

# Having a Right Head and Heart Towards the Ordinances

by Mack Tomlinson

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of having a right head (correct understanding) and a right heart (proper attitude) in observing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. It highlights the need to elevate our view of these perfect ordinances given by Christ, focusing on union with Him and the atonement. The sermon warns against having a wrong heart attitude, such as trusting in the ordinances for salvation or observing them casually, and calls for a reverent, humble, and joyful observance of these sacred practices.*

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**Scripture:** Matthew 28:18, Acts 2:37, Romans 6:1, Acts 5:32, 1 Corinthians 11:23, Romans 6:3, 1 Corinthians 10:16, Colossians 2:12, Hebrews 9:14, 1 Corinthians 11:27

**Topics:** "Understanding Sacraments", "Reverence in Worship"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Good morning. Good to see you this morning. Good to be here.

Let's pray again and commit this time in God's Word to Him. Father, whenever we come to this moment, it really is the most holy time in the earth on any given Sunday when God's people would hear the voice of Christ through the Scriptures by the Spirit. So we pray that would happen this morning.

Lord, have mercy on us. Have mercy on me. Let the words of my mouth and the thoughts and motives of my mind and my heart only please You.

And as one of Your servants often prays, make this Book live to us this morning. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts to receive. This time, Lord, is Yours.

Lord Jesus, You are the head of the church. So speak to us and direct us for Your glory. Father, receive our thanks and hear our prayer because of Your Son, our Savior, we pray in His name, Amen.

These days and recent days are days where we are observing the ordinances of Christ. A few weeks ago, we observed the Lord's Supper in here in a different manner, a unique manner. Tonight, we observe the wonderful ordinance of believers' baptism.

And I believe next Sunday we have the Lord's Supper right again. Next Lord's Day, Lord's Supper. So these are days of the ordinances of Jesus Christ.

And I had this thought this morning. The perfect things that are in the earth right now are the Bible, the gathering together of the worship of God, because that's a perfect thing to do. We don't do it perfectly.

But the Bible and public worship are perfect because they're fully biblical. But another thing that's perfect in the earth are the two ordinances of the church. Baptism is perfect.

And the Lord's Supper is perfect. Ladies, have you ever cooked a perfect meal? I mean, absolutely perfect. Your husbands have thought at times, that was perfect.

The Lord's Supper is an absolutely perfect meal. And if we don't observe it that way with the right heart and a right head, we're not honoring it. Baptism is a perfect ordinance.

And it ought to be observed not only with the right head viewing it rightly, but with the right heart in observing it. So that's what I want to speak about this morning. Having a right head, that is, a right view, and a right heart, that is, a right attitude in the observance of the ordinances.

Because it doesn't matter how much I think I may know about the ordinances of Jesus Christ and the church, I could have views that are spot on as far as what the Bible teaches. But if I bring a wrong heart attitude, if I bring a heart that's lazy about observing the ordinance, that's flippant, well, you know, I didn't like, I didn't really like how they did it. Then I'm way off course from the heart of Jesus Christ because the head of the church has given the perfect ordinances.

And so we ought to observe them with the right head and a right heart. Today can be a day that you can elevate your view of the ordinances of Christ to a higher level than ever before. Because we do have familiarity.

And that means familiarity means maybe it doesn't breed contempt, but it can breed, yeah, I'm used to this. I've been to a hundred baptisms. I've observed the Lord's Supper so many times.

So you don't come with an excited, all-filled, reverent, humble, excited spirit that you get to partake again of a holy ordinance that your head, Jesus Christ, has given you as a body to observe. Our hearts ought to be in them always. So brethren, today, my desire is that we would elevate, take to another level, our view of the ordinances and our heart being right always in observing them.

So with that being said, let's read two or three passages in the New Testament just as proof text to just get these two ordinances afresh in our minds. Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Matthew 28.

You're very familiar with it. But again, familiarity, watch out. Matthew 28, verses 18 through 20.

And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go therefore and teach all nations. I think other translations read, make disciples of all nations.

Baptizing them, that is the disciples, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Acts 2. You can listen or you can turn. Peter is preaching on the day of Pentecost. And verse 37 says, now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? These are people in the process of being regenerated and converted.

They're hearing the Gospel. They're in the process of from the heart believing the Gospel. Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

One more. Romans 6.1-11. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be in the likeness of His resurrection also, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him or has been crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more.

Death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died into sin once. But in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.

Likewise, reckon yourselves also to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Having a right head, that is a right view of baptism and the Lord's Supper, but also a right heart about these Gospel observance. A right head is what we come to believe about baptism and what we come to believe about the Lord's Supper.

Our head knowledge, our belief, our theology has got to be rooted and grounded only in the Word of God, not in tradition. If tradition isn't solidly based on Scripture. But our heart observance of the ordinances becomes very practical because we can have right head knowledge, but our heart is off track because our hearts have to be engaged with the right attitude and a right spirit every time an ordinance is practiced.

Every time. Every time we have the Lord's Supper, the critical thing for any of us who come to partake of it is, is my heart right? Is my attitude right? Is my spirit right? Not just eliminating the negatives, but saying, do I have this morning humility in my heart to observe this freely unto Christ regardless of how it's being served? Do I have a right heart toward my brothers and sisters? Because if I partake and I have a wrong heart toward a brother or sister, or I have ought against someone, can I partake in faith and freedom without lovingly being right with my brothers and sisters? The observance of the ordinances has everything to do with an elevated heart attitude that's filled with love and filled with humility. The

ordinances are baptism in the Lord's Supper.

Their meaning, we're going to briefly summarize this morning on both, because some of you will joyfully be baptized tonight. And that's exciting. This is a high and a joyful day for you.

And so, some of you will next week observe the Lord's Supper for the first time as a baptized believer. Perhaps as a new believer. And so, I want us to think rightly about it in a fresh way today as to their meaning.

Who is the giver of the ordinances? Think about the glory of this. The giver of the ordinances is not the church. The giver of the ordinances is the head of the church.

The Lord Jesus Christ. He designed these perfect pictures of water and being immersed in it as a picture of our union with Him in His death and resurrection. What a picture! What a perfect gift by Christ, the head of the church, to the church.

A perfect gift. Christ is the giver of the ordinance of baptism. And He was the giver of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in the upper room.

Right? He designed it. He took the bread. He took the cup.

And He said, this bread is My body. This cup is the blood of the new covenant given for the remission of sins. So, Christ is the giver.

And that one issue alone that Christ has given the ordinances means we are observing from a perfect Savior, perfect ordinances, and every time we do them, we better make sure we're not only observing them right, we're observing them with all of our hearts in joy and in worship and in every way bringing a right heart. Or we're not observing it properly. Many believers, in my opinion, in these recent last century into this century, have a low estimation of the ordinances.

Do you have a high estimation or a low estimation of the ordinances? The giver of the ordinances is none other than your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That alone ought to elevate our estimation of the ordinances. The recipients of the ordinances is the church.

Every believer in the body of Christ, the recipient of the ordinances is the church, the body of Jesus Christ. The head gave those to the body for our good and for His glory. And they are perfect.

They are holy, perfect ordinances. And their observance and their treatment must come from a right head and a right heart. So, those of you who are being baptized tonight, I want us to think about the meaning of baptism today.

So you'll have this fresh in your minds as we come to this evening. Baptism, as we know, is a one-time ordinance. Unlike the Lord's Supper, it's a one-time, it should be.

Now, there are people in our day that have been baptized two times, three times for various reasons, erroneous reasons, and we know that. But biblically, baptism is a one-time ordinance. You see that in Acts 2. Romans 6 speaks about having been baptized.

And we know that Paul, in all likelihood, is speaking about spirit baptism. The Spirit placing us into Christ there. But Romans 6 is still a picture of the physical picture of baptism.

But the meaning of baptism is into death and out of death, into newness of life. It is a picture of union with Jesus Christ in His death and in His resurrection. The meaning of baptism is the fact that a person has come to the place where the Holy Spirit has given them a new heart.

He's taken out the heart of stone, the dead heart that loves sin, wherein sin dwells. And through the resurrection of the Spirit, through regeneration into life, out of death, they're given a new heart. And those of you who are being baptized tonight, you have been given a new heart that you never had before by the Holy Spirit.

And in that new heart came a turning from sin to God to Christ. There can be no saving faith without a repentant heart. You can't turn to God unless you turn from your sin.

Saving faith is wrapped up with a repentant faith, a repentant heart. And so, you were joined to Jesus Christ when you were regenerated and you were turned to Christ and you trusted Him by faith alone. You were placed in Him by the Holy Spirit, participating in His death because He died in your place.

You have died to the old man. And just like He was buried, your old man is buried, truly is gone, but is symbolically buried in the waters of baptism. Tonight, when you're baptized, you standing in that water is a physical picture that the person you are now or that you were is fixing to be buried and is long gone and dead.

And you will come out of that water a picture of I'm brand new. I'm a brand new creature in Christ. Not because the water washed away my sin or did anything outwardly, but because the water is only an outward picture of cleansing, of an inward transformation that the grace of God has done in your soul.

Baptism, the physical act of baptism after conversion, is a picture of the spiritual reality experience in gospel conversion. Let us be clear. This is a living experience.

And when you experience the living Christ and He makes you alive, you go into the place of baptism and a picture is taken in that moment. Baptism is a picture of what's already happened to you within. And its meaning is... the meaning of baptism is found in three words.

Union with Christ. That's what your baptism pictures. You're dead to sin and you walk to rise in newness of life.

Henceforth, you're not your own. And you follow Him as Lord. Baptism in the Bible was the public profession of faith.

That's the way people knew that you had believed the Gospel and that you were identified with the followers of Jesus Christ. One hymn writer said, no trust in water do we place. Tis but an outward sign.

The great reality is grace, the fountain blood divine. We don't place any confidence or trust in water. And those who do trust in water, whether it's paedobaptism or Baptists who think because they get immersed, somehow their sins are gone, they're going through the motions, they're taking the step of obedience, and therefore, by the fact that they were sprinkled or immersed, they were baptized, therefore they're okay, is erroneous.

It's not true. Baptism is not something the believer trusts in. Baptism is an act of obedience because they've trusted in Jesus Christ alone.

Baptism is a personal testimony. It is an enacted sermon. Tonight, those of you who will be baptized, when you're baptized, you are preaching a sermon to the world that you're a new creature.

It is a personal testimony. And it is a means of grace. Because when you obey the commands of Christ, He brings blessing.

Acts 5.32 says, God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him. So anytime you obey the commands of Jesus Christ, you should ask His blessing on you and your life and more of His Spirit because you are walking in obedience. The ordinances.

The glorious worship of God. We gather for worship. We hear the Word of God.

We pray together. We fellowship together. And we partake of the Lord's Supper and baptism together.

That's the worship of God in the New Testament and nothing else. So, for those baptismal candidates for tonight, let me just speak some personal application to you. You know what's true of you because you're being baptized tonight? Number one, you are dead to your old life and dead to sin.

That was part of your past. And that's no longer you. You have been baptized by the Spirit into Jesus Christ.

And the Holy Spirit now lives in you. And Romans 6 says at least seven times, you are dead to sin and dead to the old. The old person you were is dead.

Truth number two, you are alive now and you are to walk in newness of life as never before. Baptism is a watershed. It's a day that you, because you've been saved, you're driving a stake down, a biblical stake.

Think of the early church when they identified in baptism and they were baptized publicly. It became a sign of absolute identification with Jesus of Nazareth and this motley crew, this early cult of the followers of Jesus. You know what a cult is in the pure definition of the word? Absolute devotion to one leader.

And in that sense, Christianity is that. Absolute, exclusive devotion to one Person. And that is God in Jesus Christ.

And baptism is the public declaration of that. Because you are now free. You're free from sin's dominion.

You're free from sin's power. And in Romans 6, 1 and 2, verse 7, verse 14, and verse 18, it says you're free. It says several times you're not only dead to sin, but you're now free from the power of sin.

So you're dead, you're alive, and you're free. And you are to believe that that is true. In fact, Romans over and over says reckon yourself to be dead unto sin and alive to God.

To reckon means you are to believe that all of that is absolutely true. That you are a new creation. All things are passed away.

All has become new. And we know that baptism was a command for all believers. And we know they did it.

Even John the Baptist's ministry was a saving baptism. Mark 1, 5 says all were baptized by him and the Jordan, confessing their sins. Acts 8, concerning Philip, it says when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God in the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women.

So think of this. To withhold baptism from anyone who gives biblical evidence of being a Christian is not right. You don't need advanced sanctification to be a candidate for baptism.

You don't need perfection in areas to be a candidate for baptism. In the New Testament, there's plenty of evidence of baptism following immediately upon profession of faith. The sanctification comes continually after that.

So that's baptism. And I hope that's helpful. Let's think about the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper, unlike baptism, is not a one-time deal. It's a perpetual ordinance. Jesus said, do this always in remembrance of Me.

Paul said as often as you do this, you do proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. So this is a regular meal the church is to have together. It's a perfect meal when we observe it rightly.

The Lord's Supper is a memorial meal. The elements, the bread, and the juice are symbolic. They represent the greater spiritual realities because Jesus said, I am the bread of life.

His body wasn't physical bread. We know that's silly to think that way. We know He was speaking in pictures of spiritual reality.

The same way He did other times when He said He's the door, etc. We know that these are spiritual pictures. The bread and the cup are spiritual pictures of spiritual realities.

The Lord's Supper is a testimony meal. When we partake of it, we are by nature giving testimony that in the partaking of it, we are partaking of Christ. And indeed, when we partake of it, we should, by faith, by the Holy Spirit, partake of the grace of God that was purchased by the Gospel, that's given to us by the Holy Spirit in our hearts when we partake of the Lord's Supper.

It is not a dead ritual. We partake of Christ Himself by the Spirit when we partake of the Lord's Supper. And it is not only a memorial meal and a testimony meal, it is a celebration meal.

We are to celebrate Christ because we're observing a perfect ordinance given by a risen perfect Savior who's alive and we're partaking of Him. Therefore, it is a celebration. And this word gets into the meaning of the Lord's Supper.

Just like baptism, the meaning is our union with Christ. The Lord's Supper, the meaning is atonement, redemption. The offering of the body and the blood of Jesus Christ once and for all.

The Lord's Supper is based on the atoning, redemptive death of Jesus Christ. And that's why it's perpetual. Because all of our salvation forever is rooted in the one-time sacrificial death of the Son of God on the cross.

He died once and forever, never to be repeated. And so, when we observe the Lord's Supper, we are, the Bible tells us, we're remembering the Lord's death. We're remembering the Lord.

We're celebrating the cross. In the participation, in the partaking, in those moments, our hearts and our minds need to be elevated that as I take that bread, no matter how it's served, that's trivial, as I partake that bread, my heart should feast on Christ right then. My heart should go to Him.

My heart should love Him. My heart should rejoice over the fact that He Himself bore my sins in His body on the tree. That He laid down His body.

He gave His body as a payment for my sin. And I take that bread, and I treasure the moment that I'm remembering my Lord in His death by eating that bread. How could my heart have a lower elevation or a mediocre participation in the Lord's Supper when He's told me, do this in remembrance of me? I take that cup.

I don't care if it's wine or white grape juice or regular grape juice or what. I don't care how it's served. Brethren, if that stuff bothers us, to borrow Paul's phrase, are you not yet carnal? Because you're making much out of nothing.

If you get caught up in the trivials of how deep they took the person under the water, or if they said the right Scriptures or not, or if it was all done perfectly, or how it was served, if that is what you major on, are you not yet carnal? You're missing things a million miles if your heart isn't in the reality of what this bread and this cup means. When I take that cup, my heart should focus on the One who shed His blood and on that blood that was shed once and for all. And I partake of that cup and I drink that fruit of the vine.

And in that moment, I say, if it weren't for the blood of Jesus Christ, I would go to hell forever. Justified by the blood. Without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sins.

My heart ought to relish and treasure the symbol of that cup. And more than that, it ought to relish and treasure infinitely more the blood that was shed. And more than that, the One who shed His blood for our sins.

I write hard about the ordinances, brethren. What we believe is one thing. But how we treat the ordinances, how we speak about them, how we observe them, how we partake in the act of partaking, that's another thing altogether.

Our hearts must lead us to treat the things of God rightly and not wrongly. With the utmost reverence, humility, tenderness, love, treasuring, and exemplary attitude, there is no place in the Christian life or in Christian worship for wrong or poor observance of the things of God. Especially the two ordinances of Christ.

Because these are His ordinances, not ours. They are holy and perfect. They're not to be tampered with, mistreated, observed wrongly, observed lightly, or partaken of with a low and a poor wrong attitude.

What is a wrong heart? What would a wrong heart look like in observing the ordinances? Number one, trusting in the ordinance itself to save you. Putting any trust in the ordinance. You put trust in that bread or that drink or that water, that's a wrong heart.

Also, trusting in the act of observing it to somehow give you acceptance with God. You don't get more merit with God because you observe the Lord's Supper, right? We don't. Our merit is in Christ.

His righteousness and His alone. A wrong heart is a heart that has a casual attitude that gets used to the ordinance. It could be a shallow, lighthearted attitude.

It could be a critical eye about the details. Whether it's wine or juice, whether it's unleavened bread or saltine crackers. Well, if it's store-bought, I'm not going to partake.

If it's homemade bread, I'll partake of the Lord's Supper. Well, I don't like that. I disagree with that.

I'm not going to observe it. A right head and a wrong heart that focuses on some details is sin. That is dishonoring the ordinances.

And I would call it, if Christ is the perfect Savior who gave us perfect ordinances, if I found fault with them in any way and I have a right attitude, that is high treason against the head of the church. Pure and simple. It is observing them in an unworthy manner.

It would be better, it's wrong to not observe because you disagree with something. But it's worse to observe with a wrong heart, a wrong attitude, or a critical spirit, and you go ahead and observe the ordinance. That could be what Paul said that they did in Corinth.

You observe in an unworthy manner and you could be in danger of eating and drinking judgment unto yourself. Which happens all the time. People observe in an unworthy manner.

Brethren, the fact is, we can get loose and carnal in treating holy things wrongly. And it's a danger. The Corinthians did.

They treated each other with prejudice in the church. Some were getting drunk. They were behaving carnal and careless in observing the ordinances of Christ.

But the only approach, the holy and biblical approach towards the ordinances is this reverence, faith, humility, gratitude, awe and reverence, love and devotion and worship without any shallow familiarity or critical attitude of heart. Because we couldn't have been given two more perfect gifts by Christ to worship Him with than baptism and the Lord's Supper. And they must be observed with the utmost reverence and humility.

So my call today, I trust it's Christ's call to us as well, that when we baptize and when we observe the Lord's Supper monthly, let's elevate our views higher than ever. Let's develop and have a higher, more glorious view of these ordinances than we've ever had before. Elevate your view.

Elevate your gratitude. Elevate your humility when you partake of them. Elevate your respect and your reverence and your love for them.

Cast off any carnal judgments. Cast off any casualness or familiarity about the details because the details aren't the point. Christ is the point.

And observing the ordinance because He commanded us to is the point. And how we behave in observing them is the point as well. I mean, just think if you saw a person.

I'll just use me as an illustration. Let's say we walk out of the baptism tonight and you see me standing with David Huldender. And you pass by and you heard me say, well, you know, I don't like those baptism tanks they're using.

It's just too cramped. I didn't think Jeff lowered him deep enough in the water candidly. What if you walked by and heard me saying that? Does that honor Christ? No.

Does that honor the ordinance? No. Does that take away from the celebration of what just happened to our brethren who gloriously were able to be baptized? No. Eliminate all carnal judgments and trivial details

about these ordinances forever in your mind.

And have a high and holy and lovely view. The Lord's Supper and baptism should be the highest, holiest, most joyful, most grace-filled time ever in the worship of God by all of us. Why? Because they are perfect ordinances that are altogether glorious.

That have come to us from a glorious Savior. And we ought to observe them in a high and a holy and an increasingly pure way. And let's do that tonight.

In a moment, we're gonna sing three or four songs, I think four songs. And some of those songs have to deal with the ordinance. They deal with the ordinances.

Baptism, the Lord's Supper. As we sing these hymns, let the reality of this sink in. And as we pray in a moment, as we sing, if you need repentance over a low and a poor view of the ordinances and a improper treatment of them, then today before Christ, repent.

And bring your heart to Him. And say, Lord, I want a heart renovation to love these ordinances as You love them. And to treat them with a holy heart and with holy hands.

Let's pray. Pray with me. I just want you to, right now, I want you to pray back to the Lord what He has said to you in this message.

He knows what He said to you and you know what He said to you. Just respond to Him. And then we're gonna sing to the Lord these songs out of joy and reverence as an act of worship.

Father, thank You for the truth that is meant to set us free. Would You change us today in our view of and our attitude toward the ordinances and our observation of them each month. Lord, we thank You for those being baptized tonight.

Fill their hearts with freedom and joy. Take away nervousness. And Lord, make it a glorious evening for them as they follow their Lord in believers' baptism.

Lord, seal Your Word in our hearts. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

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