

Three Rivers Presbyterian Church  
Foundations  
Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a sacrament. It is sometimes called communion (1 Cor. 10:16) or the Lord's table (1 Cor. 10:21), or the Eucharist (1 Cor. 11:24).

**WSC Q. 96 | What is the Lord's Supper?**

A. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is *showed forth*; and the worthy receivers are, not after a *corporal and carnal manner*, but by *faith*, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his *benefits*, to their *spiritual nourishment* and *growth in grace*.

**Words of Institution**

- Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25.
- Instituted by Christ. We are to observe it until he returns.
- Matthew 26:26-28

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." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

**The Lord's Supper and Passover**

Benjamin Warfield wrote, "Nothing can be more certain than that [Jesus] deliberately chose the Passover meal for the institution of the sacrament of his body and blood." Jesus's intention was to connect this new sacrament to its Old Covenant foreshadow.

- Religious feasts in which you participate by eating and drinking
- The Passover foreshadows the sacrifice of Christ, our Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7)
- The Passover was a celebration of God's act of redemption.
- Only those covered by the blood were spared. Only those circumcised could participate.
- Observation of the Passover distinguished the people of God from the world.
- While the exodus was a one-time event, the meal a memorial throughout generations.
- The Lord's Supper points back to Christ's finished work dying for our sins.

**Lord's Supper as a Sign**

- Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me." The event signifies the death of Jesus for his people.
- The bread is a sign of the body of Christ broken for us. The wine is a sign of the blood of Christ shed for us.

- Eating and drinking signifies participation in the crucified Christ, our union with Christ, a visible different between the church and the world, and the believers' communion one to another in him.

### **Lord's Supper as a Seal**

- Just as the Passover was a covenant meal, where God identified with his people, so also the Lord's Supper is a covenant meal, where identifies and meets with his people.
  - The Lord call Moses and Aaron and the seventy elders up onto the mountain, where "they beheld God, and ate and drank" (Ex. 24:11).
- By means of this meal, Jesus seals to his people his love; assurance of his promises; his benefits; and nourishes our souls.
- "When we partake of the cup in faith, it is the Lord's own certification to us that all that the new covenant in his blood involves is ours. It is the seal of his grace." (John Murray).
- The Lord's Supper "seals to the participant the great love of Christ... it assures the believing participant... that he was personally the object of that incomparable love" (Louis Berkof).

### **The Presence of Christ?**

- Memorial view – Christ is not present in the elements. This view holds that the Lord's Supper is only a memorial where we remember what Christ has done for us. Provides no special grace other than that which faith receives when the gospel is believed.
- Roman Catholic view – Christ is physically present in the sacrament (transubstantiation). When the priest says the words of institution, the bread and wine change into the body and blood of Christ. The elements continue to look like bread and wine, but in that form the body and blood of Christ are physically present.
- Lutheran view – Christ's whole person is "in, with, and under" the elements (consubstantiation). The elements are not transformed into the body and blood of Christ, but Christ is "locally" present in the Lord's Supper, although the elements do not change. Agree with Rome that Christ's body and blood are eaten.
- Reformed view – Christ is spiritually present in the sacrament. Christ is not physically present but is spiritually present through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The elements remain the same (bread and wine), but when we eat and drink by faith, the Spirit is at work strengthening faith and communicating all the benefits of Christ.

### **How it works?**

- Not *ex opere operato* ("by the doing it is done"), requiring no faith.
- Grace is conferred by the ministry of the Holy Spirit as Christ is received by faith.