

Blessed Understandings When the Christian Partakes of the Lord's Supper

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William Perkins, 17th century Puritan pastor, provided insight as to the actions of the person who receives the Lord's Supper and how they can bless the Christian's soul in his *preparation*, in his *partaking*, and in his *recollection* of the Feast.

1. Take the elements (bread and cup) into your hands as a seal of receiving Christ by faith.

Christ tells His disciples to take the bread and eat it. In taking the elements into the hands, the believer symbolically appropriates Christ by faith. He receives Christ Himself as the true Bread which came down out of heaven to give life to the world. The hand that reaches out to take the elements is symbolic of the Christian's faith that receives Christ by faith. So then, in that solemn feast of the Lord's Supper, it follows that as the Christian takes the elements into his hands, it is a seal and symbol of receiving Christ Jesus Himself by faith. It reminds the believer of his dependence on Christ, His hopelessness without Christ, His need for Christ, His faith in Christ, and His reliance upon Christ.

2. Eat the bread and drink the cup as a seal of applying Christ to himself by faith to increase and delight in your communion with Christ.

During the Passover meal, Christ took the bread and the cup and he blessed them and gave them to the disciples so that they may partake in the same. As the believer eats the bread and drinks the cup it can provide a symbol of applying Christ to himself by faith. That is, the believer actually partakes the bread. He does not merely reach out his hand and see it, but he consumes it. He eats it. He digests it. Christ said that believers must eat His flesh and drink His blood. In that particular context, Jesus drew the parallel with the Israelites in the wilderness that were physically satisfied with the bread that fell from heaven but Christ is in fact the true Bread which has come down from heaven that not only physically satisfies but *spiritually* satisfies the true believer with Himself. The eating and the drinking of the elements portray this 'consuming' of Christ as one's spiritual nourishment. Indeed, in eating the bread and drinking the cup, the believer is reminded of the nourishment and delight that comes from physical food — just as Israel was in the wilderness when they ate the manna. And yet how much more nourishing and delightful is it for the child of God to feast upon Christ, whose body and blood is given for spiritual food and drink so that the believer may have intimate communion with the triune God.

Christians should prepare their hearts *before* coming to the Lord's Supper so as to be well-prepared to feast upon Christ, to remember Christ Himself, and to increase one's faith in and delight in the substitutionary cross-work in the place of sinners.