

Christ's Twofold Estate

Lesson 4: A Commemorative Sign, 1Cor 11.23-25

Introduction

Last week we looked at the *first* of three preparations Christ made for His church before His death: *His High Priestly prayer*. This afternoon, we look at the *second*: *His institution of the Sacrament of the Supper* as a lasting memorial of His death.

Orientation, cf. WSC 91-93, 96

- I. In the apostle's words in 1Cor 11.23-25 we can note four things about this last and lovely act of our Saviour:
 - A. The *author*: the Lord Jesus Himself. This institution is an effect of His lordly power and kingly authority, Mt 28.18.
 - B. The *time*: on night of His betrayal. It couldn't have been sooner because the Passover had to be celebrated first. It couldn't have been later, because He was arrested later that night. And so the text emphatically reminds us that it was "the same night." On a night full of bitter sorrows for Himself, Christ leaves His church an ordinance to comfort and console them in His absence until the end of the world.
 - C. The *content* of the ordinance: bread and wine. These are choice elements to represent the body and blood of our Lord. Bread is the sustenance of life and wine is the joy of the heart—and so is Christ to us. Also, just as the grain must be ground in the mill and grapes crushed in the winepress before they can nourish us, so Christ must be ground and crushed under the cursed wrath of God. And just as we must receive bread and wine into the body, so Christ must be received by faith into the soul.
 - D. The *design* of the ordinance: a memorial. Christ knew how apt we would be to lose sight of Him and how detrimental this would be to us. So He appointed a commemorative sign, a reminder to be kept before us until He comes again.

Doctrine: *The sacramental memorial Christ left with His people is a special mark of His love and care for them. As often as we look upon this portrait of Christ, we should remember all that He endured for our sakes, we should say to ourselves, "These are the wounds my dear husband Jesus received for me."*

- I. How we remember
 - A. To remember is to return the mind to an object with which we've been conversant before. But we can remember things in two ways: historically or affectionately. *Historically*, we simply remember it as a thing, an event: Jesus died. But to remember *affectionately* is to call these things to mind in such a way as to feel the powerful impressions of them on our heart, cf. Mt 26.75. The remembrance Christ calls us to is a gracious and affecting remembrance. It includes:
 1. A saving knowledge of Christ. We cannot remember the saving work of Christ if we never knew it. But knowing it, we can use the Supper as a time to remember what the Lord has done for our soul, how He delivered us, redeemed us, satisfied for us, atoned for us, reconciled us to the Father, and secured a sonship in God for us.
 2. A discerning of Christ in the Supper. When the eye of faith sees Christ in the Supper, it calls up the affections saying, "Come my heart, and see your Lord! This is He who who

gave Himself for me. This is His flesh and His blood. He stretched out His arms to embrace me. He hung down His head in death to kiss me. Come, all affections of my soul and behold Him!”

3. A stirring of the affections after the sights before us. In the Supper we see the wisdom of God in the plan of redemption, the severity of God against sin, the mercy of God to provide His Son as a Surety for us, the love of Christ to assume a body and soul like mine for the sole purpose of bearing the wrath of God for my sins, the perfect satisfaction in His redeeming work that this memorial has been left for me, not only to say to me, “Remember my work for you,” but also to say to my soul, “That part of my work is finished.”

II. What we remember

- A. The Supper confirms our faith to the end of the world. When the elements are put into our hands, it is as if God Himself were standing at the head of the table with Christ and all His promises in His hand saying to us, “Take, eat.” His Testament is in full force, Heb 9.15-17
- B. The Supper enlarges our joy and comfort by putting our missing Christ into our hands and giving us a taste of the fellowship that awaits us when He returns for us.
- C. The Supper encourages the work of mortification in us. “Nothing tends more to the killing of your sins than to affectionately behold what your sins did to your husband Jesus.” As Christ’s blood is food to your faith, so it is poison to your lusts, Rom 6.1-4
- D. The Supper excites our love for Jesus by melting our heart in view of what Christ suffered for us and all the sins He’s forgiven us, Gal 2.20
- E. The Supper is one of the strongest bonds of union between Christ and His people, 1Cor 10.16-17. Robert Bruce, “You get a better grip of the same thing in the Sacrament than you got by the hearing of the Word. That same thing which you possess by the hearing of the Word, you now possess more fully. God has more room in your soul, through your receiving of the Sacrament, than he could otherwise have by your hearing of the Word only.”

Inferences

- I. Did Christ leave this ordinance with us to preserve His remembrance among us? Then surely, despite all He has done, suffered, and promised, we are apt to forget Him. The Lord left us the Supper because He knows how prone we are to forget Him. Let us make the most of this meal as often as we have it.
- II. The celebration of the Supper is a heart-melting season because it’s the most affecting representation of Christ.
 - A. As the gospel offers Christ to the ear, so the Supper offers Him to the eye, hand, and mouth.
- III. The believing and affective remembrance of Christ is of great advantage for God’s people because it’s the chief end of one the greatest ordinances Christ ever appointed for His church.
 - A. It’s the best means for quickening a dead spirit. “Look hither hard heart! ...hard indeed if this hammer will not break it. Behold the blood of Jesus.”
 - B. This is the most powerful restraint in the world from sin. “How shall we, who are dead to sin, still live in it?” Rom 6.2.
 - C. This is a relieving and satisfying ordinance. The cup of the Supper is the cup of the new covenant in Christ’s blood shed for you for your forgiveness, Rom 8.33-34; Col 2.13-14
 - D. This is able to fortify you with courage and resolution when you stagger on account of your sufferings for Christ in this world.
 - E. This will help you believe all God’s promises, because this is God’s seal added to His covenant of grace which ratifies and binds fast all that He has spoken.
 - F. This will cause you to redeem the time by reminding you that you are not yourself, but belong body and soul, in life and in death, to the Lord Jesus Christ, 1Cor 6.19-20; 1Pet 1.18-19