

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 28, "The Lord's Supper"

Scripture Lessons: 1 Cor. 10:16,17; 1 Cor. 11:23-26

Lesson Aim	To understand that participation in the Lord's Supper means we have a deeper belief that Christ's sacrifice was for me and that participation means Christian growth.
Steps to Learning	Read the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 28 and 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 1 Cor. 11:23-26 . 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>Why is it important to confess that Christ's historic crucifixion was "for me?" It is important because a general, non-specific atonement for sins doesn't mean that much. It's sort of like telling a crowd of people you don't know, "I forgive you all!" But a specific atonement limited to God's elect means everything; we find real comfort and a relieved conscience when we believe this and have it confirmed when partaking of the Lord's Supper. Therefore, in partaking of the bread and the wine, we believe that Christ's broken body and shed blood was "for me!"</p> <p>Why do we say that partaking of the Lord's Supper is a real participation in the body and blood of Christ? We say this because that's what the Scriptures say in 1 Cor. 10:16: "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?"</p> <p>What is the significance of a real participation in the body and blood of Christ? It is to be spiritually nourished. Just as our bodies are nourished and strengthened by food, so are our souls nourished and strengthened by partaking of the Lord's Supper each week. To be nourished spiritually speaking means several things: we believe more deeply that God loves us despite our sins, we believe that God in Christ has forgiven all of our sins on the basis of Christ's death and his righteousness imputed to us, that we have assurance of our salvation, and we find motivation to live the Christian life.</p> <p>Our union with Jesus Christ is increased when we partake of the Lord's Supper. What does this mean? After Jesus was raised from the dead, he gave us the Holy Spirit by whom he regenerated or made us alive. In so doing, he united us to his perfect human nature. To be united more and more to his perfect human nature means we are personally made more and more like Christ. That is, we become more holy, sanctified. After all, as Jesus teaches in John 15:5, Jesus is the vine; we are the branches. Whoever abides in him and he in us, we shall bear much fruit, for apart from him we can do nothing.</p>
Bible Reading	Psalm 120-126 (Reading through the Psalms)