

Identifying with Christ - The Ordinances of the Church

Steven Morris

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Prepared from the spoken message and lightly edited for readability. Scripture quotations and spoken phrasing are preserved as delivered.

Well, many of you know that I'm an Aggie. There's the whoops. Thank you very much. I graduated from Texas A&M. I loved my time there, and since I left Aggieland, every time I get the chance to cheer for them, man, I'm all over it.

I love the fact that right now we are currently national champions. You guys might not realize that, but last year our volleyball team won the national championship, and so we are sitting on top of the volleyball world.

I got a lot of texts last weekend from LSU people after LSU and A&M played, and I'm not bothered. We are a volleyball school now, and I'm fully leaning into that.

Here's the deal: I'm probably not the only Aggie that you know. There's a bunch of us, and I'm sure that you've seen that there can be times when we act a certain way. There are things that we do, and we do them because it's just who we are. That's it. It's just who we are as Aggies.

You're going to see us wearing maroon and our Aggie rings. It's just who we are as Aggies. You're going to see us starting every season full of hope while, in the back of our minds, knowing that something is going to go wrong. You're going to see Aggies fill Kyle Field every single Saturday, no matter what our record is, and cheer no matter what. You're going to hear us refer to College Station as the modern-day Promised Land. These are just things that we do because of who we are.

And listen, I know, because not everybody's perfect, that there are some of you who cheer against A&M publicly. I know that you just have to act annoyed by all of these things that we do. But we know deep down inside that you love it, and you love us as Aggies. When you ask us why we do these things, here's the phrase again: We do this because it's who we are. It's just who we are.

Now you're wondering, "Where could he possibly be going with this?"

Here it is. On an infinitely more important note, when you look around this church family and see the things that are going on, it's the same thing. There are a lot of things that we do because of who we are as believers. It's our identity in Christ. We do these things because of who we are as followers of Jesus.

We're going to zero in on two of them this morning - two actions that we do as a church that were not invented by us. It's not church tradition at all. These are two actions that have been handed to us by Jesus himself.

Oftentimes you'll hear them referred to by this phrase: ordinances of the church. We call them ordinances of the church because they were ordained by Jesus himself, and they were given to us as a church family to walk out as followers of Jesus.

The two actions that we refer to as ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Those are the two. This morning, we're going to unpack both of them. We're going to start by looking at the waters of baptism, and then we're going to finish by unpacking the table of the Lord's Supper. Then we're going to share in the Lord's Supper together.

Just know this up front: Both of these ordinances of the church are all about identifying with Christ, publicly for the first time and ongoing as a follower of Jesus. That is our main idea this morning: identifying with Christ.

As believers, I'll say it again and again and again: Our identity is in Christ Jesus. Who are we because of him? We are children of God. That is who we are. That is our identity.

Our identity is not in our job. It's not in our grades. It's not in our athletics. It's not in our last name, our finances, our ZIP code, or our past. Our identity is found in Christ and Christ alone. These two ordinances are actions that Jesus has given us to show the world where our identity lies.

We all know these aren't the only ways to show who we are as followers of Jesus, but these are two specific ways that Jesus has given us to show that together as a church family. Because of who we are as followers of Jesus, we do them.

Here's a great way to think about these two: Baptism is where you identify with Christ first. That is the first public profession, letting the world and the church family know, "This is who I am now because of Jesus."

The Lord's Supper is where you continue identifying with Jesus again and again and again as you share the Lord's Supper with a church family. Baptism is the beginning, and the Lord's Supper is the continuing.

Baptism

Let's start at the beginning: identifying with Christ in baptism. Of course, the natural question is, "Why would anybody be baptized at all?"

The answer is because Jesus told us to.

If you've got your Bible, look in Matthew 28. We're going to bounce around a little bit, but we're going to start in Matthew 28, where Jesus gives his followers their marching orders before he ascends to heaven. Matthew 28:18 says:

Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

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."

— Matthew 28:18-19

Understand this: Baptism is not a church idea. Baptism is not a Baptist idea. It's a Jesus idea. When you read

the Bible, it's more than an idea. Jesus commands baptism.

Now, whom does he command to get baptized? It's right there in the verse: believers. Those who become disciples of Jesus publicly identify and make that known through baptism.

We've talked about that often. Those who call on the name of Jesus by grace through faith are saved from their sins. They are made children of God. People who do that, those who trust Christ, are called to get baptized.

If you read through the book of Acts, you know that's the gospel expansion. That's the early church really growing and branching out. New people are trusting Christ. In the early church, they do what Jesus told them to do: They get baptized.

There's a pattern that you see in all of these baptisms. People believe in Jesus, and after they believe in Jesus, they're baptized.

In Acts 2:41, on the day of Pentecost, Peter preaches, and more than 3,000 people trust in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Scripture says that then they are baptized.

In Acts 8:12, in Samaria, Philip preaches the gospel. People believe in Jesus. The city - I love the phrase - turns into a city of great joy, and that happens because of the gospel. It says that when those people believe, they're baptized, both men and women.

In Acts 10:44-48, Cornelius hears the gospel. His entire household hears the gospel. It says the Holy Spirit falls on them. They believe in Jesus, and Peter says, "All right, guys, it is time for you to get baptized." The entire household that believed in Jesus obeyed the command of Christ, and they got baptized.

In Acts 16:32-34, the Philippian jailer is holding Christians in prison. He sees the work of God. He hears the gospel from these believers whom he's holding in prison. He trusts in Christ, and he gets baptized, along with his entire household who believes in God.

I just wanted you to see the order we have in Scripture. That's the pattern: People believe in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins and to become children of God, and then they publicly identify with Christ through baptism. Every time.

Baptism is for people who have believed in Christ. As we continue to look in Scripture, every baptism that the Bible describes in detail happens through immersion. Not all of them are described in detail. Some of it is just, "And they were baptized." But the ones that are described in detail all happen through immersion.

If you're not sure what that is, you could just replace that with "dunking." It happens when people go under the water. If you've seen baptisms here, you've seen that that's how we do it. We have people enter the baptistry, and they go all the way under. It's because of the pattern that we see in Scripture.

The Greek word for baptism is *baptizo*. That was an easy translation for us. That word in Greek means to dip, to plunge, or to immerse under the water. That's the actual word.

When Jesus was baptized, Mark tells us that he came up out of the water. When Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8, it says that they both went down into the water and they both came up out of the water. Again, that's just the picture that we have in Scripture.

Here's a question that goes with all of that: Why only believers, and why all the way under the water?

Well, it's what I just said. It's commanded for people who have trusted in Christ. The examples we have in Scripture are all the way under the water. But we can add to that. It's because of what baptism means.

Baptism is a picture of our union with Christ. It's a picture of his death, his burial, and his resurrection. I love the way that Paul explains this in Romans 6:4. Listen to this:

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

— Romans 6:4

You hear some of the language that we say when people are baptized: "Raised to walk in newness of life." That's straight from Scripture.

When you or someone else goes down into the water to be baptized, it's this picture where you are saying to a watching world, "Hey, listen, my old life died with Christ. It's under the water now. It is buried with him."

When you come up, you are declaring and painting the picture to the world: "I have been raised with him to a new life."

In Colossians 2:12, the Bible says:

Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith.

— Colossians 2:12

Baptism is a sign, the outward sign of an inward change. That's why, when we talk about baptism, it's for believers. It just makes sense. It's the outward sign of the beginning of the Christian life, and so it belongs to people who have actually begun the Christian life, who are identifying with Christ publicly and for the first time.

Let's make sure that we don't misunderstand, because some will ask - and I'll have these conversations; you probably have too - "Does baptism save you?" Or some will say, "I want to get baptized so that I can be saved."

That's not it.

I want to explain, and I'll do it with a picture. I wear some rings that are important to me - very important to me. I wear my Aggie ring. It's an important ring to me. Here's the deal: You don't get the ring to become an Aggie. They give you the ring because you already are an Aggie, and it can publicly let the world know about it.

Now, not nearly as important as the Aggie ring is my wedding ring. Chelsea made sure that I clarified that this one is more important.

Do not overthink this: Does this ring make me married? No, it doesn't. I took it off. I'm going to put it back on. I

took it off, and nothing changed. I'm still married. Nothing has changed in the relationship that I have with my wife.

The ring does not make me married. What makes me married is the covenant that we entered into with one another before God and others. That is what makes us married. The ring shows the world that we are married. It shows the world the relationship that already exists between me and Chelsea.

It's a public sign of a real commitment. It is a picture that tells the world around us of the commitment that we have already made.

Listen, that's baptism. Baptism doesn't make you a Christian. It shows the world the relationship that you already have with Jesus.

Just to be really clear this morning so there is no misunderstanding: Baptism doesn't save you.

In fact, Paul wrote letters to several churches in the New Testament where people were trying to make salvation - a right relationship with God - Jesus plus something else. People were trying to say, "You can believe in Christ, but in order to be saved, you have to do something else too."

Here are some examples. They would say, "You can be saved if you believe in Jesus and if you are circumcised, like the Old Testament law would tell you." Or they would say, "You can be saved, but you have to believe in Jesus and hold these rituals or traditions." Or, "You can be saved, but you have to believe in Jesus and keep the law."

Here's what the Bible says. Paul, as he's writing these letters to these churches, says that people who say that are preaching a different gospel, and if it's a different gospel, it is no gospel at all.

Paul reminds us that our salvation, our right standing before God, comes down to this: Jesus plus nothing else. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone. That's it.

Now, some of you know your Bibles, and you've wrestled with this concept of baptism before. If that's the case, you might have landed on a verse in 1 Peter 3:21. Peter, writing a letter to the churches, says, "Baptism now saves you."

If you stop there, you're like, "Well, wait a minute. That's different from what Jesus taught and what a lot of the New Testament teaches. How do we reconcile those two things together?"

To that, I would say, "Just finish the sentence." Finish the verse and look at what Peter says, because he tells us what he means in the verse:

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

— 1 Peter 3:21

In the verse, Peter tells us what he means and doesn't mean. I'll break it down.

He's not talking about the water. He says the water is not going to clean you. It's not going to do anything for

your soul. It just gets you wet. It is a picture of what has happened on the inside. It's a picture of a heart that has turned to God, a faith asking God for a good conscience that has trusted in the resurrection of Jesus.

Peter is saying that baptism points to the inward reality of faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He says there's no need for baptism without faith in Jesus. He actually guards us against thinking there's some saving power in the water itself.

Listen, that water doesn't save. When the faucets don't work, we drag a garden hose in and fill it up with the garden hose. It's not holy water. There's nothing special about the water itself.

Jesus saves us, and then baptism is how we tell people about it.

Why would a person choose to get baptized if it doesn't save us? It's a fair question. Again, I hope I've answered it, but if I haven't, let me give you three reasons.

The first is very simple: obedience. Jesus commanded baptism, and I believe that's enough. We don't get to pick and choose where we obey Christ. There's not this buffet of commands in the Bible where we say, "We're going to do this one and not that one," or, "We like these two or three over here, but this one makes us feel a little weird, so we're going to lean away from this."

That's not it. As followers of Jesus, we obey the words of Jesus. The first reason is obedience.

The second reason is the blessing that comes into our lives when we are obedient. There is something that happens in our souls when we do what Jesus has called us to do. Every time we take a step of obedience in Christ, our faith gets stronger. We are flexing those faith muscles. Our relationship with him gets sweeter. There is a real spiritual blessing for us on the other side of obedience.

The third reason - and this might surprise you a little bit - is to remind you that it's not all about you.

The third reason baptism is a big deal in your life is because it blesses a lot of other lives. It blesses the church. When you get baptized, you are encouraged as you take this step of obedience, but you're not the only one. The entire church family gets to celebrate with you as they see God continuing to work in your life like only God can do.

Every baptism reminds us not only that God is at work in their life, but that God is at work in our lives as well. It is a blessing to the entire church.

I don't just want you to hear it from me. I want you to hear it from a couple in our church family who are going to talk about the impact that baptism has made in their lives.

Would y'all welcome David and Claudia Calvans up here with me as they're making their way up? They're awesome. David and Claudia serve in our ReEngage ministry, our marriage ministry. If you've never stepped into that, it's a fantastic one. These are some of the leaders in there. She's representing her kids ministry shirt. They serve in the kids ministry as well.

They got baptized here at Champion Forest just a couple of years ago, and it was a really, really special time. I

want you to hear from them about the impact that baptism has made in their lives. You guys take it away.

****Claudia:**** All right, well, I'll go first. I'm Claudia, and seven years ago I was in a very dark season in my life. I had hit rock bottom, and so I knew that I wanted to get into church and find Jesus. I made a list of churches that I planned on visiting, and Champion Forest was the first on my list.

My first day here, I remember just walking in, and I felt something. I don't know what it was, but I just felt something. I walked into the worship center, and I sat in those back seats right there, where a lot of you probably know I sit.

After the sermon - it was a great sermon, and I remember it really spoke to my heart - the pastor did the altar call to come and receive this free gift. In my head, I'm thinking, "I really want that, but I don't have extra clothes."

As if the pastor knew what I was thinking, he said, "We have baptism clothes. Come get baptized. Come receive this free gift."

Then I thought to myself, "Well, I don't want to walk out of here with wet hair. I promise God I'll come back next week and I'll do it."

As if the pastor was in my head again, he said, "Ladies, we have blow dryers. We have toiletries. We have everything you need. Come receive this free gift."

Before I could come up with another thought or excuse in my head, I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned around, and I saw a tall man in a suit behind me. He asked me, "Are you ready to get baptized?"

I remember nodding my head yes, and he led me to the back. That's a far walk. I don't even remember walking back there. But I got back there, and I got with a prayer partner. I prayed. I received. I accepted. I trusted God, and I got baptized.

Since that day, I began my relationship with Christ. I started reading my Bible, and I started to understand what obedience was. I come from a Catholic background. I thought Baptist people just walked around and asked people if they wanted to get baptized, but no, that's not what it was. He was prompted. He was obedient to what he was told.

Had he not listened and been obedient, I don't know what would have happened. He has no idea, but he not only changed my life; he changed my eternity. I understand the importance of obedience now because of that.

Love it. Very good. Love it, love it.

That was actually a day when we said, "You know what? We're going to teach on baptism, and then at the end, get up and go get baptized right now."

It's a day when God put it on her heart. She trusted in Christ and got baptized the exact same day. She's just been a blessing ever since.

David, why don't you tell us your baptism story?

****David:**** Well, unlike Claudia, I have notes.

Before I surrendered to Jesus, I lived for the world and what the world offered. I was lost, but the Lord found me on Father's Day 2021.

I surprised my family by getting baptized. I wanted to publicly profess my surrender to Jesus and my commitment to follow him. Jesus himself was baptized by John, and I wanted to follow that example as a father and spiritual leader of our household.

I wanted my daughters to see me boldly profess my faith. I wanted them to know that their dad needed Jesus too. Leading my family meant first surrendering my own life to him.

That decision became even more meaningful when I had the privilege and honor of baptizing my daughters. To stand with them as they publicly professed their own faith in Jesus was something I will always treasure.

My testimony is simple: I was lost, but the Lord found me. What began with my surrender became a blessing I got to share with my own daughters. Thank you, family.

Very cool. Y'all give it up for them. I'm thankful for that.

His baptism story is incredible too. He trusted Christ, and he knew that baptism was a step of obedience for him. So he set it up with Lewis, I believe. Right, Lewis? That was with you.

He did not tell his family that it was going to happen. It was this surprise. He walked out to get baptized that day, and they were blown away. It was just a really, really neat blessing.

I want you to zero in on what they said. They both talked about obedience and trusting the Lord enough to do what the Lord called them to do. They both talked about the blessing that comes with that obedience. It's just an incredible thing.

Here's the application, and there are two different applications based on who you are this morning.

The first application is: Get baptized. If you've trusted in Christ and you have not yet been baptized, it's time for you to get baptized.

The second application is for the rest who have trusted in Christ and who have been baptized. The application for us is to celebrate baptism. That's what we've got to do. We've got to celebrate when people get baptized.

The question I'll ask you this morning is, "Is it time for you to get baptized?" I'm going to answer it for you so you don't have to think about this. If you are a believer in Jesus and you have not yet been baptized, then the answer is yes. It is time for you.

As Claudia said, don't miss the moment.

You might be thinking, "Wait a minute. What if I was baptized as a baby? What do I do then?" That's a great question, because a lot of people in the room were.

Let me just say this: If you were baptized as a baby, your parents did that because they love you and they

want you to grow up knowing the Lord. It's a beautiful thing, and we absolutely honor that.

As we look in Scripture this morning, we see that all of these baptisms in the Bible happen as someone trusts in Christ. It's the same order: Someone trusts in Christ, they believe, and then they are baptized.

Baptism is your time. It's your public profession, your declaration that you've trusted in Christ. It's a step that nobody else can take for you or decide for you. They can affirm it in your life, but if you've trusted Christ since you were baptized at a young age, we'd love to celebrate with you as you take your first step in Christ, identifying publicly with him.

If you're here this morning and you're not a believer in Jesus, listen: The first step isn't water for you. It's Christ. It's trusting in Christ as your Lord and Savior, turning from sin, and putting your faith in what he did for you on the cross. Once you do that, then yes, it's time.

If baptism is next for you, here's the action step: Text BAPTISM to 77069. You can get your phone out. You can do it now. You can do it at the end of the service. You can go see Lewis at the guest tent right out front afterward.

If baptism is next for you, go ahead and text BAPTISM to that number that's on the screen. When you do, it's going to come to Lewis, me, Cheryl, Adam, or Tony. We're going to call you sometime this week, answer any questions you might have about it, and help you schedule your baptism.

Don't wait. Don't put it off. The Lord is already answering questions for you, like he did for Claudia earlier. Let the world know that you have put your faith in him.

For those of us who have been baptized, some many years ago, get this: I was baptized in the last century. I think, technically, I was baptized in the last millennium. It was a long time ago, and many of you were as well.

If that's you, here's your application today: Don't let it get old. Don't let baptism get old. Don't let watching baptism become routine. Celebrate the moment.

Think about what it is. As someone is going under the water, we are watching someone who said, "Hey, listen, my old life has died, and I am rising up with Christ. My sins are gone because of Jesus."

It's an occasion for great joy as we celebrate that. Praise the Lord. Clap, cheer, yell, and celebrate as we see God at work in someone's life.

That's the first ordinance: baptism. It's the beginning.

The Lord's Supper

The second ordinance of the church that Jesus ordained and handed down to us is the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is also identifying with Christ, but it's identifying with Christ again and again and again. In a few minutes, we're all going to do that. We're going to share the Lord's Supper together. But before we do, I want to take just a minute to drill down on why we actually do it.

If baptism happens once, why do we do the Lord's Supper over and over throughout our Christian lives? It's a sign of continued fellowship with our Savior, with Christ.

If your Bible is open to Matthew 28, turn back two chapters to Matthew 26. Look at what Jesus says, starting in verse 26:

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."

And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

— Matthew 26:26-29

Jesus said this to the disciples at the table on the night that he was betrayed. If you'll remember, they were at the table eating because they were sharing the Passover meal together.

That's a meal that the people of Israel had shared up until that point and continue to share today. They share that meal together to remember how God rescued them from slavery in Egypt. How did he do it? Through the blood of the lamb.

On that night, Jesus does something new. He takes the bread and the cup from that old meal, and he gives them a new meaning. He's teaching us as he does it.

What is Jesus teaching us through the Lord's Supper today? A couple of things.

First, as we take the Lord's Supper, we need to know that it shows the meaning of Christ's death. Our actions through the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup are painting a picture.

The bread is broken, and that's a picture of the body of Christ that's broken for us, just like Scripture said was going to happen. When we drink the cup, it's the same thing. The cup is poured out. It's a picture of his blood for us.

Paul actually says, as he's giving instructions to the church on this in 1 Corinthians 11:26:

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

— 1 Corinthians 11:26

I want you to begin thinking about it this way, not just here and now this morning, but every time you take the Lord's Supper: You are preaching a sermon without saying a word. You're preaching a sermon without saying a word.

The second thing we learn here is that it shows our participation in the benefits of the death of Jesus.

It's one thing to look at the bread and to look at the cup. It's another thing to actually reach out and take them.

When you reach out and take the cup, you're saying that Jesus' death on the cross wasn't just for the world in general. You're making it personal. You're saying, "This was for me. His forgiveness that he extends and offers is for me."

You're saying, "By grace through faith, I have received his forgiveness and stepped into the family of God."

Third, we're learning about spiritual nourishment through the taking of the Lord's Supper. The bread and the juice nourish our bodies. Jesus nourishes our souls.

In John 6, Jesus says:

I am the bread of life.

Whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.

— John 6:35, 57

Jesus wasn't talking about literally eating him. Some traditions teach that the bread and the cup actually become the body and the blood of Christ.

Here's what I would say to that: When you read the Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John - the four Gospels that show the life and teachings of Jesus, he used pictures to talk about himself all the time, didn't he? He said, "I am the vine." He said things like, "I am the door." When he said that, nobody thought that he was made of wood.

When he held the bread up to the disciples and said, "Hey, guys, this is my body," his actual body was also there at the table. The disciples understood what he meant: "This is representative of my body."

But listen, don't diminish it, and don't think that makes it just a symbol. When we come to the table in faith, Jesus really is strengthening and refreshing our souls.

What else do we learn in the Lord's Supper? A couple more things.

We learn that we are one body at one table. This is a big part of it. It shows this unity, this connection that we have as believers.

The Lord's Supper in the Bible is not an individual action. This is a church family action. It happens when we are gathered together as a family.

Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

— 1 Corinthians 10:17

When we take the Lord's Supper, we're showing the world that we share one heart, that we have one faith in one Savior. We are a spiritual family.

That means the Lord's Supper, just like baptism, is for those who have trusted in Christ. This is a family meal.

If you're here this morning and you haven't made Jesus Christ your Savior, listen, we're thrilled that you are

here. But I'd encourage you, as those elements are passed this morning, to just let them pass and use that time to think about what Christ has done for you.

If you're ready, if you understand the good news of Christ now and you're ready to trust in him, you can do that right where you are sitting in that seat. As you do, Scripture says that this meal is for you too.

In fact, Scripture gives us instructions on how we do it. Again, in 1 Corinthians, Paul writes a letter to the church. He says, "Here are the instructions, and here's a warning that goes with it."

In 1 Corinthians 11, here's the warning. He says, "You guys have to examine yourselves before you take it," because some of them were eating and drinking "without discerning the body."

What was going on with those early believers that Paul needed to give a warning here? A lot of them were just selfish. A lot of them were gathering together as a family, and they were being inconsiderate toward one another as they looked to the Lord's Supper.

There were some who were getting there early, eating all of the food, and drinking all of the drink. They were getting drunk and full right there at the Lord's table while a lot of other people went hungry. They had missed the entire point. They weren't recognizing that the church is one body of Christ.

Paul says to examine yourself before you take the Lord's Supper. A big part of what that means is this: Ask yourself, "Are my relationships within the body of Christ reflecting the character of the Lord whom I am meeting here at the table?"

Jesus said it in Matthew 5. If you're bringing your gift to the altar to worship and you remember that there's a fractured relationship among the body, he says, "Leave your gift there at the altar. Go be reconciled to your brother, and then come back and worship."

As we prepare to take the Lord's Supper, is there a relationship that you need to make right? Is there a person in the church family whom you are holding something against?

If that's the case, take a moment to make it right with God. This week, go make it right with them.

Listen, this self-examination that Paul talks about isn't meant to keep anybody away from the table. It's meant to bring us to the table together with clean hearts and right relationships. None of us comes to this table because we're worthy. We come because of Jesus, and he has made us one body.

Look back at what he said in Matthew 26:29:

I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

— Matthew 26:29

I want you to catch that. Jesus is saying, "We're going to do this again. We're going to share this meal again. We're going to do it together."

It points us forward to what we see in Revelation 19:9:

Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

— Revelation 19:9

Here's what we know as we take the Lord's Supper: We're looking ahead as well.

One day, all of God's people are going to sit down at the table with Jesus. No more sin. No more brokenness. Everything restored.

When we look in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, we see that God's aim has always been the same: to bring his people back into fellowship with himself. One of the great joys of that fellowship is that we get to eat and drink in his presence.

When we come to the table and share the Lord's Supper together, we're declaring that we believe what Jesus has done. We're also declaring that we believe what he's going to do, what he promised to do, which is to come back for his church.

As we share this, it is a moment of worship, and it is a moment of great joy as we look ahead.

These are things that we do because of who we are as followers of Christ. Baptism is the beginning, and the Lord's Supper is the continuing.

I want to invite our deacons now to go ahead and make their way forward to serve the Lord's Supper to us. They're going to grab the elements here, and I'm going to pray in just a minute. They're going to pass these out.

As the elements are passed, go ahead and grab them. Hold them in your hand and hold on to them for just a moment. Then I'll come back up here, and I'll lead us as we take the Lord's Supper together.

As they're passing this out, our worship team is going to sing one song. As they do, examine yourself like Scripture told us to do. Examine your heart and your relationships here in the church family. Whatever is going on in your heart and in your life, let these next few moments be moments when you talk to God as we worship together.

Would you pray with me?

Heavenly Father, we are so grateful - grateful for who we are because of you, grateful that you sent Jesus and sacrificed him on the cross so that we could be right before you.

Father, I pray that our identity would be in you. I pray that those of us who need to publicly profess that in baptism would faithfully do it. Father, for those of us who have been baptized, I pray we'd celebrate it.

Lord, as all of us share in the Lord's Supper today, I ask that you would make this a moment of worship as we look back and look ahead with unbelievable joy.

It's in your name we pray. Amen.