



**BAPTISM &
THE LORD'S
SUPPER**

DEATH BURIAL
Resurrection



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What are they, how are they done, and who are they for?

What are they?

We see in the Bible two formal actions commanded by Jesus Christ to be done as part of the lives of Christians as they gather as a local church. These two are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are called sacraments. You may have heard of other sacraments such as from the Catholic church, but only these two meet the distinctive biblical criteria to make them sacraments. The criteria are a) clearly commanded for all believers b) by Christ c) in the Bible.

So what are sacraments? Sacraments are signs and seals of our relationship with Jesus Christ. A sign, just like a street sign, is a visible reminder of something. Generally the signs we see around us are instructional reminders (stop here, turn there etc). Baptism is a sign that reminds us that when we were saved, we were: washed clean by Jesus' sacrifice, we died, we have a new life in Christ, and we are made part of the body of believers. As such, it is done soon after we become believers, and we do it only once.

The Lord's Supper is a regular action done as part of a gathered group of believers (a local church), with pastors/elders overseeing it. As Jesus' himself said, we perform the Lord's supper as a way to remember Him when we gather. Specifically, the bread represents Jesus' body and reminds us that He gave His body for us as He paid the price for our sins. The cup of juice or wine represents Jesus' blood and is a reminder of the covenant (an unbreakable promise) that He paid for with his blood. We as Christians are told to do this when we gather together to be reminded of these things.

The sacraments are not just signs, but also seals. A seal is a physical representation of something agreed to, or confirmed. We might think of a traditional sealed letter, it confirms that it hasn't been read. Baptism and the Lord's Supper remind us we are sealed in Christ, we belong to Him. Put together, these two act as a tangible confirmation and commitment that we are followers of Jesus.



Together, these do more than check boxes. They are helpful tools of God's grace, because they help us on our journey in following Him. How do they help us? As indicated, they remind us of a truth in our lives (yes I really am a Christian), they also convict us (If I really am a Christian, I ought to act like I am), and in particular in the case of the Lord's supper, they help us live in peace with our fellow believers and with God (we will come back to this).

So the key is where do we see this in the Bible?

Baptism is most clearly commanded just before Jesus Christ goes back to heaven in Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Also similarly seen in Mark 16:16). There are many other passages instructing baptism or referring to baptism, alongside several stories of baptism in the Book of Acts.

The first Lord's Supper happens just before Jesus dies as seen in Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-23. Then Paul explains it in more length in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. With that biblical background, let's explore further.

How are they done, and who are they for?

BAPTISM

At Crossridge Church, we believe baptism is just for someone who has made a credible or real commitment to faithfully follow Jesus. As seen in the examples we have in Acts, it should happen soon after we have been saved by God and have made a commitment to follow him. It is also a public statement or declaration, as it was always done with witnesses, and, based on the instructions to the church, done as part of a local church. So let's unpack that a bit.

First, given we see it as done only by someone who has come to faith in Jesus, the pastors and elders of the church who oversee baptism are tasked with helping discern whether a credible profession of faith has been made. Which means, as indicated in Romans 10:9, we want to know that a person truly understands what it means to be a Christian (believing that God as Jesus came and died on the cross and rose again), and discern if a person truly believes in their heart, and have



begun to follow Him. That is why we have both a baptism class (to help people understand baptism and Christianity), and then a process of you reflecting on those realities, and speaking with a pastor or elder about your commitment.

Parents, if the question is about whether a child is ready for baptism, the pastors/elders are here to help you discern their commitment too. As such, we have not specified a minimum age, but rather would want to join you and your children to help in discerning that they truly understand the gospel and their own faith, and they are pursuing it not just because of others in their lives (including their parents). We would want to see good evidence that this is sincere faith on their part, not just a mimicking of what they see. In other words, some level of maturity on the part of the child can be a helpful tool in discerning this with them. The pastors/elders always welcome questions on this, and are happy to support you in figuring this out.

Once this initial discernment phase is complete we will have a plan to do baptisms (usually on a Sunday) witnessed by the gathered church. We believe baptism is best done by immersion, which means that someone fully goes into the water, symbolizing their death alongside Jesus, and comes back up out of the water, symbolizing their new life in Christ. While this is the ideal, and so the way we do it, we recognize that some type of washing with water (in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) is the key element, and that immersion is not strictly required to be true baptism.

Lastly, we would want to say that baptism is done only once and only after becoming a believer. This means that we believe if you were baptized in another church as an infant, that it isn't true baptism, and so should be baptized again. It also means that once you were baptized as a believer, you should not be getting baptized again. If you have more questions about baptism, please connect with one of the pastors or elders.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

As instructed by the Bible, we are to celebrate the Lord's supper when we gather together. While the frequency isn't explicitly prescribed in the Bible, we believe that doing it nearly every time we gather together as a church best matches the biblical instructions



As it is a sign and seal of our relationship with Christ, it is also only for those who have made a profession of faith in Christ. As such, we encourage you to discern in your own hearts whether this is true. One helpful tool is the process of becoming baptised since you would have had to discern you are truly a Christian for that as well. While we don't require baptism to happen before participating in the Lord's supper, the picture we see in the Bible is that once someone has made a commitment of faith, they should be doing both soon after, and, in the case of the Lord's supper, on an ongoing basis from then on.

In 1 Corinthians 11 we see instructions to participate in the Lord's supper in a worthy manner, specifically judging ourselves, and our relationships with others. In judging ourselves, we ought to reflect on whether there is any unrepentant sin in our lives, both against God, and against others, and repenting of it. Matthew 5:23-24 also suggests, when possible, to make things right if we have sinned against someone else. This at least means repenting of our sin to God in prayer before we participate in communion, but we see indication that it may mean trying to make it right with the offended person before participating in the Lord's supper too.

Parents, similarly to baptism, we would want you to discern whether your children have made a credible profession of faith and are following Jesus before participating in the Lord's Supper. The Bible, in 1 Corinthians says we ought to be careful not to take the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. So again, we don't prescribe an age requirement, but some level of maturity on the part of the child will be helpful for this.

We do the Lord's supper together, it is a small piece of bread and cup because we are doing it as a sign and seal, and not as a meal (as instructed in 1 Corinthians 11). We also do it together to remind ourselves that we are believers gathered together as a local church, one body in Christ. So we go up and collect the bread and cup and take it back to our seats and wait for instructions on taking it together. That time prior to going up, and while waiting to take it together are good times to spend reflecting, remembering, repenting and of course worshipping.

If you have more questions about the Lord's supper, please connect with one of the pastor's or elders.