

Why do we sinners participate in the Lord's Supper? The short answer is, "Because it is a blessing to us."

Listen to the words of 1 Corinthians 10:16 (ESV) "*The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?*"

We are sinners. God is holy. God calls us to this table to drink a cup. What sort of cup is it? Is this like us being summoned to the principal's office? Is God upset with us, and this is the cup of punishment? No. That would be a cup of wrath. In Jeremiah 25:15, "*the Lord, the God of Israel, said to [Jeremiah]: "Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it."*

Is this the cup of wrath? Is it a poison cup of death that we deserve for our sins?

When the Lord's Supper was first started, it was the Lord Jesus serving a cup to His disciples. A cup of what?

Later, when Jesus was receiving a cup from God the Father. Mark 14:36, "...[Jesus] said, "*Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.*"

A cup of wrath for Jesus.

But later, in our passage, what did Paul call this cup? The cup of what? *The cup of blessing.*

How can that be? Paul wrote that the cup of blessing is "*a participation in the blood of Christ.*"

How do we understand this? It is the cup of what is right. God says what is right is for sinners to be judged, and for the innocent to be set free. What is right is for freedom and acceptance for Jesus, and judgment for us. But at the cross, God reversed the effect of the cup. Jesus received the judgment. We receive the freedom and acceptance.

We participate in the same cup as Jesus. It is a participation in the blood of Christ. We participate. We partake. For us, it is a cup of God's poured out blessing, because for Jesus, it was a cup of God's poured out wrath. Since Jesus was condemned, we can be saved.

John 3:17, "*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.*"

When we drink this cup, participate in the arrangement that God the Father made with God the Son. This is the arrangement: death for God's only Son. Life for us. Condemnation for Christ. Salvation for us.

It is the same for the bread or wafer.

Some people say – that is the gospel in words, so we don't need the cup. Some people say that the truth is spiritual truth, that we can grasp without having the cup and the bread.

We might be tempted to agree, except for one fact - it is Jesus who gave us The Lord's Supper. Jesus knows what we need.

Try this as an experiment to remind you how The Lord's Supper is needed. To those people who say that we don't need the cup and the bread. Take a married couple, and as an experiment have them only tell their spouse that you love him/her, but don't touch your spouse. Speak many meaningful words of love, but don't touch. Not a kiss. Not an eskimo kiss, which is rubbing noses. Not a hug. Not a handshake. Don't give a shoulder rub. Don't play with the other person's hair. Don't hold hands. Don't touch at all. Keep right on saying I love you and keep being every so sweet verbally. Do not touch. See how long it goes before your spouse turns to you and says, "Do you still love me anymore?"

Jesus knows that is how we are. Knowing that, Jesus gave us the Lord's Supper so that we could feel the reality of God's love.

Jesus as the husband of the church, His bride, knows that we need the truth of the words of His blessing, we need the gospel of grace to be spoken to us. Jesus knows that we also need His grace to touch us. Jesus knows that we need the cup of blessing. We need the bread of blessing. We need the supper of blessing from the Lord.

While we linger at His table today, not wanting this little visit with Jesus to end, we will sing together these heartfelt words to Jesus, "A parting hymn we sing, around Your table, Lord...Here we have seen your face, and felt Your presence here, so may the savor of Your grace in word and life appear..."

We come to this table as formerly dirty, and now washed and renewed people, because we want the physical touch of the blessing of Christ, and that is granted to us in the cup of blessing.

Now at this communion table Christ is present by His Spirit and mystically. But one day, when Christ comes again, He Himself will be present bodily and visibly at the table of the Lamb's High Feast.