

Lesson Nine

In Lesson 8 we found out what a sacrament is. We also looked at the first of the sacraments the Holy Spirit uses in dealing with us. In this lesson we will learn about the other sacrament, the Lord's Supper.

What is the Lord's Supper?

God says:	From this we know:
<i>Matthew 26:26-28</i> "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"	The Lord's Supper is a sacrament Jesus created on the night before His death. It involves eating bread and drinking wine in which God gives us Jesus' body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. It is also sometimes called Holy Communion or Eucharist. It is a sacrament, because it was instituted by Jesus; it uses earthly elements (bread and wine) connected with God's word; and it offers the forgiveness of sins.

Teachings In Christian Churches Regarding The Lord's Supper

Transubstantiation

is taught by the Roman Catholic Church. This teaching states that the priest changes the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood by using the words of Christ. Then Christ is re-sacrificed for the sins of the people.

Representation

is taught by many Protestant churches such as Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Evangelical Free, Reformed and others. This teaching states that the Lord's Supper is merely a symbolic way for Christians to demonstrate their loyalty to Jesus. The body and blood of Christ are not recognized, only the bread and wine are thought to be present.

What are we actually receiving in the Lord's Supper?

God says:	From this we know:
<i>Mark 14:22-24</i> "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take it; this is my body.' Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them,	We receive bread and wine in a natural way and the true body and blood of Jesus in a supernatural way. This is often referred to as <i>Real Presence</i> .

God says:**From this we know:**

and they all drank from it. 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,' he said to them."

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?"

The teaching of Real Presence does not make sense to human reason. How can it be true?

God says:**From this we know:**

Ephesians 3:20 "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us..."

Matthew 19:26 "Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'"

God doesn't tell us how, he just tells us that it is and God can do anything. It is the promise of God that gives us the body and blood of Jesus and the forgiveness of sins. Just like with the Bible's teachings about baptism, we don't have to understand it in order to receive its benefits.

What are the benefits of the Lord's Supper?

God says:**From this we know:**

Matthew 26:26-28 "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"

We receive forgiveness of sins because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, once for all people. But Jesus gives us his body and blood as a visible reminder of the forgiveness he won for us on the cross. The Holy Spirit uses this to assure us of our forgiveness and to strengthen our faith.

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.'"

We remember the incredible sacrifice of Jesus.

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>1 Corinthians 11:23-26</i> “For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night 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, 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.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.”</p>	<p>We proclaim the Lord's death to pay for the sins of all people to everyone present. We preach the gospel!</p>

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are both sacraments. However, there is a very important difference between them. What is this difference?

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>1 Corinthians 11:27-31</i> “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. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.”</p>	<p>If we take communion, but we are not properly prepared, we do ourselves harm.</p>

How do we know if we are prepared to take the Lord's Supper?

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>1 John 1:8-9</i> “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.”</p>	<p>We are prepared if we are repentant, that is, sorry for our sins and do not want to do them again.</p>
<p><i>Matthew 26:26-28</i> “While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it</p>	<p>We are prepared if we believe in Jesus’ promise of forgiveness.</p>

God says:**From this we know:**

to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"

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 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."

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."

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."

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

We are prepared if we believe that the body and blood of Jesus are truly present.

We are prepared if we are in unity with those who commune with us. That is, we believe all the same truths of God's word as the others and we are holding no grudges against them.

God says:**From this we know:**

Matthew 6:14-15 "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Because of the serious warning given about taking the Lord's Supper when not properly prepared, some churches practice Close (or Closed) Communion. What does it mean to practice Close Communion?

It means to attempt to follow the Lord's guidelines by:

- Asking that communicants be Christians who recognize the presence of the Lord's body and blood. It takes a Christian to remember Christ and proclaim His death. It takes a Christian who has been instructed to recognize Jesus' body and blood to avoid judgment.
- Asking that communicants examine themselves prior to communion. Each communicant has the obligation of making sure they are repentant. Again this takes instruction. Close communion avoids the "herd mentality."
- Asking that communicants are one in faith with each other and are not willfully clinging to false teaching. Since people can't judge hearts, this can only be done on the basis of talking together. It is dishonest to stand before the Lord's altar and pretend we are united with other Christians or church bodies if our statements of beliefs do not agree.

There is one last item to discuss about the Lord's Supper. In a similar fashion to baptism, the Bible does not command every detail of how the Lord's Supper is to be conducted. Some churches use one loaf of bread and some use individual wafers of bread. Some congregations use a "common cup", others use individual cups for each communicant. Some congregations have the pastor perform all the tasks, others have lay members assist. The details of the Lord's Supper that are not specifically commanded in the Bible are left for each congregation to decide. However, those things that are commanded must not be changed to suit individual tastes.

All Bible passages are from the New International Version.