

Building Blocks of Faith

Episode #4 - Sacraments

1. What are the two sacraments that Methodists recognize? What are other sacraments that other faith traditions recognize? What rule limits Methodists to just two sacraments?
2. What does happen with God when an infant is baptized? What happens with baptism when an adult is baptized?
3. How is the Jewish tradition of Ritual Bath in a Mikva similar to Baptism? How does it become a different tradition with the baptism of Jesus?
4. Look at these instances of baptism of whole households in Acts? How is this kind of “family” decision making still at work in Eastern, African, or tribal cultures (like arranged marriages, etc.)? How is this different from how most families in western, democratized cultures operate? How did baptism work in your family?
 - a. Acts 11: 13 He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; 14 he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.’ NRSV
 - b. Acts 16: 11 We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. 13 On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. 14 A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. 15 When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.” And she prevailed upon us. NRSV
 - c. 18:7 Then he left the synagogue and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God; his house was next door to the synagogue. 8 Crispus, the official of the synagogue, became a believer in the Lord, together with all his household; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul became believers and were baptized.
5. How, in Methodism, is the act of confirmation a way to bridge this Eastern and Western understanding of faith, placing the ultimate responsibility of a person of age making a choice of their own?
6. Baptism is an act of God where God chooses us. Why will Methodist pastors not re-baptize? If they did, what would it infer about God? What option exists for Methodists to reconnect to God’s never-ending of covenant of Baptism?

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7. The presenters said that in Methodism, communion has a past, a presents and a future. What did you learn from that discussion? What do remember from the past? What do we experience in the present? What do we look forward to in the future?
8. How does this three-dimensional understanding change the meaning for communion? How does it open us for a spiritual experience of God's presence while receiving communion.
9. Revelation 19:6-9 says, -Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; 8 to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure"—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. 9 And the angel said[c] to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

How does this beautiful picture of the future affect you? What do you look forward to? Who do you look froward to seeing again or meeting for the first time?