

Redemption Hill Church Newcomers Class

Week 4 – Ordinances and Membership

Ordinances of the Church

- Two ordinances are given to the church by Christ – Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
- These ordinances are expectations, not options, for faithful Christians (commanded and modeled in the NT).
- These ordinances are not salvific, but essential aspects of our worship and obedience.
- In the ordinances, the GOSPEL is made visible. If we value the gospel, then we will have high regard for these two symbols.

The Lord’s Supper

- Commanded by Christ (Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor 11).
- A shared celebration that
 - o Reminds us of what Christ accomplished
 - o Expresses our continued dependence on His work.
 - o Reinforces unity in the gospel
- Clarifications
 - o The Lord’s Supper is not a mystical eating of Christ’s actual body and blood. (John 6 is about belief).
 - o The Lord’s Supper is not a superstitious “power up.” It is spiritually strengthening for us to reflect on the gospel, but the elements do not impart grace (Christ does).
 - o Symbolic. It does not save, but is for those who have been saved (like wearing a wedding ring).

Baptism

- A declaration of faith that depicts salvation, identifying with Christ and his church (Matt. 28:18-20).
 - o Baptism illustrates what salvation is - being united by faith with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.
 - o Baptism illustrates what salvation does - we are cleansed from sin through the washing of regeneration.
 - o Baptism illustrates what salvation requires – submission to the Lordship of Christ. An outward profession of inward faith.
- Problems with other modes
 - o Sprinkling/pouring fails to match the biblical word (*baptizo*= immerse or submerge under water)
 - o Sprinkling/pouring fails to follow biblical examples
 - o Sprinkling/pouring fails to illustrate biblical truths (union with Christ, submission to Christ, repentance)
- Problems with Infant Baptism
 - o Infant baptism is nowhere commanded or modeled in scripture
 - o Baptism is not a future-tense sign, but a present tense declaration
 - o Baptism is to be voluntary. It is a command to be obeyed, not something parents choose for their children.

- Baptizing infants applies the sign of union with Christ to those who aren't. Ruins the symbolism.
- Blurs the distinction between physical birth and spiritual birth, and results in an impure church that is neither salty nor bright.

Church Membership at Redemption Hill

A biblical expectation ...

- Implied by the metaphors: family, body, temple
- Necessary for discipline (Matt 18; 1 Cor 5)
- Observed in NT - counting in Acts, lists in 1 Tim, assumed in instruction to pastors

Biblical Requirements

- Regeneration – only believers belong
- Baptism – publicly identifying with Christ

Biblical Responsibilities

- Members are accountable to and responsible for Church discipline
 - For the purity of the church
 - For the protection of the believer
- Members are responsible to make provision for the church family and eligible to benefit from the provision of the church
- Members are responsible to minister and benefit from the ministry of others
- Members benefit from the ministry of leadership and are responsible to that leadership.

Privileges of Membership – Participation!

- Voting on congregational matters
- Serving in formal capacities
- The committed care of the body
- The spiritual blessings of obedience

Process for Membership

- Pastoral interview
- Signing of church covenant
- Presentation to congregation

Church Covenant

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| - Personal profession of faith in Christ | - Recognition of church leadership |
| - Commitment to the church body | - Commitment to participation in ministry |
| - Affirmation of essential doctrines | - Submission to accountability from fellow members and leaders |
| - Commitment to uphold distinctives | |

Ending Membership

- Resignation for appropriate reasons
- Removal of membership (discipline)
- Moving away
- Absence of 6 months (exceptions for illness, school, military)



REDEMPTION HILL CHURCH

By God's infinite grace I have been drawn into a relationship with him by his Holy Spirit. Through repentance from sin and faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ I have received salvation and professed my allegiance to him as Lord. I am now and forever a part of God's family and joyfully enter into this covenant with other members of his family at Redemption Hill. Realizing that this is a joyous but also a serious commitment to my fellow members, it should not be entered into lightly or abandoned with ease.

- Because Jesus loved me by laying down his life for me I will give myself in love and service to others at Redemption Hill. (Mark 10:45; John 15:12-17; Phil 2:4-8)
- Because Jesus bore our greatest burden of sin, I will help to bear the burden of others at Redemption Hill. (Gal 6:1-2; 1 Peter 2:24)
- Because Jesus prayed for our unity I will treasure and seek to protect the unity and harmony of our body at Redemption Hill, both doctrinally and relationally. (John 17:11, 20-23; 2 Cor 13:11; Eph 4:1-4; Phil 2:12)
- Because Jesus died so that I might be forgiven and reconciled to God, I will forgive and seek reconciliation with others at Redemption Hill. (Mark 11:25; Matt 5:22-24; Rom 12:18; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13)
- Because Jesus sends us into the world as he was sent into the world, I will adopt the mindset of a missionary, testifying in both word and deed to the grace and mercy of God. (John 17:17-19; John 4:34-38; John 10:25, 37-38; John 18:37; Acts 1:8)
- Because Jesus instructed us on how to pursue the reconciliation of others in the body who are in sin, I will submit to and actively participate in the process of church discipline at Redemption Hill. (Matt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:1-8)

Because I am joined to Jesus Christ by faith, and because Scripture calls me to unite with others who are part of his body in a local church, I, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, unite myself to this covenant. I affirm the essential doctrines in Redemption Hill's statement of faith and commit to uphold those distinctions of the church as well. I recognize and affirm our church's leadership, commit to be an active participant in the church's worship and ministry, and willingly seek accountability and spiritual care from fellow members and from those serving as shepherds at Redemption Hill Church.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____