

# Sharing in the Lord's Supper

*Matthew 26:26-30*

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*May 1, 2022 a.m.*

Introduction: We often refer to the 2 ordinances of our church as being baptism & the Lord's Supper. What is an ordinance? It can be defined generally as "a direction or command of an authoritative nature" or more specifically as "an established or prescribed practice or usage, especially a religious rite" (Webster). In a church setting, we mean that which is an outward act of obedience. Concerning baptism, our constitution states, "As Christ was baptized by immersion in the Jordan River, likewise each believer is commanded to be Scripturally baptized – buried with Christ, risen in newness of life." Section 2 under Ordinances states, "Observance of the Lord's Supper shall be held sometime during the first week of each month on a regular basis. Every born again believer is eligible to partake of the Lord's Supper." We use the terms Lord's Supper, Lord's Table, & Communion synonymously to refer to the breaking of bread that was established by Christ (Mt. 26:26), explained by the epistles (I Cor. 11:23ff), & exemplified by the early church (Acts 2:42; 20:7). Consider with me this morning how the Lord's Table is defined by the "scholars," described by the Scriptures, & discerned by the saints.

## I. The Lord's Supper as **defined** by the "scholars" (4 major views)

### A. Transubstantiation > Roman Catholic view

1. This refers to change ("tran") in the substance.
2. The bread & wine actually become the body & blood of Christ (this view claims).
3. This emphasizes the re-crucifixion of Christ.
4. Those who receive the "Mass" receive Christ & therefore salvation (supposedly based on John 6:48-58; but compare 6:35 & 6:53 with Hebrews 10:10, 12).

### B. Consubstantiation > Lutheran church

1. This refers to being present alongside ("con").
2. The unchanged substance of the bread is united with the substance of the glorified body of Christ.
3. The Lutheran catechism states: "It is the true body & blood of the Lord Christ, in & under the bread & wine, which we Christians are through Christ's word commanded to eat & drink... but how the body is in the bread we know not."
4. This supposes a sacramental (special grace) reception of Christ during its observance.  
[Note: "sacrament" – "Any of certain rites ordained by Jesus & regarded as a means of grace: baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, holy orders, matrimony, & anointing of the sick, are the seven recognized by the Roman Catholic & Eastern Orthodox churches" (Webster).]

### C. Spiritual Presence (John Calvin)

1. The Lord's spiritual presence is in the elements, but not His physical presence.
2. There is a certain blessing for those who partake.
3. This blessing cannot be obtained without partaking.
4. This view is held by Presbyterians, Methodists, & many Episcopalians (Anglicans).

### D. Symbolic View (Zwingli)

1. The bread is the symbol or memento of Christ's body; the cup symbolizes His shed blood.
2. The Lord's table is a memorial or commemoration; the elements offer a vivid illustration.
3. This is a memorial to the believer, reminding him of Christ's sacrificial death.
4. This view is held by Baptists & other Bible-believing churches.

## II. The Lord's Supper as **described** by the Scriptures (Matthew 26:26-30)

### A. Christ's body is represented by the bread (26:26)

#### 1. Reception of the bread:

- a. The blessing – *"He blessed it"*
- b. The benefit – *"which is for you"* ["...we should lovingly take what represents the body that is for us" (Broadus).]

#### 2. Remembrance in the bread:

- a. The symbol – *"in remembrance of Me."*
- b. The significance – I Corinthians 11:26, *"For as often as ye eat this bread, & drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."*

### B. Christ's blood is represented by the cup (26:27-28)

#### 1. There is a covenant ("an arrangement between 2 parties"):

- a. The covenant foreshadowed – Exodus 12:13, *"...& when I see the blood, I will pass over you..."*
- b. The covenant fulfilled – John 19:30, *"It is finished"* (see also Eph. 1:7 & Heb. 13:20-21).  
Summary: "The covenant God is pleased to make with us & all the benefits & privileges of it, are owing to the merits of Christ's death" (Henry).

#### 2. There is a consecration:

- a. It causes us to reflect upon the great sacrifice He made.
- b. It causes us to redirect our hearts to Him.

## III. The Lord's Supper as **discerned** by the saints (I Corinthians 11:17-34)

### A. The misuse of the Lord's Supper (:17-22)

1. There were divisions (schisms or cliques) among the church body.
2. The love feast had become a feast of "lust."

### B. The meaning of the Lord's Supper (:23-26)

1. The past – an exhortation; the recognition of His death.
2. The present – an examination; the evaluation of one's life.
3. The future – an expectation; the anticipation of His return.

### C. The manner of the Lord's Supper (:23-34)

1. It calls for proper instruction (:23-26)
2. It calls for inward inspection (:27-32) [Assurance of salvation & acknowledgement of sin]
3. It calls for thankful meditation (:26)

Conclusion: Just before we partake of this Lord's Table as a family of believers, consider again the requirements for so doing. There needs to be an assurance of salvation as well as an acknowledgement of sin (that needs to be confessed). In the words of the song writer, might we be able to say there is "Nothing between my soul & the Savior." It has been said, "As an ordinance that was commanded by God, it symbolizes the very heart of the work of Christ for the believer. It carries with it an awesome warning that must not be neglected by believers. As a memorial it should be a blessed, joyous, experience of **retrospection** (*looking back*), **introspection** (*looking within*), & **circumspection** (*looking around*)" (Stitzinger). I would add, it is also a time of **anticipation** (*looking ahead*) to the soon return of our Savior. Will you partake of this communion with us today? Do you know for sure you are saved & are seeking to live in fellowship with Christ & your fellow believers? If you are not saved or out of fellowship with the Lord, I would ask that you not share in this table until you have made things right between your soul & the Savior.