

The Doctrine of the Holy Communion

Passages: Mt 26:26–28; Lk 22:19; Jn 6:53–55; 1 Cor 11:17–26; 29:31; Ex 12:21–27; 22:26; 1 Jn 5:16–17; 6:63; 2 Cor 5:15; 1 Pet 4:1–2

Memory Verse

“Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.” (John 6:54–55)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Holy Communion is an important sacrament.2. Remember the Lord’s death and partake of the Holy Communion in order to have life in Christ and be resurrected on the last day.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is truth.2. God is life.3. God is power.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Determine to live for Christ.2. Determine to live a holy life.3. Prepare for the second coming.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Sacrament of the Holy Communion
- B. Materials Used in the Holy Communion
- C. Holding the Holy Communion
- D. Restrictions of the Holy Communion
- E. The Spiritual Transformation of the Holy Communion

Life Application

1. What Happens After I Receive the Holy Communion?
2. Testimony: “Blessings Upon Blessings”

Memory Verse

Conclusion: After partaking of the Holy Communion, let us make the determination to keep ourselves pure and holy in order to proclaim Jesus’ death and live a life worthy of His calling. When He comes back again, we’ll be united with Him forever in the heavenly kingdom.

Spiritual Teachings

A. The Sacrament of the Holy Communion

Do you remember what defines a sacrament? (*This was taught in the previous lesson. Allow students to answer if they can.*) A sacrament is defined as follows: (1) It is a practiced instituted by the Lord Jesus Himself; (2) Jesus explicitly commanded His disciples to practice it; and (3) it is directly related to our salvation. Sacraments carry the spiritual effect of salvation, making them a vital part of our faith. Today, we'll study the sacrament of the Holy Communion. Let's read 1 Corinthians 11:23–26.

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

1. The origin of the Holy Communion

a. Established by the Lord Jesus Christ (Mt 26:26–28)

Before the Lord Jesus was crucified, He sat down and ate the Passover dinner with His disciples. During this "last supper," Jesus Christ blessed the bread and gave it to His disciples as His body. Then, He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it as His blood, describing it as the "blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (v. 28).

b. Commanded by the Lord Jesus (Lk 22:19)

At the last supper, Jesus Christ also commanded the disciples to remember Him through future communions. He told them, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

c. Example of Jesus Christ's disciples (1 Cor 11:17–26)

After Jesus' death, the apostles continued to observe and teach the Lord's Supper. From Paul's letter to the Corinthians, we can see how important these communions were and how carefully they were held in the apostolic churches.

2. The purposes of the Holy Communion

a. To remember the love and death of Jesus Christ

In the Old Testament, the purpose of the Passover was to remind the Israelites of God's deliverance (Ex 12:21–27). Similarly, the Holy Communion in the New Testament reminds us of God's grace and salvation, as well as of the suffering and death that Jesus Christ endured for us. Paul wrote, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Cor 11:26). The Holy Communion helps us to truly understand the full dimension of His love for us, and when we do, we will not want to sin.

b. To have the life of Christ, eternal life

Even before the last supper, Jesus Christ predicted His death and claimed:

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood

abides in Me, and I in him.

(Jn 6:53–54, 56)

Today, we eat and drink the bread and juice that are spiritually transformed into His flesh and blood after the consecration, in order to take part in Christ. Through the Holy Communion, Jesus Christ lives in us and we in Him. When Jesus Christ returns, we will be resurrected and given eternal life.

B. Materials Used in the Holy Communion

1. Unleavened bread

Leaven is a substance that causes fermentation in dough or batter, such as yeast or baking powder. Adding any type of leaven makes dough rise or expand. The Lord commanded the Israelites to eat unleavened bread during Passover (Lev 23:4–9) as a sign of being God’s chosen people, separated from the world. Consequently, whoever ate leaven during the seven days of Passover was “cut off from the congregation of Israel” (Ex 12:19). The Bible uses leaven to represent sin (1 Cor 5:8), false teachings (Mt 16:6, 12), and hypocrisy (Lk 12:1).

Following the Passover custom, our communion bread today is unleavened bread, made of flour and water. Because it stands for the pure and holy body of Christ, no other flavoring is added. Also, only one communion bread may be used because there is only one body of Christ. Just as Paul said, “For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread” (1 Cor 10:17).

2. Grape juice

During the last supper, Jesus Christ used the fruit of the vine (Mt 26:28–29). Following His example, we use grape juice, or the fruit of the vine, as our communion drink. We do not use wine, since it is fermented by yeast, and yeast represents sin in both the Old and the New Testaments (1 Cor 5:6–8).

C. Holding the Holy Communion

1. Begin in the name of Jesus Christ

The Bible says, “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Col 3:17). Jesus Christ also promises that “where two or three are gathered together in [His] name, [He is] there in the midst of them” (Mt 18:20). Therefore, we begin the Holy Communion in the name of Jesus Christ. The minister then offers a consecrating prayer. After this, the single piece of unleavened bread is broken and given to the congregation, followed by the consecration and partaking of the grape juice.

2. Remember the death of Jesus Christ

Since one purpose of the Holy Communion is to “proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Cor 11:26), it should have the solemnity of a funeral. As we repeat the last supper, we should remember the grief, suffering, and death that the Lord endured for our sake. We should remember His agony in the garden of Gethsemane; His pain as He was mocked and whipped by soldiers; and the intense physical and spiritual suffering He bore as the consequences of our sin.

3. Examine ourselves, repent, and let go of our grudges

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will

be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

(1 Cor 11:27–29)

We must examine our deeds, motivations, and thoughts to see if we have sinned against anyone. Then, ask God to forgive our sins and determine to live a new life, so that we can shine the light of the truth for the Lord.

4. Give thanks, and partake of the bread and juice

Imitating the Lord Jesus' example, we give thanks and eat the bread before giving thanks and drinking the juice (Mt 26:26–27). We also thank the Lord for giving His life for our salvation.

D. Restrictions of the Holy Communion

1. Baptism required

In the Old Testament, no foreigners could participate in the Passover meal (Ex 12:43). Likewise, today, those who are not baptized into Jesus Christ's name cannot partake of the Holy Communion. Because the body of Christ is holy, a person must wash away his sins through water baptism before joining in the communion meal.

2. Repentance of sins

Before we partake of the bread and the cup, we must first examine ourselves. We repent of our sins, so that we do not become one who "eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor 11:29–31). If we have committed a sin that leads to death, we must also refrain from partaking of the Holy Communion (1 Jn 5:16–17).

3. One location

During the original Passover meal, each family stayed in their own house for the night (Ex 12:22). In apostolic times, the believers gathered together when they shared the communion bread (1 Cor 10:16–17). Likewise, we should keep the Holy Communion in one location. If the location is at church, no bread or juice should be taken outside of the church premises.

4. No leftover bread and juice

Following Passover regulations, none of the communion meal should remain until the next day (Ex 12:10). Also, to show respect for Christ, we must be solemn even when finishing the leftover bread and juice after the communion ceremony.

E. The Spiritual Transformation of the Holy Communion

1. More than just symbolism

Jesus Christ said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (Jn 6:53). He also said, "My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" (Jn 6:55). From this, we can see that partaking of the communion bread and juice has a direct relationship with our salvation.

2. A spiritual transformation

What causes the bread and juice to turn into the body of Christ? By faith, we believe that a spiritual transformation takes place when we consecrate them. Jesus Christ said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the

bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world” (Jn 6:51). He also said, “It is the Spirit who gives life [...]. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” (Jn 6:63). Although the bread and juice remain the same physically, once consecrated, they are spiritually transformed into the body and blood of Christ through God’s promise and power.

When we partake of the Holy Communion, we must do so with holiness and solemnity in order to fulfill its purpose and spiritual meaning. Hebrews 6:6 tells us that Christians who do not repent and continue to sin “crucify again for themselves the Son of God.” This means that every time we deliberately sin and do something that we know is wrong, we cause our Lord Jesus to suffer all over again. Once was enough for our Lord and Savior. After partaking of the Holy Communion, let us make the determination to keep ourselves pure and holy in order to proclaim Him and live a life worthy of His calling. Then, when He comes back again, we’ll be united with Him forever in the heavenly kingdom.

Check for Understanding

- 1. What was the origin of the Holy Communion?** During the “last supper,” Jesus Christ blessed the bread and gave it to His disciples as His body. Then, He took the cup, gave thanks and gave it as His blood (Mt 26:26–28).
- 2. What are the purposes of the Holy Communion?** To remember and proclaim the death of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 11:26); to obtain eternal life (Jn 6:53).
- 3. What do the unleavened bread and grape juice represent?** The bread represents Jesus’ body which has no sin, being separated and chosen; the grape juice represents His blood, shed for us on the cross.
- 4. Name some restrictions regarding the Holy Communion.** The person partaking of it must first have received water baptism (Ex 12:43) and repented of their sins (1 Cor 11:29–31); if we have committed a sin that leads to death, we must also refrain from partaking (1 Jn 5:16–17). It must be held in one location (Ex 12:22). There must be no leftover bread and juice (Ex 12:10).
- 5. What spiritual transformation occurs during the Holy Communion?** The bread and juice being used in the Holy Communion remain the same physically, but once consecrated, they are spiritually transformed into the body and blood of Christ through God’s promise and power.

Life Application

1. What Happens After I Receive the Holy Communion?

1. Remembrance and Proclamation of the Lord’s Death

a. Remembrance

The very first Holy Communion took place during the Passover meal. The purpose of the Passover was to save the Israelites from the angel of death, through the blood of the sacrificial lamb. In the same way, Jesus’ blood has freed us from our slavery to sin and death. When Jesus said, “This is My body,” and “This is My blood,” He was referring to Himself as the Passover lamb (1 Cor 5:7). He is truly the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). Thus, when we hold the Holy Communion in “remembrance,” we are remembering:

- How the Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed
- How Jesus broke the bread, and later gave His body to be broken
- How Jesus suffered on the cross and shed His blood so that we can live
- The new covenant that we have now obtained
- Jesus’ promise that we will drink this fruit of the vine in the kingdom (Mk 14:25)
- His grace, love, and power through the Holy Spirit

- His words

b. Proclamation

To proclaim the Lord's death means to teach the world about His sacrificial love, death, and resurrection, and about how we have been saved by the blood that He shed on the cross. It means following His commandments and remembering the Lord's death, so that we can proclaim and receive the future that He has promised to us. We need to spread His saving grace and love for mankind, until the day Christ comes again.

2. Live Out the Divine Covenant

Remembering the Lord's death is not simply the act of recalling His death on the cross. The purpose of this remembrance is to renew our determination to do everything "to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31). Why do we need to have such determination? Jesus Christ "died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Cor 5:15). Jesus referred to the blood in the Holy Communion as the "blood of the new covenant." According to this agreement with God, we must determine to live for Jesus Christ. We must strive to "walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:10).

a. Live a holy, sinless life

After partaking of the unblemished body and blood of Christ, we should strive to live holy lives by removing all sin from our thoughts, words, and actions. That's what it means to live for Jesus Christ. "Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened" (1 Cor 5:7). With the help of the Holy Spirit, we should aim to be like Christ and keep away from "the lusts of men" (1 Pet 4:1-2).

b. Abide in His word and Spirit

To live out the divine covenant, we need to live in Christ every day. This means setting aside time to read God's word every day, as well as praying to be filled with the Holy Spirit. When we do so, just like branches receiving nutrients from the vine, we will bear good fruit. If we constantly pray in the Spirit, we will be strengthened and become more and more like Him, as "he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him" (1 Cor 6:17).

c. Love One Another in Unity

Paul wrote, "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread" (1 Cor 10:16-17). Conflict or division is contrary to the spirit of the Holy Communion. As members of the same body, we should love and help one another (1 Cor 12:20-27). The Bible tells us that "the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love" (Eph 4:16). Let's determine to practice self-sacrifice and truly love one another deeply, from our hearts. To do this, we must lay aside our interests and pray for the unity of His body.

3. Prepare for the Second Coming

Jesus Christ stated, "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn 6:54). Hence, the Holy Communion is a reminder for us to store up our treasures in heaven and prepare for the second coming of Christ.

2. Testimony: “Blessings Upon Blessings” (Excerpt)¹

I received the Holy Spirit during the last prayer of a local Spiritual Convocation, after partaking the Holy Communion for the first time. During the entire sacrament, tears flowed down my cheeks. At the beginning, I tried to hide it, since grown men aren't supposed to cry. But toward the end I couldn't help it. I asked myself, “Did the Lord Jesus go through so much pain just for me? Was it I who caused the Lord Jesus so much suffering? Was I important enough for Him to be tortured, disgraced, and crucified?”

When we knelt down to pray, I saw a vision. I saw the impression of two men. One of the men was beating the other. He was hitting him and kicking him down to the floor, but the other man never fought back. Every time the man was beaten, he fell down to the floor. Then, he would get back up just to be beaten down again. In my vision, I took a closer look at the man that was doing the hitting, and I realized that that person was me! It wasn't long before I realized that the other person was Jesus Christ.

I saw His eyes, and in them I saw His pain and suffering. I asked myself, “Am I beating the Lord Jesus? Am I just like the Roman soldiers who whipped, beat, and mocked the Lord Jesus?” In my vision I pleaded, “Stop beating Him!” and “Why don't You just stay down? Stop getting up!” But I saw myself beating Him relentlessly. I kept pleading and pleading. Eventually, I just fell to my knees, closed my eyes, and wept bitterly. I knew it was I who hurt Him; I who caused Him pain. Every time I pushed Him away or disobeyed Him, it was like a punch or a kick to Him.

While I was weeping, I felt two arms around me, holding me. I was filled with warmth, as though I had finally found my home. During this, I suddenly felt my tongue begin to roll. Like a dam bursting open, I felt the love and power of the Holy Spirit flow and rush to every part of my body.

– Mike Yuan, Canoga Park, California, USA
Manna 45: A Life of Servitude

Student Activity

(Teachers: Give the students five minutes to reflect on and write down ways in which they have intentionally or unintentionally hurt Jesus Christ. Ask them to share some of the things they have written. Discuss some things they can do to stop hurting Jesus Christ. As a conclusion, ask each student to write a short paragraph on how they can make their lives more worthy of the Holy Communion.)

Memory Verse

“Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.” (John 6:54–55)

Meaning

1. When we partake of the unleavened bread, we are partaking of His body spiritually.
2. When we drink of the grape juice, we are drinking His blood spiritually.
3. The bread and juice are His spiritual food and drink. When we partake of the Holy Communion, we have life in Him, and on the last day, we'll be resurrected.

¹ The full testimony can be found in Manna #45:

Mike Yuan, “Blessings Upon Blessings”, *Manna Magazine* 45 (2007): 11, accessed September 25, 2020, <https://tjc.org/elib-single-item-display/?type=pub&langid=1&parentid=1059&itemid=5626>.

Conclusion

Hebrews 6:6 tells us that Christians who do not repent and continue to sin “crucify again for themselves the Son of God.” This means that every time we deliberately sin or do something we know is wrong, we cause our Lord Jesus to suffer all over again. Once was enough for our Lord and Savior. After partaking of the Holy Communion, let us make the determination to keep ourselves pure and holy in order to proclaim His death and live a life worthy of His calling. When He comes back again, we’ll be united with Him forever in the heavenly kingdom.

Lesson 10 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. According to the memory verse, why must we partake of the Holy Communion?
To obtain eternal life, and be raised on the last day.
2. What is a sacrament?
A sacrament is an example set by Jesus Christ and something that we must do in order to carry the spiritual effect of salvation.
3. Name three ways we should live out the divine covenant. Explain each.
 - a. *Live a holy, sinless life: After partaking of the holy and unblemished body and blood of Christ, we should strive to live holy lives by removing all sin from our thoughts, words, and actions.*
 - b. *Abide in His word and Spirit: To live out the divine covenant, we need to live in Christ every day. This means setting aside time to read God's word every day, and praying to be filled with the Holy Spirit.*
 - c. *Love one another in unity: Conflict and division is contrary to the spirit of the Holy Communion. We should practice self-sacrifice, and learn to truly love one another deeply, from our hearts. To do this, we must lay aside our own interests and pray for the unity of His body.*
4. Do you think you are prepared for the second coming? Why or why not?
Personal answers.