

Communion, Baptism, and Our Belief on Sacraments

Introduction: Why This Matters

Let's be honest — a lot of us grew up around church traditions like Communion and Baptism without ever really knowing what they were. We just did them because, well, everyone else was doing them.

I still remember the first time I saw Communion happen. I thought, “Wait, we get snacks during church? Crackers and juice? Sign me up.” And when I saw baptisms, I thought it was a pool party happening in the middle of service. “Why are people getting dunked fully clothed? I want in!” I didn't understand what any of it meant... but I wanted to be part of it — to fit in, to belong, to feel included. And maybe you've felt that way too.

These moments weren't explained to me — at least not in a way that connected. And if that's your story, you're not alone.

At **Love Church**, we want to go deeper than ritual. Communion and Baptism aren't just traditions to check off a spiritual to-do list. They're sacred invitations from Jesus — physical expressions of invisible grace. They help us remember who He is, respond to what He's done, and walk in step with Him as we follow His lead.

In Acts 2:38–42, we get a glimpse of the early church's heartbeat. Baptism and breaking bread were essential parts of following Jesus:

“Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...’ They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

- Acts 2:38,42

Communion and Baptism aren't about earning something — they're about remembering someone. They're not about joining a club — they're about responding to the love of a Savior who gave everything for us.

So whether you've taken Communion a hundred times or never been baptized in your life, we want to help you see these moments the way Jesus intended: as signs of grace, symbols of faith, and sacred steps in a life of following Him.

What Are Sacraments?

Sacraments can sound like a heavy, religious word — but at the core, they're simply sacred practices Jesus gave us to remember and respond to Him.

At **Love Church**, we talk about two primary sacraments (also called ordinances): **Baptism** and **Communion**. These aren't magic rituals. They don't save us. But they are powerful, tangible expressions of our faith in Jesus.

Here's how we define them:

- **Sacraments are visible signs of invisible grace.**
- **They are symbols, not salvation.**
- **They are acts of obedience, not entry requirements.**
- **They are communal, but also deeply personal.**

We don't do them out of pressure — we do them out of love.

| Catholic vs. Protestant — A Simple Overview

Some of us come from Catholic backgrounds, others from Protestant, and some with no church background at all. So here's a quick comparison to clarify where we stand:

- **Catholics** recognize **seven sacraments** (like confession, confirmation, marriage, etc.) and believe the sacraments themselves convey grace (ex opere operato — “by the work worked”).
- **Protestants** (that's us) typically recognize **two sacraments** that Jesus specifically modeled: **Baptism and Communion**. We believe **grace comes by faith**, and sacraments are a response to that grace — not a cause of it.

Ephesians 2:8–9 says it clearly:

| **“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.”**

At **Love Church**, we don't take Communion or get baptized to “earn” God's love. We do it because we already have His love — and these practices help us anchor our faith in real moments of remembrance, surrender, and celebration.

Baptism – Death to Life

If you're new to faith, you might be wondering: What's the deal with water and pools at church? That was my reaction too. When I first saw a baptism, I thought, "Is this a pool party?" And when Communion came around, I just knew I wanted in on the crackers and juice. I didn't understand the meaning—but I wanted to fit in.

The truth is, a lot of people grew up seeing baptisms without really knowing what it was all about. But baptism isn't just a symbolic swim—it's a sacred, public response to the transforming grace of Jesus.

Baptism in the Bible

Jesus didn't just suggest baptism—He **commanded** it:

**"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."
- Matthew 28:19**

The early church took this seriously. Baptism followed belief—again and again:

- **Acts 2:41** – "Those who accepted his message were baptized..."
- **Acts 8:12** – "They believed... and were baptized, both men and women."
- **Romans 6:3-4** – "...buried with Him through baptism into death... raised to walk in newness of life."

Baptism is a **declaration of faith** and a **symbol of transformation**:

- You die to your old life.
- You rise into the new.
- You show the world that you belong to Jesus.

What We Believe at Love Church

At **Love Church**, we practice:

- **Believer's baptism by full immersion.** This follows the example of Jesus and the early church. The water represents death, burial, and resurrection.
- **Baptism is not salvation—it's response.** We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), not by religious acts. Baptism doesn't earn grace—it celebrates it.
- **We honor your past but invite you forward.** If you were baptized as a baby (paedobaptism), we honor that as a meaningful step your family took on your behalf. But we also invite you to consider being baptized now as your own public declaration of faith. (Acts 8:36-37)

Do I Need to Be Baptized to Be Saved?

Short answer? No. **Jesus saves—not baptism.**

Some ask this question because they've read verses like Acts 2:38 or Mark 16:16, which connect baptism to salvation. But these verses must be read **in light of the whole New Testament**, which consistently teaches salvation is by **grace through faith alone** (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Baptism is the **first act of obedience**, not the key to heaven. It's like putting on a wedding ring—it doesn't make you married, but it shows the world that you are. If you've trusted Jesus, your salvation is secure. But baptism is your way of saying:

| **"I'm not ashamed of the Gospel. I'm His."**

| **What Is Believer's Baptism?**

Believer's baptism is the conviction that **only those who personally trust in Jesus** should be baptized. It's based on these patterns in Scripture:

- Acts 2:41 – "Those who accepted his message were baptized..."
- Acts 8:12 – "They believed... and were baptized..."
- Acts 10:47–48 – "They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have... so he ordered that they be baptized..."

In every example, belief **precedes** baptism. At **Love Church**, we follow this pattern: **Faith first. Baptism follows.**

| **What Is Paedobaptism (Infant Baptism)?**

We understand many were baptized as babies. While we don't rebaptize out of disrespect for your upbringing, we invite you to see baptism in the Bible as a **personal response to Jesus**—something you choose for yourself.

| **Baptism is not about negating the past. It's about owning your present faith.**

Some Christian traditions practice infant baptism, seeing it as:

- A covenant sign, like circumcision in the Old Testament (Genesis 17)
- A family commitment to raise a child in the faith
- A sacramental act that marks inclusion in the church community

Churches like the Catholic Church believe baptism washes away original sin. Others, like Reformed and Anglican traditions, believe it welcomes children into the covenant community, with the hope that they'll grow into faith later.

| **Our View at Love Church:**

- We honor the heart behind infant baptism — **the desire to raise children to know and follow God.**
- But we see in Scripture that **baptism is always a response to personal faith.**
- So we don't practice infant baptism. Instead, we dedicate children and then invite them to be baptized **when they personally trust in Jesus.**

We see baptism not as a parent's decision, but a **disciple's declaration**.

| **Pastorally Speaking...**

We know this decision can feel emotional, even intimidating. But here's what we've seen at **Love Church**:

The moment someone comes out of that water, there's joy. Tears. Laughter. Peace. It's a line-in-the-sand moment people never forget.

And we'd love to celebrate that with you.

| 💡 **Common Questions**

Do I need to be baptized to go to heaven?

No. The thief on the cross wasn't baptized, and Jesus told him, "Today you'll be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Baptism is important, but it's not the entry fee to eternity—Jesus is.

What if I was baptized as a baby?

We invite you to be baptized as a believer—not to dishonor your past, but to declare your personal faith today.

Can I get baptized again?

If you've walked away and are rededicating your life, it's okay to get baptized again—but we encourage you to reflect on what the step means for you spiritually, not emotionally. We're here to walk with you.

Communion – Remember and Receive

When I was a kid, I remember seeing everyone eat crackers and drink juice during church. I thought, Church snacks? Count me in. I didn't know what it meant—I just wanted to participate.

A lot of people relate to that. Maybe you've received Communion without really knowing why. Maybe you've felt unsure whether you should take it at all.

But Communion isn't a random church ritual. It's a powerful reminder of what Jesus has done—and an invitation to remember, repent, and receive again.

Communion in the Bible

Communion, also known as the Lord's Supper, was **instituted by Jesus** the night before He gave His life:

“This is my body, given for you; do this in remembrance of me...
This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”
— Luke 22:19–20

The early church practiced it regularly:

- Acts 2:42 – “They devoted themselves... to the breaking of bread and prayer.”
- 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 – Paul reminds believers to remember Jesus through the bread and the cup.

What Does Communion Mean?

Communion is a **symbolic meal** that helps us:

- Remember Jesus' sacrifice
- Reflect on our hearts
- Recenter our lives on the Gospel
- Reaffirm our unity as the body of Christ

It's not about being perfect—it's about being **present with Jesus**, grateful and honest before Him.

What We Believe at Love Church

At **Love Church**:

- **We see Communion as symbolic.** We don't believe the bread and juice physically become Jesus' body and blood (as taught in Catholic doctrine called transubstantiation). Instead, they are sacred symbols that point us to His real sacrifice and presence.
- **We welcome all believers.** Communion is open to anyone who has put their trust in Jesus. You don't have to be a church member—you just need to know and love Jesus.

- **We receive it regularly, but reverently.** We don't do it out of routine, but out of remembrance. Before we take it, we pause, pray, and check our hearts.

“Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.”
— 1 Corinthians 11:28

Common Questions

Is Communion just a symbol?

It's a sacred symbol—deeply meaningful, but not magical. It doesn't forgive sins, but it points us back to the One who does.

Can anyone take Communion?

We believe Communion is for believers. If you've trusted Jesus with your life, you're invited to the table.

How often do we take Communion at Love Church?

We practice Communion regularly at Sunday gatherings and special nights of worship. It's a rhythm of remembering together.

Final Reflection

Communion is not a religious checkbox—it's a holy moment with Jesus. Every time we take it, we proclaim the Gospel to our own hearts:

“Jesus gave everything for me. His body was broken. His blood was shed. He loves me.
And He's coming again.”

Why the Sacraments Don't Save Us — But Still Matter

You might be wondering, If Baptism and Communion don't save me, why do they matter so much? That's a good question—and one that cuts to the heart of the Gospel.

The Bible is clear:

“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”
— Ephesians 2:8–9

Salvation doesn't come through water or wine—it comes through the **finished work of Jesus** on the cross and our faith in Him. **Baptism and Communion are not requirements for salvation—they are responses to it.**

They're not about earning grace.

They're about **encountering** it again and again.

They're not boxes to check.

They're **reminders** of the love that changed everything.

So Why Do We Practice Them?

Because Jesus told us to.

Because they keep our hearts soft.

Because they help us remember what we can so easily forget:

Jesus gave everything for us—and we belong to Him.

How We Practice This at Love Church

- **Baptism** is offered regularly at Sunday gatherings, special events, and even beach days. It's open to anyone who's placed their faith in Jesus and is ready to take that public next step.
- **Communion** is shared during worship gatherings and prayer nights. We lead people into it with teaching, reflection, and space to encounter God personally.

Both are open to **all who believe in Jesus.**

Both are rooted in **Scripture and grace.**

Both are practiced with **joy, humility, and hope.**

| One Last Thought

These aren't rituals for the religious; they're **rhythms for the redeemed.**

Every time we step into the waters of baptism or hold the bread and cup in our hands, we are declaring:

| **"Jesus saved me. Jesus sustains me. And I will follow Him all my days."**