

The Lord's Supper (6th)

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

In our last study, we began discussing some of the benefits as listed in the confessions where both Protestants and Baptists agree. Today we will continue discussing some of these benefits.

The fourth benefit previously listed is that it is the believer's "further engagement in and to all duties which" he owes unto Christ. It is obvious to any Bible reader that believers have many duties that they owe to Christ and one of these duties is partaking of the Lord's Supper. As we noticed previously, I Corinthians 11:28 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 not only do not have the option of examining ourselves prior to the Lord's Supper, but we are equally commanded to eat and drink; that is, we are commanded to partake of the Lord's Supper.

The Scriptures declare that obedience is the proof of the believer's love to Christ. Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Further, He said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." (John 14:21, 23-24.) Many professed believers today are slack in their attendance at the Lord's Supper. In fact, there are many people who profess to be a believer that never attach themselves to a congregation and do not participate in the supper of the Lord. Such people refuse to submit themselves to the Scriptures because they (by practice) set themselves in authority above the Lord. Too often a person (or family) will attend a congregation but because that congregation does not dot every "i" and cross every "t" as they believe, they refuse to submit themselves to it. In effect, they place themselves in judgment or in authority over the congregation and, thereby, abstain themselves from the commandment of the Lord—the Lord's Supper.

Allow me to clarify something here. I am not saying that any group of people who assemble together is a congregation of God. Obviously, if the pastor or pastors of a congregation are not preaching the true gospel of God and the congregation is not properly administering the Lord's Supper according to the teaching of the Scriptures, one should not join himself to it. Also, I am not implying that the gospel and the Lord's Supper are the only distinguishing marks of a scriptural congregation of the Lord. Nevertheless, I am saying that these two marks are generally listed at the top of the list by both Baptists and Protestants and are vital to the subject at hand.

Sadly, we live in an age where most people do not have the proper reverence and respect for the worship services of the Lord. When I was young and unconverted, I remember that I was taught to respect the worship services. Then people would generally sit in their seats and give their undivided attention to the prayers, songs, and preaching. Hardly would you see anyone getting out of their seats for any reason and they did not have water in containers at their pews. Today it is not uncommon to see people (young and old) going back and forth to water fountains and bathrooms or lifting a bottle of water during the sermon. Additionally, it is not uncommon to see some removing themselves from the worship of the Lord to answer their phones. No wonder the Lord's Supper is so little considered since the worship of the Lord as a whole is so little regarded. While I am addressing this, allow me to say that too often the ministers set the stage and encourage such lack of reverence by their modern casual dress. The worship of the Lord, whether on Lord's Day morning, afternoon, or evening, or during mid week services, is to have the same honor and respect because it is the same God that we are to adorn and admire. Equally, when we are

commanded to remember the Lord in partaking of His supper, we should not consider it lightly. We should remember that we are commanded to do so and by doing it we manifest our love and devotion to Him.

The fifth benefit previously listed is that it is “to be a bond and pledge of” the believer’s “communion with” Christ “and with each other.” What is meant by “a bond and pledge”? We might better understand it if we would say “a connection and guarantee” of the believer’s communion with Christ and each other. In other words, we are testifying that we are living in communion with Christ and that we are living in fellowship with each other, especially with our fellow church members. While communion with Christ is the center of the Lord’s Supper, the fellowship of the saints must not be ignored. It, too, is central to what the Lord’s Supper is all about. However, we will look at the first part which is that of the believer’s communion with Christ. But before doing this, we should be clear about something.

The Greek word translated communion is *κοινωνία* and it is translated as communion and fellowship. In fact, it is translated fellowship twelve times and communion four times. It is translated distribution, contribution, communication, and communicate one time each. Three other kindred words to this Greek word (*κοινωνέω*, *κοινωνικός*, and *κοινωνός*) are translated as to partake, communicate, distribute, partner fellowship, and companion. By studying these words and their meaning it is clearly seen that there is a mutual participating between the parties (that is, the believer and the Lord) on a reciprocating basis. Just as two people have a fond attraction for each other, they are continually fellowshiping with each other. Therefore, the believer is to be living in a conscious awareness of his fellowship and companionship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice that the confessions read that by partaking of the Lord’s Supper it is “a bond and pledge of the believer’s communion with Christ.” Obviously, one should be communing with the Lord during the meal, but the statement is declaring more. It is affirming that fellowship and communion with the Lord is a way of life on a daily basis. Too often one will approach the Lord’s Supper and wonder why he is not blessed with sweet fellowship with the Lord. Usually this is because he does not fellowship the Lord daily. As we noted previously, a bond is a link or connection, and the pledge is a guarantee or assurance. Therefore, in partaking of the supper one is affirming his assurance and connection of his ongoing fellowship with Christ. You see, the believer is not merely eating and drinking in remembrance of Christ, he is affirming his fellowship with Christ.

However, this is only half of what this benefit declares. It equally declares that it is “a bond and pledge of the believer’s communion with each other”; that is, that the participant is living in fellowship with the saints, particularly with a congregation of the Lord.

There are some who believe that all believers are to be invited to the table while others limit the meal to a particular denomination. Some limit the supper to the particular congregation. Our purpose is not to try to determine which view is correct, though I believe it should be limited to the congregation. Regardless, which view is correct, I do believe we can all agree that the people who do partake of the Lord’s Supper are generally those of a particular congregation. It is there where the individual member usually affirms his allegiance and responsibility to partake of the Lord’s Supper.

Therefore, we should bear in mind when we eat the meal that we are affirming our communion and fellowship with the people of the congregation. Too often the individuals of the congregation hardly know some of the members. Regardless of the size of the congregation, the membership should be so acquainted with each other that there is some fellowship. The members are to take time to know and understand their fellow members so that they are consciously aware of each other. How can one pray intelligently for their fellow members if he does not know of their struggles, needs, and blessings? The Scriptures tell us to rejoice with those who are rejoicing and to weep with those who are weeping and that we are to be of the “same mind one toward another,” Rm. 12:15-16. This cannot be done unless we know something about each other.

Beloved, our time is up for today, but this topic needs to be further addressed and, the Lord willing, I plan to do so in our next podcast. However, I trust you are beginning to see that there is much more included in partaking of the Lord's Supper than what is generally taught or considered in this age.