

Belgic Confession, Article 35, “Fencing the Lord’s Supper”

Scripture Lesson: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Lesson Aim	To understand three things: First, what the problems in Corinth were with respect to the Lord’s Supper and Paul’s teaching on the Supper. Second, what is required for those partaking of the Lord’s Supper. Third, what is required of the church administrating the Lord’s Supper.
Steps to Learning	Read Belgic Confession, Article 35 and 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 . Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
Discuss	<p>What were the problems with respect to the Lord’s Supper that Paul was addressing in his letter? There were divisions among them. That is, there were hardened differences in opinion and probably class distinctions between the rich and the poor.</p> <p>How do these problems fulfill Satan’s plan for the church? Satan’s plan for the church is its destruction through disunity, backbiting, fighting, finger-pointing and hatred for brother and sister.</p> <p>What does Paul teach the Corinthians and us about the Lord’s Supper? He teaches that it is a sacred meal in contrast to a common meal. That is, that Jesus Christ is spiritually present in the faithful partaking of the meal.</p> <p>How do we know that the Lord’s Supper is a sacred meal and not a common meal? Paul quotes Jesus’ teaching on the Lord’s Supper in which he uses “sacramental” language. That is, when Jesus says that the bread of the Supper is his body and the wine of the Supper is his blood, he is teaching that the saving benefits of his crucified body and shed blood are communicated to those who have true faith. In addition, according to v.27, anyone who eats of the meal in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord.</p> <p>What must those in the church do when approaching the Lord’s Table? According to v.28, examine themselves (discerning unrepentant sin in one’s life and if they can discern the body (v.29), that is, the spiritual presence of Christ in the meal).</p> <p>How is the church given the authority to fence the Lord’s Table? It is implied in v.32 where Paul talks about discipline in the church (church discipline). In addition, the leaders of the church must teach what Paul teaches. Finally, we can compare 1 Cor. 11 with 1 Cor. 5 on excommunication. If the church has the right and authority to excommunicate, then it has the right to commune.</p>
Bible Reading	Daniel 1–6 [Daniel and his friends’ time in Babylon] (covering the great Bible stories)