

THE MARKS OF THE
**TRUE
CHURCH**



SACRAMENTS: OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Sunday 9th October 2022

FOUNDATION PASSAGES:

Matthew 16:13-20 (NKJV)

“When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” So they said, “Some [say] John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed [this] to you, but My Father who is in heaven. “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.”

God will give the keys of the Kingdom to those who are members of the true church!

Matthew 18:15-20 (NKJV)

“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. “But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ “And if he refuses to hear them, tell [it] to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

18 “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

In today’s text, we will add another passage of scripture:

1 Corinthians 10:1-13 (NKJV)

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness.

Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as *were* some of them. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.”

As Jesus is building the church, the enemy doesn’t want the church to be built.

Recap From Previous Weeks

For the past few weeks we have been expanding on the sacraments/ordinances of Jesus Christ.

Specifically, we have addressed the sacraments of baptism and communion. In the ‘Sacrament of Baptism’ message, we were reminded that on the ledger of death and life, once you are in Christ Jesus, life wins. Likewise, last week’s message explained the 5 points of grace, to show the various victories that Christ attained for us on the cross.

This included:

1. His back – giving us health and wholeness.
2. His Head – to release the blessing of Christ, and remove the curse.
3. Hands – giving us prosperity (what money can and cannot buy).
4. Feet – giving us dominance and victory.
5. Side – to give us new life.

Today, we will cover the topic, ‘Sacraments: Our Responsibilities’.

Introduction

If you are a citizen of the UK, there are certain benefits and rights that you enjoy. Similarly, there are rights and benefits that you enjoy as a result of being in the Kingdom of God; but there are also responsibilities.

For example, whatever you earn, you pay back in the form of taxes. In the same way, in the church, we have responsibilities. This is what ‘Perfecting Life’ is all about. It is about the spiritual maturity that gives and doesn’t only take like a child does.

What are the activities in a true church?

1. **The Preaching of the Word** – The Word of God is sufficient and authoritative.
2. **The Administration of Sacraments** – Ordinances by Christ for our observation and participation.
3. **The Exercising of Church Discipline** – this is for the reconciliation of the body of Christ.

How Does Jesus Build His Church?

In **Matthew 16:18** Jesus speaking prophetically said, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock (*the rock of the revelation by the Holy Spirit*) I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

This was on the rock of the revelation that Jesus is Lord.

In **Ephesians 5:25-27 (NKJV)** Paul writes, “Husbands, love your wives, just as **Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.**”

Jesus builds the church in the same way that a godly husband will cherish, love and build up his wife with love. God uses the analogy of a godly husband who uses encouraging words to build up his wife and remove the 'spots' and 'blemishes.'" In the same way, God is using His Word to build up the church.

However, there is an enemy whose goal is to dampen the church; this is something we should be aware of. Nonetheless, the devil will always fail and God will get what He desires.

Why Jesus is Building His Church?

Jesus is building the church to take away the spots and blemishes.

In **Hebrews 2:12-13 (NKJV)** we read the why? saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You." And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."

From this verse, we can see that:

- The name of God contains the attributes of God. When you carry the name of God into a place, you carry God into that place!
- God desires to have a people who worship Him.

"God wants to build His church so that He can take all the praises. The enemy doesn't want this to happen, but as we allow the Marks of the True Church to become our living reality, the devil will fail in every area and God will get what He desires, in Jesus' name!"
– *Pastor Kola Taiwo, New Wine Church, Woolwich.*

Rights and Responsibilities

In every kingdom, there are rights and benefits on the one hand, and there are responsibilities on the other, i.e., citizens of every kingdom have rights and responsibilities.

1 Corinthians 10:1 causes us to understand that as saints, we are part of a Kingdom, because we are members of the 'fathers' – the people of old, who God took out of Egypt and brought into the Promised Land. There is something to learn from the fathers!

Matthew 6:33 says: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

We are part of a Kingdom. In the Old Testament, this was the nation of Israel but now it is the church of Christ. In the same way that they had rights and responsibilities, so do we; we are not independent of one another. We are brothers and sisters in Christ – we are a family!

A true church must be one in which the brothers and sisters look out for each other.

The phrase ‘Our Father’ creates a connection between the children of God of old, and us as children of God today, as we are the Kingdom of God in this age.

In **1 Corinthians 10:2**, we see that the church in the wilderness partook of a sacrament that was a type, in which we are enjoying the fulfilment of today. In this Scripture, there was a cloud that followed them. They were *baptised* into Moses by the cloud and the sea. This was a ‘type’/picture of baptism which we now enjoy the fulfilment of, in the form of water baptism, and the Holy Spirit.

When the Israelites passed through the Dead Sea, this was also a type of baptism.

We are enjoying the real thing, which is the Holy Spirit!

Responsibilities of Communion

In enjoying the benefits of the fulfilment, there are certain responsibilities that follow. There are things you shouldn’t be doing, places you shouldn’t be going and things you shouldn’t be saying.

“The killing element of the death of Christ must kill something in you, so that the living element of the outward resurrection can germinate and initiate a new state in you.” – *Pastor Kola Taiwo, New Wine Church Woolwich.*

*We have the **RESPONSIBILITY** to not crave evil things.*

1 Corinthians 10:3 says: “All ate the same spiritual food.”

In the days of old, the 'spiritual food' was the manna, which was a type/picture of the communion that we have today, which includes the wafer, representing the body of Christ. This gives us victory in Christ!

It is our responsibility to live in this reality.

When you began your journey with Christ, you received the 'spiritual drink' which is the river of life; the life-giving Spirit flowing in you (see **1 Corinthians 10:4**). What we saw then was a picture, but now we have the privilege of experiencing the living reality.

In the Old Testament water, which was sustaining the people, flowed but in the New Testament, blood flowed, which was a spiritual drink providing life! As a result, we can never lack, because there are certain rights and benefits that belong to us.

The baptised saint has a **RESPONSIBILITY** to suppress the urge to tempt the Lord.

Exodus 17:7 (NKJV) says: "So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

It your **RESPONSIBILITY** to remind yourself of the presence of God as you partake of the communion table.

Numbers 21:5-6 (NKJV): "And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "***Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For [there is] no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.***" So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died."

It is your **RESPONSIBILITY** to remind yourself of the goodness of God in the provision of the sign and seal of baptism and the communion.

The Importance of Faith : The only way to please God is by faith.

Although the children of God in **Exodus 17:1-7** had partaken of the sacraments and were baptised, because they didn't have faith in their daily living, they were not pleasing God. The consequence of this was being destroyed in the wilderness!

Reflection question: Is it possible that we are partaking of the sacraments and God isn't pleased with us?

1 Corinthians 10:5 shows us that the only way to please God is to have faith, and lack of faith is displeasing to God. Even though the children of Israel partook of the sacraments and were baptised, because they didn't have faith, they were struck down in the wilderness.

“Is it possible that we come to the Lord's table and have sacraments, but God is not well-pleased with us?” – Pastor Kola Taiwo, New Wine Church London.

1 Corinthians 10:6 talks about how these things happened to the Israelites as an example for us. God wants us to enjoy the sacraments, but we also have the responsibility of having faith in what the sacraments represent, i.e., the victory that Christ achieved for us on the cross and our new life in Him.

Do Not Grumble!

1 Corinthians 10:10 says: “Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.”

Grumbling is an issue for God! Maybe because it is a breeding ground for rebellion among the church that claims to be in union with God and one another.

Philippians 2:14-15 (NKJV) says: “Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”

God has put you in the body of Christ as a light. It is your responsibility to keep being a light-bearer for God.

Grumblers or complainers are not light bearers.

*It our **RESPONSIBILITY** to keep being light bearers.*

The example of the failed church in Exodus should instruct us; we should learn from this and shine as light-bearers of Christ.

Living Responsibly

1 Corinthians 10:11 says: “Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our **INSTRUCTION**, upon whom the ends of the ages have arrived.”

It is your **RESPONSIBILITY** to get the instructions that will bring perfecting life - maturity.

1 Corinthians 10:12 says: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.”

What Paul is communicating to the church in Corinth is that there are consequences for those who are baptised and are partakers in the Lord’s table and refuse to be **responsible** and live responsibly.

Again, Paul mentions that the history of the failed church in the wilderness is for our warning and to instruct us! Why? The phrase, “upon whom the ends of the ages have arrived” refers to this age of grace. This is the age between Christ’s first coming and His second coming. The second coming will put an end to the age of grace.

“It is your responsibility to be a responsible, badge-wearing member of the local church.”
– Pastor Kola Taiwo, New Wine Church Woolwich.

1 Corinthians 10:13 says: “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

This means that we have the grace to live responsibly as children of God.

The Responsibility of Fellowship

1 Corinthians 1:9 (NKJV) says: “God [is] faithful, by whom you were called into the **FELLOWSHIP** of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

It is our responsibility to maintain a close relationship with Christ because we are in fellowship with Christ. If you are in fellowship with Christ, you will not have time for idols, grumbling or habitual sin.

*Our **RESPONSIBILITY** is to stay in fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Importance of Chastity in the Church

1 Corinthians 10:8 says: “Nor let us act in sexual immorality, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day.”

In the days of old, 23,000 people died when God showed up to judge the nation of Israel, showing that sexual immorality has grave consequences.

For us who are baptised, we should not be unrepentant of habitual sin.

It is your **RESPONSIBILITY** to deal with habitual sin.

“A church where chastity is not high on the agenda is an abomination to God.” – Pastor Kola Taiwo, New Wine Church Woolwich.

Is Christ your Saviour *and* Lord?

Most of us have received Jesus as Saviour, but not as Lord.

Titus 2:11-12 says: “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,”

These things were commanded for our training and instruction.

Grace brings salvation and instruction. Be encouraged to follow the instructions as well and enjoy the salvation that is in Christ.

Open your heart to enjoy Christ as Lord, as well as Saviour.

Who is our Lord Jesus Christ to you?

Is He your ***Titus 2:11-12***?

Communion

The Israelites' eating of the spiritual food and drinking of the spiritual drink did not immune them because they didn't have faith in the God that provided it. When you take communion in remembrance of God, you make a statement and must take it in faith.

Let us bring Christ into remembrance!

1 Corinthians 10:7 says: "Do not be idolaters, as some of them were. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play."

God has an issue with His children, who partake in sacraments, having an idol elsewhere.

Question: What is the idol in your life?

Lastly...

As you now have a deeper understanding of our responsibilities of the sacraments, be encouraged to obey the instructions of Christ and His sacraments!