



19 Minutes with Luther

Holy Communion

The Power of Holy Communion

Third: How can eating and drinking do such great things?

It is certainly not the eating and drinking that does such things, but the words “Given” and “poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins.”

These words are the main thing in this sacrament, along with the eating and drinking. And whoever believes these words has what they plainly say, the forgiveness of sins.

The Reception of Holy Communion

Fourth: Who, then, is properly prepared to receive this sacrament?

Fasting and other outward preparations may serve a good purpose, but he is properly prepared who believes these words: “Given” and “poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins.”

But whoever does not believe these words or doubts them is not prepared, because the words “for you” require nothing but hearts that believe.

1. It is because God’s powerful Word is connected with the eating and drinking in the sacrament that the Lord’s Supper is able to offer and give the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation. According to the following passage, what additional blessing does Jesus give us through the Word in this sacrament?

“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

2. Our Savior intends that the Lord’s Supper be a blessing. Nonetheless, according to the following passage, why should we be careful about whom we invite to receive this sacrament and how we receive it ourselves?

“Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. . . . Anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself” (1 Corinthians 11:27,29).

3. What do the following passages tell us about those who commune with us?

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, [God] . . . will forgive our sins” (1 John 1:8,9).

“A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup” (1 Corinthians 11:28).

- The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles’ Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ’s Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ’s Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ’s Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ’s Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ’s Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- **Holy Communion (Part 2)**
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord’s Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

“Do this in remembrance of me.’ . . . For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:24,26).

“Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf” (1 Corinthians 10:17).

4. Our church (and many other Christian churches) practices “close communion,” admitting only qualified communicants to the Lord’s Supper. At times people have criticized this practice and labeled it “unloving.” Explain how close communion, however, actually demonstrates a loving concern for . . .

. . . God’s Word.

. . . souls redeemed by Christ.

5. Luther wrote that, prior to receiving the Lord’s Supper, “fasting and other outward preparations may serve a good purpose.” What good purpose might these serve? List other practices that might serve the same good purpose(s).

6. Agree or disagree:

A person with a weak faith shouldn’t receive the Lord’s Supper.

We gain God’s favor when we partake of the Lord’s Supper.

Luther said:

“If you are heavy laden and feel your weakness, go joyfully to the Lord’s Table and let it refresh, comfort, and strengthen you. If you wait until your burden disappears and you are pure and worthy of the sacrament, then you will stay away forever, for in that event the Lord’s verdict will be, ‘Since you are so pure and good, you do not need me, nor I you.’” (Tappert, p. 455.)

Closing Prayer

Lord, we praise you for the blessings you offer in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. May we always come to this meal in humble repentance and leave it with stronger faith and renewed resolve to live to your glory. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Power of Holy Communion and the Reception of Holy Communion.
- Read (and begin using regularly) Personal Preparation for Holy Communion (CW, page 156).

Helps

(1) Through the Word in the Lord’s Supper, Jesus also strengthens our faith in him as our Savior. (2) We should be careful because it is possible to receive the body and blood of Christ in an unworthy manner. Those who do so bring God’s judgment on themselves. (3) Those who commune with us should be penitent sinners who are able to examine themselves and are able to remember the Lord’s death, that is, they have been instructed properly so that they understand the significance of Christ’s sacrifice. Since partaking of the Lord’s Supper together is an expression of unity in faith, those who commune with us should be one with us in faith and doctrine. (4) Close communion demonstrates a love for God’s Word, for it leads us to faithfully adhere to the directives found in Scripture regarding the reception of the Lord’s Supper. This practice also demonstrates a love for souls by protecting communicants from receiving the sacrament improperly or foolishly. (5) These practices may help a person center his thoughts on the meaning of the Lord’s Supper or may be a way of showing respect for the Lord Jesus who invites us to dine at his table. The practice of registration prior to receiving the sacrament may serve these same good purposes. (6) A person with a weak faith should, indeed, receive the Lord’s Supper, since God promises to strengthen faith through this sacrament. In a sense, we can say we gain God’s favor when we partake of the Lord’s Supper, not at all because we are doing a good work (sacrifice) but because of what God offers in Holy Communion (sacrament).