

The Lord's Supper as a Sacrament

By Pastor Charles Carlberg

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2 Peter 1:3 His divine power has granted to us **everything** pertaining to **life** and **godliness**, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

This morning I want us to look at the Eucharist

And the reason is, if we are going to be a Sacramental church we need to make sure we have a clear understanding of what the sacraments are and how they work.

Therefore this morning I want to ask three questions

What is the Lord's Supper

How does it work

What benefits are we to receive by partaking of it

I. What is the Lord's Supper?

A] It is not *magic*. The bread and wine do not become the body and blood of Jesus. Nor do they contain grace like a pill, which works on its own just because you take it. Instead, the Lord's Supper is a time of real fellowship at the heart of a real relationship. Therefore, God intends you to be an *active participant* at the Table not a *passive recipient* of the meal. That is, God intends you to understand what is going on and be actively engaged with it.

B] Instead the Lord's Supper is a *Sacrament*. A Sacrament is a means ordained by God to *portray* the very heart of the Gospel that Scripture *proclaims*. Therefore, the message of the Gospel and the message of the Lord's Supper are exactly the same. In both cases, your **faith** is directed to Christ and His saving work on the cross.

II. How does the Lord's Supper work?

A] Simply put: the Lord's Supper works by **faith**. That is, God assures you that when you receive the Sacrament **by faith** (just as when you receive what God says in Scripture **by faith**), that Christ and all His benefits are yours *personally*. How?

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God puts the very signs and guarantees of Christ's redeeming work (the bread and wine) into your hands and onto your tongue

Notice the result: God assures you that when you receive the Sacrament by faith, the *grace* accomplished by Christ is actually given and the *fellowship* with God restored by Christ is truly and actually enjoyed. In other words, the *grace* is real and Christ's *spiritual presence* is real.

Importance: just as it is vital for us to remember that the Lord's Supper is not magic, it is equally important for us to remember that it is not a bare *memorial meal*. Notice then, Jesus does not *just* tell you to remember, He also tells you to *take and eat*. Why? The spiritual reality we are instructed to remember is the very reality that God is giving to nourish and feed us. In other words, what God offers, He truly gives.

1 Corinthians 10:16 Is not the **cup** of blessing which we bless a **participation in the blood of Christ?** Is not the **bread** which we break a **participation in the body of Christ?**

Bottom line: the Lord's Table is a time of real fellowship at the heart of a real relationship. How does the Lord's Table work? The Lord's Table works by **faith**. When you receive the bread and wine by faith, God assures you that He receives you into His very presence and nourishes you with His grace.

IV. What benefits do I receive from the Eucharist?

A] The Lord's Supper is a recurrent meal. Notice there are two parts to this: First, the Lord's Supper is a *meal* and second it is *recurrent*. In other words, it is provided to *nourish us throughout* our lives. Why? The grace that God provides is not simply a matter of the distant past or the far off future. Instead, the grace that Christ accomplished for you on the cross, the grace that will one day fully and finally complete you, is already at work in you and for you.

Philippians 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who **began** a good work in you will **perfect** it **until** the **day of Christ Jesus**.

B] Notice the result: each week you come to the Table in the very midst of life. As *you come*, you bring with you your current needs, new situations, and specific sins.

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As you partake of the Table by faith, God assures you that Christ is with you in the very midst of your present circumstance and that His grace is already at work in the very details of your life.

Importance: remember earlier we said that God puts the very signs and guarantees of Christ's redeeming work into your hands. There's more. He puts them into your hands *right now*.

Finally, *as you leave* the Table, you have the confidence and strength to stay the faithful course. Why? You know that you are not alone. Instead, Jesus promises that He is with you right now in the midst of all you face and that His grace is at work right now in the specifics of your life.