

DEVOTIONAL AID FOR 23 NOVEMBER 2020 – 29 NOVEMBER 2020



**UPPER
HUNTER**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dear church family,

The Heidelberg Catechism continues to teach us about the Lord's Supper this week (and the next week too). There are several reasons why catechism spends three weeks on just the Lord's Supper.

- 1) The Lord's Supper is important. The Bible teaches how important this sacrament is. So much so that Paul warns in 1 Cor 11:29 that "anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks **judgment** on himself." He goes on to say that this misuse of the Lord's Supper is the reason many Corinthian Christians were weak, sick, even dead (1 Cor 11:30). It is important to understand and participate in this sacrament biblically.
- 2) The Lord's Supper has been debated fiercely in church history. During the Reformation in the 16th century, the nature and use of the Lord's Supper was one of the most hotly debated theological and pastoral issues. The Roman Catholic church maintained its error about the Lord's Supper to say that the bread and the wine were changed into the real and physical body and blood of Jesus. This error is not merely about whether God can perform a miracle. Of course we believe God can change the bread and wine into Jesus's body and blood without making them look, smell, and taste like physical body and blood. There were deeper theological issues at stake here.
 - i. One was whether Jesus's humanity was genuine if His body could be on earth (on the tables all over the world wherever the Lord's Supper is celebrated) while at the same time He is seated on the heavenly throne. And if Jesus was not truly human (and truly God at the same time of course), then our salvation is not possible.
 - ii. Another problem was the Roman Catholic insistence that the Lord's Supper was a sacrifice of Jesus's body and blood. In this way, no Christian could continue in the saved state unless they kept on receiving the elements at the Roman Catholic mass (the Lord's Supper). To this, we say what the Bible says: Christ offered Himself as perfect once-for-all sacrifice, not repeating it again and again. (Heb 9:24–28)
 - iii. Ironically, the Roman Catholic also found a way not to offer the wine to the believers but only the bread. The Bible, again, teaches us that Jesus wants us to have both the bread and the wine.

All these issues (and more) culminate for us to reject the Roman Catholic teachings on the sacrament, which will be even more directly dealt with next week.

I hope you find this week's catechism and the devotional aid helpful.

Yours in Christ,

Timothy Lee

<https://www.upperhunterpc.com>

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM¹

Lord's Day 29

Q78) Do the bread and wine become the real body and blood of Christ?

C) No. Just as the water of baptism is not changed into Christ's blood and does not itself wash away sins but is simply a divine sign and assurance of these things, so too the holy bread of the Lord's Supper does not become the body of Christ itself, even though it is called the body of Christ in keeping with the nature and language of sacraments.

Q79) Why then does Christ call the bread his body and the cup his blood, or the new covenant in his blood, and Paul use the words, a participation in Christ's body and blood?

A) Christ has good reason for these words. He wants to teach us that just as bread and wine nourish the temporal life, so too his crucified body and poured-out blood are the true food and drink of our souls for eternal life. But more important, he wants to assure us, by this visible sign and pledge, that we, through the Holy Spirit's work, share in his true body and blood as surely as our mouths receive these holy signs in his remembrance, and that all of his suffering and obedience are as definitely ours as if we personally had suffered and made satisfaction for our sins.

MATTHEW 26:26–29

Matt 26:26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." 27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

*Jesus instituted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. That is why Christians, i.e., Christ-followers continue to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In the passage in Matthew, we read Jesus saying, "Take, eat; this is my body" and "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood ...". Yet, Jesus was right there at the table distributing the bread and the wine. We conclude then that the bread and wine are not somehow the same as Jesus's body and the blood. Instead, we see Jesus's intention here. It is our Lord's intention to teach us that the bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper direct our attention to Jesus's broken body and poured-out blood and by such sacrifice He made, we are forgiven of our sins and saved to eternal life. We also see, however, that this meal of bread and wine are meant to fill us with the hope, because we are reminded of Jesus's return in glory where we will all feast with Him in the new Kingdom. Read verse 29: "I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day **when I drink it new with you** in my Father's kingdom." Jesus longs to feast with you in the new heaven and earth. Do you long for it too?*

¹ The text of the Catechism is usually from <https://threeforms.org/heidelberg-catechism/>, but time to time, for the sake of clarity, I have also adopted the translation used in *The Good News We Almost Forgot* by Kevin DeYoung.