

# Baptism & Communion: Gospel Flags

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## Introduction – Symbols That Speak

Baptism and communion are like flags that represent something much bigger than themselves. Just as a national flag carries the meaning, history, and pride of a whole country, these two ordinances carry deep spiritual meaning. Baptism symbolizes dying with Christ and rising to new life, while communion proclaims Jesus' death until He comes again. They are given to the church to remind us of who we are and whose we are.

## Point 1 – Baptism: The Picture of New Life

Christians have sometimes disagreed about baptism. Some practice paedobaptism (infant baptism), seeing baptism as a sign like circumcision, marking children as part of the covenant community. Others, like us, practice credobaptism (believer's baptism), where baptism follows personal faith. The New Testament pattern is clear: hear the gospel, believe, then be baptized (Acts 2:38–41).

Baptism does not save us. Salvation is by grace through faith alone (Ephesians 2:8–9). We reject baptismal regeneration — the idea that baptism itself washes away sin. Instead, baptism is a powerful symbol of what God has already done through Christ: our old self is crucified with Him, we are buried with Him, and we rise to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3–5). It is also a public welcome into the family of faith — the church affirms, 'You belong to Jesus, and you belong to us.'

## Point 2 – Communion: The Picture of Ongoing Grace

If baptism is the starting line of the Christian life, communion is the family meal that nourishes us along the way. On the night before His death, Jesus gave His disciples bread and wine as a way to remember His sacrifice. Christians hold different views on what happens in communion — from transubstantiation (Catholic), to consubstantiation (Lutheran), to spiritual presence (Reformed), to the memorial view we hold.

Communion looks back to the cross, up to Christ, forward to His return, and around to the unity of the body. It is a time to examine our hearts, confess sin, and remember that we are one family because of Jesus' blood. Communion is for all believers — a regular way to proclaim the gospel and receive encouragement and strength.

## **Conclusion – Gospel Flags That Point Us to Christ**

Baptism and communion are gospel flags planted in the life of the church. They proclaim: 'This is who we are. This is whose we are.' Baptism is the public declaration that we belong to Jesus; communion is the ongoing reminder that we are sustained by Him.

If you have trusted Christ but have not been baptized, take that step of obedience. If you do not yet know Jesus, these symbols invite you to trust Him today. When you do, your sins are forgiven, and you are brought from darkness into His kingdom. Then, baptism and communion become lifelong reminders of God's grace and your new identity in Christ.

# Discussion Guide – Baptism & Communion: Gospel Flags

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*Take a moment to pray. Thank God for the gift of salvation and for the reminders of baptism and communion that point us back to Jesus.*

## **1. The Meaning of the Symbols**

Why do you think God gave us baptism and communion as visible “pictures” of the gospel instead of leaving us with only words?

*Read Romans 6:3–5 and 1 Corinthians 11:23–26.*

How do these verses help you see the beauty and seriousness of these ordinances?

## **2. Baptism – Personal & Public**

How were you taught about baptism growing up? Did today's teaching challenge or clarify any of those ideas?

If you have been baptized, what do you remember about the experience, and how does it encourage you now?

If you haven't been baptized since coming to faith, what might be holding you back from taking that step?

### 3. Communion – A Family Meal

*Paul says we should “examine ourselves” before taking communion (1 Corinthians 11:28).*

What does it look like to prepare your heart before communion — both personally and as a family?

How might remembering Christ’s death, His presence with us, and His promised return change the way we approach the Lord’s Table?

## 4. Reflection

*Both baptism and communion point us back to Jesus' finished work.*

How can these reminders help us when we feel far from God, weighed down by guilt, or discouraged by the world?

Does your baptism or communion ever feel more like a ritual than a lived reality? What can you do to help avoid these things feeling hollow or becoming ritualistic repetition?

*Take a moment to thank God for saving you — or, if you have not yet trusted Him, think about what is keeping you from making that decision.*