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WHY BAPTISTS PRACTICE CLOSED COMMUNION

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"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters: for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person," 1 Corinthians 5:7-13.

A New Testament Baptist Church has two ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both of these were given to his kind of church. They have great meaning. Both of these ordinances have caused persecution among Baptists; therefore, very few will stand for these truths.

The Lord's Supper pictures Jesus Christ on the cross—"show forth his death," 1 Corinthians 11. He was broken and bruised, He shed his precious blood, for me.

That is why I believe the winepress is symbolic of the wrath of God. What do you put in a winepress? You put grapes. What comes out of a winepress? Grape juice. Don't get him off the cross, when you are observing the Lord's supper. Revelation 14 tells us that. They put the grapes in the great winepress of God and blood came out of the winepress. I believe fruit of the vine typically portrays the precious blood of our

Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Supper pictures Jesus Christ on the cross. Baptism pictures Jesus Christ off the cross. Baptism pictures his burial and resurrection. When we observe the Lord's Supper we are declaring him on the cross, believing that he died for our sins. When we baptize a person, they are picturing the burial and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are declaring that the work has already been done. When he came off the cross, the work was already done. He did not have to go to hell and suffer. You cannot practice proper baptism until you die with the person of Jesus Christ. The work of salvation is already done.

The Lord's Supper is done over and over again. As often as ye drink it, you show forth his death, etc. Why do that over and over again? Because we are declaring, in observing the Lord's Supper, that I believe the Lord Jesus Christ died for all of my sins. The ones that we have committed after we are baptized. He died for all of my sins. We are declaring Jesus on the cross. We are not saved every time we observe the Lord's Supper. The old man was crucified with him. When we were baptized we declared that. Anyone who teaches you can be saved and lost again is not being baptized properly.

When we observe the Lord's Supper, we are picturing that we are living by faith in Jesus Christ who died for all of our sins. It is a continual trusting. Those of us who are saved by the grace of God are continually trusting in Jesus who died for all of our sins.

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin," Romans 6:6. *"For in that he died, he died unto sin once,"* Romans 6:10. When we are baptized, we are declaring that Jesus died on the

cross for our sins. It has all been done. We are buried with him and raised to walk in newness of life.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," Colossians 3:1-3. When we observe the Lord's Supper, we are saying that the blood of Christ has purchased us, and redeemed us from all of our sins. In baptism we have risen with Christ. We trusted in him before we were baptized. When we were baptized we were raised to walk in newness of life. Why? Because of Christ who has already died for our sins. The work is all done, it is complete. We never have to do that again.

The Lord's supper does not save us, it just brings back into memory what has already happened to us when we trusted the Lord Jesus Christ. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory.

Now the question is, Why do true Baptist churches practice closed communion? What do I mean by that? This ordinance is limited to members of that particular assembly who are in fellowship with the Lord. God cannot fellowship with sin. This is a communion with the Lord. It is not fellowship one with the other.

Other people are not invited to partake of the Lord's supper even though they may be saved and/or members of a New Testament Baptist Church.

If Brother DeRossitt was in our service, and I have all respect for him as a pastor and as a man of God, he could not and would not be permitted to observe the Lord's Supper with us. Why? Because he is not a member of this local visible body.

I am quoting from an Associated

Press report recently of a meeting of a Southern Baptist Convention in Houston, Texas. It stated that 90 percent of Southern Baptists have abandoned closed communion. They no longer practice closed communion.

There are a great number that are departing from the truth that was once delivered unto the saints. You see open communion being practiced on TV, inviting others to partake of it. The Lord doesn't do that. We must include only those God invites to the table.

We need to know why we practice closed communion. I might say this, it is not because we believe we are better than anybody else. If we are anything at all, we are by the grace of God. Baptists are not selfish. If you will study Baptist history they have always been missionary, striving to get the gospel to every creature. This is what Baptists have done all down through the centuries. They have always contended for religious freedom for all. People have the right to worship in their own mind as they please. They don't have the right before God. But they have that right, if that is what they want to do. We also have the responsibility of telling them the truth.

In the history of this nation, there were times when Baptists had the opportunity to suppress other faiths, to be the major religion and they would not. Baptists do not want that. There are religions today that want to control the government. We need to pray for the government, but we should never try to control the government. God is in control.

We do not practice closed communion because we believe that other people are not saved. People may attend our church when we observe the Lord's Supper. They may be saved, but God forbids them to partake of it, unless they are members of our particular local body.

Baptists do not believe that just Baptists are saved. I have taught in the parable of the kingdom where the good seed are the children of the kingdom and the tares are the children of the devil. No doubt there are multitudes of people who are saved and are not members of Baptist churches. We have people in this congregation who were saved in other denominational churches. It is only by the grace of God that you have come to the knowledge of the truth.

Baptists have always believed that every person that has been born again is in the kingdom of God. When you are born again, translated out of the kingdom of darkness, you are in the kingdom of God, before you become a member of the Lord's New Testament church. It takes the proper baptism in water. The world is not teaching that.

You will find out that what most people are teaching is destroying the local church. They are teaching that by one Spirit are ye baptized into one body. That is simply not what the Bible teaches.

It is the Holy Spirit that leads you to be baptized in water to become a member of the Lord's New Testament church. In that sense the Lord is still building his church. Every person who has repented and put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is in the family of God. There are members of the Lord's family that are not members of the Lord's church.

I believe the Lord's church is his bride. But there are going to be many guests at the wedding, those guests have to be clothed with the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. They are in the family of God, been born again, trusted Jesus Christ as Saviour. They are saved and will be saved now and forever. Those people who are truly saved and are members of denominational churches are saved eternally.

We do not practice closed communion because we are opposed to Christian unity. Baptists believe that it is a desirable thing for Christians to dwell in unity. We ought to be in unity. We do not believe that we should compromise the truth to promote Christian unity. *"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* [That is the only unity there is.] *There is one body,* [or one kind of church, the Lord's assembly] *and one Spirit,* [that's the Holy Spirit] *even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;* [that's Jesus Christ] *One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all,"* Ephesians 4:3-6. That is the unity of the Spirit. We cannot compromise true baptism in order to have unity. We cannot compromise on the Lord's supper in order to have Christian unity. We need to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is a difference between union and unity. Two people can be married and they can have a marriage license, they are joined together, legally. They have a union together. But they may not be in unity. If they don't, they have a problem. That is why saved people should never marry lost people. Where there is no unity, there is a problem. When two people are married and get along together, then they are in unity. The Bible teaches us that the church ought to have unity.

Closed communion does not promote unity among Christians. It only manifests this unity. When we limit the Lord's Supper to those who are truly saved, living for the Lord, it manifests people who are in this unity. Those who we will not observe the Lord's supper

with, must be disciplined from the church. They are not in unity with the church. That is what our text tells us in I Corinthians chapter 5.

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3. *"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump,* [God's people are unleavened. They are saved by the grace of God.] *For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:* [referring to the passover in Exodus chapter 12] *Therefore let us keep the feast,* [the feast of unleaven bread; the type is not the anti-type how we are to do it] *not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* *I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:* [I wonder how many Baptist churches are practicing this] *Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.* [In other words you are going to have to work with them.] *But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat* [The Lord's Supper]. *For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person,"* I Corinthians 5:7-13.

If we are going to worship God, we must worship God in Spirit and in truth. What about Baptist churches that have 3,000 members and 1,000 attend. That is not scriptural, friend. The Bible tells us that if a person won't assemble, you can just put it down he is in some kind of mess. If you don't have enough love for the Lord to assemble, if you don't believe in church discipline, then you don't believe what the Bible says. There is a reason behind this, *"put away from among yourselves that wicked person."* Do you know why? Because God cannot fellowship with sin. We cannot fellowship when there is this kind of sin in our midst.

People will quote *"Judge not, that ye be not judged."* That's about all they know. But the same chapter says, *"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged,"* Matthew 7:1-2. We need to be willing to be judged with the same judgment. Then he goes on to say, don't you know you are going to judge angels? How much more that pertains to this life. God's people better start judging some things. Some judgment is placed upon us. I Corinthians chapter 5 tells us when we discipline a member and set them outside the Lord's church that it is for the destruction of the flesh. *"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may*

be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," I Corinthians 5:5. It is a serious thing for a child of God to be disciplined from the Lord's New Testament church. There is protection in the Lord's church.

Open communion is an open rebellion against God's word. Various religious groups can meet together, they can sing, they can receive one another's baptism, they can invite one another to the communion table; but God does not accept it. They are divided in doctrine and practice. The Lord is very plain to his people. *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"* II Corinthians 6:17.

Baptist practice closed communion because we believe the Lord himself gave his kind of church this ordinance. The Lord did not give the His Supper to any kind of church. He gave those two ordinances to his kind of church. His kind of church has been here since his personal ministry. He observed the Lord's Supper with his apostles in the upper room before Pentecost.

So the Lord's Supper is not merely a Christian ordinance, it is a church ordinance. It belongs to the local, visible body of baptized believers, the Lord's church. It does not belong to Christians, it belongs to his church. We are to keep the ordinances as God has given them to us. There is no instance in the Bible where the Lord's Supper was observed except in church capacity. *"If therefore the whole church be come together into one place,"* I Corinthians 14:23. Now that eliminates universal church--that is a local, visible church. *"When ye come together therefore into one place,"* I Corinthians 11:20. That is a local, visible, body of baptized believers.

The Bryan Station Baptist Church is His kind of assembly. Though in the same family, and same kingdom, the members of other Baptist churches are not members of this particular assembly. We are not responsible for them. We are responsible for this body to keep it glorifying the Lord. To Him be glory in the assembly.

The first observance was strictly to the apostles who were first members of the Lord's New Testament church. The instructions given in I Corinthians, chapter 11, was given by the Apostle Paul. Look how he started it. *"For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.* [Notice the seriousness of this.] *For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.* [Do you realize that God allows people in his church who cause divisions, in order that God's people would rise up against them. Does not light make manifest? Are not God's children

supposed to take issue with things that are false?] *When ye come together therefore into one place,* [if there are divisions among you] *this is not to eat the Lord's supper,"* I Corinthians 11:18-20. This is saying, you can't eat the Lord's supper. God is not pleased with it, you are not in fellowship when there are divisions in the church.

Some may say, "that does not mean what it says." Let's look at his word in John 9:16. *"Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, [talking about Jesus] because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them."* One person was teaching one thing, another person teaching another thing. The Bible says, you cannot observe the Lord's Supper when there are divisions among you. We see the same word exactly in John 7:43, *"So there was a division among the people because of him."*

What is the will of God for the Bryan Station Baptist Church? *"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment,"* I Corinthians 1:9-10. Our church ought to have the mind of Christ. We should have the same mind and the same judgment.

When the truth has been taught and the members know what God would have them to do, then when a vote is taken to discipline a member, every child of God who is a member of that church, ought to vote to uphold the truth. Some may say, "I am not going to vote." You better vote. When you fail to vote, it is a vote to fail to do what God told you to do. That is serious business--we are dealing with the things of God here. The Bible says that there be no divisions among you. You can not eat the Lord's supper when people are divided. *"Is Christ divided?"* I Corinthians 1:13. Christ is not divided. If there are divisions, it is not because Christ is divided. It is because people are not yielding themselves to the word of God.

Many churches today do not practice discipline. When we observe the Lord's supper, we ought to have members that are not only saved and been scripturally baptized, but they ought to be living their lives pleasing to the Lord.

The local church is called the body of Christ. He is the head, we are the body. Every member of that body should be a working, living, individual member of that particular body. He is not talking about the building. This building is not the church, it is only a meeting house. The Lord is talking to the mem-

bers of a local Baptist church.

Many Baptists will not admit that a group of people who deny that salvation is wholly by grace, practice false baptism, reject eternal security, and practice open communion, is not a church. Listen friend, when a church denies the sovereignty of God, will take any other kind of baptism from denominational churches, will offer the fellowship of the Lord's table to members of other denominations, they are not qualified to be a New Testament Baptist church.

They are agreeing that the doctrine which they are receiving is as good as the doctrine that they have, and it is not. To admit this, is to deny that the Lord's church is the pillar and ground of the truth. We need to uphold the truth. In doing so, we are simply trying to do what God told us to do--to uphold the truth and give the truth a foundation to rest upon. That foundation is Jesus Christ. Baptists should never compromise the truth.

There are good Baptist preachers today who are being put in situations where they compromise the truth. Baptists have always believed, and the Lord himself taught that if we are going to worship, we must worship in Spirit and in truth. The Lord seeketh such to worship him. If He is seeking us to worship in Spirit and in truth, God will not accept any other kind of worship. We need to make sure that we are worshiping according to the Holy Spirit, the unity of the Spirit with the truth.

Denominational churches have a variety and multitude of teachings that differ from one another; this causes confusion. True Baptist churches ought to have unity--not just to have names on the roll, but to be in unity in teaching and doctrine. They ought to have the same mind, the same judgment. This is the reason there is so much confusion in Baptist churches, because people are not in unity. They have plenty of members, but no unity.

Baptists practice closed communion because we believe that people who are not baptized scripturally have no right to partake of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is for the Lord's New Testament Baptist church.

Membership into a New Testament Baptist church takes proper baptism. Scriptural baptism that is administered by a New Testament Baptist church which has the authority to baptize and always has had since Jesus gave that authority in Matthew 28.

People will come and say they will be a member of your church if you will accept their baptism. No, we must not accept any baptism that has not been administered by a New Testament Baptist church that is scripturally authorized to provide that baptism. Do

you know why we shouldn't do it? Because the Lord is not pleased with it. God would not accept it. Jesus himself walked more than 60 miles to get the proper baptism from John the Baptist, who alone had the right to baptize.

To be scripturally baptized is to be immersed; therefore, sprinkling is not baptism. If a person is immersed to be saved, if he goes into the water in order to get to the blood, that also is not scriptural baptism. Jesus Christ died unto sin once. If you add anything to it or take anything away from it, it is not scriptural baptism.

We must not accept any immersion from a group of people who were initially organized by man. All denominational churches have their beginning with some man. You can search in vain through all the history and you will never find any man who organized the first New Testament Baptist church except Jesus Christ. Most other churches have started since the 1500's and the Reformation.

People who have been scripturally baptized and members of the Lord's New Testament church and have that authority given to them by the Lord are his kind of a church. *"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers,"* Acts 2:41-42. They received his word, they were baptized, then they have the right to the Lord's supper. But they don't have the right to do so unless they are members of the Lord's New Testament church which is his body.

Baptist practice closed communion because the Bible says that a divided group cannot eat the Lord's Supper. That means there are heresies, people that are walking disorderly among us and God cannot fellowship with sin. In order to eat the Lord's Supper properly, the Bible says, put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

True Baptist churches do not practice open communion because it would declare that church discipline does not amount to much. If we start practicing open communion and receiving all kinds of baptism, we are saying that church discipline ought not be practiced. If I believed that, I would not practice it either. Friend, the Lord's supper is based upon the fact of church discipline. If God cannot fellowship with sin, we should not fellowship with sin. Before any of us can partake of the Lord's Supper, the Bible says we need to examine ourselves and confess our sins. If we do not do that, God judges us. And when he judges us he chastens us.

If somebody attends our services who is not a member, we know nothing about them. We have no right to judge them or to discipline them. They are welcome to attend all they want; we appreciate them coming. But when they become a member of our church and begin to walk ungodly and out of fellowship with the Lord, we can do that. By doing so, we are manifesting the fact that you are not in fellowship with the Lord. God cannot fellowship with your sin. It is an act just like when you discipline your children. Not to hurt them, but to help them. To get them back into the things of the Lord. Our church is obligated to discipline those that teach false doctrine. *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them,"* Romans 16:17.

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly," II Thessalonians 3:6. *"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself,"* I Timothy 6:3-5.

"And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, [Don't mix up together with him, don't treat him as if he is alright. Same thing goes with churches, that

we have to withdraw fellowship from. Do not have any company with them. In other words, you can not say that you are practicing something, then go right along with what they are practicing.] that he may be ashamed." II Thessalonians 3:14. The only way that you can correct anyone is to show them their error and to continue to stand for the truth. Do not count him as an enemy but admonish him as a brother; but do not agree with the false teaching.

Baptists practice closed communion because they are a witness and a protest against false doctrine. This is why people hate the Baptist church so much because true Baptists will not agree with false doctrine. Others want us to admit that their doctrine is as right as ours--it is not. It is only by the grace of God that Baptists know the truth. Others would have us to believe that our differences are not important. But when Baptist begin to practice open communion and alien baptism they are saying that their doctrine is no different. Baptist are a distinct people, with

a distinct doctrine, which has a distinct meaning. When denominational churches baptize they do not baptize for the same reason that Baptists baptize--to declare eternal security. Only Baptists and old-time Presbyterians believe eternal security.

Baptists practice closed communion because it's the Lord's Supper. It is restricted to the local, visible body. The Lord is the one who determines who eats and who does not eat. He is the one who is to determine who is to participate. It is not the communion of a Christian with a Christian. It is our fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. *"This do in remembrance of me,"* I Corinthians 11:24. *"Ye do shew the Lord's death till he come,"* I Corinthians 11:26.