

Lord's Day 29 – Of Man's Deliverance

~ Of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ ~

The Heidelberg Catechism explained to children

Last week, you read about the Lord's Supper. Even though some things might be difficult to understand, you were asked to remember the most important things. Do you still remember them?

- The bread and wine teach us about the body and blood of Christ. The body of Christ was broken, and His blood was shed, to forgive the sins of His people. Was His body broken and His blood shed for **your** sins as well?
- God's people, when they attend the Lord's Supper, eat the bread and drink the wine. It assures them that they belong to Christ, and that their sins are forgiven. Do **you** belong to Christ? Are **your** sins forgiven?
- Christ Himself instituted the Lord's Supper. He wants us to remember His death, His sacrifice on the cross, until He comes back on Judgment Day!

The student has more questions about the Lord's Supper, and he asks:

78. Do then the bread and wine become the very body and blood of Christ?

The people in the Roman Catholic church believe that the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper truly change into the body and blood of Christ. They are very careful to not spill any crumb of bread or any drop of wine, because then they would spill the real body and the real blood of Christ! Is that true?

Not at all; but as the water in baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ, neither is the washing away of sin itself, being only the sign and confirmation thereof appointed of God; so the bread in the Lord's Supper is not changed into the very body of Christ, though agreeably to the nature and properties of sacraments, it is called the body of Christ Jesus.

Not at all, the teacher says. When a person is baptized, the water is a sign of the blood of Christ, which washes away sins. Yet, the water of baptism does not change into the blood of Christ! When a person is baptized, he or she does not have blood on his or her forehead, but regular water. The water of baptism does not wash sins away either.

In the same way, *the bread of the Lord's Supper is not changed into the very body of Christ*. Because of *the nature and properties of the sacraments*, because of the deep meaning of the sacraments, *it is called the body of Christ Jesus*. Yet, it is not His true body. That would be impossible!

79. Why then doth Christ call the bread His body, and the cup His blood, or the new covenant in His blood; and Paul, the "communion of the body and blood of Christ"?

But then, why does *Christ call the bread His body, and the cup His blood*? Paul also calls it *the body and blood of Christ*. How can they call it that, when it is not the true body and blood of Christ?

Christ speaks thus not without great reason, namely, not only thereby to teach us that as bread and wine support this temporal life, so His crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink whereby our souls are fed to eternal life;

Christ does not speak *without great reason!* He wants to teach us something with that. *Bread and wine support this temporal life.* You need food and drink in order to live. Without food and drink, you would die! In the same way, Christ's *crucified body and shed blood* give *eternal life* to His people. They receive eternal life, because Christ sacrificed His body and shed His blood on the cross! The body and blood of Christ are *meat* (food) *and drink* for the souls of God's people.

Are the body and blood of Christ also food and drink for your soul? Did Christ sacrifice His body and shed His blood to give you eternal life?

However, this is not the only reason Christ calls the bread His body and the wine His blood. The teacher adds:

but more especially by these visible signs and pledges to assure us that we are as really partakers of His true body and blood (by the operation of the Holy Ghost) as we receive by the mouths of our bodies these holy signs in remembrance of Him; and that all His sufferings and obedience are as certainly ours, as if we had in our own persons suffered and made satisfaction for our sins to God.

At the Lord's Supper table, God's people eat the bread and drink the wine. They *receive by the mouths of their bodies these holy signs in remembrance of Him* (Christ). In that way, Christ assures His people that they are *really partakers of His true body and blood*. Christ really sacrificed His body and shed His blood for them. They truly belong to Christ.

Christ suffered and died on the cross. With *His sufferings*, He paid the penalty for the sins of all His people. He was obedient: He obeyed all the commandments of God. He never sinned. He did that for His people. It is as if His people themselves had *suffered and made satisfaction for their sins to God*. Of course, God's people did not pay the penalty for their own sins. They would never be able to! But Christ did it for them! Christ assures His people of that when they eat the bread (Christ's body) and drink the wine (Christ's blood).

Did Christ die for your sins too? What a great blessing that is! If not, how can you receive that blessing? The teacher answers that question too: *by the operation of the Holy Ghost!* The Holy Ghost can make you a *partaker of His true body and blood*. He can make you belong to Christ!

Psalters

♪ Psalter 111:4

♪ Psalter 53