

Belgic Confession 35 – Lord’s Supper – The Explanations

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The Lord’s Supper 圣餐 is commonly treated in 2 different ways. First, the Lord’s Supper is treated as a simple memorial 纪念 of the work of Jesus Christ. The view was advocated by men like Zwingli 慈运理 and is continued in most Baptist/Pentecostal type churches. Second, there is the Roman Catholic view which treats the Lord’s Supper as being a means of salvation 救赎. Some water down the sacrament and others exalt it more than was intended.

But like good children, you must go to the Father and his Word to find out what he has taught. You must reject any teaching or tradition that conflicts with his Word. To that end, we will examine 3 things about the Lord’s Supper today.

Our headings are:

Why do you need the Lord’s Supper?

How are you able to receive the Benefits of the Lord’s Supper?

What are the elements of the Lord’s Supper?

Our goals are: **That you will yearn for the Lord’s Supper, rejoice that you can get it, and report for your Christian duty on a daily basis as you are equipped for service.**

Why do you need the Lord’s Supper?

We believe and confess that our **Savior Jesus Christ did ordain** and institute the sacrament of the holy supper **to nourish and support those** whom He has **already regenerated** and **incorporated** into His family, which is His Church. 我们相信并承认，我们的救主耶稣基督的确设立了圣餐这一圣礼（1），目的就在于滋养并扶持那些祂所重生的人，将他们纳入祂的家中，就是祂的教会。

1. The Lord’s Supper focuses on the work of Christ on the cross. That message of the cross nourishes your soul. And you need **nourishment to be able to work for Christ and bring honor to him.** Look at the details now.

2. The Lord’s Supper reminds you that you are in covenant 圣约 with the Lord and that you have a commission 使命 from him to advance his kingdom’s cause.

Matthew 26:27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. **28 "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.**

You are motivated to work for the Lord knowing he is your Covenant Keeper.

3. The Lord’s Supper is a means of sanctifying grace 成圣恩典, not a means of saving grace 救赎恩典. When you take the sacraments 圣礼, the Holy Spirit works through them to strengthen your faith. Remember, the Sacraments are visible expressions of God’s Word.. and they produce the same thing!

Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

4. The Lord’s Supper draws you closer to Christ – as often as you eat and drink it. The more you talk to your spouse in deep conversation, the more you draw closer to them. It is similar with the Lord’s Supper. This is really the expression of your sanctification. Your heart is cleaned out of your lusts, and replaced with your Lord. And he nourishes you.

Ephesians 5: 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. **30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.**

And from the inside he nourishes you. (See 1Corinthians 6:15-17)

John 15: 5 "I am the vine 葡萄树, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. **6 "If anyone does not abide in Me,** he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and **throw them into the fire, and they are burned.**

Because you draw from Christ you are more equipped to focus on Christ’s dominion rather than your own elevation 提升.

5. The Lord’s Supper draws you closer together with brothers and sisters ; it is a true expression of unity.

1Corinthians 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

With this closeness – this unity - you are able to work better together to advance Christ’s cause.

This further implies that those who are outside of the church rob themselves of these blessings.

6. The Lord’s Supper brings you joy each time you eat it. It is a celebration of your wonderful salvation. It authenticates you as a Christian.

7. Those who refuse to eat it because they think they are unworthy 不配的 disregard the purpose of the Lord's Supper. The Lord assumes your unworthiness. The Lord assumes your inability to do what he has called you to do. **That is why he instituted the Lord's Supper.** He wants you to be fully strengthened for the task. To refuse to eat it is to deny God's grace. And it is clearly an attempt to exalt the human agency rather than to receive Divine mercy.

8. Because the benefits of the Lord's Supper are necessary for the Christian, those who refused to associate with the church are committing a spiritual suicide!

How are you able to receive the Benefits of the Lord's Supper?

Now those who are regenerated have in them a twofold life, the one corporal and temporal, which they have from the first birth and is common to all men; the other, spiritual and heavenly, which is given them in their second birth, which is effected by the Word of the gospel, in the communion of the body of Christ; and this life is not common, but is peculiar to God's elect. In like manner God has given us, for the support of the bodily and earthly life, earthly and common bread, which is subservient thereto and is common to all men, even as life itself. But for the support of the spiritual and heavenly life which believers have He has sent a living bread, which descended from heaven, namely, Jesus Christ, who **nourishes and strengthens the spiritual life of believers when they eat Him**, that is to say, when they appropriate and **receive Him by faith in the spirit.**

如今，那些重生之人的生命具有两重性（2），一是属肉体的、现世性的生命，这是他们第一次出生所得来的，与众人一样；另一方面就是属灵与属天的生命，这是上帝在他们第二次出生时赐给他们的（3），是由福音真道（4）、与基督的身体联合中产生的；这一生命与众不同，乃是特别赐给上帝的选民的（5）。同样，为维系我们肉体性的、地上的生命，上帝一直赐给我们地上的食物，这食物是众人同样具有的，正如众人都同样的生命一样。但是，为了维系信徒才有的属灵与属天的生命，祂就赐给我们从天上降下的生命之粮，就是耶稣基督（6）。当信徒吃喝祂，也就是藉着圣灵所赐给的信心领受祂的时候，祂就滋养并坚固他们属灵的生命（7）。

1. Everyone needs food for daily life. Everyone needs food for a spiritual life. No one can survive long or well without physical food, and neither can the soul survive long or well without spiritual food. That we have established!

2. Now the question: How are you able to receive the benefits of the Lord's Supper – benefits that you truly need in order to worship God and work for him? You must **receive the Lord's Supper with faith.** (The visible Word must always be mixed with faith.) You see, you might sit down at a table that is filled with the best meats and vegetables...and lots of desserts...but smelling them is not sufficient. You have to actually eat them to enjoy them.

3. It was by faith that the children of Israel participated in the Passover 逾越节 – which was the origin of the Lord's Supper. **They would eat the lamb and unleavened bread – which pictured Jesus...and eat the bitter herbs 苦菜...that pictured Jesus' intense suffering at the end of his life.** And it was by faith that they painted the blood of the lamb...that pictured Jesus' blood...on their door posts...to signify their faith in the coming Savior.

4. Similarly, when you receive the elements (the bread and the wine) of the Lord's Supper by faith – you are spiritually eating the body and blood of the Lord. In other words, you internalize 使内在化 the death of Jesus Christ for you. The Lord's Supper then becomes a source of nourishment for you. This causes the Lord's Supper to become **a means of grace** to you. The Holy Spirit works in his unique, mysterious way through the visible Word that you receive by faith.

Now, as it is certain and beyond all doubt that Jesus Christ has not enjoined to us the use of His sacraments in vain, so He works in us all that He represents to us by these holy signs, though the manner surpasses our understanding and cannot be comprehended by us, as the operations of the Holy Spirit are hidden and incomprehensible. 现在，确实确实，毫无疑问，耶稣基督吩咐我们善用祂所设立的圣礼，这一吩咐并不是徒然的，因为祂在我们心中做成祂藉着这些标志所代表的一切，尽管做成方式超出我们的理解，是我们无法完全明白的，正如圣灵的运行是隐藏的，是我们无法完全明白的一样。

5. Those who simply see the Lord's Supper as a matter of ritual observance 礼仪的遵守 – with no faith - a plain ceremony alone, with no gracious benefits, are treating it with contempt 轻蔑 and robbing it of its rightful splendor, and at the same time, they are robbing themselves of the benefits. They remain weak and lose the ability to fight as they should.

6. Those who take the Lord's Supper but don't believe in Jesus, even if they are members of the church, and make believe they are members of Christ, bring judgment on themselves. It is treating God with great contempt. It is like chewing the food and spitting it out – food given by God. It is eating stolen food. Would God be pleased with such wickedness? Surely not!
Hebrews 11:28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

What are the Elements of the Lord's Supper?

In order that He might represent unto us this spiritual and heavenly bread, Christ has instituted an earthly and **visible bread** as a sacrament of His body, and **wine** as a sacrament of His blood, to testify by them unto us that, as certainly as we receive and hold this sacrament in our hands and eat and drink the same with our mouths, by which our life is afterwards nourished, we also do as certainly receive by faith (which is the hand and mouth of our soul) the true body and blood of Christ our only Savior in our souls, for the support of our spiritual life.

为要向我们表明这种属灵的属天的食物，基督就用世上的有形的饼来表征祂的身体，用酒来表征祂的宝血（8）。祂用这饼酒向我们证实，我们确实是用双手来领受这一圣礼，用我们的嘴来吃喝饼酒，使我们的生命得到滋养，同样我们也藉着信心，就是我们灵魂的手与嘴，在我们的灵魂中确确实实地领受我们独一的救主基督的身体和宝血，目的就在于使我们的灵命得到扶持（9）。

1. There are 2 elements in the Lord' Supper, both of which are non-bloody, as there is no need for blood.

a. Bread – an earthly visible bread. This reminds you of the Lord's body that was broken for you. The body of Jesus Christ was pictured by the unleavened bread 无酵饼 that the Israelites ate with the meat of the Passover lamb and bitter herbs. Twelve loaves of bread were also kept on the table in the Tabernacle 会幕 and Temple 圣殿, picturing Jesus. Jesus was born in Bethlehem – House of Bread. Jesus Christ called himself the “Bread of Life.” And bread is the basic necessity for life. Bread symbolized God's providential care 上帝的护理看顾.

b. Wine – an earthly visible wine. This reminds you of the Lord's blood that was spilled for you. Christ's blood was pictured earlier by the blood of the lamb that was killed and painted on the doors posts 门柱 of the Israelites' homes. This covenant sign has an even earlier beginning in the Garden of Eden after Adam fell into sin. God shed the blood of the animal and made coverings of his people. All the Old Testament sacrifices 旧约的献祭 were bloody as well. Wine is now most appropriate as it is a drink of celebration.

2. Further, breaking bread shows a kinship 亲属关系...a covenant relationship. No one sits down to break bread with his enemy. The Lord himself appeared to Abraham and had a meal with him.

3. These elements must be held with your hands and eaten and drunk by your mouths in order to complete the things they signify. What do hand and mouth signify? They signify faith 信心 - faith by which you receive these elements. Faith is the hand and mouth of your souls.

Conclusion:

You need the Lord's Supper for nourishment so you can properly do the work the Lord has called you to do. What work do you have? To rejoice in him, to worship him, to spread the Good News of salvation to the world – so the world might glorify him. But **for you to be nourished by the Lord's Supper, you have to receive it by faith.** If you don't receive it by faith, then your soul will not be strengthened by it. Your confidence in Christ will not be as strong. You will be a malnourished 营养不良的 person trying to lift a house.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Long to be in church every Sunday for the Word and Sacrament. There are no shortcuts to being strong. Try to find someone who is a great spiritual giant who does not regularly worship and hear and see the Word! You wouldn't find such a person. God wants you regularly in worship to receive his benefits.

2. When you receive the Lord's Supper...and baptism as well...let your mind be drawn back to the cross and receive the blessing of seeing Christ's suffering for you. That will make you stronger. That will make you more faithful. That will give you zeal. That will make you brave. That will make you work to advance Christ's kingdom.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you have no faith. You must not take the Lord's Supper lest you endanger your life. But there is a way into the Christian family. If you ask God to make you his child, he will. That's it. God provides all the means by which you can enter. He puts your sins on Christ and he puts Christ's righteousness on you. Receive this blessed invitation.