

The Lord's Supper (5th)

(Today we will begin discussing some of the benefits as listed in the confessions where both Protestants and Baptists agree.)

In a previous session, some positive benefits were listed in partaking of the Lord's Supper. However, before discussing the things listed, we gave some general observations of the importance of one's theology and the differences in individuals as to why the blessings received vary in participating in the Lord's Supper. As stated in the previous study, some of the things that I would like to discuss regarding benefits of the Lord's Supper where Baptists and Protestants agree are (1) that it is "showing forth the sacrifice" of the death of Christ, (2) that it is a "confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof," (3) that it is a confirmation of the believer's "spiritual nourishment and growth in him," that is, in Christ, (4) it is the believer's "further engagement in and to all duties which" he owes unto Christ, (5) it is "to be a bond and pledge of" the believer's "communion with" Christ "and with each other," and, (6) that "worthy receivers . . . spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death." Also, we need to keep in mind that we will not necessarily enjoy all of the things listed when partaking of the Lord's Supper at any one time. While we may enjoy multiple blessings, it may be that only one blessing will feed our soul as we partake of the meal.

The first thing listed is that the Lord Supper is showing forth the sacrifice of the death of Christ. I Corinthians 11:26 clearly says that the Lord's Supper shows "the Lord's death till he come." The word for show in this verse is the Greek word *καταγγέλλω* and means *to proclaim, promulgate*. Of the seventeen times this word is used in the New Testament, it is translated *preach* ten times; *declare* two times; *teach* and *speak of* one time each. The three times it is translated *shew* it has the same meaning. Therefore, the meal itself is a proclamation of the death of Christ. This is one time where the membership of the congregation is preaching the gospel of the death of Christ. Too often the bread is broken and the wine is poured prior to the supper, but when our Lord instituted the supper He took and blessed the bread before breaking and giving it to the disciples. Likewise, He took the cup and blessed it prior to dividing it out to the disciples. Paul told the congregation at Corinth that the Lord delivered unto him the procedure of the Lord's Supper: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me," I Corinthians 11:23-25. I believe something is lost in the meaning when the congregation does not see the bread broken or the wine poured during the supper. Breaking the bread and pouring the wine before the congregation aids in reminding them of the broken body and the shed blood of Christ. It reminds them that not only were their sins paid for but what Christ endured in paying the penalty for their sins. What a blessing to be reminded of the death of Christ and being blessed to participate in showing or preaching the death of Christ! It is marvelous to know that we (the congregation) are not merely a spectator receiving some bread and wine, but we are actively engaged in proclaiming the death of Christ.

The second thing previously listed is a "confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof." Obviously, to confirm "the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof," one must know what true faith is and what are the benefits of having saving faith. Modern Christianity revolves around people who have "made a decision" or given a mental assent to some presentation of logical steps that appeal to the reason of the natural man. The concept of faith is often explain with such logic as believing that a chair will support a person and, therefore, the individual believes (or has faith) that the chair will hold him up and he sits in it. This is not faith in the biblical sense of the word. This is the law of mathematical

probability; that is, the chair has supported many other people and it should also hold up the individual. Biblical faith is something else. Biblical faith is often defined by quoting Hebrews 11:1: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” This is true, but there are other factors included in describing biblical faith. Scripture equally teaches us that faith is “a gift of God,” (Eph. 2:8) and that “all men have not faith,” II Thess. 3:2. Jesus taught that no man *can* believe (come to Christ) except the Father draws him to Christ and that everyone the Father gave to the Son is taught of the Father and comes to (believes on) Him, John 6:44-45, 65. The Lord also taught that some *will not* believe on Him, John 5:40. Therefore for one to exercise biblical faith his will must be changed and he must be drawn by the Father. In short, biblical faith or belief is when God changes a person’s will and disposition and causes him to believe in the truth of Christ as his Lord and Savior and to walk in the way of God. By this we see that when one participates in the Lord’s Supper it is more than merely sitting on the pew and eating a small fragment of bread or drinking a little cup of wine. It is to be a validation of the faith that is wrought in the soul of the believer by God and a testimony of all the benefits of the salvation that is in and by the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Naturally, this is not realized in the heart and soul of one who does not have faith, nor it is a confirmation to the person who carelessly and without serious meditation reflex on what the faith of God and the salvation in Christ is all about. Too many aimlessly sit on the pew with their minds wandering on the cares of life without any consideration to the work of God in the life of a believer or of the divine benefits graciously conveyed to the believing sheep of God. May the Lord pour out a spirit of revival in our day that will quicken the heart and soul of the people of God so that they will give the proper honor and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation bestowed on His elect people! Our materialistic society is so filled with the pleasures of life that professing believers hardly know what are the blessings and benefits of the ordinances of God found in the congregation of the Lord. Often the members of the congregation do not know when their next appointed time that the Lord’s Supper is to be observed and have to be reminded so that they might attend. Additionally, when the time is announced, many schedule activities and trips in such a way that they do not attend. It would be good if the members would mark their calendars throughout the year as to when the Lord’s Supper is to be observed in their respective congregations and plan their lives around it. This would go a long way in the members giving attention to the ordinance and devoting their lives in such a way that their faith would be encouraged and their souls would be blessed by the benefits received by participating in the meal and by the blessings given to us because of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The third blessings in our list is that it is a confirmation of the believer’s “spiritual nourishment and growth” in Christ. Few believers ever stop and take inventory of their spiritual growth or if their souls are being nourished spiritually. We are not talking about something that can be measured naturally or by the flesh. We are discussing the soul, that part of our being that is in communion and fellowship with the Lord. Believer, are you aware of what it is to have spiritual nourishment or growth? Can you sincerely and consciously ascertain as to whether you are growing in a spiritual way? Do you know what it is to receive spiritual nourishment? I Corinthians 11:28 says that we are to examine ourselves prior to eating the bread and drinking the cup. When is the last time you examined or judged yourself? Have you ever done so? If not, why? If we partake of the Lord’s Supper unworthily we are “guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,” I Cor. 11:27. Some try to get around this by not partaking of the meal to avoid being guilty. However, this will not work. Verse twenty-eight plainly declares that we are to examine and eat and drink. All three words (examine, eat, and drink) are in the present active imperative in the Greek text. In other words, we have no option. All three are a command. We do not have the option of not eating and drinking after examination. After we examine ourselves, we are commanded to eat and drink. Therefore, when the congregation observes the Lord’s Supper, this is an excellent time for the believer to confirm his spiritual nourishment and growth in Christ.

We have come to the end of our time for today. The Lord willing we shall continue looking at the other benefits and blessings of the Lord’s Supper in our next podcast.