

The Lord's Supper LORD'S DAY 28

75. Q. How does the Lord's Supper signify and seal to you that you share in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross and in all His gifts?

A. In this way:
Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup in remembrance of Him.
With this command He gave these promises:¹
First,
as surely as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup given to me, so surely was His body offered for me and His blood poured out for me on the cross.
Second,
as surely as I receive from the hand of the minister and taste with my mouth the bread and the cup of the Lord as sure signs of Christ's body and blood, so surely does He Himself nourish and refresh my soul to everlasting life with His crucified body and shed blood.

1 **Matthew 26:26-28** And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." ²⁷ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Mark 14:22-24 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." ²³ Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴ And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many."

Luke 22:19-20 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This

is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁰ Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."

1 Corinthians 11:23-25 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."

76. Q. What does it mean to eat the crucified body of Christ and to drink His shed blood?

A. First,
to accept with a believing heart all the suffering and the death of Christ, and so receive forgiveness of sins and life eternal.¹

Second,
 to be united more and more to His sacred body
 through the Holy Spirit,
 who lives both in Christ and in us.²
 Therefore, although Christ is in heaven³
 and we are on earth,
 yet we are flesh of His flesh
 and bone of His bones,⁴
 and we forever live and are governed
 by one Spirit,
 as the members of our body
 are by one soul.⁵

1. **John 6:35** And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."
John 6:40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.
John 6:50-54 "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." ⁵² The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" ⁵³ Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."
2. **John 6:55-56** For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. ⁵⁶ He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.
1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.
3. **Acts 1:9-11** Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."
Acts 3:21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.
1 Corinthians 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.
Colossians 3:1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.
4. **1 Corinthians 6:15** Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not!
1 Corinthians 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.
Ephesians 5:29-30 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.
1 John 4:13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.
5. **John 6:56-58** He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.
John 15:1-6 I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.
Ephesians 4:15-16 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ; ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.
1 John 3:24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

77. Q. Where has Christ promised
that He will nourish and refresh believers
with His body and blood
as surely as
they eat of this broken bread
and drink of this cup?

A. In the institution of the Lord's Supper:
*The Lord Jesus on the night when He was
betrayed
took bread, and when He had given thanks,
He broke it and said,
"This is my body which is for you.
Do this in remembrance of Me."
In the same way also the cup after supper,
saying,
"This cup is the new covenant in My blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of Me."
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the
cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death
until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).*
This promise is repeated by Paul where he says:
*The cup of blessing which we bless,
is it not a participation
in the blood of Christ?
The bread which we break,
is it not a participation
in the body of Christ?
Because there is one bread,
we who are many are one body,
for we all partake of the one bread
(1 Corinthians 10:16,17).*



The second sacrament which Christ has instituted for His church is the sacrament of Holy Supper. It corresponds to the Old Testament sacrifice of the Passover. The Passover was instituted by God on the night of Israel's redemption out of Egypt. When God's wrath against sin descended upon Egypt, the Israelites were spared through the blood of the lamb which was sprinkled on the doorposts of their homes. Seeing that blood, the Destroying Angel passed over their houses and did not destroy their first born. The lamb pointed to Jesus Christ who would become our representative and offer His life for the redemption of us all.

Besides the lamb, there were two other elements to the Passover to which we should pay attention. The first is the command to eat bitter herbs. This was to serve as a reminder of Israel's bitter suffering while enslaved to Pharaoh. More generally, the bitter herbs portrayed the misery in life due to sin.

The last element of the Passover to which we pay attention is the command to remove all leaven from their homes. Leaven was a symbol of corruption, of evil and malice (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:8). As the redeemed of the LORD they were taught that they were to live in holiness and faithfulness, out of thankfulness for their redemption.

In these three elements of the Passover—the slaughter of the lamb, the eating of bitter herbs and the removal of leaven—the people of Israel were taught much the same as we are taught in the Catechism. These three elements correspond to the three parts of the Catechism, and also to the three parts of self-examination which is required of those who partake of the Lord's Supper. Consider the chart below.

In order to show that His death was the fulfilment of the Passover, Christ instituted the Lord's Supper in the midst of the Passover meal, He Himself being the *Paschal (Passover) Lamb* (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:7).

By offering the perfect sacrifice by the shedding of His blood, Christ put an end to all sacrificial shedding of blood. Therefore Christ instituted a non-bloody sign to replace the Passover. The lamb and its blood is now replaced with bread and wine.

The first question which the Catechism asks concerning Holy Supper is similar to that which was asked concerning baptism, "*How does the Lord's Supper signify and seal to you that you share in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross and in all His gifts?*"

The Lord's Supper does two things:

1. The Lord's Supper **teaches** us about the merits which Christ obtained through His death.
2. More importantly, the Lord's Supper **assures** us of our participation in these

merits. This knowledge and assurance is conveyed, not by words as in the preaching, but by symbols. In the Lord's Supper there are many symbols (cf. the chart at the end of this lesson).

What are the benefits of Christ's sacrifice? They are the same as we learned in Lord's Day 26 concerning the two-fold promise of baptism:

1. Justification (whereby our **guilt** is removed).
2. Sanctification (whereby our **corruption** is removed).

In the Lord's Supper, the promises are the same.

Eating the bread and drinking the wine is symbolic of eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ. But what does that mean? Let it be clear that we eat the body of Christ and drink His blood, not with our mouths, but with our hearts. This eating and drinking is a spiritual exercise. ***To eat Christ's body and drink His blood means that I accept with a believing heart that Christ died for me and made full payment for my sins.*** And when I accept Christ's death with a believing heart, I actually receive the forgiveness of sins. By spiritually eating and drinking Christ's body and blood, that is, by accepting Christ's suffering and death in faith, I am **justified**. God the Judge declares me "Not guilty!"

PASSOVER	CATECHISM	SELF-EXAMINATION
Eating bitter herbs, symbolising the bitter life of Israel in Egypt.	How great our sins and misery are. LD 1-4	Let everyone consider his sins and accursedness
Slaughtering the lamb, which symbolised the blood of Christ.	How we are delivered from our sins and misery (through Christ). LD 5-31	Let everyone consider whether he believes ... that all his sins are forgiven him only for the sake of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ.
Removal of the leaven, which symbolised the cleansing of their lives of all corruption.	How we are to show ourselves thankful for this deliverance. LD 32-52	Let everyone examine his conscience whether it is his sincere desire to show true thankfulness....

But I am not only justified. When I eat the body and drink the blood of Christ by faith, I am also *sanctified*. I, who by nature am dead in sin, am given new life. I am reborn, regenerated.

When we eat Christ's body and drink His blood in faith, Christ enters into us. When Christ dwells in us, then we are made spiritually alive. Christ said "*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.... He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him*" (John 6:53,56). Christ dwells in those who eat His body and drink His blood in faith. His presence gives us life. Thus Paul says elsewhere, "*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me*" (Galatians 2:20).

As a result of Christ dwelling in us, a spiritual transformation occurs. We become like He is. We begin to have the mind of Christ because the Holy Spirit who lives in Christ lives in us also. We begin to do the

things that Christ does. We are conformed or transformed into His image. We share His life. We become flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bone. Because Christ comes to dwell in us, we come to have the same godly nature as Christ (2 Peter 1:4).

All this is a part of our sanctification, our renewal, our rebirth. At the table of our Lord, we are reassured that we partake in this transforming power through the Holy Spirit who is promised to us in the Lord's supper.

We do not leave the table the same person as the one who came to the table - not if we have participated in faith. We may not feel so much more alive. We may not consciously feel the effects of that transforming power. But does a child feel that he has grown after eating a meal? It is a very slow and gradual process, so slow that we cannot perceive it. But we may believe it. The Holy Supper is a means whereby God imparts His grace to us.

SYMBOL	MEANING
Bread and wine	symbolise the body and blood of Christ
Bread and wine	are forms of nourishment which sustain temporal life. In this way the Lord's supper teaches and assures us that Christ's sacrifice is the source and sustenance of eternal life.
Wine	is often used in the celebration of a joyous event. So also the use of wine symbolises the abundant joy of the marriage feast of the Lamb, and of which we now already have a foretaste.
Breaking of bread and pouring of wine	symbolise the crucifixion of Christ. We are reminded and assured that Christ's life was broken and His blood poured out for our redemption.
Minister hands the bread and cup	symbolises the offer of salvation. Just as surely as the minister, as Christ's representative offers the bread and the cup, so surely Christ offers us the merits acquired by His sacrifice.
Taking the bread and the cup from the hand of the minister	symbolises our acceptance of, or our faith in, Christ's offer of grace.
Eating and drinking	symbolises our unity with Christ. When we eat food, it becomes a part of us. Our body breaks food down to proteins, carbohydrates and minerals, which are absorbed by our body and become one with it. So surely do we become one with Christ when we eat and drink His body and blood.
Sitting with others at the table	symbolises our unity with one another. Just as many grapes are pressed to make one wine, and many grains are baked to make one bread, so we who are many are one body, being members of one another (cf. Romans 12:5).

Questions:

1. What is the second sacrament which Christ has given to the church? What is the Old Testament sacrifice that corresponds to it?
2. What did the Passover remember? To whom did the Passover lamb point?
3. Describe two other elements of the Passover and what they signified?
4. To what do these three elements of the Passover correspond? To what else do they correspond?
5. How do we know that the Lord's Supper is the fulfilment of the Passover?
6. Why did Christ put an end to the Passover and institute the Lord's Supper?
7. What two things does the Lord's Supper do for us?
8. What two things does the Lord promise us in Holy Supper?
9. What is justification? How does eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ lead to my justification?
10. What is sanctification? How does eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ lead to my sanctification?
11. Should we who eat and drink at the Lord's table feel that we have grown in faith by eating this meal? What must we do? Why?
12. Memorise the various symbols of the Lord's Supper.