

In the HOUSE *of the* LORD

LESSON #8 – THE LORD’S SUPPER



One way of looking at the Divine Service is that it is a conversation between God and His children. Another way of looking at the Divine Service is that we approach God on His mountains. When you study Scripture, you realize that God really seems to like mountains – giving the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mt. Sinai, burning Elijah’s sacrifice on Mt. Carmel, Jesus appearing in glory on the Mt. of Transfiguration, Jesus praying in the garden on the Mt. of Olives, etc. The two mountains of our worship are the sections of our service titled, “the Word” and “The Sacrament.” In the first, God speaks to us as his Word is read. In the second, God’s Word is not only heard but God himself is present in his body and blood.

Today we take a closer look at this second mountain, the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion. The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper has always been reserved for those who are mature in their faith, who have been baptized and properly instructed, and have made a confession of unity with fellow members of the Christian Church.

A Sacrament literally means “a holy thing.” Again, the Lutheran Church defines a sacrament as ...

1. It is a sacred act instituted (commanded) by Jesus while He was on earth.
2. It has a visible element connected to the Word of God.
3. It offers, gives and seals to us the forgiveness of sins, new life, and salvation.

God spoke of a new covenant – a new promise that was coming – in Jeremiah 31:31-34: “The time is coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ... For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” This new covenant would be fulfilled through Jesus.

What is the Lord’s Supper?

Read Matthew 26:17-30. On Thursday of Holy Week (the week before Christ’s death and resurrection) Jesus and His disciples sat down to eat. What special feast were they about to celebrate?



What does Jesus mean by saying “my appointed time is near?” (v18)

Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper. What visible element does He first give to them?

What statement does Jesus make concerning the bread? (v26)

Jesus then gives them wine. What does He say about it? (v28)

What blessing does Jesus say had been given to the disciples through this? (v28b)

What two earthly elements does Jesus use in the Lord’s Supper?

Therefore, what do we receive when we partake of the Lord's Supper?

- 1 Corinthians 10:16 *Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?*
- 1 Corinthians 11:27 *Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.*

What blessings do we receive in the Lord's Supper?

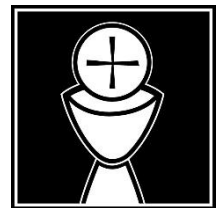
- Matthew 26:28 *This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*
- Luke 22:19-20 *And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.*
- Romans 5:9 *Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!*
- Romans 6:22-23 *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

What are the "unions" in Holy Communion?

Union between

Union between

Union between



What happens at the Lord's Table?

In the Lord's Supper we celebrate the vertical relationship between God and His children. There is also a horizontal relationship that we celebrate as a unity of fellow Christians based on our confession of faith. The study of God's Word together and the confessing of that faith in public is the practice that we call "confirmation."

A comparison of the major differences

	Bible (Lutheran)	Roman Catholic	Reformed
Bread and Wine	Yes	No	Yes
Body and Blood of Christ	Yes	Yes	No

Who teaches it:	The Bible (Lutheran)	Roman Catholic	Reformed
Name of the doctrine:	Real Presence	Transubstantiation	Representation
Summary of the doctrine:	Partakers of the Lord's Supper receive the body and blood of our Lord "in, with, and under" the bread and wine.	Partakers of the Lord's Supper receive only the body and blood of Christ.	Partakers of the Lord's Supper receive only the bread and wine, which are symbolic of the body and blood of Christ.
Summary of the doctrine:	The crucified and risen Christ offers himself to you for your forgiveness and salvation.	The priest re-presents Christ as a non-bloody sacrifice to God as a work of satisfaction for the sins of the people.	Christians remember Christ's work and uses their faith to join Christ in a spiritual union.
Reason for the belief in the doctrine:	Matthew 26:26-29 Mark 14:22-25 Luke 22:18-20 1 Corinthians 11:23-29	False belief that Christ's bread and wine become body and blood and remain that way even after the sacrament.	Human reason

For whom is the Lord's Supper intended?

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-29. The apostle Paul had been taught the truths of the Lord's Supper by the Lord Himself. What did he then do with those truths?

What insights does that give us as to what God wants to happen before a person comes to the Lord's Supper?

One of the reasons that a person should be instructed before coming to the Lord's Supper is the warning contained in verse 27, "Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord." If we take the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, what does God say we are doing?

Verse 29 further explains verse 27, "For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself." If I come to the Lord's Supper not knowing what I'm doing, into what dangerous situation do I put myself?

In verse 28 God gives us further instruction, "A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup." What does God want us to do before coming to the Lord's Supper?

In order to examine myself, I would compare my thoughts, words, and actions with what God commands in His Ten Commandments. I can also use the Personal Preparation for Holy Communion found on page 156 in *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*. If I do this honestly, what will I have to admit?

Personal Preparation for Holy Communion

Q: What does God tell me about myself in his holy Word?

A: He says that I am a sinner and deserve only his punishment.

Q: What should I do if I am not aware of my sins or am not troubled by them?

A: I should examine myself according to the Ten Commandments and ask how well I have carried out my responsibilities as a husband or wife or single person, as a parent or child, an employer or employee, a teacher or student. Have I loved God with all my heart, gladly heard his Word, and patiently endured affliction? Have I been disobedient, proud, or unforgiving? Have I been selfish, lazy, envious, or quarrelsome? Have I lied or deceived, taken something not mine, or given anyone a bad name? Have I abused my body or permitted indecent thoughts to linger in my mind? Have I failed to do what is right and good?

Q: When I realize that I have sinned against God and deserve his punishment, what should I do?

A: I will confess before God all my sins, those which I remember as well as those of which I am unaware. I will pray to God for his mercy and forgiveness.

Q: How do I receive his gracious forgiveness?

A: His Word assures me that Jesus led a pure and holy life for me and died on the cross for me to pay the full price for all my sins. Through faith in Jesus, I have been clothed in my Savior's perfect righteousness and holiness.

Q: What further assurance do I have that Jesus is mine and I am his?

A: In Holy Communion he gives me his body and blood together with the bread and wine as a truly life-giving food and drink to unite me with him and my fellow believers. By means of this sacrament, Jesus not only forgives my sins but sweeps away all my doubts about his love for me, gives me his own strength to live a God-pleasing life, and grants me a joyful foretaste of heaven.

Q: How can I be sure that I receive all these blessings in the Lord's Supper?

A: I have his own word spoken as his last will and testament on the night before he died. There he tells me: "Take and eat; this is my body. Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."

Q: How will I respond to this priceless gift from Jesus?

A: I will daily thank and praise him for his love to me. With his help I will fight temptation, do my best to correct whatever wrongs I have done, and serve him and those around me with love and good works.

Lord Jesus, with joy and gratitude I now come to your table to receive the precious food of your life-giving body and blood. May it strengthen me to remain in you as you remain in me, so that I bear fruit in devoted service to you and in acts of kindness to others. Amen.

Why would God want us to do that before coming to the Lord's Supper?

What should I do if I've wronged someone and haven't settled the matter. Should I still come to the Lord's Supper?

- *Matthew 5:23-24 Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.*

God gives us one further word of instruction in 1 Corinthians 10:17, "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf." If I take the Lord's Supper with someone, what am I confessing about our beliefs?

Celebrating the Lord's Supper on the basis of this unity is known as "close communion."

Close Communion

Who is properly prepared to receive Holy Communion? Communion should only be given to those who..

- *1 Corinthians 11:27-29 Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*
- *1 John 1:8-9 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*
- *1 Corinthians 10:21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.*
- *1 Corinthians 10:16-17 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.*

This Biblical doctrine is called "close communion," and has been the practice of the Christian Church all through the ages.

What does God command concerning the unity of the Church?

- *1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.*

What is an unfortunate truth about how some people destroy the unity of the Church?

- *Matthew 7:15 Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.*
- *1 Timothy 4:1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.*

Why should we receive Communion only in our own church or church body?

- John 8:31 *Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples."*
- Romans 16:17 *I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.*
- 1 Corinthians 10:17 *Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.*

Joint Communion signifies a common faith.

When the Lord gave His Passover Meal to the Children of Israel, it was only for those who believed in Him as their Savior God. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper to replace the Passover Meal, it was with His close circle of disciples, not large crowds. This highlights what the Church has always practiced. The Lord's Supper is a meal of close spiritual fellowship. It is an expression of this close fellowship.

Once we are united in faith, how often should we come together to receive the Lord's Supper?

- Luke 22:19 *And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."*
- 1 Corinthians 11:24-26 *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."²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

What if I am unable to receive the Lord's Supper because I am the hospital or homebound?

What should I do about worship and communion if I am on vacation?

If my faith is weak, should I come to the Lord's Supper?

- Matthew 11:28-29 *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*
- Isaiah 40:29-31 *He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;³¹ but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*
- Isaiah 42:3 *A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.*

The communion liturgy for the Divine Service

Preface

M: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: It is good and right so to do.

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who brought the gift of salvation to all people by his death on the tree of the cross, so that the devil, who overcame us by a tree would in turn by a tree be overcome. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Holy, Holy, Holy/Sanctus

C: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of might: heav'n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

Words of Institution

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my (+) body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my (+) blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

O Christ, Lamb of God/Agnus Dei

C: O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace. Amen. Amen.

A hymn that teaches the faith: Christian Worship Supplement #741 – "Take and Eat"

***Refrain:* Take and eat, take and eat, this is my body given up for you.
Take and drink, take and drink, this is my blood given up for you.**

1 I am the Word that spoke and light was made; I am the seed that died to be reborn; I am the bread that comes from heav'n above; I am the vine that fills your cup with joy. ***Refrain***

2 I am the way that leads the exile home; I am the truth that sets the captive free; I am the life that raises up the dead; I am your peace, true peace my gift to you. ***Refrain***

3 I am the Lamb that takes away your sin; I am the gate that guards you night and day. You are my flock: you know the Shepherd's voice; You are my own: your ransom is my blood. ***Refrain***

4 I am the cornerstone that God has laid, A chosen stone and precious in his eyes. You are God's dwelling place; on me you rest Like living stones, a temple for God's praise. ***Refrain***

5 I am the Light that came into the world; I am the Light that darkness cannot hide; I am the Morning Star that never sets. Lift up your face; in you my light will shine. ***Refrain***

6 I am the First and Last, the living One; I am the Lord who died that you might live; I am the Bridegroom, this my wedding song. You are my bride; come to the marriage feast. ***Refrain***