

The Lord's Supper (9th)

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

In our last podcast we ended saying that 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. As we saw previously, when the confessions speak of spiritually receiving or feeding, it must be that which is aligned to the Scriptures and not something produced by the natural senses or emotions.

In John 6:48-51, 53-58, Jesus said, "I am bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. ... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meet indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as you fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread live for ever." It is clear that our Lord was not teaching cannibalism. Equally, He was not teaching about the Lord's Supper here, but what is being taught is important to understand what it is to feed spiritually on Christ.

When we study these verses in the context, we understand that the Lord is teaching about believing. Previously, the Jews asked Him about doing the work of God and Jesus said to them that the work of God was to believe on Him (Jesus) Whom God had sent into the world, Jn. 6:28-29. Later Christ told them that He was that bread and those who comes to and believes on Jesus will never hunger or thirst, Jn. 6:35. Here we see that coming and believing are synonymous. He enlarges on this by telling them that they had seen Him but did not believe on Him, but all that the Father gave to the Son comes (i.e., believes) on Him, Jn. 6:36-37. Jesus later pointed out that the prophets taught that all of the children of God (the elect) shall be taught of God the Father and that all who are taught will go to (i.e., believe on) Christ, Jn. 6:44-45. Then as we come to the passages quoted at the beginning of our study today the Lord turns to eating and drinking of this bread from heaven (the body and blood of the Lord). Before this, it was believing on and coming to Christ that one has (note, present tense) life; now it is eating and drinking that one has life and shall not die. In verse forty-seven (and afterwards), our Lord speaks of believing and coming to Christ. Consequently, the idea of feeding on Christ is believing, coming, eating, and drinking. These things are not one time incidents; they are a process, a way of life. Many analogies can be supplied to further explain this, but I would like to draw your attention to John 15:1-11 where Jesus teaches about abiding in Him and, thereby, abiding in the Father.

Listen to the passage: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you:

continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full."

Regardless of all that is taught in this passage, it is certain that the central point is abiding (living) in the vine; that is, living (abiding) in Christ. The word *continue* in verse nine is the same Greek word as abide. This gives us insight as to how we are to abide in Christ. We are to continue or keep the commandments of the Lord. As our Lord said in verse three, it is by the word that we are cleansed. The Greek word for abide is μένω and it is found one hundred and twenty times in one hundred and five verses. While it refers to one's place of dwelling or that of remaining in a place for a period of time, it is frequently used in relation to the believer abiding (dwelling) in God (all three Persons in the trinity) or of God dwelling (abiding) in the believer. By studying this word, we find that abiding in Christ involves living (abiding) in the Scriptures, walking in obedience to the commandments of God, loving the brothers, believing in the Lord, living a life of bearing good fruit to the glory of God, and many other similar activities. In other words, to spiritually feed on Christ will involve one to read the Scriptures on a continual basis (ideally, daily), to read good and sound literature that honors the Lord, to meditate on the truths of the Scriptures and the truths of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), to love and faithfully attend the assembly of the saints, to fellowship and love the saints, and many other things as previously mentioned. Allow me to supply a list of a few verses for you to study this word for abide: Jn 5:38; 6:27 (endure), 56 (dwelleth); 8:31 (continue); 12:46; 14:16-17; 15:16 (remain); I Tim. 2:15 (continue); II Tim. 3:14 (continue); Heb. 13:1; I Jn. 2:6, 10, 14, 17, 19, 24 (abide, remain), 28; 3:6, 9 (remaineth), 3:14, 15, 17 (dwelleth), 24 [2x]; 4:12 (dwelleth), 13, 15, 16 [2x]; II Jn. 2 (dwelleth), 9 [2x].

By this we find that by partaking of the Lord's Supper one is expressing his person relationship and fellowship with the Lord and His people. It is not merely attending a congregation and participating in an ordinance by eating a small piece of bread and drinking a little wine. Also, the things we have presented concerning "spiritually receiving and spiritually feeding" on Christ should be revealing as to why so many take part in this ordinance of the Lord but do not "get anything out of it." If one is not living in communion and fellowship with the Lord Jesus prior to the Lord's Table, obviously he will not immediately commune with Him as he eats some bread and drinks some wine. Likewise, if one is not living in communion and fellowship with the saints of God (particularly with his fellow church members) then there is no communion with the people of God. Such a person is merely sitting with a group of people, many (if not most) of whom he does not know and cares little for and, thereby, his affections (if he has any) for the people around him are cold and distant.

The last part mentioned regarding the crucifixion of Christ is that we are to spiritually receive and feed on all the benefits of the death of Christ. Sadly, many (if not most) people today only think of being saved from their sins and by this will be with God in heaven after they die. This is no small benefit of the death of Christ, but there are many more things that should bless our souls on a daily basis. In fact, there are too many things to list or study about in this study. I pray this will motivate you to seek out these benefits as you learn more about them. We should not merely wait until we are to partake of the Lord's Supper and then try to cram our souls with emotions and thoughts that will cause us to have some spiritual experience with the Lord. What we find here is that it is a way of life, and unless we are living this daily, we cannot expect to sit at this meal and flip on a switch and fellowship the Lord and His people. It just will not happen. Can it happen? Yes, the Lord could do that, but He has commanded us how we are to live and unless we are following His directions we cannot expect Him to do otherwise. Just as a husband and wife, or friends, have to continually work to have a rich fellowship and life together, so likewise we must apply ourselves to have a rich communion with Christ. As the farmer must till the ground, plant the seed, and remove the weed to expect an abundant harvest, so likewise we must break up the fallow ground and draw nigh to the Lord to enjoy the love and friendship of the Lord. Abraham was not called the friend of God because he did not walk with the Lord. No, Abraham "staggered not at

the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able to perform,” Rm. 4:20-21. Scripture further says that Abraham is “the father of all them that believe,” Rm. 4:11. What better way to show yourself as a child of Abraham (a believer in Christ) than by walking as Abraham did?

I pray that your soul has been exhorted and encouraged to live in such a way so that when you come to the Lord’s Supper that you will be blessed to receive and feed on Christ, as well as delight in the fellowship of the saints.