

# How Can We Benefit from the Lord's Supper?

*Heidelberg Catechism Season 20*

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**Bible Text:** 1 Corinthians 11:26  
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Our scripture reading this evening is from 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verses 17 through 34. 1 Corinthians 11:17 through 34. Let's hear the word of God as it comes to us this evening.

17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. 20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. 21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. 23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. 33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

May God bless the reading of his word to our souls.

Dear church family, it's just wonderful to be back in God's house together. We, as pastors and elders and deacons, we love you and we're grateful for how you've kept brotherly love in these months when we were not able to meet. We know that that was not always the case in many churches, there were divisions and struggles, but you've respected the decision of the consistory, you've come together and we're grateful that we didn't have those tensions and divisions, which a very difficult time, such as we've gone through, could easily produce. 2020 has been quite a year for us already. We're not even halfway through the year and we've gone through presidential impeachment proceedings, worldwide pandemic, near economic depression, a great sadness over the numbers, great numbers of sickness and deaths and loss of jobs, and now intense racial, social unrest, lack of school, semester being interrupted. It's difficult. We have indeed gone through a lot this year and who has taken it to heart, who has profited from it, who has been reminded, I hope we all have, of our radical dependence on God? Without his mercies, we couldn't even function as a society. And we don't know what the future will hold. We've seen a horrific death. In graphic terms, it's brought great anguish to our nation, even internationally. We know, as we heard this morning, that we're called to be agents of reconciliation for betterment, for compassion, compassion that must address also racial challenges in our communities and in our nation, which once again has come to the fore. The spirit of Romans 12, to reach out, to be a brother to others, to weep with those that weep, to mourn with those that mourn, to be patient in affliction, faithful in prayers, to rejoice with those who are joyful in hope, and to live as much as possible at peace with all men based on truth and justice. That is what Paul wrote to the Romans, and that must also take place in the church as well.

Martin Luther King, 57 years ago, wrote these words, spoke these words rather, "We must learn to live together as brothers or we will perish together as fools." The church must live by that foundational principle as well. That's what Paul is saying and that is manifest in a peculiar way in the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is the supreme binding ordinance in the Church of Jesus Christ to bind together the people of God in communion with the Lord first and foremost, but flowing out of that vertical communion to have horizontal communion with one another in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's what we're called to look at this evening from 1 Corinthians 11:23 through 25. And please do keep your Bibles open this evening as we're going to walk through this passage but I just want to read again, verses 23 through 25, and then I'll also read Lord's Day.

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you,  
That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:  
24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is  
my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After  
the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This  
cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in  
remembrance of me.

Lord's Day 28 is our longest Lord's Day in the Catechism, Questions 75 through 77.

Q. 75. How art thou admonished and assured in the Lord's Supper that thou art a partaker of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross, and of all His benefits?

A. Thus: That Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread and to drink of this cup in remembrance of Him, adding these promises: first, that His body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and His blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup communicated to me; and further, that He feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, with His crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hands of the minister, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ.

Q. 76. What is it then to eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ?

A. It is not only to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ, and thereby to obtain the pardon of sin and life eternal: but also, besides that, to become more and more united to His sacred body by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us; so that we, though Christ is in heaven and we on earth, are notwithstanding flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; and that we live and are governed forever by one Spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul.

Q. 77. Where has Christ promised that He will as certainly feed and nourish believers with His body and blood, as they eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup?

A. In the institution of the supper, which is thus expressed [and there is our text, and also,] This promise is repeated by the holy apostle Paul, where he says: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body; because we are all partakers of that one bread.

Well, in God's providence, we are at this point in our Catechism where we begin a discussion in three weeks of sermons on the Lord's Supper, providentially coinciding with the Lord's Supper to come two weeks from now. And so this evening, rather than focusing as much as I normally do on the actual words of the Catechism, I want to first walk you through the passage of 1 Corinthians 11, and I want to stir up, to whet your appetite for the Lord's Supper's benefits to us. We haven't been able to have it for half a year. It's worthy to spend an extra evening to stir us up to the beauty and the glory of this sacred meal and the benefits that the people of God glean from it. So my theme tonight is "How Can We Benefit from the Lord's Supper," and I have five points. First, 1

Corinthians 11, reminding ourselves of its words of institution. Second, reconnecting with Christ crucified. Third, renewing our covenant with God. Fourth, refreshing our inward spiritual life. And fifth, recapitulating, that is, I want to give a summary of our feast-like blessings. So that's where we're going with God's help this evening.

Now, 1 Corinthians 11 is the chapter in scripture that explains what the institution of the Lord's Supper is all about, and the reason why the Catechism has this as its longest Lord's Day and two long ones to follow on the Lord's Supper, is because this was a matter of great debate; still is today, but it was especially so back in the 16th century. The Roman Catholic Church, as you know, had added all kinds of things to this plain scriptural celebration of the Lord's Supper and so it's always been the Reformed and Presbyterian view that we must follow the pattern of Christ carefully also in the manner in which the Lord's Supper is celebrated. That's why we gather around a table still today. That's why we partake of the wine and the bread. That's why the minister hands those things to you, to follow the pattern, he representing Christ in the institution of the sacrament. So none of this is mere custom. All of this is following what Paul sets out before us, he says, being told by the Lord to say this, so he got it straight from Jesus, how we should celebrate the Lord's Supper.

Now, of course, in this context, Paul is upset that some of the Corinthian Christians didn't realize this, even though he had told them already, and they would sometimes come to the Lord's Supper without any spiritual grace, just to get food and drink and Paul says, "Don't you have houses in which to eat and drink? This is a sacred meal. You don't just come," verses 20 to 22 say, "to eat and drink, to have a meal. One is hungry," he said, "another is drunken. No, I won't praise you in this. I praise you not. This is not," he says, "the Lord's Supper." And then he comes to our text and says, "This is the Lord's Supper. These are the words of institution. I've received of the Lord Jesus that which also I delivered to you, that he came the same night in which it was betrayed and took bread when he had given thanks, he break it and said, Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me." And then the same thing with the cup. And so Paul is enlarging here in greater detail in this chapter on the original institution of the Holy Supper in the night in which Jesus was betrayed, and so this passage in 1 Corinthians has become called in church history, the words of institution, the words of institution and Paul draws some conclusions from these words of institution in our text and these actions of Christ.

His first conclusion is that the Lord's Supper is a witness therefore to Christ's atoning death and the redemption he accomplishes for his people through that death. Look at verse 26 with me, "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come." So when you partake of the Lord's Supper in truth, you are declaring yourself to be a witness as a grateful sinner saved by grace, and you are publicly confessing as a witness to Christ that your only hope for this life and for the life to come is that your sins are washed away by the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's it. Your hope is in Christ. He's your total salvation. You trust in nothing else but him and you look forward to the day when he returns to usher forth that eternal redemption in glory forever. You do show forth the Lord's death till he come.

What a beautiful testimony that is. What a beautiful conclusion that is. And then Paul's second conclusion is in verse 27, and it concerns those who partake and how they should do so. He's saying it's one of the Christians' highest privileges and holiest of privileges to eat and drink the holy things in the Holy Supper and therefore we must not do so unworthily or we shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. So if we do it unworthily, then our guilt is great because we offend against the body and the blood of Christ, either through our ignorance or impenitence or our scandalous behavior at his table. And you read in verse 29, that "he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

Now you need to know that the word damnation in 17th century could also mean condemnation. Condemnation, you see that later in verse 34, "If any man hunger, let him eat at home, yet ye come not together unto condemnation." Charles Hodge put it well when he said this, "The word damnation used in our version," our King James Version, "originally, properly, simply means condemnation, not hopeless and final perdition, which is its modern and popular sense." In other words, in the original Greek here, the word doesn't mean if someone partakes unworthily, they're definitely going to hell and there's no possibility for them to be saved, but it means that they will be chastened of the Lord. You're not to come lightly. You're not to come on these casual grounds, "I want some food and drink." You're to come based on the fact that you know something of the work of the Holy Spirit in you to teach you to grieve over sin, to find your only hope outside of yourself in Christ, and to yearn to live a lifestyle of holiness and gratitude to God. The basic three marks of grace of all those who are truly converted, misery, deliverance, and gratitude.

So the one whom eats and drinks unworthily makes himself liable to the chastening of the Lord and Paul says, because many of you are doing that, and I hope there's no one here in this audience that has ever come to Lord's Supper just to have some food and some drink, but he says, "for this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep," that is many are backsliding or many are lukewarm. So the all-important word here and the word that some people struggle with also among us from time to time is this word unworthily. You see, if the Lord's Supper were only appointed for those who feel themselves to be worthy, well, only the Pharisees would come. No, no true child of God feels himself worthy in himself. No Christian says, "Well, I've got a right to the sacrament because I'm so worthy. I've earned it somehow. I've deserved it somehow." No, no, no. That kind of claim is a contradiction of the gospel itself. All have sinned and all have come short of the glory of God. Every single one of us is unworthy in ourselves but our worthiness, our worthiness is in this, that guided by God's word, we look to Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, we examine ourselves to see whether we have been sorrowful for sin, whether the content of our faith is in Christ, and we do rely on gospel promises, and whether the reality of our thankfulness to God is evidenced in our life and in our conduct. And so Paul goes on in verse 31 and 32, says, "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." If we examine ourselves rightly, others wouldn't have to judge us, but if we are judged and we are judged unworthily because we are strangers of grace and

the Lord's Supper is only for the people of God, then we will be chastened, he says, verse 32, of the Lord.

So what does that all mean? It means as a true believer that when you examine yourself, the results of faithful self-examination, will be mixed. You'll take comfort in trusting that Christ died for your sins, that's your only hope, and because you need him so badly to die for your sins, you cannot stay away, but you'll also be painfully aware of how sinful you still are. That's why the Lord's Supper form says so plainly, but we do not come to this supper thereby to testify that we are without sin, but we still grieve over our unbelief. We still grieve that we are not what we ought to be in so many ways. We are always sorrowful, yet rejoicing. We rejoice in Christ but we grieve that we are not as godly, as holy, as we wish we were. We grieve that we still grieve him with our sin. And so we have to be careful how we parse this word unworthily and worthily. An unworthy partaker is someone who comes based on something in himself, a worthy partaker, is someone who says, "I'm unworthy in myself, but I come with empty hands, open hands to receive from Christ my only hope, another reassurance of his redemption for me through his bloody crucifixion."

So that's the first benefit we get from the Lord's Supper, that we end in Christ alone. That's our hope. That's our salvation. That's our all in and all. We don't come to say salvation is 99% Christ, 1% me. We come saying it's 100% Christ, it's 0% me. We don't come to the table to say how good we are, how converted we are, how worthy we are in ourselves. We come to the table saying, "I am so bad. so sinful that I need to have a total Savior for a total sinner and that Savior is my exclusive and my full and rich and glorious and complete and sufficient hope." And that leads us to thought number two, reconnecting with Christ crucified. You see, one of the chief spiritual disciplines of the Christian life is remembering wherever you see the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus is always saying, Paul is always saying, "Do this in remembrance of Christ." Christianity is a historical religion. We base our faith on a Bible that has historic redemptive development. But that's true also in your own life. You see, when you come to the table, you remember Jesus, but you also remember the faithfulness of Jesus and of God to you in all the ways he's led you in your life, in all the good that he's done for you, in all the gifts he's showered upon you through his Son. The Psalms are full of that, aren't they? "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

So through the power of our memory, as we prepare for the Lord's Supper, but also at the Lord's Supper, we focus on Christ, but we also focus on what Christ has done for us and we recall his faithfulness to us, we reconnect with him in his sufferings and death for our redemption and in his intercession for our sanctification and preservation. And that's why God says to Israel that forgetting God is a great sin. Forgetting God is a great sin. Next to unbelief, perhaps there's no sin more deadly to the Christian than to forget God. And that was just the problem with Israel. They would turn to idols. They'd turn away from God. They'd forget the wonders of the past. They'd forget the deliverance from Egypt. They'd forget so much and when they would forget so much, they'd be led astray so easily.

How many historical Psalms are there? Lots of them. Psalm 78, Psalm 106 are major historical Psalms. Psalm 78 talks a lot about when the people received manna, bread from heaven, they forgot God. They failed to trust him. They got sick of the manna. Psalm 106 talks about how they wanted fresh meat because they were forgetting what God had done in the past and God sent them quails, flocks of quail to feast on, but it was a chastisement for their sins because they were forgetting God. Forgetting God is an all too human sin and one that we often fall into when we walk by sight and not by faith. And you see, all that we've gone through in 2020 already is God also, this is another purpose we haven't talked too much about, but it's God coming to us and saying, "Don't forget me. I'm bringing you face to face with me. I'm bringing you back to look at the leanness of your own soul, to confess your guilt before me." God does not want his people to forget him. And so the Lord's Supper in a positive way is a frequent reminder, "Remember me. Do this in remembrance of my death. Do this in remembrance of who I have been to you."

You know, one of my favorite things to do when I'm sitting at the Lord's Supper, one of my favorite things to do is to think back to the last three months that God's mercy is to me, despite all my fears and all my sins, that he still wants to sup with me. That's a humbling thing. Between every Lord's Supper, we sin so many times. This time it'll be six months to remember our sins and remembering our sins in the face of the remembering of God's goodness to us, it's just a huge benefit. It's good for our soul to be humbled that way and to end in him and just shake our heads almost in disbelief, "Why is he so good to me when I'm so bad to him?"

This is a benefit of the Lord's Supper. It brings us to fresh self-examination. Of course, every week should do that but in the Lord's Supper, it's a special time where we consider our forgetfulness of God, even as we remember him. And of course, that's our duty, to remember what Jesus Christ has done on the cross, his mighty works, his glorious being, his holy laws, his gracious promises, and especially his sufferings and his death. And as we remember him, you see, we're to do that with our whole person. We're to be engaged both body and soul. In the Lord's Supper, there are words, words to hear and understand. There are actions to witness. There's food and drink to be taken and enjoyed. There's prayers in which we must join in one accord. There's praises to be offered with heart and voice. At every point in the Lord's Supper, faith must be fully engaged, vigorously exercised and as we do so, by the grace of the Spirit in us, we are reconnecting with Christ himself publicly in the midst of the people of God. We're entering, as it were, at the Lord's Supper into the holy place of redemption and we're remembering especially those long hours of darkness when our sins relate upon Christ and he made satisfaction for them, God's justice demanding payment, and God's mercy providing that payment.

So the very best thing we can do at the Lord's Supper is remember what Christ went through, especially those last hours of his intense sufferings in Gethsemane and Gabbatha and Golgotha. At communion we fix our minds on that, don't we? We see Christ forsaken by his friends, surrounded by his foes. We witness him tried and found blameless of any wrongdoing. We hear him condemned to death by the highest authorities of church and state. We hear the crack of the whip as he is scourged, the taunts of his captors. We wince at the sight of his crown of thorns. We tremble at the shout of the multitudes demanding

that he die. We stand by as he is taken out and nailed to a cross. And then we hear him praying for sinners. We hear him granting pardon to a dying thief, expressing loving concern for his mother, crying out to God in deep distress, asking for drink to relieve his thirst, uttering the loud cry of victory before he surrenders to the power of death. And in all of that, our amazement is just multiplied that he's done that for me whose fingerprints are all over those thorns and all over that sword that pierced his side because I am the one that crucified him by my sins, not literally, but figuratively. It's my sins. Every thorn in the crown is my sin. He suffered and died for my sin.

So we tremble, but we also are overwhelmed at his goodness. We say amen when we hear the centurion declare, as we meditate upon our Savior, just as he died, "Truly this man was the Son of God." And so you see the benefits of that reconnection through meditation remembering Christ are many. It humbles us. It breaks our heart that we used the hammer to nail Christ to the cross. It should deepen our sense of the fear of God. Considering that the wrath of God, the form says, against him is so great that rather than it should go unpunished, he's punished the same in his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, with the bitter and shameful death of the cross. It also affords us the most solid ground for us to stand on, rejoicing in hope and the glory of God, and then it benefits us because it ought to be the death knell of all our self-centeredness and our waywardness. And then it brings us face to face with the incredible love of God in Jesus and it makes our hearts overflow with joy and thanksgiving.

All of this, all of these things are benefits that flow out of reconnecting with Christ, remembering Christ but then thirdly, we also renew our covenant. We renew our covenant with God. We have an eternal covenant of grace with God, says our Lord's Supper form. You see, God covenants with his people in the Lord's Supper through his precious blood. It's called the covenant of grace, isn't it? It's a marriage bond whereby he gives himself to his people and takes his people unto himself. He calls it the New Testament in my blood in our text. The New Testament in my blood. The word testament there is the Greek word for covenant. The New Covenant in my blood. But it carries the added implication that the benefits of this covenant can only be distributed to the heirs after the death of the testator. So he connects it with a cup of wine, symbolizing his blood, calls it a sign of the blood of sprinkling, which sanctifies this covenant. All of its terms, all of its promises are sanctified as things holy to the Lord and so the Lord covenants with us at his table if we're true believers, and then we in turn covenant back to him.

Now, how do you do that? Well, by trusting in him, by surrendering to him. by loving him, by repenting of sin, by confessing he's our only hope, by feeding on him. By faith we respond covenantally by drinking ye all of it, as our text says. You see take and eat, take and drink. We respond. That's a covenantal response. When we eat and when we drink, we're obeying the imperative of Christ. That's why Lord's Supper, Question 75 of the Catechism says, Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread and to drink of this cup. If you're a true believer and you don't partake of the Lord's Supper, you see, or you don't clear up what needs to be cleared up so you can partake of Lord's Supper, you don't examine yourself or you examine yourself and then somehow



you manage to stay away even though you say, "I'm not a stranger of misery, deliverance and gratitude," you will plunge yourself in darkness because you're disobeying the Lord Jesus Christ. He covenants with you and you're not there. Now, if you don't have a church right, of course, Then he understands that and he covenants with you in your pew if you're a true believer, like a boy or girl or a young teenager and you respond from your pew. But if you're a believer and you have a church right and you have a divine right because he's worked in your soul and you don't partake of the Lord's Supper, what are you doing? He commands you and all believers, no exception, doesn't say just the strong believers partake or sure believers partake, or weak believers shouldn't partake. No, no, no. Is there some reason you're not partaking? Well, then you go and you deal with that reason. You don't just go on for years keeping yourself in darkness, not partaking. That's a flagrant act of disobedience to your Savior. This is not an optional thing. He commands me and all believers to partake of this broken bread and to drink of this cup. Actually, if you belong to this church, you've confessed that you embrace the truth of the Heidelberg Catechism. So you're disobeying 1 Corinthians 11, but you're also disobeying the doctrinal standard you confess to believe. Please think about that. Take this to heart. Could it be that some of the darkness you experience is because you're disobeying the Lord Jesus Christ?

Now, when we renew covenant with God through the sacrament, as the Westminster divines put it, we stir up ourselves to a vigorous exercise of God's graces in us and that gives us a lot of benefits. One benefit is, is that we lay hold of this pardon and cleansing of all sin through the blood by the grace of the Spirit, and there's no better way to banish lingering guilt and to bury vain regrets and to clench our gnawing doubts and to silence the disquiet of our soul than to lay hold of God through Jesus Christ and trust in him and renew covenant with him. That helps us gain better view, a clearer view of the many benefits of Christ, helps us fight against our unbelief, the deadly sin of forgetting God we talked about. It helps us to walk in the paths of righteousness. It helps us to live out our holy resolutions, to put the world behind us with all its lusts and its pride. It helps us to see Christ more clearly, that Christ who can keep us all the way, every footstep, all the way to the celestial city. And when we're tempted to sin, it helps us to say, "What? Can I sin against my Lord with impunity who suffered and died for me? Who says with great desire, I have desire to have this meal with you?" No, I'm to reckon myself dead into sin and alive into God through Jesus Christ my Lord. I'm a Christian, I have no business sinning against my Lord who bought me with his blood.

So these are all benefits that accrue to us from the Lord's Supper, and then there is a refreshing of our inward spiritual life. That's number four that comes from the Lord's Supper. This is a glorious thing, but this is what happens, it's like well-oxygenated air to breathe. It's like safe water to drink. It's like nourishing food to eat. Without it, we'd all soon weaken, we'd sicken, we'd die, but what is true for the life of our body is also true for the life of our soul. Created by God, our soul has no life of its own. We need God to keep us every moment. In him we live and move and have our spiritual being. And God maintains that spiritual being by the means of grace, and one of the most important means is the Lord's Supper. And so it's God's express purpose to strengthen and increase our faith inwardly through the Lord's Supper. Our faith is always going up and down isn't a

bit, but in the Lord's Supper, God wants to strengthen us. He wants to lead us to assurance, full assurance of faith.

The Puritans used to call this sacramental assurance. It was a fond term because it meant, well, not that they got assurance in some different way than they do under the preaching of the gospel, it's the same Christ, it's the same promises, but it was so common for them to experience large dosages, increased measures of assurance at the table of the Lord that they called it sacramental assurance. That's a benefit, a huge benefit for our spiritual lives and then there's the benefit of the inflaming of our love, the inflaming of our love within us vertically through communion with God. What a beautiful thing that is in the Lord's Supper when we eat and drink Christ spiritually by faith. Sometimes that love is inflamed like a still small voice of the gospel. Sometimes it's inflamed in a more fervent emotional way. But whatever it may be, if we walk away from the table of the Lord and we can say with joy and gladness and humility, "We love him because he first loved us," our love is inflamed.

At the same time, horizontally, our love is inflamed through the communion of saints. Imagine if you were the only one at the table. It wouldn't be the same, would it? But just being there in the presence of the people of God is so lovely. The love we feel for one another spills over into each other's lives and multiplies that love. It's what the form means when it says, "For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread, 1 Corinthians 10:17. And then it comes, "For as out of many grains one meal is ground and one bread baked, out of many berries being pressed together, one wine floweth and mixes itself together, so shall we all, who by our true faith are engrafted into Christ, be all together one body, through brotherly love, for Christ's sake, our beloved Savior, who has so exceedingly loved us, and not only showed us in word, but in very deed, towards one another."

So, that's a huge benefit of the Lord's Supper. Our love is inflamed and that, when our love is inflamed to God, and our love is inflamed to God's people, then the joy of our salvation is restored. Like David says in Psalm 51, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." And there you see at the table of the Lord, when we may taste the joy of salvation afresh or in an augmented measure and meet our Savior face to face, we can say with Peter, 1 Peter 1 verse 8, we rejoice in him, though we do not see him physically, we love him and believing in him, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Well, these are the benefits of the Lord's Supper and I'll recapitulate them in my last point. Based on Jesus' institution of the Supper, and on 1 Corinthians 11, and on Isaiah 25 verse 6, "a feast of wines and the leaves of fat things full of marrow," our forefathers were fond of calling the Lord's Supper a feast, a feast. And they said Christ himself is the feast provider, he is the feast provision, he is the feast himself. His person, his work are the focal point of the entire sacrament. Well, in closing this sermon, I want to just give you a list of ways in which the Lord's Supper is a wonderfully varied, soul-enriching, and Christ-centered and exalting feast. I would encourage you to write these 20 things down, because there's going to be 20. I'm going to give them to you all in 10 minutes, so we're not going to be late. 20 things, meditate on these things, and your soul will be enriched.

1. It's a witnessing feast. We saw that, didn't we? I'm just recapitulating everything we saw. We do, show forth the Lord's death till he come looking forward to a better eternal feast.
2. It's a self-examining feast to make sure we're not going for the wrong reasons.
3. It's a remembering feast. We remember Christ and him crucified.
4. It's a humbling feast because we consider who we are over against what he's been for us.
5. It's a God-fearing feast. It fills our soul with a childlike fear of our God and we value his smiles and frowns to be of greater weight than the smiles and frowns of men.
6. It's a hoping feast. We put all our hopes and all our expectations in the promises of the gospel and the atoning work of our Savior.
7. It's a self-denying feast. It pronounces a death knell. on all our self-centeredness, all our waywardness.
8. It's a rejoicing feast in which our hearts overflow with gratitude as we trace God's mighty works and wondrous ways.
9. It's a covenanting feast. We saw that at length, we're responding in covenant to our God who covenants himself to us.
10. It's a thanksgiving feast. We give our whole heart of thanks to God for the gift of his son.
11. It's a rededicating feast. We commit ourselves afresh to Christ's terms of discipleship. "Take up thy cross, deny thyself, and follow me."
12. It's a pardoning feast by which we lay hold of the full pardon and cleansing from all our sins, past, present, and future, only in Christ's blood.
13. It's a filling feast. Our cup runs over, so we feast upon all the benefits of Christ's death for us.
14. It's a preserving feast. The Savior who ministers to us at the Lord's Supper will never let us go.
15. It's a refreshing feast. We're nourished sacramentally through taking, eating, drinking Jesus Christ spiritually our souls are refreshed.

16. It's a heaven-embracing feast. It's as if we are brought down low and then lifted up high to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. our great feast himself.

17. It's a shepherding feast. Our good and great and chief Shepherd fulfills all the tasks outlined for us in that precious 23rd Psalm.

18. It's a strengthening feast. Our weak faith is strengthened when we go forward in the strength of the Lord our God, making mention of his righteousness, even of his only.

19. It's a loving feast by which our vertical love for the Triune God is inflamed and our horizontal love for the communion of saints is also inflamed.

And number 20, it's a restoring feast. We throw ourselves on the mercy of God, confess our sins, cry out for and receive pardon, cleansing and total restoration.

Well, I hope by God's grace that this sermon whets your appetite for the Lord's Supper to come. And finally, if you're not a true believer, you may not partake of the Lord's Supper. You know that, for the Lord's Supper is not designed to plant saving faith within you, but to strengthen the saving faith that is already present within believers. So without saving faith, the Lord's Supper won't profit you at all, it will only testify against you. All of its benefits are tethered to your possession of saving faith, even if it's infantile, but the seed of the matter, the root of the matter must be within you. And though the sacrament does not invite you to come to the Supper, through the word preached at the sacrament and in the sermon, God does invite you and through your witnessing the humble joy of the people of God as they come, God does invite you evangelistically to consider what you are missing as the benefits of this holy meal are not for you and you need to repent of your sin you need to flee to the Savior, you need to rest in him alone and trust in him alone for salvation. So do not rest until you too can go with freedom to the table of the Lord confessing, "My only hope for life and death is in Jesus Christ, this glorious feast, this glorious Savior, who invites the greatest of sinners to come to him just as they are." May God help us to glean great and glorious benefits from the Lord's Supper for our own heart and our own life. Amen.

*Great God of heaven, we thank thee so much for this wonderful stream of benefits, this glorious feast that flows to thy children through the Lord's Supper. And do help us as we commemorate Preparatory Week, our next Sabbath, and then the Lord's Supper itself, God willing. Help us, O God, to truly feast on the feast himself and to meditate on our glorious Savior and what he's done for us over against what we've done and all our sins, and that we would be humbled and receive with gratitude his glorious salvation. Lord, please feed our souls with Jesus Christ and please be with those who do know thee, but have been holding back. May they be aroused through this sermon tonight and sermons next Sunday to no longer deny the Lord who has bought them. Please Lord, keep them from bringing further darkness upon their own soul. But also keep back from thy table all those who do not know thee at all, who are trusting in something other than Jesus, from coming superficially and falsely to this table. Lord, we must be born again. We must know experientially something of our misery, our deliverance, and our gratitude in and*

*through Jesus Christ. So help us not to deceive our poor souls for eternity but to know what it means by faith to surrender all into the hands of Jesus Christ and trust alone in his atoning blood for salvation. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*