

Ordinances of Separation

#0098

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—December 27, 1975

This afternoon is the special service of the family of God. When you stop to think about it, the ordinances of the church are few and simple. It is the apostate church which has loaded the service of God with all kinds of rituals and ceremony. But the services that Christ gave to His church, the ordinances, are very simple—baptism and the Lord's Supper, with the preparatory ordinance of feet washing.

I sometimes think that, in our multiplication of various things in the church, we are likely, if we are not careful, to lose sight of these two great mountain peaks of baptism and the Lord's Supper. It was not so in the apostolic church. I venture to say it will not be so when there is a revival of primitive godliness and a return to apostolic simplicity in the remnant church.

Now, why are we here at this special service when we have nothing else to consider? You will remember that Jesus told His disciples to go out and teach and baptize and to teach the converts to observe all things that He had commanded. He commanded these ordinances. Repeatedly, He told them, "I have left you an example." When we look at the service of the Lord's Supper, we find that it originated the night before Jesus was crucified. Knowing what was just about to take place, Christ withdrew from the multitude and gathered His inner circle about Him. There, He gave them these emblems.

In an early vision that the prophet to the remnant was given, a comment is made on this:

"Then I was pointed back to the time that Jesus took his disciples away alone, into an upper room, and first washed their feet, and then gave them to eat of the broken bread, to represent his broken body, and juice of the vine to represent his spilled blood. I saw that all should move understandingly, and follow the example of Jesus in these things, and when attending to these ordinances, should be as separate from unbelievers as possible" *The Present Truth*, November 1, 1850.

So in seeking to carry out this instruction, we have this special hour set apart for this service and this alone. Announcement is made of this service so that all who wish to share in these blessings may come, and with nothing else to divert us or distract us, to receive the fullness of blessing of this particular service.

You will notice that it is a service in which Christ deliberately chose to be apart from the multitude. He ministered to the throng. Much of His public work was in dealing with vast groups of people as well as the individuals who gathered about Him for healing and teaching. But there were times when He said to the inner circle, "Come apart. I have something special to share with you." This was one of these occasions. In fact, this is a very special high point in Christ's training of His inner circle of disciples.

So this evening, I would like to have us think of this ordinance as a sign, a symbol, of separation—for that is exactly what it is: a sign—as a symbol of separation. This is true of both of these ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper. In baptism, you remember, the individual who accepts Christ and His church is immersed in the water in token of a death concerning his past, a burial, putting an end to that old life. Then as the candidate is raised, that is a sign of resurrection, the beginning of a glorious new life through the power of Christ.

Baptism, then, forms a boundary between the life that was and the life that is and is to be, a very simple but wonderful symbol of separation. And this ordinance in which Christ says, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come" (1 Corinthians 11:25), this too calls us back to Calvary as the sign of separation.

In Galatians, the 6th chapter, and the 14th verse, the apostle presents the cross as the sign of separation. "But God forbid," he says, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

The cross means the world is dead to me. The cross means I am dead to the world. In some countries and in some cultures, an individual who accepts Christ is counted dead by his former friends and family. In some cases, a funeral is conducted. And from that time, that individual is counted as if he were dead. Spiritually, the Christian counts *himself* dead to the former life, dead to the world. And what is the sign that marks that separation? The cross. The cross is the symbol of an eternal separation between the world on one side and the life of the child of God on the other. And we are gathered here this afternoon to commemorate the cross, to remember Calvary, to renew our baptismal vows, to share anew in the life that Christ purchased by His death, to share anew in that full consecration to Him. I'm so glad for it, aren't you?

When I was thinking about this, my mind went to a statement. I looked it up in Volume 1 of the *Testimonies*:

"Our holy faith cries out, Separation" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1*, page 240.

Oh, how that separation has been and is being eroded in these times of apostasy. But as we have joined with those who are seeking to give the trumpet a certain sound, let us respond by lifting the standard, and remember, that means separation.

“Our holy faith cries out, Separation” *Ibid.*

Separation? Separation from what? From everything except Jesus, my friends. This world is no better than when it dragged Him to the judgment hall and took Him out to Calvary and hung Him up nailed to the tree. We are told very plainly that the present generation would crucify Him as that one did, had they the opportunity. I remember dear Elder McGuire, seeking to make this very practical and very graphic, used to give this illustration. “Suppose,” he said, “we should hear of a young wife whose husband has been brutally murdered. And several days after the funeral, we think to comfort her. So we go over to her house to visit with her and extend our sympathies. As we draw near the door, we hear music and laughter inside. We wonder at it. She finally answers the door and in an embarrassed way, asks us in. We notice a group of men in there that are joining in this music and laughter, and finally in answer to our question, she admits that these are the men that murdered her husband!”

Unthinkable, isn't it friends? Unthinkable. Laughing and chatting and having fun with the men that murdered her husband. But when the Christian finds his pleasure in this world—the things of this world, the people of this world—when he finds fun with those whose hearts are not with Jesus, it is all this and *worse* than this that is going on. Do you see?

And so the apostle says,

“...The friendship of the world is enmity with God?
whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the
enemy of God” James 4:4.

“Ah, but,” somebody says, “Brother Frazee, don't you think we ought to mingle with the world and try to help them?”

Ah, it makes a world of difference, friends, why we go, what our objective is. I remember Elder McElhaney telling us of this simple fact, that as one of these great ships plows its way across the ocean, it's all right for the ship to be in the water as long as the water doesn't get in the ship. And this is precisely what we are dealing with. We may be surrounded with the waters of sin—Joseph was in Egypt, Daniel was in Babylon—but thank God, not a drop got inside of their minds, hearts, and lives!

“Our holy faith cries out, Separation” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1, page 240.*

And if you want something interesting, read the next sentence there in *Volume 1, page 240*. I leave it with you to look up. You will find that the warning extends not merely to the outside world, but to those *within* the church whose hearts are going out after the things of this world. It is dangerous, brothers and sisters, for us to have a close personal friendship with those whose influence is toward the leeks and onions of Egypt, who are

seeking for the fleshpots, either literally or symbolically, who want to mingle with the world in music, in literature, in drama, in opera, in performances of all kinds, who want to mingle with the world in education, who want to share with the world in all these and other fields.

“Our holy faith cries out, Separation” *Ibid.*

And what is it that marks the separation? The cross.

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” Galatians 6:14.

You know, friends, things can look so different in different light and through different glasses. Have you ever chanced to have on a pair of glasses where the lenses were tinted? And you take the glasses off, and the landscape looks so; you put them back on, and it looks different, depending on the tint of the lenses. Some of you have bought goods in a store where looking under one kind of light, the color was so; looking at it under another light, it was different.

To the Christian, the world looks dead because he is looking at it through the cross. Equally true, to the world, the Christian looks dead because the world looks at the Christian through the cross. And which side of the cross are you on? If the world to you looks like the place to have a good time, or the place to make money, or the place to get fame, or the place to have fun, then my dear friend, I deal truly with your soul: you need to be converted. You need to be born again. It isn't baptism in water that will save you; it is to be changed by the Holy Spirit of God. We need to pray, “Refining fire, go through my heart, illuminate my soul. Scatter Thy life through every part, and sanctify the whole.”

As the fire on the altar of burnt offering consumed the sacrifice, so the refining fire of the Spirit of God must enter into our hearts and lives and consume every vestige of world conformity, every interest in the fun of this world, the education of this world, the literature of this world, the music of this world, the amusements of this world. God help us, friends! As the waters of apostasy roll in, God grant that in our hearts, the Gibraltar may stand there of loyalty to Jesus. Remembering Calvary, we cannot consort with the enemies of our Lord. We cannot find pleasure in their society. Mingle with them to do them good? As was brought to us so vividly and beautifully last night, yes friends, but always remembering we are like a diver going down to rescue somebody that is drowning. We are like a fireman going into a smoke-filled building to pull somebody out before they sleep, eternally asphyxiated. This is our mission. We have a lifeline to bring.

But firemen are not finding a social hour there in that smoke-filled building, are they? No, no! They realize that they are on a dangerous mission. And every time we mingle with this world, we are on a dangerous mission, and our only hope is in keeping the lifeline open between Heaven and our souls.

And so this afternoon we are here to commemorate this great act, this great fact of Calvary. But it is more than an act; it is an experience. And so the apostle says:

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” *Ibid.*

“I am crucified with Christ...” Galatians 2:20.

The cross, then, is not only the place where *He* gave His life for *me*; it is the place where *I* give my life for *Him*. And so this service this afternoon speaks to us, not only of the great gift of Jesus for our salvation, this service speaks to us of our privilege, our duty, our obligation, to give ourselves as completely to Him as He gave Himself for us. It calls for separation.

Will you note, please, this message in 1 Corinthians, the 10th chapter. A tremendous statement here. He speaks in the 16th verse of this very service we are celebrating this afternoon:

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” 1 Corinthians 10:16–17.

“But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils”
1 Corinthians 10:20–21.

There is the separation. You and I can have our choice, my brethren, but we cannot have both. No. No. To come to the table of the Lord means to forsake the table of Satan. This bears on TV programs. This bears on radio programs. This bears on everything that affects our thinking, whether coming through the eye or the ear or any other sense organ. We are to present our bodies a living sacrifice W-H-O-L-L-Y and H-O-L-Y, completely dedicated to Jesus. (See Romans 12:1–2.) Is that what this service means? Yea and Amen. Here we meet to remember what He did for us. Here we meet to renew our vows of dedication to Him.

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...” Titus 3:5.

Separation. Another way this word is translated is ‘set apart.’ Set apart. We are meeting on a day that has been set apart—God’s holy Sabbath. The tithe is set apart. That’s holy money. And the God who made a holy day and a holy tithe has said to

Israel, “And ye shall be holy men unto Me...” Exodus 22:31. The sanctified day is the sign of His power to sanctify us—to set us apart from the world outside.

“Ah,” somebody says, “you think you have a ‘holier than thou’ attitude!”

My dear brethren, our holiness is in Jesus Christ. But God forbid that we should turn aside that sneering charge of being “holier than thou” by demonstrating “*unholier* than thou.” God forbid that we should yield to the tendency to bring everything down on an ecumenical level. God has called His church, His true church, His remnant church, to come out of Babylon. The voice of the Loud Cry angel is:

“...Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” Revelation 18:4.

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Let's do it, brothers and sisters, what do you say? Thank God, "...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

But His blood can cleanse us from all sin only as we *yield* all sin to Him. No matter how big the sin, He can wash it away if we *give* it to Him. No matter how small the sin, it remains with us if we hang unto it with our choice. Thank God, this evening hour, in our little hearts (for we are small, all of us, aren't we?), we can make the same consecration that His *great* heart made; we can yield all to Him. Seeing what He did for us, we can give all to Him.

How many of us would like to send Him the word that this is what we mean? Thank God for everyone! And so I'm glad that we have this preparatory service, the ordinance of feet washing. The disciples were far from ready for the communion when they came into that upper room. There may be somebody here that came into this chapel utterly unprepared. But I tell you in Jesus' name, the same Savior who washed the feet of John and Peter and Matthew and Thomas, and looking into their eyes could say to them at the completion of that preparatory service, “You are clean now,” can cleanse us as we yield our hearts to Him and as we wash one another's feet in obedience to His Word. God grant it for each one.

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