

Theme: A sacrament is a special symbol given by God to His people that, when received in faith, serves as a sign and seal of His promises to us, functions as a means of grace to strengthen us, and through which we testify of our faith in Him and His promises.

I. Intro - The Sacraments

- A. Strange ancient rituals - water baptism and the Supper
- B. Why do we do these? What is a Sacrament?

II. Understanding A 'Sacrament'

A. Defining the word 'sacrament'

A sacrament is a special symbol given by God to His people that, when received in faith, serves as a sign and seal of His promises to us, functions as a means of grace to strengthen us, and through which we testify of our faith in Him and His promises.

1. We refer to these special symbols as sacraments, not ordinances.
2. Sacraments are special symbols that unite us to the reality they represent
 - a. There are many symbols, but these are unique
 - b. These symbols actually convey the thing they symbolize

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a **participation** in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a **participation** in the body of Christ? 1 Corinthians 10:16

 1. At the Table, we participate with the Reality behind the symbols - the Body and Blood of Christ
 2. This is not just an ordinary symbol - it actually links us with the reality behind the sign.

Or don't you know that all of us who were **baptized into Christ Jesus** were **baptized into his death**?⁴ We were therefore **buried with him through baptism into death** in order that, just as Christ was **raised** from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Romans 6:3-4

1. In baptism, we are linked with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection!
2. This is not just an ordinary symbol - it actually links us with the reality behind the sign.

B. Sacraments are given to the Church by God

A sacrament is a special symbol **given by God to His people** that, when received in faith, serves as a sign and seal of His promises to us, functions as a means of grace to strengthen us, and through which we testify of our faith in Him and His promises.

1. Sacraments are given by God

And he **received the sign of circumcision**, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised... Romans 4:11

- a. Abraham did not create the idea of circumcision - he received it from God as a command to follow.
- b. We don't create the sacraments - God does!

2. Sacraments are given by God to His people

- a. Circumcision was given to Abraham as part of His covenant with God.
- b. The sacraments are not for humans in general, but rather for the people of God. Circumcision was given to mark off the people of God from others.
- c. After Hours - Why we believe there are only 2 sacraments for the Church in the New Testament - water baptism and the Lord's Supper

III. The Sacraments In the Life of A Believer

- A. The sacraments are signs and seals of God's promises
A sacrament is a special symbol given by God to His people that, when received in faith, **serves as a sign and seal of His promises to us**, functions as a means of grace to strengthen us, and through which we testify of our faith in Him and His promises.
1. Paul uses this language to refer to circumcision
And he received **the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith** while he was still uncircumcised. Romans 4:11
 - a. Circumcision was an external sign and seal of God's promise that Abraham's faith was counted as righteousness.
 - b. Sacraments are visible signs and seals of the invisible work God has promised to do for His people.
 2. The primary Person working in the sacraments is not the believer but God!
 3. Water baptism and the Lord's Supper are not primarily about my promise to God, but rather His promises to me!
 4. In both water baptism and at the Lord's Table, I am responding in faith and giving public testimony that I am part of God's people, but that is secondary! The primary thing in both is God's promise and work!
- B. Sacraments must be received in faith by the believer
A sacrament is a special symbol given by God to His people that, **when received in faith**, serves as a sign and seal of His promises to us, functions as a means of grace to strengthen us, and through which we testify of our faith in Him and His promises.

1. The focus in Romans 4:11-13 is receiving by faith
And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by **faith** while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who **believe** but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. ¹² And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the **faith** that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. ¹³ It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by **faith**. Romans 4:11-13
 - a. Faith/belief is mentioned 4 times in 3 verses!
 - b. v12 - the sign and seal is of no value apart from faith
2. The only way we receive from God is by faith!
For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Hebrews 4:2
 - a. The Israelites delivered from Egypt who did not have faith did not receive the Gospel given to them!
 - b. Even the Gospel itself is of no value to me if I do not receive it by faith!
 - c. Those Israelites passed through the Red Sea of baptism and received the Passover and manna, but did not receive in faith received nothing from God's work! (see 1 Corinthians 10:1-5)
 - d. Water baptism and the Supper are only effective for those who receive them in faith!

C. Sacraments are a means of grace to strengthen us

A sacrament is a special symbol given by God to His people that, when received in faith, serves as a sign and seal of His promises to us, **functions as a means of grace to strengthen us**, and through which we testify of our faith in Him and His promises.

1. The sacraments are not just rituals - they actually strengthen believers in their walk with God because they unite us to Christ!
2. In water baptism, we are united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection to empower us in our struggle against sin so we can walk in new life
Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into his death**?⁴ We were therefore **buried with him through baptism** into death in order that, just **as Christ was raised** from the dead through the glory of the Father, **we too may live a new life**. Romans 6:3-4
 - a. Water baptism is not a mere ritual - it unites us to Christ in reality
 - b. Baptism strengthens us in our struggle against sin so that we might live as the people of God!
3. At the Lord's Table, we are united to Christ's body and blood to strengthen us spiritually
Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks **a participation in the blood of Christ**? And is not the bread that we break **a participation in the body of Christ**? 1 Corinthians 10:16
 - a. The Lord's Supper is not a mere ritual - the bread and cup actually unite us to Christ's Body and blood, His saving life and death for us!
 - b. At the Table, the Holy Spirit freshly unites us to Christ to give us strength for our journey.

D. Sacraments allow us to testify of our faith

A sacrament is a special symbol given by God to His people that, when received in faith, serves as a sign and seal of His promises to us, **functions as a means of grace to strengthen us**, and **through which we testify of our faith in Him and His promises**.

1. The word "sacramentum" originally referred to a soldier's vow of obedience.
2. Water baptism especially is the initial act by which we testify that we are followers of Jesus and members of His Church.
Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6:12
 - a. I think the good confession was originally made at baptism, as witnesses watched Timothy profess his faith in Jesus.
 - b. When we are baptized, and each time we come to the Table, we are making a public profession of our faith in Christ.
3. Once again, this is a response to the primary aspect of the sacraments, which is God's pledge to us!

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Experiencing and receiving God's grace through the sacraments
 1. We saw this in the water baptisms today!
 2. All believers are now invited to experience and receive this at the Lord's Table!
- B. The Lord's Table

1. 1 Corinthians 10:16
2. The Lord's Sacramental Table
3. Come and be strengthened!

Understanding the Sacraments

Romans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; Romans 6:3-4

January 11, 2026

Water baptisms & Communion

Numbers 6:24-26

Teaching keywords: Sacrament; water baptism; Lord's Supper; catechism

The LORD bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. Romans 4:11

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Romans 6:3-4