

The Lord's Supper (8th)

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

In our previous podcast, we were discussing the last and sixth benefit of the Lord's Supper. It is that "worthy receivers . . . spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death." We briefly noted the doctrines of transubstantiation and consubstantiation but since the majority of the Protestants did not hold to these views, we did not consider it expedient to show the fallacy of these beliefs. Also, before studying what it is to receive and feed on Christ crucified and the benefits of His death in a spiritual way, we endeavored to show somewhat the distinction between soul fellowship with the Lord and human emotions.

Now I would like to consider what is it to be a worthy receiver? At least two things are involved: (1) one who is legally constituted worthy by the righteous of God; (2) one who does not partake of the meal unworthily.

Clearly it is understood that if a person is not regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God and given a heart to receive and a mind and will to understand and obey the truth of the Scriptures he cannot be a fit candidate to partake of the Lord's Supper. Unless he understands and knows that his salvation is outside of himself and that he only stands before God in the justifying righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ he is not worthy to partake of the meal or fellowship with the saints in the congregation of God. It matters not how many times a person may be immersed in water or how many congregations he may have joined or how often he eats the bread and drinks the wine, if he is an unregenerate man he is unfit for the table of the Lord. He is not a worthy receiver.

Additionally, if one *is* a true believer and does not participate in the supper as ordained in the Scriptures, he is not a worthy receiver. I Corinthians 11:27, 29 says, "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." (It should be understood that the word damnation in verse twenty-nine is literally judgment. We do not have time to do a word study of this Greek word. The translators and the Church of England believed that if one partook of the Lord's Supper unworthily that he would be damned to hell. This belief is a carry-over from the Roman Catholic teaching.) We need to be clear regarding the word "unworthily." This word is an adverb. Unworthy is an adjective. Unworthy describes the state or condition of a person. Unworthily denotes how a person is engaging in an activity. In and of ourselves, no Christian is worthy to partake of the Lord's Supper. The believer is only worthy in Christ. However, if a believer partakes of this meal (as the Corinthians were doing) unworthily he is in violation of being qualified to eat. The Corinthians were divided. I Corinthians 11:18-22 declares that because of these divisions (notice the plurality of the word division) they were despising the congregation of God and shaming the poor, and, thereby, they could not lawfully engage in the communion service of the Lord. Because of this, verse thirty declares that some of the members were weak and sickly, and some slept; that is, some were dead. They were judged (chastened) of the Lord so that they would not be condemned with the world, I Cor. 11:32. (The word for judged in verse thirty-two is judgment as with the word condemned in verse twenty-nine. The word condemned in verse thirty-two is a separate word and rightfully means to be condemned.) Also, I reminded you that the Lord only chastens His people. The Greek word for chasten means child training. Hebrews 12:6-8 says, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." Therefore, those Corinthians saints who were weak

and sickly and who were killed for partaking of the supper unworthily were chastened so that they would not be condemned (damned) with the world (ungodly). Obviously, they were not focusing on the death of Christ; their attention was centered on their various factions or divisions. Therefore, we need to give heed to the warning in this passage and examine ourselves so that we are a worthy receiver when we come to the Lord's Table.

Next we find that we are to *spiritually* receive and *spiritually* feed on Christ crucified and all the benefits of His death. The question is what is meant by *spiritually* receiving and feeding? While we have looked at this somewhat previously in a different light, it is important that we have a proper understanding of this spiritual work of grace in the soul of the believer. The believer is a complex person. He is still in his natural or human body and affected by the senses and passions of the flesh. However, he is also a spiritual individual and there is a principle residing in him that causes him to be inclined to follow after the things of God. This is summed up well in Romans 6:14: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Additionally, our Lord said that the believer has the Spirit of truth that dwells with and in him, John 14:17. He further stated that the Holy Spirit would teach the believer the truth of Christ, John 14:26. Therefore, how is it that we can discern the difference between that which is given to us spiritually by the Holy Spirit from our human and fleshly senses? The Scriptures tell us that our heart is deceitful and desperately wicked and that we do not know it, Jeremiah 17:9. Is there some way that we can be assured that we are being spiritually led and not swayed by the spirit of the world, the flesh, or the devil?

Paul told the Thessalonians saints that he knew that they were elected by God and that they were being guided by the Holy Spirit. He knew that because they received the gospel and walked in the path of those who preached the gospel to them. They turned to the God of the Scriptures from serving idols. Further, they received the word of God as the true word of God and that it was not merely the word of men. Many other proofs could be supplied from the Thessalonians saints as well as like proofs from other congregations or individual believers throughout the New Testament. In other words, their lives and emotions were being affected by the truth of the Scriptures. When people are walking according to the course of the world in opposition to the Word of the Lord, they are not being led and guided by the Spirit of the Lord. They are being guided by that which is against the Scriptures. Likewise, when people are excited and their emotions are being stirred by doctrines and practices that are not taught in the Bible, they are being led by the flesh. People who are following another gospel that is not taught in the Scriptures are not being led by the Spirit of God. They are being led by another spirit. See Galatians 1:6-9.

Since we are to *spiritually receive* Christ crucified at the Lord's Supper, we are to know what the crucifixion of Christ involves. We are not talking about the historical facts of the crucifixion. This is important, but that is not central. We are to know what was the intent and purpose of the death of Christ. We must know that Jesus not only intended to do something by His death, but that He actually did it. How can one feed on the death of Christ if he does not know what was accomplished in it? If one has a false idea and concept about the crucifixion of the Lord, he has received a false premise and thereby it is not that which is taught by the Spirit of truth. By this we see that the Lord's Supper is not merely something in which believers participate by eating a small piece of bread and drinking a little wine. The doctrines involved in the Person and work of Christ are foundational to it: doctrines such as redemption, atonement, justification, the righteousness of God, satisfaction, resurrection, mediation, intercession, and many others too numerous to mention at this time. It is obvious that we cannot receive (not even spiritually) Christ crucified if we do not know what was accomplished by that crucifixion.

We are not only to *spiritually receive* Christ crucified, but we are to *spiritually feed* on Christ crucified. Obviously, it is one thing to know something, but it is entirely different to enjoy or delight in that which is known. However, our time has come to an end for today. The Lord willing, we will enlarge on what it means to *spiritually feed* on Christ crucified and the benefits of His death in our next study. I

pray this lesson will be blessed of the Lord to help you feast on Christ as you fellowship Him in the Lord's Supper.