

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- You can watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.

Welcome: *Icebreaker – When you hear the phrase “actions speak louder than words”, what comes to mind?*

Study Context: This week’s study guide talks about the sacred ordinances of baptism and communion, with particular emphasis on the ongoing ritual of communion in the church. Here is a helpful video that visually connects all of the confusing Old Testament imagery to what is going on when Jesus institutes the Communion meal at the Last Supper!



What’s Going on This Week

This week, Pastor Danny Strange brought us into the ninth week of our series titled *A Church that Pleases God*. Pastor Danny directed our attention to *1 Corinthians 11:23-30* to express that one of the main reasons we **gather** is to engage in the sacraments and ordinances of *baptism* and *communion* as a local church body. Pastor Danny unpacks the theology of the protestant sacraments and suggests that when we practice these earthly and elemental actions, we supernaturally rest in the promises of God, we receive the grace of God that is poured out upon us, and we are uniquely drawn into union with Jesus Christ. As you engage with this study guide, pay close attention to the ways you tangibly express your faith in this earthly and elemental world!

“If you find yourself in need of grace today, good news. God has grace for you! And the communion rite actually becomes that means of grace. It can bring life back into your soul, reconciliation back into your relationships.” – Pastor Danny Strange



The Sacraments (April 10th, 2022)

GROUP MEETING (60 – 90 minutes)

Worship (10 – 15 minutes)

Take time with your group and prepare your hearts as you enter into the presence of God for this meeting.

Option 1: Worship Music Have someone share their favorite song. You can find it online, play it, and even sing along with your group! Have them explain why the lyrics have impacted them!	Option 2: God Sightings It can be difficult to praise the Lord, especially if you are blind to what He is doing. Go around your group and praise the Lord for all of the ways you have seen God at work in your life!	Option 3: Practice of Examine Psalm 139:23-24 / Jeremiah 17:9-10 Allow the Lord to examine you by reviewing your day, your emotions, and singling out any lessons you took away as you look forward to tomorrow!
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Word #1: Process your Own Understanding of the Sacraments (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:1-14 (baptism); Matthew 26:17-25; Corinthians 11:17-34 (communion) – The following texts are often cited when thinking through the sacraments and ordinances of Jesus that are meant for all believers to celebrate within the context of the church. At the same time, there have been many debates and traditions that have surrounded the practice that revolve around (1) the purpose of the rituals, (2) the extent to which God's grace is poured out in the practice, and (3) the means by which we are drawn into union with Christ. **What has been your personal experience when it comes to the ceremony of baptism and the partaking of the communion meal? What is it about Paul's writing on baptism (Romans) and the communion meal (1 Corinthians) that stands out to you?**

Host Tip: This question comes pre-loaded with many traditions and theological debates. Please remember that you do **not** have to have all the answers. Simply be there with your group to listen to everyone's perspective as you discover the significance of the sacraments. If you need any theological help, write down the questions and submit them to a pastor on staff!

Word #2: Allow the Lord and Your Group to Examine Your Life (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: 1 Corinthians 11:27-32; 2 Corinthians 13:5-10; Galatians 6:1-5; 1 John 1:5-9; 4:20-21– Even though the 1 Corinthians passage implies a “spiritual danger” in approaching the sacrament of communion inappropriately, we are still called to partake in the ritual having *examined ourselves* carefully. Some of the suggested ways that we can examine ourselves before approaching the sacraments are by (a) determining whether we are actually a believer in Jesus Christ, (b) confessing any sin that is in our life, (3) reconciling any division between you and another believer within the church, and (d) becoming a more integral part of the body of believers that is becoming more united in the act of communion. **As you examine yourself, which of these suggested examinations resonate with you the most? If none of these suggested categories apply to your situation, what is the Lord putting on your heart as you let Him objectively examine your life? How might your group creatively come together to hold each other accountable to what the Lord has put on your heart so that you may approach the sacrament of communion joyously and confidently renewed?**

Host Tip: The four categories of examination are what Pastor Danny suggested in the sermon. However, a great moment for you to examine yourself could be in the WORSHIP section of the study guide!

Witness (20 – 25 minutes)

- **Pray for the Unfolding Events in the [Russia – Ukrainian crisis](#).**
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to reveal to us the meaning of baptism and communion.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would examine our hearts for any ways we are not aligned with Him.
- Pray for any individual prayer request that comes up in your group.
- **Pray for the entire group and how they may be able to participate in future group meetings.**
- **Pray for an interaction with someone who you can invite into your next group meeting!**
- **Pray for God's hand in the multiplication and revival of your group!**

Stay up to date with our Prayer Ministry by signing up to be an intercessor online at [3Crosses.org/pray](https://3crosses.org/pray)!

Throughout the Week

- **Prepare for Next Week: *HE IS RISEN* - Primary Texts: Matthew 28:1-7** — In the **gather** portion of our series, we will pause to celebrate our risen savior! This week, you can prepare by attending our Good Friday Service at 7:00 PM! Then, reflect on how we are called to respond when we do encounter this truth (Receive New Life like Lazarus in John 11; Repent and be Baptized like the early church in Acts 2, Seek and Find him like Acts 17:27)
- **Follow up between group members:** Have each member of the group pick one other group member to follow up with about how they are growing in their faith as they learn to keep in step with wherever the Holy Spirit is leading them.
- **Join relief efforts locally and around the world:** Looking to contribute to what is going on both locally and around the world? Visit our website and volunteer in our [neighborhood resource center](#) or help sponsor an [indigenous missionary](#)!
- **Life Groups 2022:** For more information about joining a group, hosting a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at avanegas@3crosses.org or Carmela at carmela@3crosses.org