

**The Life of the Church (Part 2)**  
**Acts 2:42-47**  
**April 29, 2007**

**I. Devoted to the Breaking of Bread (v. 42b)**

**A. What is a sacrament?**

**1. means of grace (SC 88)**

“God actually delivers Jesus Christ and his benefits to his elect by his Holy Spirit and through prayer.”<sup>1</sup>

*The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it: but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers. (Westminster Confession of Faith 27.3)*

**2. sign and seal (SC 92)**

→a seal confirms what is written or gives confidence in the authenticity of a letter (e.g. a king’s seal on a letter)

**3. covenantal ordinance – covenantal formula**

- a. I will be your God – points to the gospel
- b. We will be your people – express our commitment

**B. Lord’s Supper – the breaking of bread**

**1. Six purposes for the Lord’s Supper (WCF 29.1)**

- a. remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice
- b. sealing of the benefits (see above)
- c. serve our spiritual nourishment and growth
- d. further engagement to live as Christ requires
- e. bond and pledge of our union with Christ
- f. bond and pledge of our communion with the saints

**2. Christ’s activity in the Lord’s Supper (WCF 29.7)**

“The Lord’s Supper is not an empty ceremony. Christ is active in it by His Spirit, so that believers are truly blessed and built up in their relationship with Him.”<sup>2</sup>

**C. Word and Sacrament**

The Lord’s Supper is “primarily a visible, tangible affirmation to us from God himself. God appends the sacrament to His Word in order to reinforce his gospel message.”<sup>3</sup>

“Let it be understood that the sacraments add nothing to the Word of God. There is nothing contained in the sacraments which is not contained in the Word. When the church administers the sacraments it proclaims visibly the very same gospel which it proclaims audibly in its preaching. The preaching of the Word presents the gospel to ear-gate; the administration

<sup>1</sup> Larry Wilson, “Signed, Sealed, and Delivered,” *New Horizons* 26, no. 6 (June 2005): 3.

<sup>2</sup> Wayne R. Spear, *Faith of Our Fathers* (Pittsburgh: Crown and Covenant, 2006), 154

<sup>3</sup> Larry Wilson, “Signed, Sealed, and Delivered,” 3.

of the sacraments presents the same gospel to eye-gate. But this is not to intimate that the sacraments are lacking in dignity. On the contrary, it means that they share in the high dignity of the Word of God.”<sup>4</sup>

## II. Devoted to the prayers (v. 42b)

### A. The Command to Pray

#### 1. For believers

*Heb. 4:16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

#### 2. For the church (see I Kings 8:23-53)

*Mark 11:17 And he was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer?’”*

### B. Pray for what?

#### 1. All men

*I Tim. 2:1-4, 8 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth . . . I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling . . .*

#### 2. Saints and ministers

*Eph. 6:18-19 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel . . .*

#### 3. The gospel

*Col. 4:2-3 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison . . .*

### C. Corporate Prayer

#### 1. Our guide – Matt. 6:9-13

To our heavenly Father, with praise, seeking His kingdom and His will, for our daily needs, with confession and forgiveness of sins, and deliverance from temptation

#### 2. Our Practice – see the bulletin

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<sup>4</sup> R. B. Kuiper, *The Glorious Body of Christ* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1998), 202-3.

**1 Kings 8:22-53** <sup>22</sup> Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven, <sup>23</sup> and said, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart, <sup>24</sup> who have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day. <sup>25</sup> Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, 'You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.' <sup>26</sup> Now therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David my father. <sup>27</sup> "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built! <sup>28</sup> Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O LORD my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, <sup>29</sup> that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, 'My name shall be there,' that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. <sup>30</sup> And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive. <sup>31</sup> "If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, <sup>32</sup> then hear in heaven and act and judge your servants, condemning the guilty by bringing his conduct on his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness. <sup>33</sup> "When your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you, and if they turn again to you and acknowledge your name and pray and plead with you in this house, <sup>34</sup> then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them again to the land that you gave to their fathers. <sup>35</sup> "When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you, if they pray toward this place and acknowledge your name and turn from their sin, when you afflict them, <sup>36</sup> then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel, when you teach them the good way in which they should walk, and grant rain upon your land, which you have given to your people as an inheritance. <sup>37</sup> "If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar, if their enemy besieges them in the land at their gates, whatever plague, whatever sickness there is, <sup>38</sup> whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing the affliction of his own heart and stretching out his hands toward this house, <sup>39</sup> then hear in heaven your dwelling place and forgive and act and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways ( for you, you only, know the hearts of all the children of mankind), <sup>40</sup> that they may fear you all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers. <sup>41</sup> "Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name's sake <sup>42</sup> (for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, <sup>43</sup> hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name. <sup>44</sup> "If your people go out to battle against their enemy, by whatever way you shall send them, and they pray to the LORD toward the city that you have chosen and the

house that I have built for your name, <sup>45</sup> then hear in heaven their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause. <sup>46</sup> "If they sin against you- for there is no one who does not sin- and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near, <sup>47</sup> yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors, saying, 'We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,' <sup>48</sup> if they repent with all their mind and with all their heart in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive, and pray to you toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen, and the house that I have built for your name, <sup>49</sup> then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause <sup>50</sup> and forgive your people who have sinned against you, and all their transgressions that they have committed against you, and grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them <sup>51</sup> ( for they are your people, and your heritage, which you brought out of Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace). <sup>52</sup> Let your eyes be open to the plea of your servant and to the plea of your people Israel, giving ear to them whenever they call to you. <sup>53</sup> For you separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be your heritage, as you declared through Moses your servant, when you brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD."