



Formula of Concord Session Six: The Lord's Supper

- **If we're saved by grace, why these human actions?**
- **What is really happening in communion – remembrance, forgiveness, cannibalism?**

Lord's Supper: Status

Question: In the Holy Supper, are the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ (a) truly and essentially present, (b) distributed with the bread and wine, and (c) received with the mouth by all those who use this Sacrament – whether they are worthy or unworthy, godly or ungodly, believing or unbelieving? Are they received by the believing for consolation and life, but by the unbelieving for judgment? The Sacramentarians say No. We say Yes (Ep VII. 2, p.487-8)

- **At first glance, is this a very important distinction/argument? Why or why not?**

Lord's Supper: Affirmative and Negative Statements

We believe, teach, and confess that in the Holy Supper Christ's body and blood are truly and essentially present and that they are truly distributed and received with the bread and wine.

We believe, teach, and confess that the words of Christ's testament are not to be understood in any other way than the way they read, according to the letter. So the bread does not signify Christ's absent body and the wine His absent blood. But, because of the sacramental union, the bread and the wine are truly Christ's body and blood. (Ep VII.6-7, p.488)

- **Why is this understanding important?**

They understand this according to His divine nature alone, and not of His body and blood. They say His body and blood are now in heaven, and nowhere else. He gives us His true body and blood with the bread and wine to eat, to partake of them spiritually through faith, but not bodily with the mouth. (SD VII.6, p.563)

With simple faith and due obedience we receive the words as they read, in their proper and plain sense. We do not allow ourselves to be diverted by any objections or human contradictions spun from human reason, however appealing they may appear to reason. (SD VII.45, p.570)

Human senses and reason do not comprehend. But, as in all other articles of faith, our reason is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. This mystery is not grasped in any other way than through faith alone, and it is revealed in the Word alone. (Ep VII.42, p.491)

- **Read and discuss:** Matthew 26:26-28 [Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20]; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 2 Corinthians 10:5



We believe, teach and confess that no work of man or recitation of the minister produces this presence of Christ's body and blood in the Holy Supper. Instead, this presence is to be credited only and alone to the almighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ep VII.8, p.488)

It is not our faith that makes the Sacrament, but only the true Word and institution of our almighty God and Savior, Jesus Christ. (SD VII.89, p.576)

There is a twofold eating of Christ's flesh. One is spiritual which Christ describes especially in John 6:54. This "eating" happens in no other way than with the Spirit and faith, in preaching and meditation on the Gospel, as well as in the Lord's Supper. By itself, this is useful and helpful, and necessary for all Christians, at all times, for salvation... The other eating of Christ's body is oral or sacramental, when Christ's true essential body and blood are orally received and partaken of in the Holy Supper by all who eat and drink the consecrated bread and wine in the Supper. This is done by the believing as a certain pledge and assurance that their sins are surely forgiven them and that Christ dwells in them and is at work in them. (SD VII.61-63, p.572-3)

- **So, what brings Christ's presence to the bread and the wine?**
- **Is our eating spiritual or physical? Why?**

We believe, teach, and confess that not only the true believers in Christ and the worthy, but also the unworthy and unbelievers receive Christ's true body and blood. However, they do not receive them for life and consolation, but for judgment and condemnation, if they are not converted and do not repent. (Ep VII.16, p.489)

- **Harsh? Too harsh?**
- **Read and discuss:** 1 Corinthians 11:27-29

We believe, teach, and confess also that there is only one kind of unworthy guests: those who do not believe. About these guests it is written in John 3:18, "Whoever does not believe is condemned already." And this judgment becomes greater and more grievous, being aggravated by the unworthy use of the Holy Supper.

We believe, teach, and confess that no true believer – as long as he has living faith, however weak he may be – receives the Holy Supper to his judgment. For the Supper was instituted especially for Christians weak in faith, yet repentant. It was instituted for their consolation and to strengthen their weak faith.

We believe, teach, and confess that all the worthiness of guests of this heavenly feast is and is founded on Christ's most holy obedience and perfect merit alone. We receive these for ourselves by true faith, and by the Sacrament we are assured of them. Our worthiness is not at all in our virtues or inward and outward preparations. (Ep VII.18-20, p.489)

- **Who should commune? Who should not commune? Why?**
- **Read and discuss:** Matthew 9:12; 11:28