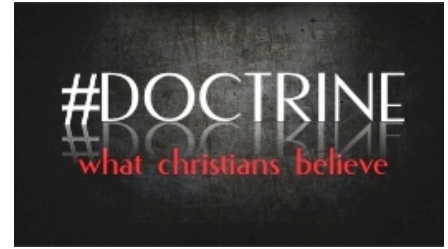




Sermon Discussion Guide




"The Sacraments"

Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:4-5; 1 Corinthians 11:17-29

Rev. Brandon Laurantzon, August 2 & 3, 2014

Step 1: Reflect on the Text

Why do we do this first? We always want to start with the Bible. The goal is to meditate on the Word and read it with an ear sensitive to the Holy Spirit's promptings. Look for words or phrases that stand out through logic, repetition, layout, etc.

-  Read Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:4-5; 1 Corinthians 11:17-29. What stood out to you? What did you find interesting and/or important? What was challenging or caused you to have questions?

Step 2: Reflect on the Sermon

INTRODUCTION

- 1 What has been your experience with the sacraments? How did the church you grew up in practice baptism and the Lord's Supper? Do you remember your baptism? Can you recall any Lord's Suppers that were particularly memorable?
- 2 Summarize the *Big Idea* of the sermon in *one phrase or sentence* (Note: this is not the same as listing the main points). In other words, if someone woke you up at 3am on Monday morning and asked, "What was the sermon about on Sunday?" what would you say in the midst of your sleepy haze?

THE SACRAMENTS: IDENTITY

- 3 *You are beloved.* Do you believe that God feels the same way about you that he feels about his Son, Jesus? How do you live when you forget that, in Christ, God is pleased with you?

- 4 *You are new.* Baptism symbolizes union with Christ. In your own words, what is union with Christ? Why did the early church pair exorcism and baptism together? What is one way that you are “new”? That is, what is one way that you are not the person you used to be before you became a Christian?
- 5 *You are part of a story.* How do you look both backward and forward in the Lord’s Supper? What did Jesus mean when he said, “Do this in remembrance of me”? Brandon used the phrase, “the cosmic story of redemption”. What did he mean by that? How is Christianity different from Eastern religions in this respect?

THE SACRAMENTS: COMMUNITY

- 6 *Common.* Brandon said, “Being a Christian and being a lone ranger are antithetical.” Why is that? Have you ever tried to do life alone instead of in community? How have you been strengthened and blessed by being in community?
- 7 *Unity.* Have you ever been a part of a church in which there was disunity? What could individuals and churches do to foster greater unity within the body of Christ?
- 8 *Welcome.* How are the sacraments “welcoming”? Brandon read a welcome from another church’s website. What did you like about it?

THE SACRAMENTS: GRACE

- 9 *The priority of grace.* Discuss the following quote related to Brandon’s story about taking communion to a woman with Alzheimer’s: “The Sacraments are first and foremost about His faithfulness to us, not a declaration of our faithfulness to Him. He is making a promise to you in the water and bread and wine, more than you are making a promise to Him.”
- 10 *The participants of grace.* Read 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 again. In your own words, what makes you “worthy” to partake of the Lord’s Supper? What does it mean to “examine yourself” and “discern the body”?
- 11 *The power of grace.* Why are the sacraments necessary when we’ve already got the Word? How do you see this illustrated in the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus?

Step 3: Final Reflections

- ✠ How has your understanding, appreciation, and love for Jesus and the gospel grown as a result of this study?
- ♥ In what areas of faith and practice are you feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit to act as a result of this study?