

Session 15

The Nature of the Church / Sacraments

1. Discipleship Scenario

2. Discussion Questions

a. *"The Nature of the Church"*, (Bible Doctrine chap. 26)

Review Questions

- Does the definition of "church" in this chapter include only NT believers? Explain?
- Does God have two distinct plans for Israel and the church, or should they be viewed as both constituting one people of God? Support your answer from Scripture.
- What are the two primary marks of a true church? Why are these important?
- Name and describe the three primary purposes of the church.

Questions for Personal Application

- When you think of the church as the invisible fellowship of all true believers throughout all time, how does it affect the way you think of yourself as an individual Christian? Does the NT say anything about the ideal size of an individual church?

- Would you consider the church you are in now to be a true church? Why or why not? Have you ever been a member of a false church? Viewed from the perspective of the final judgment, what good and what harm might come from our failure to state that we think unbelieving churches are false churches?
- Did any of the metaphors for the church give you a new appreciation for the church you currently attend?
- To which purpose of the church do you think you can most effectively contribute? What purpose has God placed in your heart a strong desire to fulfill?

b. "*Baptism*", Bible Doctrine chap. 27

Review Questions

- How was baptism carried out in the NT? Support your answer from three pieces of evidence:
 1. The meaning of the word *to baptize* in the Bible.
 2. Scriptural references.
 3. The symbolism of baptism.
- Who should be baptized? Support your answer with Scripture.

- The Roman Catholic Church teaches that baptism is necessary for salvation and that the act of baptism by itself causes regeneration. How is this different from the view of baptism advocated in this chapter?
- Unlike the Roman Catholic view, the Protestant paedobaptist view does not teach that baptism actually saves infants. What purpose does baptism play in this view? What differences do you see between circumcision under the old covenant and baptism under the new covenant?
- If baptism is not necessary for salvation, is it really important for believers to be baptized? Explain.

Questions for Personal Application

- Have you been baptized? When? If you were baptized as a believer, what was the effect of the baptism on your Christian life (if any)? If you were baptized as an infant, what effect did the knowledge of your baptism have in your own thinking when you eventually learned that you had been baptized as an infant?
- What aspects of the meaning of baptism have you come to appreciate more as a result of reading this chapter (if any)? What aspects of the meaning of baptism would you like to see taught more clearly in your church?

- When baptisms occur in your church, are they a time for rejoicing and praise to God? What do you think is happening to the person being baptized at that moment (if anything)? What do you think should be happening?
- Have you modified your own view of infant vs. believer baptism as a result of reading this chapter? In what way?
- How can baptism be an effective help to evangelism in your church? Have you seen it function in this way?

c. "*The Lord's Supper*", Bible Doctrine chap. 28

Review Questions

- Why is baptism only observed only once by each believer while the Lord's Supper is observed repeatedly throughout the believer's life?
- Name at least four things symbolized by the Lord's Supper.

- Respond to the following points of the Roman Catholic view of transubstantiation:
 1. The bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper actually become the body and blood of Christ.

 2. The Mass is in some sense a repetition of the death of Christ and a real sacrifice.

- In the view held by most of Protestantism (outside of Lutheranism), what relationship do the elements of the Lord's Supper have with the body and blood of Christ? In this view, in what way is Christ said to be present in the Lord's Supper?

- Who should participate in the Lord's Supper? Why is self-examination for the participant in the Lord's Supper important?

Questions for Personal Application

- What things symbolized by the Lord's Supper have received new emphasis in your thinking as a result of reading this chapter? Do you feel more eager to participate in the Lord's Supper now than before you read the chapter? Why?

- In what ways (if any) will you approach the Lord's Supper differently now? Which of the things symbolized in the Lord's Supper is most encouraging to your Christian life right now?

- What view of the nature of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper have you been taught in your church previously? What is your own view, now?
- Are there any broken personal relationships that you need to make right before you come to the Lord's Supper again?
- Are there areas where your church needs to do more teaching about the nature of the Lord's Supper? What are they?

3. Scripture Memory Verses

Ephesians 4:11-13 ¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, ¹ to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for¹ you. Do this in remembrance of me."² ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

4. Assignment for Next Time

Read chapters 29-30 in Bible Doctrine. Next meeting is _____.