

The Lord's Supper

Lesson 1: The Design of the Lord's Supper

Intro

Its great design is to 1) signify, 2) commemorate, and 3) proclaim the death of Christ as a sacrifice for our sins, and 4) to declare our expectation of His coming again, 1Cor 11.26; WSC 92, 96

- I. A *representation* or *signifying* of the Lord's death as a sacrifice for our sins
 - A. Owen: "This sacrament is a more special and particular representation and setting forth of Christ as our Redeemer, than either the written or preached Word. God has appointed Him to be *evidently crucified before our eyes* (Gal 3.1-3), that every poor soul that is stung with sin, and ready to die by sin, should look up to Him and be healed." Jn 3.14-15; Isa 53.5
 1. Thus it's *by faith* that we come to and look upon this ordinance. By faith, we don't stop at or rest in the outward elements and visible signs. Instead, we see and lay hold of Christ. The Supper shows forth Christ's atoning death in a way that's full of tenderness and love. To every communicant, Christ is being offered in His death and with all its benefits.
 2. The question in the Lord's Supper is not if or what is being offered on God's part. Rather, it is will we stir up our hearts on our part to a new and fresh receiving of Christ and all His benefits being offered to us by the love of our Father.
 3. In the Supper, the Lord looks you in the eye, puts Himself into your very hands, and then says to personally, "Take, eat."
 - B. When we come to the Supper, our *faith* is to be earnestly engaged. We're to see and behold Christ, given up for us on the cross and given now to us in the sacrament, both by the Father.
- II. A *commemoration* or memorial of Christ crucified for us
 - A. To commemorate is to preserve the memory of something by a public act.
 1. Memorials are necessary for us because the Lord knows that left to ourselves we'll soon forget our Deliverer and His great work for us and we'll follow the lead of our pride and rely on ourselves to run and complete the race.
 2. The Supper is a memorial. The Lord told us to observe it in remembrance of Him, 1Cor 11.24-25. When we come to the Supper, our thoughts are to be earnestly and deeply engaged. We're to recollect His eternal dignity and glory, His humiliation and abasement, His extreme sufferings, His painful death under the curse of the Law and at the hands of the divine wrath, together of course with thoughts of His resurrection, ascension, and consequent glory.
 3. It's as a sacrifice for our sins that we should regard His death when we come to His Table. Don't let your minds be turned from this truth. Fix your thoughts on the fact that Christ died for your sins, and keep in view the benefits which that death procured for you. We receive our greatest comfort from this ordinance when we determine to "know nothing but Christ and Him crucified" for us.
 - B. "There are seasons in the Christian's life in which the name of Jesus comes to his heart like a live coal from the altar, and brings with it a warmth, a feeling, and a joy, which angels might come down from heaven to share." The Lord's Supper, believingly entered upon and thoughtfully received, is such a season.
- III. A *proclaiming* of the death of Christ, cf. Ex 12.16
 - A. We declare the *fact* of His death
 1. The continual commemoration of the death of Christ in the church's observation of the Lord's Supper is a plain and manifest testimony of His death to all mankind, and a standing declaration that His death is a sacrifice for sin. It is a standing proof of that great

fact which is the foundation of all our hopes: that the death of Christ atoned for our sins and reconciled us to God.

B. We declare the *manner* of His death, Mt 26-27

1. The broken bread declares that His body broken in death and the cup of wine declares that His blood was shed in death.
2. And not far from the cross, we must remember also His great agony in Gethsemane, at the hands of the Sanhedrin and the soldiers, and on the cross itself, Isa 53

C. We declare the *cause* of His death

1. He was wounded for our transgressions. Our sinfulness caused His death.
2. And the very sufferings which were the effect of our crimes, were by the the counsel of God also the very expiation of them. Our sins caused His death and yet His death took away our sins.
3. In fact, the entire life and death of Christ was all for us, all for our benefit. He was weary, that we might rest; He hungered that we might eat the bread of life; He thirsted that we might drink the water of life; He grieved that we might rejoice; He became miserable to make us happy; He was apprehended that we might escape; He was accused that we might be acquitted; He was condemned that we might be justified; He died that we might live; He was crucified by men that we might be reconciled by God.
4. This is the Saviour and this the atoning death, that the Supper is designed to signify, commemorate, and show forth. This sacrament was given to the church for our edification, as a testimony to the world, and as a prevailing mode of Christ's merits before the Father.
5. "What we compendiously express in that general conclusion of our prayers, "through Jesus Christ our Lord," we more fully and forcibly represent in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, in which we plead the virtue and merits of the same sacrifice here that our great High Priest is continually urging for us in heaven."
6. Scott: "Receiving the Lord's Supper is making a profession of those things in which genuine Christianity consists. It is saying, "I believe that I am a lost sinner who must have perished if Christ had not come to save the lost. I believe Him to be the Son of God and that His blood shed in immense love to lost sinners is an all-sufficient atonement. In this persuasion, I repent of all my sin, renounce all other confidence, receive Christ alone as my Saviour, feed on Him in my heart by faith with thanksgiving, yield myself to His service, and join myself to His people. And in avowing this at the Lord's Table, I avow that I put no trust in that act of my obedience, but offer it as a sacrifice of thanksgiving acceptable only through His sacrifice of atonement as signified by it."
7. "Look up to the offering of Jesus Christ once for all. Look to Him as dying for the remission of your sins, washing them away in His precious blood, suffering that you might be saved. And while you are kneeling under His cross, touched with the utmost possible sense of God's love, who gave His only begotten son, and are affected with sentiments of the most tender devotion to Him who gave himself for you, also embrace with your good will all those who know His love. Then rise up, by His grace, to the sober and continual practice of everything that is good and excellent and praiseworthy and conformable to such sentiments, affections, and obligations laid on you by His infinite love."

IV. A declaration of our *expectation* of His coming again, 1Cor 4.5; 11.26

- A. By the Supper we acknowledge that Jesus Christ will come to *judge* the world.
- B. We also acknowledge that in His coming He'll come as the *Saviour* of His people, Heb 9.28; Jn 14.2-3. Until this day arrives, we need the memorial of the Supper. But when it comes, the observance of this ordinance will cease because we'll enter into the fullness of all it signifies.