

CP - 5/21/23

The Lord's Supper - 1 Corinthians 11:17–34

Found in Mark 14:22–25, Matthew 26:26–29, and Luke 22:14–20

1a. What do we call it?

- A **“sacrament”** or **“ordinance”**?
 - “Sacrament” (from Latin Vulgate, *sacramentum*, from μυστήριον, “mystery”) vs Ordinance
 - RCC has seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, matrimony, holy orders, and extreme unction) - really no biblical warrant except for James 5:
 - Protestants have two: baptism and the Lord's Supper
 - The danger of *ex opere operato*, “by the work performed”
- **The reality is different from the sign of it. Ordinances are signs of the reality. “The sign is secondary, outward and visible. The reality is primary, inward, and invisible.” (Alistair Begg)**
 - Gregg Allison: “Protestant theology of the sacraments emphasizes the necessity of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and faith in conjunction with baptism and the Lord's Supper while denying that these rites confer grace *ex opera operato* and are necessary for salvation as maintained by Catholic sacramental theology.”
- **We use “ordinance” to clarify that the Lord's Supper is a sign and does not confer grace on its own.**
 - Ordinances because they were ordained by Christ, given by him!
 - Ordinances given to remind us of Christ, His work, and our salvation
 - Baptism - initial entrance into the body of Christ - initial obedience, reminder
 - Lord's Supper - continual communion with Christ and his body - ongoing obedience, reminder

1b. What do we call it? (the event that we will observe today)

- “The breaking of bread” (Acts 2:42)
- “Cup of blessing” and “bread that we break” (1 Cor. 10:16)
- “the table of the Lord” (1 Cor. 10:20)
- Eucharist (from εὐχαριστέω in Mark 14:23/1 Cor. 11:24, meaning “thanksgiving”)
- Communion (from κοινωνία in 1 Cor. 10:16, meaning “participation, communion”)
- “the Lord's Supper” (1 Cor. 11:20)

2. What is the Lord's Supper?

- Christ's reinterpretation of the Jewish Passover
 - **“When Jesus wanted to explain to his disciples what his death was all about, he didn't give them a theory, he gave them a meal.” - NT Wright**
 - “This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt”
 - Christ takes the passover feast remembrance and redefines it in relation to himself! what arrogance! unless He is the one who instituted the Passover and He is the one who is the REAL PASSOVER LAMB (READ JUDE 5)
- Christ's centrality in God's salvation/redemption
- Christ's reminder of his suffering and our salvation
- Continual ordinance by the church to remember and celebrate Christ with each other

3. Why do we observe the Lord's Supper?

- To obey Christ - why take the Supper when you haven't been obedient to baptism?
- To proclaim the gospel - ok for unbelievers to see us - deny the lies and rumors
- To affirm our unity
- To offer thanksgiving
- To recognize Christ's presence (not transubstantiation - we do not re-crucify Christ!)
 - The elements do not become Christ!
 - We remember and yet HE IS HERE with us.
 - By the Spirit, he is with us!
- To strengthen our faith in the present and hope for the future

4. Who can take the Lord's Supper?

- born again believers
 - Should be baptized
- Those who take it in a worthy manner
- Worthy participation, not worthy participants (Calvin quote)

"Let us remember that this sacred feast is medicine to the sick, comfort to the sinner, and bounty to the poor; while to the healthy, the righteous, and the rich, if any such could be found, it would be of no value.... Wherefore, the best and only worthiness which we can bring to God, is to offer him our own vileness, and, if I may so speak, unworthiness that his mercy may make us worthy; to despond in ourselves, that we may be consoled in him; to humble ourselves, that we may be elevated by him; to accuse ourselves, that we may be justified by him; to aspire, moreover, to the unity which he recommends in the Supper; and, as he makes us all one in himself, to desire to have all one soul, one heart, one tongue.

If we ponder and meditate on these things, we may be shaken but will never be overwhelmed by such considerations as these, how shall we, who are devoid of all good, polluted by the defilements of sin, and half dead, worthily eat the body of the Lord? We shall rather consider that we, who are poor, are coming to a benevolent giver, sick to a physician, sinful to the author of righteousness, dead to him who gives life; that worthiness which is commanded by God, consists especially in faith, which places all things in Christ, nothing in ourselves, and in charity, charity which, though imperfect, it may be sufficient to offer to God, that he may increase it, since it cannot be fully rendered." (John Calvin)

****When do we take it?

- publicly together (not individually but with the whole church)
- "as often" - freedom and flexibility - regularly so that you do not forget its meaning; not routinely so as to forget its value - however, it is permanent "until he comes"

5. How do we take the Lord's Supper? - IN FAITH

- Looking back in remembrance of Jesus
- Looking up in thanksgiving to God
- Looking within to examine ourselves
- Looking around in unity and celebration
- Looking forward in confident hope - the great feast to come! (Rev 19) - We behold him now in faith; then we shall behold him with sight!