



# GRACE CHURCH

## BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

There are few finer points of Christian practice more hotly debated in Christian history than both baptism and the Lord's supper. The right instigation of the Lord's supper goes all the way back to the earliest church, where the apostle Paul calls out the believers in Corinth for using the supper for their own means (1 Cor. 11:17-34). The supper was one of the main points of contention that separated the differing strands of the protestant reformation, and the understanding of who receives an invitation to the table has split protestants further among denominational lines ever since. Baptism is no different: more protestant blood has been spilt over the issue of baptism than perhaps any other specific theological difference, both at the time of the reformation<sup>1</sup> and onward until the modern era of tolerance prevailed. Many of the New World's historic settlements were divisions of religious dissenters seeking the right to practice their understanding of right and Biblical baptism.<sup>2</sup>

Praise God that today, divisions over the practice of the Lord's supper and baptism rarely cause enough viral hatred to spur martyrdom, and yet that does not mean that churches should draw silent on the issue. A right understanding of both of these elements is vital to a healthy, growing, congregation of believers. It is not enough to sit in the grey area of "non-denominationalism" or church autonomy and simply remain silent. Both baptism and the Lord's supper impact the way the Christian community understands the physical representations and signs of their relationship with God through Christ.

For the sake of a deeper understanding of that covenant relationship, the pastors of Grace Church have chosen to affirm this position paper as showcasing the particular way both baptism and the Lord's supper are to be interpreted, taught, and applied from scripture at

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<sup>1</sup> During the early years of the Reformation, "The martyrs [killed for their view of baptism] were many – probably more than those who died during the three centuries of persecution before the time of Constantine" (Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, vol 2 [San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1985], 56).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Kidd and Barry Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History* (New York: Oxford Press, 2015), 7.

Grace Church. The purpose of the paper is not to divide among theological differences, but to provide clarity and understanding for the sake of unity in our specific local church.

This paper will define and defend the following definitions of the ordinances:

**Baptism** is a biblically ordained act of obedience to Christ in which the church, through immersion in water, is meant to publicly affirm and portray a believer's union with Christ through faith and his or her commitment to Christ and his church.

**The Lord's Supper** is a biblically ordained act of obedience to Christ in which the church, through the regular taking of bread and wine, spiritually commune together with Christ in a covenant meal by remembering Christ's work and renewing their commitment to Christ and his church.

## **Biblically Ordained Acts of Obedience**

Both baptism and the Lord's supper are Biblically ordained acts of obedience to Christ. The call to practice both comes directly from the mouth of Christ.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood'" (Lk. 22:18-20).

Both of the acts of baptism and the Lord's supper, instigated by Jesus, are maintained, exemplified, and commanded further in the New Testament, showcasing that these commands of Jesus ("Go, baptizing" and "Do this in remembrance of me") are normative commands that are meant for the church throughout time (e.g. Acts 2:41; 18:8; 1 Pt 3:21; Eph 4:5; 1 Cor 12:13, 15:29; Gal 3:27; and 1 Cor 11:23-25).

For this reason, we refer to both baptism and the Lord's supper as the *ordinances* of the church. They are ordained by Jesus Christ himself, and we perform them correctly in order to be obedient to his commands. Historically, the word *sacrament* has been used to define both baptism and the Lord's supper, signifying their set apart uniqueness. There is no significant harm in using the term sacrament, but it might be misleading in some instances. Originally, the sacraments were believed to confer grace *ex opera operato*,

meaning they operate “from the work performed”, and that baptism and the Lord's supper incur special or salvific grace directly through their administration. Since we believe that baptism and the Lord's supper signify the grace of the gospel, but not infer the grace of the gospel in and of themselves, we avoid the word sacrament so as to not cause any confusion.

Both of these ordinances are ordained by Christ to be performed or administered by the church alone. Neither baptism or the Lord's supper are meant to be practiced by individual Christians or outside of the community of faith. Since baptism, as will be stated again, is a public affirmation of faith and commitment to both Christ *and* his church, a baptism that occurs outside of the context of the community of faith misses the point of the purpose of the ordinance. The Lord's supper, as outlined in the New Testament, assumes a gathered community of faith each and every time it is mentioned (e.g. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 11:17-34), and its purpose is meant to be an act of communion not just of the believer to Christ, but the believer to other believers.

## **Baptism**

***Baptism is a biblically ordained act of obedience to Christ in which the church, through immersion in water, is meant to publicly affirm and portray a believer's union with Christ and his or her commitment to Christ and his church.***

### ***Through immersion in water,***

Water is both a historical and practical necessity of baptism, but throughout history various modes of water baptism have been used, such as sprinkling or pouring. Immersion, however, exemplifies most accurately what baptism is intended to display: that we have been crucified and raised to life with Christ (Rom 6:4). This mode is also most faithful to the original greek meaning of the word baptism (*baptizo*) in the New Testament.

### ***To publicly affirm and portray a believer's union with Christ through faith***

The purpose of Baptism is to signify and affirm what has already happened in the heart of all those who repent of their sin and believe in Jesus: that they have been unified with Christ (Jn 6:56; 15:4; 1 Jn 4:13; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 2:20).

In this way, baptism acts as a public *sign* of the reality of the New Covenant. A covenant is a binding agreement, and throughout Scripture we see God make progressively building

covenants with his chosen people. God promises that in Christ, he has instigated a new and final covenant, that all those who repent of sin and believe in Jesus' saving work will receive the promised Holy Spirit and be united to God through faith in Christ (Jer 31:31-34; Heb 8:13; 2 Cor 3:6). This is the final and better covenant that sets apart the people of God from the world.

Typically, all of the covenants God makes with his people have a sign of entrance. The most obvious example is the covenant with Abraham, which required the outward sign of circumcision for entrance. What is required for entrance into this new covenant family, however, is not circumcision but faith in Christ and his work (Col. 2:11; Phil 3:3). Baptism is simply the New Testament way of outwardly and publicly showcasing the faith necessary for entrance into the new covenant. For this reason, we respectfully reject the practice of infant baptism. Baptism is reserved for those who have been unified with Christ, since it is an outward sign of the reality of faith, and faith requires both repentance and belief. Baptism is for believers in Jesus who have been unified with him by faith. Faith is the marker of the community of the new covenant, and baptism is the public affirmation and portrayal of that faith.

***And his or her commitment to Christ and his church.***

Because baptism is an outward and public act of faith, it signifies not just union with Christ but also commitment to Christ. Baptism is the outward expression of faith for all to see—showing a clear break from the world and a turning toward Christ—and for a specific people to affirm. This means that baptism requires public profession of faith. Jesus shows us what this profession is to look like in Matthew 18 when he tells us to baptize “in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”. The public profession that accompanies baptism is an identification with the Triune God of the gospel, to a Father who sent his Son to save his people and who both sent the Spirit to seal the saved forever. Because of this, any baptism that does not include a public profession of faith in both the Triune God and the gospel of Jesus Christ is not a true or valid baptism.

The church of Christ is charged with the protection of the purity of the body of Christ, as shown in the passages that speak of this protective authority as the “keys of the kingdom” (Mt 16:19; 18:18-19). In other words, every local church is charged with the authority to identify who is a member of the new covenant community, and who is not.<sup>3</sup> If this is true, then baptism acts as a way of properly identifying who belongs to the new covenant

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<sup>3</sup> For a more in depth explanation of this concept, see our position paper on church government and authority.

community and who does not.<sup>4</sup> So when a new believer is being baptized, they are not only entering into the community of the universal church all over the globe, but they are receiving public affirmation from a specific community of faith that they belong. Since the local church is the visible manifestation of the new covenant community in the world, baptism signifies not only union with Christ and commitment to Christ, but also a commitment to the people of Christ, his church.

For this reason, baptism is required for membership at Grace Church, and in nearly all situations, we only baptize into the membership of the church. If baptism is your affirmation of faith, it should signify also your affirmation of faith into a specific and visible local church which can continue to affirm you in your faith. We will accept prior, valid believers baptisms that were not performed in accordance with church membership, but will not perform baptism apart from church membership except in very specific cases.

## **The Lord's Supper**

*The Lord's Supper is a biblically ordained act of obedience to Christ in which the church, through the regular taking of bread and wine, spiritually commune together with Christ in a covenant meal by remembering Christ's work and renewing their commitment to Christ and his church.*

### ***Through the regular taking of bread and wine***

The view that the Lord's Supper consists of bread and wine is not new, novel, or unique. Christ used bread and wine, not simply because those were the elements present at the Passover meal. He used bread and wine as tangible examples and symbols of his work on the cross.

“So Jesus said again, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you.’” (Jn 6:53)

The bread is his body, broken on behalf of his people. Jesus himself acknowledges he is the “bread of life” (Jn 6:35). In breaking the bread, we remember Jesus’ body beaten, bruised, and broken on the cross. As we partake in the Lord’s supper, we break off a piece of unleavened bread, remembering it was our act of sin that broke Christ, and we are given

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<sup>4</sup> For this reason, Bobby Jamieson calls baptism a “passport of the kingdom”; It’s how we signify that we belong to the people of God (*Going Public: Why Baptism is Required for Church Membership* [Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015], 93).

the words of institution by a brother or sister in Christ: this breaking was on our behalf. Jesus was broken so that we are not.

The wine is his blood, spilt or poured out for his people. The blood of Christ on the cross justifies (Rom 5:9), redeems (Eph 1:7), heals (1 Pt 2:24), purifies (1 Jn 1:7), overcomes (Rev 12:11), reconciles (Eph 2:13), and provides access to the very throne of God (Heb 10:19-22). With all of this in view, we drink of the wine and taste its bitterness as a reminder of sin and the power of the blood of Christ to redeem sinners. Grape juice is not used because it does not convey the same kind of bitter picture of the blood, but can be available to those for whom the taste of alcohol might be detrimental to their health or spiritual well-being.

The Lord's Supper should be taken regularly—at Grace Church this means we take it weekly—and not neglected for extended periods of time. In his admonition to the Corinthian church, Paul assumes that they are taking (and abusing) the Lord's Supper “when [they] come together” weekly (1 Cor 11:17-34). This should be read as descriptive and not prescriptive, but it does present a strong argument for the regular partaking of the supper. Many evangelical churches practice monthly or on other schedules, and there is room for Christian freedom to decide how often is “regularly”. However, due to the sustaining nature of the Lord's Supper, we believe that weekly observance is the most helpful practice for the health of the local church, the strengthening of the Christian, and the unity of the body.

### ***Spiritually commune together with Christ in a covenant meal by remembering and proclaiming Christ's work***

In the ancient world, every binding covenant was sealed by a meal, a feast that demonstrated the new relationship of the two covenanting parties. Even today we do the same: our marriage covenants are sealed by a marriage supper. The Lord's Supper is a covenant meal, signifying the realities of our new covenant union with Christ. Every week before communion we recite the words of institution, which Jesus said before he instigated the practice of the Lord's Supper. It is recorded in Luke 22:

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood”

So Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:16,

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

And perhaps the most striking reference to the reality of what is signified in the supper, in John 6:

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

Through this covenant meal, the Christian is remembering their union with Christ, communing with him in the process. J. Todd Billings is helpful in showing that “remembrance” in the language of Jesus and Paul is much deeper than our modern word can convey.

...to “remember” in this sense is not simply to “call to mind” the mighty acts of God, but to assign them an active role in one’s “world”... Some “remembering” is trite—like remembering a shopping list; but other remembering is identity forming—opening up a new world, a new drama to inhabit.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, we tend to think of the Lord’s Supper as simply a meal of remembrance of Christ’s cross. Surely it is, since he said “do this in remembrance of me.” But it is so much more, a kind of unique “spiritual remembrance”. The “remembrance” of the Supper is an invitation to participate in union with Christ, to belong, to feast, to be shaped by a new identity. The image of the cross we remember is an identity-shaping one. We partake of his blood and his body, and in doing so, we abide in him, and he abides in us. The Lord’s Supper is a weekly act of saying: I am one with Christ! This meal is an invitation not only to eat and drink forgiveness, but eat and drink covenant relationship.

Our deep and spiritual remembrance of Jesus acts as the means of communing us with him and sparking our intimacy with him and with his body, the church. This is a *community*

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<sup>5</sup> J. Todd Billings, *Remembrance, Communion, and Hope: Rediscovering the Gospel at the Lord’s Table* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 114.

meal, signified by the corporate nature of the covenant that we are remembering and taking part in.<sup>6</sup>

***and renewing their commitment to Christ and his church.***

The Lord's Supper is also an act of covenant renewal. Paul charges the Corinthians church to "examine" themselves to see if they are condemning themselves by failing to discern the body of Christ as they partake (1 Cor 11:28). The Corinthian church was isolating poorer and less well-known Christians from partaking in the unity of the Supper. The Supper is intended to be the place where in remembrance, the church of God is fueled to remain faithful to their covenant with God in Christ.

Of course, the New Covenant is not a covenant of works. This means that even as the people of God fail to uphold their end of the covenant, it is sealed with the perfect righteousness and blood of Christ, not the works and obedience of the people of God. And yet, even imperfectly, the Lord's Supper is a means of grace by which the people of God renew their commitment to partake in Christ and obey his commands, to hold onto Christ imperfectly as he holds onto them perfectly.

For this reason, those who are in deliberately unrepentant sin and ignorance of the covenant should not partake in the Lord's Supper. Those under formal church discipline due to lack of repentance from obvious sin or who have no profession of faith in Christ will only be "eating and drinking judgement on themselves" (1 Cor 11:29).

Many churches restrict the Lord's Supper to only those who are baptized members of a gospel-preaching church (who can in turn affirm their salvation), which we acknowledge is an appropriate and Biblically faithful way of fencing the table of covenant renewal. At Grace Church, however, we acknowledge the personal reality of new birth can allow the assurance of the covenant meal to be offered to all those who publicly affirm their repentance and belief in the taking of the meal together. In other words, any false assurance given by not requiring local church membership is not damning (since those taking falsely already sit in judgement) and should not outweigh the desire for the Supper to showcase the free grace of God in making covenant with *any individual* who would repent of sin and put their faith in Christ. This means that every Sunday the meal is offered

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<sup>6</sup> "The Supper is *the* ultimate symbolic act of unity in the Church, as the body of Christ gathers around common symbols of the one Lord who died for all and in whom all are united" (Brian J. Vickers, "The Lord's Supper: Celebrating the Past and Future in the Present: in *The Lord's Supper: Remembering and Proclaiming Christ Until He Comes*, eds. Thomas R. Schreiner and Matthew R. Crawford [Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010], 328).



freely, but only to those who are *in Christ* and who are willing to come forward and partake with the body. In contrast, the invitation to those who are not unified with Christ is to repent and believe so as to enter the covenant family by faith.

**In conclusion, Grace Church teaches that both baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances that act as Biblically ordained acts of obedience to be administered by the local church.**

*Baptism is a biblically ordained act of obedience to Christ in which the church, through immersion in water, is meant to publicly affirm and portray a believer's union with Christ through faith and his or her commitment to Christ and his church. The Lord's Supper is a biblically ordained act of obedience to Christ in which the church, through the regular taking of bread and wine, spiritually commune together with Christ in a covenant meal by remembering Christ's work and renewing their commitment to Christ and his church.*

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For teaching on the ordinances from a pastor of Grace Church, please visit <https://subsplash.com/gracechurchwaco/sermons/mi/+dsnsw6b>. If you have any further questions about the teaching of Grace Church, please email [connect@gracewaco.com](mailto:connect@gracewaco.com) and direct your question to a pastor.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

**At what age should I present my children to be baptized? What does this mean for their membership in the church?**

Here we come to another point where Scripture does not seem to provide hard and fast guidelines or rules to follow. When considering the appropriate age for a confessing child to be baptized, we must make sure that at least two Biblical links and two general cautions must be considered.

**THREE BIBLICAL LINKS:**

**First, the Biblical link of being baptized without significant delay after affirmation of faith.** There is at least one Biblical example of immediate baptism (Acts 8:26-40), and several that seem to imply immediate baptism (Acts 2:38-41; 9:17-19; 16:55, 33). If faith

is genuine, baptism should follow soon after. While there may be wisdom in a short period of delay to help identify if a profession of faith is genuine and that the effectiveness of the witness of baptism can be maintained, the general rule should be to not delay baptism in the life of a true believer, no matter their age.

**Second, the link of being baptized into the local body of believers.** We have already established that the definition of baptism as understood by the pastors of Grace Church is that it is meant to publicly affirm and portray a believer's commitment to Christ and his church. Baptism is church-witness and church-affirmed and acts as the means of public entrance into the body of Christ. Except in very specific circumstances, every believer baptized by Grace Church will be baptized into membership in the church, no matter their age.

**Third, the link between adolescence and healthy submission to spiritual authority.** Until they separate themselves from dependence on their parents, each child is commanded by God to obey their parents (Eph 6:1, Col 2:20) by submitting to their leadership and guidance. Some children achieve autonomy earlier or later than others, and so no specific age can be set as to when a child makes spiritual decisions apart from their parent's authority. This sense of spiritual authority is heightened when the parent in question is a believer and member of Grace Church. It would be foolish to neglect the special authority and role every Christian parent has in caring for the spiritual wellbeing of their child, in tandem with but entirely distract from that of the church.

## **TWO GENERAL CAUTIONS:**

**First, a caution against hasty affirmations of faith in mentally immature children.** There is no specific age where every child has achieved the mental capacity to grasp a simple understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Some children are able to understand complex thoughts at a very young age, and some struggle to put abstract concepts together until they are well into young adulthood. Acknowledging that every child is under the authority of their parents, a significant burden of proof should be put on a believing parent to help verify the maturity of the child in question. Though the baptisms in the New Testament seem largely to have occurred soon after the initial conversion, all of the individuals we can read of are both adults and coming from a non-Christian context.<sup>7</sup> Both of these factors would tend to lend credibility to a conversion. We must be careful not to give false assurance to those who are too immature to understand their profession of faith.

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<sup>7</sup> Help derived on this point from the statement on children and baptism from Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. <https://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/ministries/children/baptism-of-children/>

**Second, a caution against naturally doubting simple and sincere faith.** There is no age requirement for the kingdom of God. In fact, childlike faith is praised in Scripture (Matt 18:2-4). Although we want to be careful to guard against professions of faith that are disingenuous or not rooted in clear expressions of Biblical truth, the profession of the gospel is simple enough that a child could understand and be moved to genuine faith.

Based on these realities and cautions, we will recommend the following course of action when considering the baptism of a child. On a case by case basis, the pastors will work alongside the believing parent or guardian (if there is one) to verify to the best of their ability their affirmation of faith. This is perhaps the most difficult step. Often a profession of faith may be classified as genuine if it is sincere, even if it lacks understanding. The pastors are under the conviction that a profession of faith must also be in some way mature and understanding, as well as sincere. A mature confession of faith does not require, however, that a child must be totally physically or mentally mature. Instead, the profession must have elements of spiritual maturity that may transcend the age of the child. Generally speaking, the child must have a basic understanding of their own sinfulness, the triune and holy nature of God, the person and work of Christ, the need for repentance and faith, and the cosmic scope of Christ's victory and lordship. This understanding should be accompanied by aspects of spiritual fruit in the life of the child which are generally atypical of the child's age and experience.

Once a profession of faith is affirmed with the parents and the pastors, the young believer will be ready to be publically witnessed via baptism and affirmed into membership of the church alongside the witness of his/her family. The young member will be expected to participate in the life of the church to the best of their ability (small service opportunities, attending members meetings, participating in corporate worship, etc.) They will be now welcomed to the table of communion as a believer. If at any point the congregation, parents, or pastors can no longer positively affirm the faith of the child in good conscience, the pastors will help guide the parents to lead out in church discipline by explaining to the child why they are now prohibited from the benefits of membership, and pray for and seek their repentance. Recognizing the unique spiritual authority of parents over their children, voting in members meetings will be done in tandem with the believing parents or guardians until the child is independent from the household of the parents (can be decided on a case by case basis, but generally to be understood as moving out of the house for college education or entering the workforce following high school).

If no believing parent or guardian exists, and the child is able to participate in the life of the church by some other means with the consent of their parent/guardian, the pastors

will help appoint a sponsor family from the membership of the church to represent the child in helping the pastors determine spiritual maturity and profession of faith.

### **How should we administer communion? Is there theological reasoning behind our method?**

The pastors of Grace Church believe that while the exact method of communion is not vital to the ordinance itself, our methods can convey specific meaning and therefore influence our understanding of the Supper. There are numerous ways that faithful churches administer the elements, but clarity for specific congregations can be helpful to strengthen the effectiveness of the ordinance.

**Dipping or Sipping?** *Intinction* is the practice of dipping the communion bread into the wine before consuming both elements together. Scholars are unsure when this practice started, but it might have been done as a way to protect the sick from drinking out of one common cup. This practice has never been broadly accepted, however, and even denominational bodies like the Presbyterian Church in America have made efforts to outright condemn it. Why practice intinction? Mostly it is done for its practical benefit. It allows for the participation in a single unified cup (or several divided cups) without drinking after one another, and it is easier for large congregations to prepare than individualized cups. Although we have practiced intinction before at Grace Church, we believe it takes away from, even if only in a small way, the overall understanding of the nature of the Supper.

Rather than dipping them together, Jesus himself separated the bread from the wine when he instituted the Lord's Supper, giving the elements one at a time (Mk 14:22-24; Mt 26:26-29; Lk 22:14-20) and explaining them separately. Taking the elements separately brings more significance to each. The Christian meditates on the broken body while tasting the coarse bread, and remembers how Jesus was torn to pieces to become our bread of life and our one, unbreakable body. While tasting the sharp bitterness of the wine, the Christian meditates on the spilled blood of Christ, and participates in the cleansing flood of righteousness that comes from the blood of the lamb. This blood is bitter with the sadness of sacrifice, but like the wine, is also sweet with the taste of redemption. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 helps us see how each element, while not being separated, is meant to work individually to convey specific meaning: "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."

When considering the significance of the practice of the early church and the example of Jesus, we believe that taking the elements separately is the most helpful and Biblically faithful mode of administration. Intinction, although having practical benefits, should only be used in specific occasions when it's practicality would be the difference between partaking in the Supper together or not partaking.

**One Cup or Many?** In the earliest churches, it is likely that a common cup of wine was used by each participant to signify the unity of the church. This appears to be the case in Mark's explanation of the first supper in Mark 14:23: "And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it." The idea of "one cup" has strong theological precedent, as it naturally signifies the unity of the body of Christ. The blood of Christ which washes away sin is not divided equally among every Christian: rather in union with Christ they receive *all* of him.

And yet, there is no reason to believe that partaking in a common cup is Biblically commanded. In Mark's gospel, the emphasis in the text rests not on the sharing of the cup, but the significance of it being "poured out" for many and the coming fruit of the new kingdom. In Luke 22:17, we read that "he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, 'Take this, and divide it among yourselves.'" Rather than seeing this as a contradiction in the two gospel accounts (one describes drinking of a single cup, one describes dividing the cup), the lack of clarity in detail teaches us that the mode of division is a tertiary issue, if it is important at all.

Because of this lack of specific Scriptural instruction, in order to help provide for the health of the congregation, we have found it helpful to separate the cup into smaller individualized vessels for partaking.