

Hello. /Today we will begin the seventeenth lecture on systematic theology. /We will begin with sacraments as a means of grace.

/II. The sacraments.

/A. Definition of sacraments.

/A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, /in which by sensible signs the grace of God in Christ, and the benefits of the covenant of grace, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers, /and these, in turn, give expression to their faith and allegiance to God.

/B. Relation between the Word and the sacraments.

/1. The Word of God can exist without sacraments.

/The Word of God is a complete means of grace. /Sinners can receive salvation through faith in God's word, without participation in sacraments.

/Jesus says to the robber in Luke 23:43, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." /The robber who was crucified alongside Jesus did not participate in sacraments, but Jesus said this when the robber believed in the gospel.

/2. Sacraments cannot exist without the Word of God.

/Sacraments are a means of grace, but it is incomplete. /The Roman Catholic Church claims that the sacraments contain all that is necessary for the salvation of sinners.

/However, this is a wrong claim.

/It is a fact that sacraments appeal to the more sensitive eye than to the ear, and hence, it leaves a deeper impression on the participant and specially helps him.

/3. Differences between the Word of God and sacraments.

/God's word is absolutely necessary for salvation. /The Word engenders and strengthens faith. /However, sacraments only strengthen faith.

/One attains salvation through faith in God's word in his heart. /Yet, sacraments are external rituals that the already saved participate in. /God's word goes out into the world, but sacraments are administered only to those who have been saved.

/C. The necessity of the sacraments.

/1. It is a means to strengthen faith.

/Sacraments are not absolutely necessary for salvation, but they are a means to strengthening one's faith. /The Roman Catholic Church claims that sacraments are absolutely necessary for salvation. /They believe that there is a mystical effect that brings about spiritual grace in the hearts of those who participate in sacraments. /However, these claims are incorrect.

/2. Sacraments are God's command and must be obeyed.

/God commanded that believers perform sacraments, and believers must obey. /It is a sin to disobey God. /Therefore, it is a sin to deliberately refuse to perform sacraments.

/D. The Old and New Testament sacraments.

/There is no essential difference between the sacraments of the Old Testament and the sacraments of the New Testament. /Yet, the Old Testament sacraments had a strong national aspect. /The Old Testament sacraments were seals of grace of faith in the coming Christ.

/However, New Testament sacraments are seals of salvation of faith in the complete redemption of Christ who already came. /Romans 4:11 says, "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them."

/The Old Testament sacraments did not deliver an abundance of spiritual grace as the New Testament sacraments do. /Colossians 2:11 says, "In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ."

/E. The number of the sacraments.

/1. The Old Testament sacraments were circumcision and the Passover.

/"Circumcision" was a mark of one's participation in the covenant of God by cleansing his body and heart. /The covenant symbolized the repentance of sins and participation in the promise of salvation through faith in the gospel. /Genesis 17:11; Romans 4:11.

/"The Passover" was a celebration of the Israelites' salvation from Egypt, and the lamb of the Passover was a type of Jesus Christ. /1 Corinthians 5:7 says, "Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast-- as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."

/2. The New Testament sacraments are baptism and communion.

/Jesus personally said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." /On the night Jesus was arrested, He took bread and wine at the last supper in remembrance of the redemption of the cross of Christ. /Luke 22:19, 20.

/The bread and wine at communion symbolize the body and blood of Christ as the atoning lamb. /Sacraments of the New Testament are performed without the blood of animals because Christ already completed redemption.

/Roman Catholicism added confirmation, penance, extreme unction, holy orders, and matrimony to the sacraments. /However, there is no Scriptural grounds for any of these, and they are merely formal and superstitious inclinations.

/III. Christian baptism.

/A. The institution of Christian baptism.

/Christ Himself received baptism, and He told His disciples to go out and baptize. /Christ

told His disciples, “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

/The apostles and disciples of the early church obeyed Jesus’ command and baptized believers. /Acts 2:38, 41. /Anyone who becomes a disciple of Christ must receive baptism as a seal that they had entered into a new relation with God.

/A new relation indicates becoming a member of the Church. /It also means to become a part of the body of Christ. /1 Corinthians 12:13 says, “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

/B. Meaning of baptism.

/Baptism is a holy ceremony personally instituted by Jesus. /Therefore, saved believers must receive baptism. /Those who are baptized must know the true meaning of baptism and must live holy lives as those who have been baptized.

/1. The nature of baptism.

/Baptism is explained differently from the points of the view of those who baptize and those who are baptized. /Those who are baptized confess their faith before the Church that they have received salvation through faith in the gospel.

/However, one is not saved through baptism. /Baptism is a ritual in which a saved believer confesses his faith before the Church.

/From the point of view of the Church that baptizes, baptism is an acknowledgement that one who is being baptized has received salvation through his faith in the gospel of Christ, and this ritual is a public proclamation that he has been accepted as a member of the Church.

/Thus, baptism is an initiation ceremony into the Church. /The Church only acknowledges the baptized as official members of the Church. /The nature of baptism can be seen as a seal that one has become a disciple of Jesus.

/2. The true meaning of baptism.

/The truth in this ritual is more important than the ritual itself. /What is the true meaning of baptism?

/First, it is an indication that one’s sins have been completely washed away. /Acts 22:16 says, “And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.” /Our sins are not washed away through the rite of baptism. /We receive forgiveness of sins and become clean only through faith in the redemption of the cross of Christ.

/Baptism is a rite of a confession of faith of the saved believer, who has been forgiven of his sins through his faith in the gospel, before the Church, and it is the Church’s

acknowledgement of this.

/**Second**, the saved believer has become united with the cross of Christ. /The believer has become a new person through new life from God. /Romans 6:6 says, “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.”

/The old self refers to the person before salvation, the sinner. /The old self was crucified with Jesus on the cross. /It is beneficial for the believer to believe that his old self has died.

/If we believe that the old self, the sinner, has died, we will neither be enticed by sin nor will we be pulled away by sin. /Furthermore, the saved believer has become united with the resurrection of Christ.

/Ephesians 2:5-6 says, God “made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.”

/We have been made alive with Christ, which indicates the souls of us believers. /We received eternal life when we believed in the gospel. /Our souls, which were dead in our transgressions and sins, have come to life. /Ephesians 2:1 says, “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.”

/The soul that has come to life by receiving eternal life is united with Christ in spirit. /This is because eternal life is life in Christ. /1 John 5:11. /Hence, believers can live in Christ when they live in spirit.

/**Third**, baptism is an indication that believers have become united with the body of Christ. /1 Corinthians 12:12, 13 says, “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

/Therefore, believers have not only been united with Christ, but have also been united with other believers to form one body.

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/C. The proper mode of baptism.

/Baptists claim that immersion is the only proper mode of baptism. /However, the mode or method of baptism is not of great importance. /Jesus did not stress a specific method of baptism.

/“To baptize” is “baptizo” in Greek. /“Baptize” also means, “to wash, sprinkle water, to sprinkle blood.” /In the Old Testament times, there was the ritual of cleansing through the

sprinkling of water or blood. /Numbers 8:7; Psalm 51:7; Ezekiel 36:25.

/Therefore, baptism does not only refer to complete emersion in water. /This means that baptism does not require full immersion in deep water. /Matthew 3:11; Luke 12:50.

/There are also biblical passages on baptism that cannot be seen as baptism by immersion. /Acts 2:41; 9:18; 16:33.

/D. The lawful administrators of baptism.

/Let's discuss the issue on who can administer baptism. /The Roman Catholic Church considers baptism absolutely essential to salvation, and they even allow doctors or nurses to baptize in emergencies.

/However, the Reformed Church sees the proclamation of God's word and the administration of sacraments as under one authority. /Thus, only an accredited minister of the gospel can be a lawful administrator of baptism.

/Baptism must be administered by an accredited pastor before the public assembly of believers and in the name of the triune God.

/E. The proper subjects of baptism.

/1. Adult baptism.

/In the case of adults, only those who believe in Jesus may be baptized. /Thus, the Church must insist a profession of faith be made by the one who is to be baptized. /One is baptized only when it is determined that his profession of faith is neither formal nor false, but genuine. /Mark 16:16; Acts 18:8.

/2. Infant baptism.

/The Bible does not state whether or not infants should be baptized. /However, there is Scriptural grounds for infant baptism. /The covenant God made with Abraham was a spiritual covenant. /Circumcision was a sign of the spiritual covenant.

/The covenant with Abraham is still valid in the New Testament period, and it is essentially the same as the new covenant of the New Testament. /Children of the Old Testament period were circumcised as a sign of participation in the covenant. /Genesis 17:12.

/However, circumcision was abolished in the New Testament period, and baptism became a sign of the covenant of grace. /Christ also allowed children to come before Jesus.

/There is evidence in the Bible that children were baptized along with their parents during the apostolic age. /Matthew 19:14; Acts 16:31; 1 Corinthians 7:14. /Hence, it is right that the Church perform infant baptism.

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/IV. The Lord's Supper.

/A. Institution of the Lord's Supper.

/The Lord's Supper is a holy ceremony of the Church that was instituted by Jesus. /Matthew 26:26-29. /The Old Testament sacrament of the Passover was replaced with the Lord's Supper in the New Testament times.

/The Passover of the Old Testament was a sacrament in which a lamb was killed and its blood was smeared on the sides and tops of doorframes. /Yet, in the New Testament period, the death of Christ completed redemption, and the lamb and unleavened bread of the Passover were replaced with wine and bread of the Lord's Supper.

/The bread and wine of the Lord's Supper symbolize the body and blood of Jesus. /The Passover had a great national significance, but the Lord's Supper became a personal and Church-related rite.

/B. The true meaning of the Lord's Supper.

/Baptism is conducted once in a saved believer's life when he registers as a member of the Church. /Yet, the Lord's Supper is conducted repeatedly, for it symbolizes the continual relationship between believers and Christ. /It is important that believers understand the true meaning and the truth of the Lord's Supper, and not merely the rite itself.

/The Lord's Supper symbolizes the redemption of Christ. /The bread and wine of the Lord's Supper symbolize the body and blood of Christ, the atonement lamb. /Jesus personally said that the bread was His body, and the wine was His blood.

/Matthew 26:26-28 says, "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"

/1. Participation in the Lord's Supper is participation in the grace of redemption of the cross of Christ. /It signifies the grace of redemption. /The Lord's Supper also symbolizes that Christ is the bread of life. /Just as food provides nutrients for the body, the body and blood of Jesus are symbols of spiritual food for believers.

/John 6:35, 54 say, "Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.'"

/2. It signifies grace of eternal life. /John 6:54.

/3. It symbolizes believers' union with Christ. /Jesus says in John 6:56, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him."

/4. It signifies believers' union with other believers to become one body. /1

Corinthians 10:17 says, "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."

/5. It symbolizes a delightful relationship with the Lord. /Just as those sitting together around a table take part in joyful conversation with one another, believers who participate in the Lord's Supper take part in a delightful relationship with the Lord. /Revelation 3:20.

/Here we will conclude the seventeenth lecture on systematic theology. /Thank you.