



What do we believe about:  
The Lord's Supper?

At Christ Our Hope Church, we consider the Supper to be a very important part of our worship. Jesus thought it significant enough to make it part of the normal worship life of His people.

*<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, <sup>24</sup> 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." <sup>25</sup> In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." <sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

### What does it all mean?

The Lord's Supper is the New Testament "sacrament" (visible ways God gives invisible grace). It *symbolizes* our fellowship with Christ and *assures* us of our inheritance in His covenant of grace. The *Westminster Confession Of Faith*<sup>1</sup> teaches:

Our Lord Jesus, in the night where He was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of His body and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in His Church, unto the end of the world, for the (1) perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of Himself in His death; (2) the sealing all benefits of that sacrifice to true believers, (3) their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him, (4) their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe Him; and, (5) to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other, as members of His body. (WCF 29.1)

Let's consider some of the key concepts in that summary.

- 1) "Perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of Himself in His death" Key concept: **reminder**  
(1 Corinthians 11:23-26): Each supper is a reminder of what He did for His people: gave His body (symbolized by the bread) and His blood (symbolized in the cup) in their place.
- 2) "The sealing all benefits of that sacrifice to true believers" Key concept: **assurance**  
Jesus designed the supper so that as we eat and drink, He strengthens and assures our covenantal connection to Him and all He has earned for us.
- 3) "Their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him" Key concept: **strengthen**  
(1 Corinthians 10:16-17): At the supper, although we eat a tiny piece of bread and drink from a thimble-cup, Jesus works to fill our souls with strength. Why? Believing that He gives us new grace at the supper, we *actually* get it. We can't see this happening at the supper which is why its effectiveness for us is by *faith*.
- 4) "Their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe Him" Key concept: **drive**  
(1 Corinthians 6:20; 2 Corinthians 5:8-9): The supper reminds us Christ bought us with His blood. Now, we belong to Him and our lives and all we do are for *His* purposes. The supper reminds us to live in a way that is pleasing to the One who bought us.
- 5) "To be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other, as members of His body." Key concept: **church**  
(1 Corinthians 10:17): Christ died for His Bride: all of us. When we eat the supper

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<sup>1</sup> This is one of the historic summaries of Scripture used by Reformed and Presbyterian churches since the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

together as a church, we remember we are part of a family and have responsibilities within that family. We are all sitting down at the same meal because we are all the same family.

## Three important facts about the Lord's Supper.

### #1: the Bread and the Cup: what are they?

We are not eating His *actual* body nor do the elements of bread and wine become His body and blood<sup>2</sup> but rather He mysteriously *assigns* and *delivers* grace to those who eat the Supper in faith. It isn't that we eat the elements simply remembering<sup>3</sup> His life and death, but rather in the eating, by His Spirit, Christ spiritually assures His promises to our souls.

### #2: how should we eat this Supper?

We might think the supper is like any other meal. It is not! We learn this from how Paul tells us to eat it: (1 Corinthians 11:27-34):

*Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.*

It is possible to eat the supper in the wrong way and be guilty of sin! In fact, some ate it wrongly and that sin led to their death. Paul wants the churches to eat the supper and gain the benefits so he explains to them all who eat must "examine" themselves. Perfection is **not** required but *inspection* is; the *Westminster Larger Catechism* (Q. 171) explains:

Those that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are to **prepare themselves by examining themselves** (1) of their being Christian, (2) of their sins and desires; (3) of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance; (4) of their love to God and the church, (5) charity to all men, (6) forgiving those that have done them wrong; (7) of their desires after Christ, and of their obedience.

We come to the table as those who have put our faith in Christ but still need strengthening grace; are repentant but still proud, are faithful but still in doubt, are obedient but still rebel.

### #3: who may eat the Lord's Supper?

The short answer: **baptized believers** in Christ who are **active members** of a church **living for Christ** not perfectly but consistently.

The Supper isn't *just* a regular meal or even a church meal. It is a meal where Christ's life and death are both symbolized and the benefits are re-guaranteed to His people. All who eat have to understand these things. So, some should **not** take the supper because they just aren't ready. The elders are responsible to determine who eats at the table (Matthew 16:18).

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<sup>2</sup> This is called "transubstantiation" and is the view and practice of the Roman Catholic church. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* calls this an abomination (see WCF 29-6). A related view that we also reject is that His actual body and blood are "in, with and under" the tokens. This is the historic Lutheran view called "consubstantiation." The Reformed view of both of these is to reject them since each requires a physical presence of Christ at the Supper.

<sup>3</sup> This is one way to describe the memorial view of the Supper which is the common Baptist view. That is, the Supper is simply a remembrance.

Who *cannot* eat at the table?

1. Unbelievers (i.e., those who have not repented of sins and put their faith in Christ).
2. Infants and young children who have not been baptized or instructed in the faith and doctrine of the Lord's Supper.
  - Note: little ones might have genuine faith but unless they can understand what the Supper **is**, **is not** and **how** it is to be eaten, the elders require they refrain from eating.
3. Those who are neither baptized nor active members of an evangelical church.
4. Those who are under church discipline or who are not trying to live in peace with other Christians.

The Lord wants **all** His people to eat at His table. The elders “fence” (or guard) this Table only to *protect* those who might eat unworthily and *prepare* those who do eat to receive the benefits and beauties of the Table.

But there is hope! **All** who put their trust in Christ, who believe in Him by faith can begin this journey to Christ's table at Christ Our Hope church!

Christ Our Hope's membership class (for teens and adults) and communicants' class (for 5<sup>th</sup> grade or older) teaches the faith and doctrines the elders have deemed necessary so one can eat at the Table. If you are interested in either of these classes, please see one of the pastors or elders.