

Celebrating Sacraments

Week 2 - The Eucharist

WHAT WE BELIEVE

1. Read Matthew 26:17-29. What is the Passover?
2. What did Jesus predict would happen in our text? How did his disciples respond?
3. Jesus was about to go to the cross and suffer terrible humiliation, torture, and death.

What did Jesus have to give thanks for?

4. What sign(s) are used in baptism? What sign(s) are used in the Lord's Supper?

What do they represent?

Unlike "Communion," which emphasizes the communal sharing and fellowship among believers as they partake in the elements, or "Lord's Supper," which highlights the meal's institution by Jesus as a memorial act, "Eucharist" focuses on the liturgical act of giving thanks to God for redemption.

WHAT IS THE EUCHARIST?

The term "Eucharist" derives from the Greek eucharistia, meaning "thanksgiving," and is specifically employed in Christian traditions to underscore the grateful commemoration of Christ's sacrifice during the Last Supper.

CATECHISM CORNER

Heidelberg Catechism

Lord's Day 50

Q&A 125

Q. What does the fourth petition mean?

A. "Give us this day our daily bread" means:

Do take care of all our physical needs¹
so that we come to know

that you are the only source of everything good,²
and that neither our work and worry

nor your gifts

can do us any good without your blessing.³

And so help us to give up our trust in creatures
and trust in you alone.⁴

1 Ps. 104:27-30; 145:15-16; Matt. 6:25-34

2 Acts 14:17; 17:25; James 1:17

3 Deut. 8:3; Ps. 37:16; 127:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:58

4 Ps. 55:22; 62; 146; Jer. 17:5-8; Heb. 13:5-6

GOD SPEAKS TO US

1. The term "Eucharist" comes from the Greek word eucharisteo which means "to give thanks." Jesus gave thanks at the Last Supper with his disciples as he was preparing to go to his death. These were trying circumstances for all, yet they still went to God with thanksgiving. What trying circumstances have you endured? Were you able to give thanks to God during that time?

2. Read Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 125. It pleads for help from God so that we may not put our "trust in creatures". Why shouldn't we put our trust in creatures? Why can't I trust my doctor or my spouse?

GOD SPEAKS TO OUR FAMILY

1. One way to bond with your family is to share meals with them regularly. The Lord invites us to sit at his table. Does sitting at the Lord's table make you feel like part of his family? Why or why not?

2. Are you thankful for all your family members (including your crazy uncle)? Should you be? Explain your answer.

GOD SPEAKS IN WORSHIP

1. What does First CRC have to be thankful for?

2. How do we show our thankfulness to God during worship?

EXCERPT FROM THE INSTITUTES

"What we have so far said of the Sacrament abundantly shows that...it was ordained to be frequently used among all Christians in order that they might frequently return in memory to Christ's Passion, by such remembrance to sustain and strengthen their faith, and urge themselves to sing thanksgiving to God and to proclaim his goodness....

The Lord's Table should have been spread at least once a week for the assembly of Christians, and the promises declared in it should feed us spiritually....

All, like hungry men, should flock to such a bounteous repast."

John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion John T. McNeill, ed,
Ford Lewis Battles, trans, Library of Christian Classics

(Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960 [1559]), IV.xvii.44, 46.

CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Orthodox communion traditions emphasize deep spiritual preparation, including fasting, prayer, and confession, followed by a reverent, physical reception using a sacred spoon (lavra) directly into the mouth, with participants swallowing immediately, wiping their lips with a communion cloth, and often abstaining from antidoron (blessed bread) afterwards before returning to their seats to pray, all highlighting union with Christ and avoiding worldly distractions.

THE GOSPEL CALL

1. How would you explain the term "Eucharist" to someone who doesn't know Jesus?
2. What message does the Eucharist convey that the world needs to hear? How can you help them hear that message?

BAVINCK ON EUCHARIST

"Voicing the thanksgiving at the Lord's Supper was a part of the ministry of the Word and therefore assigned to the minister, though like the breaking of bread in 1 Cor. 10:16, it is represented as an act of the congregation. According to the Didache, therefore, the giving of thanks (εὐχαριστεῖν, eucharistein) is the proper task of the prophets; according to Ignatius, it is that of the bishop; according to Justin, it belongs to the presiding minister (προεστῶ, proestōs) while in this connection the deacons served and gave the bread and wine to the communicants. This unique linkage of the administration of the Lord's Supper to that of the Word proves that the minister acts in the name of Christ and functions as the steward and distributor of his mysteries. The Lord's Supper is a meal whose host is Christ."

Bavinck, H., Bolt, J., & Vriend, J. (2008).
Reformed Dogmatics: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation
(Vol. 4, p. 563). Baker Academic.

