

Church Life

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Preacher: BK Smith

- [0 : 0 0] Good morning, everyone. Welcome to this Worship Sunday. Thank you for being here. I appreciate guests, visitors who are here supporting their loved ones to be baptized today.
- ! It is a great day in the life of the church. Now, before I kind of get to our text, and our text is going to be found in Acts 2. If you want to turn there just ahead of time, Acts 2.
- I'm going to tell you something, and you might call me a liar. You might say you don't believe me, you don't agree with me, but I'm going to tell you it really is true.
- It's summertime. As of yesterday, it became officially summer. I know. You're going to check your watches, your phones. It's true.
- It is July 22nd, and... What? Can some... Just one person talk? I can't... July 22nd, is it not?
- [1 : 1 3] June 22nd. What am I talking about? I really want summer to be here, so I'm fast-forwarding to July. Anyway. So anyway, we're kind of going to get into our... It's a little bit of a shift in church life during summertime.
- So I thought I would just have a little bit of a church life talk, just to kind of let you know what's going to happen during the summer, and what's going to be happening in the fall. A lot of times, people think that there's a bit of a slowdown for church life in summer.
- And there is. There's vacation time. We, as pastors, will be taking it different weeks, various times. We will be stepping back from our study in the Book of Romans till the fall.
- But this summer, I just kind of want to introduce what will happen, just so you can look forward to those events. So Pastor Dave and Pastor David will each be presenting each a mini-series of what God has been working on their hearts to present to us.
- We're also going to have several guest speakers, both of which you will be familiar with, which I'm excited about. That will be speaking here both in July and August. And in August, the second weekend of August, we are going to be hosting Carl and Joanna Hargrove.
- [2 : 3 4] If you don't know them, he is one of the pastors at Grace Community Church under the ministry of John MacArthur. And he visited us last week, so he's coming back this week.
- And we're doing kind of a mini-conference. It's not going to be that arduous. There will be a few evenings. But we've asked him to speak about what it is to live as men and women for Christ.
- In this day and age. So essentially, we're asking him to address the issue of what is biblical masculinity and what is biblical femininity according to the Word of God.
- So they're going to be doing several sessions. Joanna is a gifted speaker. There will be some sessions just with her and the women, Carl, the guys, and they'll be coming together. So we're looking forward to that being a wonderful time of fellowship.
- Now, one of the things, as you guys know, with the merge between Grace Church on 99 and us that happened in March, we've been kind of welding the teams together, coming together as elders, planning vision.

[3 : 40] And one of the reasons why we really believed that this was led by God is we believe that together we can fulfill God's purposes better, if not just fulfill them.

There were certain limitations with some of our giftings. But I believe now, just with our elder team and the gifts that those who've been coming over to, from Grace Church of 99, really helps us to establish our purpose.

And our purpose is to know Christ and make him known. Amen? That is what God's calling is. So there's not only just preaching, but we've got teaching.

But we have this mission, which is to glorify God by making more and better followers of Jesus Christ. That's really the underlining fact of Jesus' call to us in Matthew 28.

So during the summer, part of the work in the background is getting ready. And one of the big things that we're doing is we're kind of relaunching our growth group ministry, if you remember from a couple of years ago.

[4 : 49] But there's going to have a little bit more teeth to it. We're also developing not only the growth group ministry, which is a curriculum based on the pulpit series, but it also comes with daily devotionals and Bible readings to beef up that teaching.

Because we really believe as we come together as children of God, under God's word and working it out together, that is both making disciples and being disciplined at the same time.

So one of our goals is also within our body is to be known and loved in the life of the church. Amen? It's too easy to come, hear a message, and then disappear for a week.

Come back, kind of show up, have a coffee, talk with someone. And we know some of us have been able to create relationships through that. But our desire is to create relationships where we have this community.

We know that there is a group of people that know our needs, our concerns, and are actively praying for us. It's pretty great, right? And we know we want to do it, and we want to do it right.

[6 : 02] And I really believe, so Pastor Corrente David, he's kind of taken the lead on that, pulling that through. It's going to be leadership development helping us grow to accomplish that task.

So that's kind of what's going on for the summer as we prepare in the background. And we get, I hate saying it, but the fall does happen after summer, right?

Unfortunately. But we want to be prepared. We want to be proper ministers of the opportunities that the Lord Jesus Christ has given us. So obviously today is a day of celebration.

And before we get into that, I'm going to kind of cover a couple of topics today. And we're going to basically be looking at the flow of church life.

I've gotten a lot of questions over the last couple of years. People have asked questions about baptism, membership, communion. What do those all mean and how they come together in the life of the church?

[7 : 08] So this morning, that's kind of what I would like to address. But before I get there, I want to take this time to pray. Pray for us. Pray for the summer, the work that's going on.

And as we look forward to the fall, I'm praying that many of you want to be a part of the work that God's doing here. And that you have these gifts.

And not only do you want to learn, you want to give. You want to give your time. You see this as an opportunity to bless this body with the unique gifts that God has given you. And you've heard me say this.

In fact, when you come here and you take from the gifts, from the music gifts, the preaching, the praying and all that. But you don't give us your gifts.

You're actually ripping me off. You're ripping us off. You've got these gifts that God has given you. And we want to give you that opportunity to use those gifts in the body life of the church.

[8 : 06] So let me pray. Dear, holy, heavenly Father. We just stand in awe of you. We stand in thanks that you have created this church, this body life, this wonderful place where we come to know you.

We come to be known. We come to have our hearts exposed by the truth of your word. We come here to be challenged by our friends who call us to holiness.

Who love us when we are weak and we are feeling down. We give you thanks for our friends that show up at our door with flowers and dinners because we're going through hard times.

Father, for many of the families here, these seasons sometimes don't last for a quote-unquote true season, but sometimes they last for years.

There's heartaches. There's suffering. They're just kind of hanging on. Father, I really pray that as we develop this growth group ministry, that we will be far more effective in multiplying the gifts that we have.

[9 : 25] We pray that these gifts will resonate in the hearts of those who are called to serve, are called to freely give of their gifts. And also for those seasons where we radically need to be ministered to.

Where we need the errands as Moses did to raise his arms when he prayed. Father, I pray that sometimes we just simply need people to pray for us because we're exhausted.

Father, I pray that just through this process that you will be with us as pastors and elders. As we go where you're calling us to.

We really believe that's where you're leading us to. Father, this isn't our vision on how to build a church. This is your vision of how to be the church.

So God, we give you thanks. And this morning, we give you thanks for the testimonies we're going to hear today. And witness these baptisms of those who've been called by you.

[10 : 31] We rejoice that friends and family are here to see this event in the life of a believer. So Father, as we walk through the text, I pray that you'd give us understanding.

May you give my voice clarity. That I would never misrepresent your word, your intention. And I pray that this would truly be a spiritual time.

We ask these things in your most holy and precious name. Amen. So like I said, this is a day of celebration. So I thought I would use this also as a time to bring some clarity.

So this morning, what we're going to be witnessing is four people are going to step into the waters of baptism. Of the group, some are newer in their walk with Jesus.

And others have walked with him for decades. But none of them have made this step. But this morning, all of them are obeying Jesus Christ and declaring publicly, I belong to Jesus.

[11 : 38] Now I know there's some questions. If you are unchurched or you come from a different type of church or background, you might have some questions. You might be asking, what exactly are they doing?

What is the big deal to this baptism things? Others might be thinking, hey, I believe in Jesus, but I haven't been baptized.

Should I be? Others still might be asking, how does this baptism thing relate to belonging to a church?

How does it fit into membership? And what does it have to do with communion? So this morning, I want to walk through what the Bible says about the progression of the Christian's growth in the church.

And I want to present to you, not according to tradition, not based on denominational preference. Obviously, we're a Baptist church. I'm not teaching these things because we're a Baptist church.

[12 : 39] I'm teaching these things because I believe they're biblical. That is the bottom line. I want to look at what God has to say about these in God's Word.

So basically, I'm going to give you a brief outline of what's going to happen. We're going to look at what the four-step journey of the Christian life is in the church. The first step is called salvation.

What it means to be born again by faith in Jesus Christ. The second step would be baptism. The public act of obedience, which identifies you with Jesus and with the church.

The third step will be belonging. We're going to look at how we're called to be committed in fellowship to one another in the local church. And the fourth step is communion.

What does it mean to share the Lord's table as a part of God's body? So let me say this plainly.

[13 : 44] You don't start with baptism. You don't start with the table. Everything begins with Jesus Christ. Amen? Everything begins with the work of Jesus Christ.

And once you belong to him, you show it by going into the water. And it's not something you do privately. It's not something you do quietly. But it's something that you do publicly.

It's interesting. I was able to plant a church, God be praised, back in the late 2000s. And there was one family. They were so, so excited to be a part of our church.

And they kind of read our doctrine of faith. And it talked about being members. You needed to be baptized. So they all rushed out to the ocean and all baptized themselves. And came back.

And, you know, they were so keen. They were so excited about being a part of this church. It was a sweet and powerful moment. But it still didn't fully align with what the Bible teaches about baptism and church life.

[14 : 45] So once you're a part of the family, you sit down with the family and you share a meal that declares we are one in Christ.

Now, if I've said anything that sounds unfamiliar or it's pushing against your sentiments or what you've been taught, that's okay. I'm all right with that. But I'm going to ask you to do something.

I'm going to ask you to don't shut me down. I want you to lean in. And I want you to open your Bibles. And I want you to see it for yourself. Because what we're doing is we're looking at a text when the gospel was first preached in Acts 2 and the Holy Spirit was forming the church.

And I want you to pay attention to a specific question they ask, which is found in Acts 2, verse 37. The simple question is, brothers, what shall we do?

Essentially, they're asking as this church started to explode, they're asking the question, where do I go from here? What does it look like now that I'm a Christian?

[15 : 55] How do I obey? What does this mean? And these are some of the questions that I'm hoping to answer for you this morning.

Where do we go from here? So the first point that I have for you in this sermon of the four points is we are to be saved by faith alone.

Faith is not something we generate in ourselves. Faith is a work of God. As we've seen in the book of Romans, everything starts with salvation.

Before baptism, before church membership, before communion, you need a new life with Jesus Christ. And if you're here today and you're kind of unfamiliar, on our website, and we're on Apple Podcasts, I just did a three-part series on Romans chapter 3, verses 9 to 20.

It clearly expounds what man's condition is before and why we can't come to Christ on our own. Basically, we need Jesus to have Jesus.

[17 : 01] Amen? We need him. Now notice in the text in Acts 39, it says, Now this is Peter preaching. It says, Now when they heard Peter, they were cut to the heart.

It's a huge statement. They weren't moved by Peter's emotional appeal. They weren't drawn in by the music of the worship team.

They were cut to the heart. That means they were convicted. They understood the message that Peter preached was true.

And that is something that the Holy Spirit does in our moment. That's the moment of realization that says, I am a sinner. I need a Savior.

And Jesus is Lord. That's where this all begins. In John 3, Jesus said, You must be born again.

[18 : 05] It didn't matter how religious you were. It did not mean how moral you were. It did not mean that you were attending church. Jesus clearly states, You must be born again.

And here's the thing about the Christian life. You don't start the Christian life by cleaning yourself up. Right? Because the Bible actually talks about that all our works are like filthy rags.

And one might say, You know what? My bad works, BK, my evil works, they are dirty. They're horrible. Of course not. But what if I told you, Your good works are just as filthy as your bad works.

That God is so perfect. And if you guys have ever been in a mechanic shop, you know what a mechanic's rag is, right? I grew up with a cousin who was quite a few years older than me. And he would have me come and visit him in the garage.

In the garage as a six-year-old kid running around. That was the dirtiest place in the world, right? You'd grab a rag thinking you were cleaning yourself up, and you're just spreading more grease all over you.

[19 : 08] That's what he's talking about. That you can't clean yourself up. You're just spreading it around. See, you don't start the Christian life by signing up.

You start it by being made alive through faith in Jesus Christ. For by grace you have been saved through faith.

It is a gift of God. It is not the result of works. So put it plainly, faith is the root.

Baptism is the fruit. Salvation is the cause. Baptism is the effect. Christ saves. Water does not.

Salvation is a spiritual work where Jesus Christ takes my stone heart and replaces it with the heart of flesh. That's the imagery that is used in the Old Testament.

[20 : 12] But let me tell you about the people who are getting baptized this morning. Every single one of them has attested to a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

You will hear them testify that some sooner than later that Jesus is their Lord. Make no mistakes.

They are not perfect. Nor are you. They are the work that God has done in them is not finished at baptism. It continues.

But here's three things that they are. They are forgiven. They are sealed by the Holy Spirit, which means their salvation is guaranteed.

And they are new creations. Romans 10.9, Paul reminds us, if you confess with your mouth that the Lord Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart, you will be saved.

[21 : 16] That is why we do not baptize babies in our church. Not because we don't love children, but because baptism, we believe, is for believers.

Regeneration first. Even we get kind of nervous when some of the kids will start confessing Jesus Christ at a young age, but we're not sure if they truly understand it.

But we believe that children can't believe before they actually hear the gospel. And we read in scripture, every baptism in scripture follows personal faith.

Now, I know some of you come from traditions that baptize infants. Maybe you were raised that way or you embrace covenant theology. And I want you to hear, we love you.

We're thankful that you are here. But this isn't about a salvation issue. We believe this is a church life issue. And still we practice believers baptism because the New Testament consistently shows faith first, then water, conviction, then confession, then immersion.

[22 : 29] Now, before I move away from salvation, my question is, are you born again? I'm not asking you if you go to church.

I'm not asking you if you believe in God or you have positive thoughts about God. I'm not even asking if you believe Jesus is real.

My question to you this morning is, have you trusted Jesus with your life? Have you repented and believed the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Because you cannot take any steps until you've taken this first step of belief.

So before we talk about baptism, church membership or communion, the first place we need to come to is the cross. See, the cross is the place where Jesus Christ died for our sins, our unrighteousness.

[23 : 32] It is the place where Jesus Christ willingly took our sin and gives us ours. It's the place where Jesus died for your sin and for my sin.

And then he rose for your new life. If I have one thing that you can take away from this morning is I pray that you would turn from sin, you would turn to Jesus, and that you would be saved today.

Now I want to move on to baptism. You have the text, it's up there. So the question is, what comes after salvation?

What's the first thing a new believer is commanded to do? One, it's not joining a ministry. Two, it's not signing up for a class. Three, and this may surprise some people, it's not to take communion.

It is to get baptized. Acts 2.38, repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.

[24 : 47] 2.41, so those who received the word were baptized. So they gave him the command and they obeyed him at that moment of Pentecost. That's the pattern.

Faith, baptism. Now we've got several points on baptism. First point. It is the first step of obedience, but I want you to understand it doesn't save you.

Baptism does not save you. But it's not optional either. Jesus was baptized not for personal cleansing, but he was baptized to fulfill all righteousness.

And the command of Jesus Christ is for us to follow him. That baptism is not a graduation ceremony, that I'm living a certain life and I now go get baptized because I now consider myself good or mature.

Baptism is actually the starting line. And here's the thing. It's not a private confession or a private expression. It's a public declaration.

[26 : 00] If Jesus is your Lord, baptism is your yes, sir. If Jesus is your Lord, baptism is your yes, sir.

Now let me tell you what baptism does. First, baptism unites us not only with Christ, but with his people. Romans 6, 3, 4 says, all of us were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into his death.

Galatians 3, 27, and many of you were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. 1 Corinthians 12, 13, for in one spirit, we were all baptized into one body.

Now Paul is not simply talking about someone who just got wet, right? They just didn't have a bath. He's talking about someone who's met Jesus, believes in the gospel, and is now publicly marked as one of his people.

The early church fathers within that first centuries of the church understood that when Paul talks about, a lot of people say, well, they're talking about the spiritual baptism.

[27 : 13] And he is, but it's linked to the physical. The idea that we would not be baptized was an outside thought within the early church.

And it's not just symbolic. It's actually rich with power and identity. You're going to see them as they're going to go down into the water.

It's the image of being buried with Christ. And they're going to come out of the water, raised to walk in a new life.

It's the line in the sand. It simply says, I belong to Jesus. I'm not ashamed.

I'm all in. So not only that, we understand that baptism is the doorway to the truth. If you look at Acts 2, 41, those who received his word were baptized and then were added.

[28 : 18] There were added. They weren't added to the church before baptism. They were added to the church after baptism. If you actually study her church history, when Rome was persecuting the church and they knew you weren't baptized, they'd leave you alone.

You could say, I'm a Christian. I made a profession in Christ. But if you had not publicly declared that declaration in baptism, they wouldn't bother you. Because even the Romans understood a real believer is baptized.

That's how serious this is. You see, there was no category for an unbaptized believer casually hanging around the church.

So if you believe in Jesus but haven't been baptized, you're actually standing in the doorstep of obedience. But you're not in. It's like you're looking in the window in the door.

You feel like you're apart but you're actually not in. What happens is it moves from I believe in Jesus to I belong to Jesus.

[29 : 27] You with me on that? Now there's basically three barriers to baptism. Top three that I'm going to give you. One, lack of understanding. A lot of you have not experienced this type of teaching which teaches on baptism.

Some think baptism is optional or symbolic. But in the New Testament, we read that it's immediate and it's expected. The two, the second barrier to baptism is there's a fear of going public.

There's a fear of going public. And I understand for shy or anxious people, baptism can feel absolutely overwhelming. As an extrovert, I don't get that but I get it.

Some people are introverts. I get it. But here's the thing. But going public with your faith is a part of following Jesus. It's hard.

But here's the thing. When you go public, you're going public with people who love you. So poor, you've been pouring themselves into your life if you grew up in the church. This is the safe place.

[30 : 38] And three, sometimes we run into cultural or family pressure. I've seen people from different traditions, whether it be Catholic, Orthodox, even Muslims.

Their adult baptism is viewed as a betrayal of what happened. And that pressure is real. But Christ always calls us to follow him.

Some might say, but I was baptized as a baby. And I want to let me speak gently and clearly on this. If your parents baptized you as an infant, praise the Lord.

They meant well. They loved you. They wanted you to be a part of God's family. They are attesting that they want to raise you in the faith and that is good.

But the baptism that we're talking about in Scripture follows personal faith. We never see non-believers baptized. We only see those who repent and believe the gospel.

[31 : 40] That is why we practice and call it believer's baptism. Not to divide, but to obey. But here's my invitation. Don't reject your upbringing, but fulfill it.

Fulfill it. Seal your parents' intention with your own confession. Step into the water, not just because they hoped you would, but because you now believe in Jesus.

Amen? And here's the last point on baptism. baptism. Baptism is bold. Baptism is bold.

It's public. It's meant to be. You're declaring, Jesus is Lord and I'm not going back. To your family, your friends, your community, you're saying, this is who I am.

It's not a ritual. It's not about feeling ready. It's about obedience. So my challenge or my encouragement to you, if you believe, be baptized.

[32 : 57] Not later, not someday, now. Because you know who is now? Jesus is Lord now. And if you want to talk about it and you're convicted, guess what?

We're having another baptism next Sunday. We're capitalizing Baptists in Squamish Baptist Church apparently. Right? So I'd encourage you to talk to me, Pastor Dave or Pastor David.

Talk to Andy, Clay, even any of the worship guys will talk to you about this kind of stuff. So I want to move into the third aspect which is called church membership.

And I want to keep walking this path. First, salvation, you're made new in Christ. Then, it's followed baptism. You go public and identify with Jesus and his church.

And next, you join yourself to a local church. Notice Acts 2.41 it says, So those who received his word were baptized and they were added that day about 3,000 souls.

[34 : 00] Now I want to point out that's not poetry, that's clarity. They were counted. They were known. They were committed.

How do I know that? Acts 2.42. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

They just didn't keep watching Peter online. They didn't drift away into private spirituality. They joined a church because that's where they belonged.

Now, some people are going to say, well, church membership, is it biblical? And they argue that because I don't see those words in the Bible.

Well, there's a lot of words that we believe in. Trinity is one such word that is not in the Bible that we believe. And the truth is you won't find the word membership in the New Testament, but you are going to find the concept of membership everywhere in the New Testament.

- [35 : 12] 1 Corinthians 5 speaks of removing someone from the church. And my question is, how do you remove someone who is not considered in? You with me? Can't move you out if you weren't in.

In Hebrews 13, 17, it tells us to, there's a command for elders to watch over your souls. Now, who are they accountable to?

Just random attendees? Like, honestly, the example is, if you know The Rock, Glenn, the pastor there, and their elders are responsible for the souls that are members at The Rock.

I don't have authority over them. I love them and I can speak to them as brothers and sisters in Christ, but ultimately I don't have that authority over them.

But it's those that come under and trust us as shepherds. That's why we belong. And you make a promise to pray for us.

- [36 : 14] And you covenant with us to be a part of this church life. And then obviously the big text, text, it's Acts 6, which shows deacons being appointed to serve specific people.

That communicates to us that there was structure and it was seen as a family. So church membership just isn't tradition, it's actually obedience.

It's saying, these are my people. I'm theirs believers and we are Christ's. Now why does this matter?

If I had grown up in the church that I grew up, this would never have been asked the need to talk about church membership. It was all assumed. But we live in a day, a time today, where there's a lot of believers are what's called spiritual freelancers.

Float from church to church, they attend but never really commit. They consume sermons but avoid accountability.

- [37 : 26] This might surprise you for me to say this, but just that having been discipled in John MacArthur's ministry, you don't know, his radio ministry is worldwide.

There's literally almost a million people every week download his sermons all around the world. So that's a lot of people consuming. And it hasn't happened here but in some of my other churches people show up, hey, I'm all for you.

I love John MacArthur, I listen to Grace Q. And for us who are graduates, we always say that's a red flag. And I'll tell you why. Because often they've been consuming these sermons but they've never been discipled.

They hear a sermon that they really like and they hone in on that sermon but they forget the 30 other preceding sermons to that sermon. So they end up becoming pretty arrogant, they tend to be legalistic and they think they're the boss because they're being shepherded by someone who lives 2,000, I don't even know how far it is, 2,000 miles, kilometers down the coast.

No, no, that's never how the church was designed. It was designed where you were to be shepherded by local shepherds who can know you, love you, care for you, disciple you.

- [38 : 47] You see, let me be clear. The New Testament Christianity never teaches that you can be a Christian outside the church. It doesn't exist.

It never was and it never will. The early church wasn't built on personal convenience but the early church was based on shared conviction.

This church isn't a place that you go to on Sunday mornings. It's actually a people that you commit to. It's a people that you serve.

It's a leadership that you trust and it's a mission that you share. So from baptism we go to belonging.

They were baptized and added. They just didn't believe. They just didn't have a bath. They were added to the church. Baptism says, I belong to Christ and membership says, I belong to Christ's people.

[39 : 55] The thing is, we're not asking for perfection. You don't have to be perfect to belong here. In fact, you don't need to be perfect to even have a gift. We're asking you to participate in the life of the body.

You see, the local churches where disciples grow, gifts are used, sin is confronted and the mission is launched. Which is why one of our key goals is to get every person plugged into growth groups in the fall.

We believe that these smaller expressions of the church were real community and discipleship where you can be known, loved, and care for. Now you might be thinking, can't I be a Christian without all that?

You can. You can be saved without joining a church. just like you can be married and living in a different house from your wife. Is that obedience?

Is that Christ's design for the marriage? Of course not. It's not even close. The church is called the body of Christ.

[41 : 02] The fact is, you can't follow the head while cutting yourself off from the body. The head, sorry. Jesus didn't save you to walk alone.

He saved you to walk with a people. And in the New Testament, that people is the local church. With baptism, you go from me to we.

Amen? We go from me to we. To where we move to me and Jesus to we and Jesus. Now, when you're ready for the next step, not just into the water, not just into the church, but now to the table.

I'm going to talk about briefly communion because this has been a subject that's come up. But before I go any further, for those of you who are going to be baptized, now's the time for you to leave, get changed.

So you can use the washrooms and then come meet in the back room over here. So the four of you that are getting baptized today, please do so.

[42 : 14] So far, so here's the journey, right? It begins with salvation by grace through faith. It is followed by obedience through baptism, which is public identification with Christ and his church.

And then the membership is being committed belonging to a local body. And now we come to the Lord's Supper or communion. So you might be asking me, why this order?

Why does this church practice communion after baptism? Here's a question many people ask. Why does this church ask people to be baptized before communion?

It's a fair question. I think it's a vital one. And here's your answer. Because you don't eat at the family table until you've entered the family through Christ, being marked as a follower through baptism and joined with his people in fellowship.

Put it this way. This is the way Pastor Dave presented it. You don't celebrate the anniversary until you've been married. In many churches, this order was once assumed.

[43 : 30] Many churches, the one I grew up in, you were required membership before they would even allow you to the communion table. And to become a member, you must first be baptized.

That's not legalism. That's the biblical order. Now, of course, we allow other people who come, and that's why we talk about this when we do communion. If you're a member of another church and you're a believer in Jesus Christ, you're free to participate.

I believe the Holy Spirit is going to work on you. I don't feel, I've got to ask for your membership papers in order to take communion. But it's a serious thing. Because communion isn't casual.

Because what Jesus Christ did on the cross for us wasn't casual. It says, the cup of blessing, it is not a participation in the blood of Christ.

This bread, a participation in the body of Christ. It's not to be seen as a mid-service snack.

[44 : 41] It's a declaration of unity with Christ and his body. That's why Paul gives such serious warnings. He says, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty.

Verse 28, let a person examine himself. There's a seriousness to it.

anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. Like I said, Paul isn't demanding perfection because the truth is if perfection were the standard, the bread would be there forever.

But Paul does demand reverence. Come rightly knowing what the meal means, who it's for, and who you're joined to.

You see, it's not just Jesus and me. And this is where people often go wrong. We live in a very individualistic society, make a personal decision for Jesus.

[45 : 58] Communion isn't about a personal moment with Jesus. It's about Jesus and us. Amen? I'm going to tell you, I've lived long enough to see heartbreaking stories.

And I remember one was a guy in university I was doing an outreach with Campus Crusade and he was a very good friend. And he comes, he hears the testimonies and he confessed that he made a decision for Christ.

Basically, there was an outreach when he was in high school. They showed up, did a presentation in the gym. It was some athletic competition. He made a decision for Jesus and they left the town and no one directed him to a church.

I remember just weeping with him as he expressed how lost he was for those three years of high school, not knowing what to do. He was a kid from a non-Christian background with no church to care for him and love him.

And I'm going to tell you, he was not a friend of the gospel at that point. He was bitter and angry. You see, it's not I'm saved, it's I'm saved, I'm baptized and I belong to this body.

[47 : 15] Notice Acts 2.42, it says they devoted themselves to the breaking of the bread. Who did? Those who believed, those who were baptized and those who were added.

there's no example in the New Testament of someone taking communion who hasn't first believed and been baptized. Please don't misunderstand me, David or Dave, as being a bunch of legalists.

We're not, we're not trying to add requirements to the table. We're just trying to follow the biblical pattern. Baptism before the bread.

we don't do it to exclude, we do it to protect. We do it to be biblical. We never ask, are you good enough?

Because the truth is you're not. Guess who isn't? Me. We don't ask, are you perfect? Because only Christ is. But we do ask, have you trusted in Christ?

[48 : 24] Have you been baptized and have you joined his people? And if not, the table's not yet for you. But hear me when I say this, I'm not rejecting you, I'm inviting you.

This is your invitation. If you believe but have never been baptized, your next step isn't the bread, it's the water. If you've been baptized but never joined a church, your next step is to belong.

When you're part of this family, come to this table hungry, humbled, and grateful. Because the table is for the family.

It's not evangelistic, it's not a sentimental ritual, but it is essentially a family meal where the people of God declare we were saved by Jesus, we are united in him, we belong to each other, we remember his death, and we proclaim his return.

Hallelujah. So when you understand it, you take him that way, it's really beautiful, is it not? It's powerful.

[49 : 42] More importantly, it's biblical. So this morning I've outlined the path. This isn't a man-made system, this is not a denominational tradition.

This is God's design revealed in his word, modeled by his church. Salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone, amen. Baptism, the first act of obedience, publicly identifying with Jesus.

This is the joyful, accountable belonging to a local church, and for communion, the ongoing celebration of our unity with Christ and one another. This is what we're about to witness in these baptisms.

Four individuals who've trusted Christ, now obeying his command and joining his people. They're beginning their steps into the family, they're walking the path, and now they're ready for the journey ahead.

You know, I'm going to ask, where are you on this journey? Where are you now? Have you, one, believed in Jesus Christ? If not, come to him today.

[50 : 55] Trust him. Be saved. Call him Lord. Have you believed but never baptized? The next step isn't communion.

It's obedience. Come public with your faith. Have you been baptized but never joined a church? Maybe now it's time to commit to stop dating the bride of Christ and marry her, join the body that he died for.

And have you taken communion without the right order or understanding? My request to you is to examine yourself, return to the Lord's design with joy, not guilt.

Listen, I expect you to be a Berean. You don't believe what I'm saying? Go to God's word. Come back. Don't go what someone else is telling you. Go to scripture.

Look at Acts. Look how it flows. Look up that word baptism in your Bible. You can find all the verses. You can go on online or easy enough. Give me all the verses that speak about baptism.

[52 : 00] It'll pull them out. Look at them. Study them. Study them. Now you might ask him, what if that's me? Listen, if you're feeling challenged, I think that's a good thing.

I call that the Holy Spirit at work. It's not shame that he's bringing to you. It's grace. Jesus isn't pushing you away.

He's drawing you in. So come. Come to the cross. Come to the water. Come join the family.

And when the time is right, come to the table. Let us pray. Dear most holy, heavenly father, we give you thanks for your word.

We give you thanks for the growth of your church and what the Holy Spirit provided for us. These words written in Acts weren't purposeless. There was a purpose in them.

[53 : 02] We thank you for Paul's later explanations to us throughout the epistles and the other disciples as well. Father, we give you thanks for this church, but more importantly, I give you thanks for these four individuals who have trusted you with their faith and now want to make a public declaration of their faith, that they are being obedient.

They are turning from self and have turned towards you. And they want these people that are before us to know this great and glorious news that they are now sealed by the Holy Spirit.

They are Jesus's. They are God's children. So Father, we thank you for this word. And as we go forth, I pray that we can have constructive conversations.

I pray even if people think differently that we please let them know that we love them, we care for them. that they're always welcome here. And we want to see people continue to grow in the knowledge of you so that we as believers, as elders, can present them mature in Christ.

My heart's desire for every elder here is to be known by our chief shepherd that we have served him well and represented him well here in this flock in Squamish.

[54 : 29] Some ways it feels like the end of the world, the ends of the earth, the frontier. It's where people need to know the love and the words of Jesus so very much.

We ask these things in your most holy and wonderful and incredible name. Amen. Amen. Amen.