

Means of Grace, Lesson #8 - The Lord's Supper
Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 29.1-4, "Of the Lord's Supper"

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1. *Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in his church, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death; the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him; and, to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body.*

RP Testimony

1. *The Lord's Supper is to be repeatedly administered to a Christian congregation, at such times as the session deems advisable, according to the needs of the congregation. Observance of this sacrament is a corporate and personal profession of continued adherence to the covenant bond entered into at baptism.*

Words of institution in 1 Cor 11

1 Cor 11:23-26 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

- 1 Cor 10:21 refers to the sacrament as "the Lord's table"
- 1 Cor 11:20 refers to it as "the Lord's Supper"
- Both passages show this is a rite that belongs to Christ. He instituted it and presides over it.

Three reasons for the institution of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper:

1) Lord's Supper as a memorial

- "Do this in remembrance of me..."

Psalms 103:2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits...

John 10:18 No one takes it [my life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.

Phil 2:8 He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

- Majority in modern evangelical church limit Lord's Supper to memorial view

2) Lord's Supper as a proclamation of the gospel

1 Cor 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

- Sacraments are a kind of visible, tangible proclamation of the gospel

3) Lord's Supper as participation, or communion, in the body and blood of Christ

- Christ is truly present here and now, meeting with his people in a special way at the Lord's table.
- In 1 Cor 10:16,17, Paul refers to the Lord's Supper as "communion" or "participation" in the body and blood of our Lord.
- We feed on Christ, the bread of life, through faith.
- We are bound together by each of us communing with Christ and therefore communing with each other also.

1 Cor 10:16-17 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? 17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread

Frequency of Lord's Supper

- The Scriptures do not give explicit instruction as to how often the Lord's Supper should be held.
- The church is at liberty to partake as frequently as it sees fit - this is a decision made by session.

Q. 171. How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it? They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance; love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of

their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.

Q. 174. What is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper in the time of the administration of it? It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord's body, and affectionately meditate on his death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves, and sorrowing for sin; in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fullness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace; in renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints.

Q. 175. What is the duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's supper? The duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's supper, is seriously to consider how they have behaved themselves therein, and with what success; if they find quickening and comfort, to bless God for it, beg the continuance of it, watch against relapses, fulfill their vows, and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance: but if they find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to, and carriage at, the sacrament; in both which, if they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time: but, if they see they have failed in either, they are to be humbled, and to attend upon it afterwards with more care and diligence.

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2. In this sacrament, Christ is not offered up to his Father; nor any real sacrifice made at all, for remission of sins of the quick or dead; but only a commemoration of that one offering up of himself, by himself, upon the cross, once for all: and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God, for the same: so that the popish sacrifice of the mass (as they call it) is most abominably injurious to Christ's one, only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of his elect.

- Roman Catholic Church teaches that every time the mass is celebrated, Christ is offered up afresh to the Father in a real sacrifice.
- Reformed position states there is no actual repetition of the sacrifice of Christ made.
- God's righteousness and justice were satisfied by Christ for us, forever. We cannot add to the propitiatory value of the cross.
- In the Lord's Supper, we celebrate the perfection of the atonement Christ has already given

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3. The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people; to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy use; and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants; but to none who are not then present in the congregation.

- At no point does the essential structure of the actual elements change.
- However, the common elements are set apart for special, or holy, activity.

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4. Private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other, alone; as likewise, the denial of the cup to the people, worshiping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about, for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use; are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.

RP Testimony

2. When a congregation is observing the Lord's Supper, worship services in which this sacrament is observed may be held for the sick and invalid who are of sound mind in the presence of members of the session and congregation. There is no instance in Scripture of private communion.

3. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not to be exalted above the regular preaching of the Word.