

**I. The Necessity of the Sacraments.****A. What is a Sacrament?**

- 1) Origin of the Word – Latin, *sacramentum*; Greek, μυστήριον
- 2) Defined — *Larger Catechism 162*, What is a Sacrament? ‘A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his church, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of his mediation; to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces; to oblige them to obedience; to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another; and to distinguish them from those that are without.’
- 3) Described — *Larger Catechism 163*, ‘The parts of a sacrament are two; the one an outward and sensible sign, used according to Christ’s own appointment; the other an inward and spiritual grace thereby signified.’

**B. What are the only two sacraments? — Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (WCF 27.4)**

- 1) Baptism — *All were baptized into Moses*
  - a) Sign
  - b) Significance
    - i. Union with Christ (Mt 28:19; Rom 6:3)
    - ii. Cleansing of our sins (1 Pt 3:21)
    - iii. Regeneration from the Spirit (Titus 3:6)
    - iv. Visible inclusion in the covenant of grace (Gen 17:10)
    - v. Membership in the Visible Church (1 Cor 12:3)
- 2) The Lord’s Supper/Communion/Eucharist
  - a) Sign
  - b) Significance —
    - i. Feasting upon Christ not corporeally, but spiritually, yet really/truly
    - ii. Union with Christ in His death (1 Cor 10:16)
    - iii. Communion with Christ (Jn 6:56)
    - iv. Sustenance with and through Christ by the Spirit
    - v. The renewing of our covenant obligations (11:24, 11:26)
    - vi. Unity as the Church (1 Cor 10:17)
    - vii. Pledge of our eternal home in heaven (1 Cor 10:26)

**C. The Necessity of the Sacraments**

- 1) As marks of the church (1 Cor 10:19-22)

- 2) As means of grace, truly, to God’s people.

- a) The ordinary necessity of baptism (Mk 16:16)
- b) The ordinary necessity of the Supper (Jn 6:53)

**II. Warnings Against the Abuses of the Sacraments.****A. Regarding their efficacy**

- 1) Not ex opere operato, but require faith (Psa 78:24-25; Heb 3:11-12)
- 2) Yet they are always efficacious in that the result of the sacraments is not neutral (1 Cor 11:27, 29-30; Heb 6:4-6).

**B. Regarding their place in relation to the other marks**

- 1) Relation to the Word
  - a) The sacraments are not above the Word (or for that matter, below), but alongside.
  - b) The sacraments are not to be without, but with the Word, as seen in the Scriptures.
- 2) Relation to Discipline

**C. Warning against abuses of Baptism**

- 1) Confusing its meaning (Jn 3:8)
- 2) Restricting its mode and recipients

**D. Regarding the Lord’s Supper**

- 1) Confusing the meaning
- 2) Controversy over the circumstances
- 3) Improper administration
- 4) Being too permissive in admission
- 5) Too restrictive in admission (Col 2:23)
- 6) Infrequency (1 Cor 11:26; Acts 2:42; Ex 20:8)

**III. Uses from the Text.**

- A.** We are to seek to be faithful and reforming, most particularly in our faith in the Lord as we make use of the sacraments.
- B.** We are not to think too highly of ourselves. (Lk 17:10)
- C.** We are not to think too lowly of others.
- D.** Let us not be overly scrupulous and contentious in dealing with the sacraments.
  - 1) To focus on the sign rather than significance is idolatry, which is the whole warning of the text (1 Cor 10:6-7a)
  - 2) The sacraments are not debate points but acts of worship.
  - 3) The administrator and administration is not what makes these mysteries efficacious, but rather the Triune God.
- E.** Reflect upon the faithfulness of God and the pledges given to us in the sacraments of Baptism and the Supper (1 Cor 1:9)