

**BLESSEDNESS OF THE TRUTH: THE SPIRITUAL BANQUET OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

**Intro:** - Last week we considered the Lord's Supper from the point of view that it is the table of communion where God is pleased to fellowship with us. Today we consider the nature of the banquet that is ours in the Lord's Supper. Is there still the need for such a careful treatment of the Lord's Supper? Is there still the need for QA 80 of the Catechism? Is it still proper to have such harsh language as we find in QA 80? We will carefully distinguish between the sign and the reality in the Lord's Supper. Last week we saw the fellowship, this week the provision God gives.

**I. THE PROVISION IN THE ELEMENTS:**

- A. One of the important questions we face is how is Christ present in the elements?
1. To be regretted is that the Lord's Supper which symbolizes the unity of the family of God is the subject of so much division.
  2. But the issues involved are not unimportant! How is Christ present? How do we receive Christ?
  3. The question has to do with whether and how Christ is present in and at the Lord's Supper.
  4. Our views on this matter make a difference with how we use the supper: superstitiously or believingly, carefully or careless
- B. The different views:
1. Roman Catholicism holds to transubstantiation: the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ.
  2. Lutherans teach consubstantiation: the physical body and blood of Christ are present with & under the bread and wine.
  3. Most evangelicals today hold the Zwinglian view that Christ is not present, but the supper is merely a memorial.
  4. Reformed view is that **Christ is really present, but spiritually, not physically.**
- C. Why is this important?
1. Christ is present to the faith of God's people and has fellowship with them and feeds them with himself through faith.
  2. Christ uses the bread and wine to direct our faith toward him.
  3. This is taught in I Cor. 11:29 which speaks of "discerning the Lord's body" in the Supper.
  4. This is also implied in Jesus' own words at the institution of the Supper, "This is my body".
  5. Only because Christ is present can there be any blessing in the supper: we meet with and enjoy Christ in his fullness.
- D. QA 80 evaluates the false doctrine of the mass held by the Roman Catholics.
1. The history of Q 80: not in the first edition, but only added in the second and third edition by Frederick III.
  2. Added as a counterblast to the anathemas of the Council of Trent as a solemn protest against idolatry.
  3. Rome believes that when the priest speaks over the bread and wine, they miraculously change into body & blood of Christ
  4. Rome teaches that we are not saved except by the continual & repeated sacrifice of Christ by the priest on their altars.
  5. The mass is **an accursed idolatry**: strong language but correct! We have not an altar, but a table. One sacrifice of Christ!
  6. The elements show Christ. We see signs of Christ's body and blood in which he has fulfilled all righteousness at the cross.

**II. THE PROVISION IN THE OPERATION:**

- A. In the Lord's Supper, Christ has given us a spiritual feast!
1. When we eat and drink spiritually, we enjoy spiritual nourishment similar to what happens physically.
  2. Scripture teaches us that the spiritual nourishment we need is Christ (John 6:53-56, I Cor. 10:3,4).
  3. We are reminded that **Christ is everything**, the beginning and end of our salvation.
  4. We have nothing without him, and with him we have everything. He alone is worth desiring, seeking, loving & serving.
  5. Enjoying God's gift of the supper, may we seek him with undivided heart and enjoy him in all his fullness.
- B. How does Christ nourish us in the Supper?
1. We are nourished by the spiritual operation of the Holy Spirit through faith!
  2. There is an operation of God in Christ. Christ as a man is now present only in heaven, and not on earth.
  3. Christ is present spiritually, and can be eaten and drunk not by the mouth, but only by faith. He is sought by faith.
  4. Christ nourishes and strengthens those whom he has already regenerated and incorporated into his family, the church.
  5. A spiritual nourishment: righteousness, holiness, wisdom, light, knowledge are assimilated by believers.
  6. The spiritual food and drink is in one word: grace. And that grace is all in Christ. Christ is the food which we are fed.
- C. How are we spiritual fed?
1. We are partakers of Christ's true body and blood by the operation of the Holy Spirit.
  2. By faith we lay hold of the promises of God and Christ found in Scripture, preached and portrayed in the Supper.
  3. There is spiritual food. Christ imparts himself at the table to believers as the true meat and drink to eternal life.
  4. There is a spiritual operation. It is through the Spirit of Christ that he imparts himself to believers.
  5. There is a spiritual mouth by which we eat and drink. And that spiritual mouth is faith.
- D. Our need for this:
1. Our inward man created in Christ is not independent and cannot sustain its own life but must be nourished and grow.
  2. Assimilation of this food and drink we become flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone.
  3. Christ strengthens our personal assurance and confidence of faith and stimulates us to greater hunger & thirst for Christ.

**III. THE PROVISION IN THE TESTIMONY:**

- A. QA 80 exposes the fundamental error of the Roman Catholic mass:
1. It "is nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and sufferings of Jesus Christ."
  2. It is a denial of the truth of election. We are chosen in Christ, blessed with all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3,4).
  3. According to this eternal election Christ shed his blood on the cross for all his elect. He shed his blood once for all.
  4. The mass is a denial of the cross of Jesus Christ.
- B. The rich testimony in the Lord's Supper:
1. Christ died once for all for all of our sins (Heb. 9:11,12,28), blotting out forever the sins of the elect.
  2. Jesus Christ has fully accomplished our redemption with his atoning sacrifice on the cross of Calvary.
  3. Christ by his Spirit applies the merits of this one sacrifice to us so we receive this forgiveness through justifying faith