

Daily Bible Study

“Catechism & Communion” Westminster Larger #172

Selected Scripture

April 25 – May 1, 2010

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY – After several months away from it, we return again this week to our study of the Lord’s Table entitled “*Catechism & Communion*”. If you remember, we are using The Westminster Larger Catechism for an outline in our study and the specific question we are using for this week is **Question #172. Question: May one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to The Lord’s Supper?** **Answer: *One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God’s account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity: in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians he is to bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord’s supper, that he may be further strengthened.*** If you will think back to the last time we looked at “*Catechism & Communion*” you will recall we addressed the question (**#171**): **How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord’s supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it?** The importance of preparation in coming to The Lord’s Table cannot be understated. It is true that in all of our lives as Christians, in each and every moment and circumstance we should be prepared to live, think, act, and speak properly and to the Glory of God (**1 Peter 3:15, 1 Corinthians 10:31**). We understand that a constant *walking circumspectly* and *in the Spirit* is key to victory, sin mortification, and glorifying God (**Galatians 5:16**). Preparedness in coming to The Lord’s Table is stressed for us in **1 Corinthians 11:27-32** where Sacred Scripture commands an examination, introspection, and confession before we come to partake of the Sacrament in which we publicly testify before God and men to be in Christ and beneficiaries of Jesus substitutionary death for us. From #171 we saw summarized that before coming to receive the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper we prepare by examining whether we are truly in Christ; take a good look at our sins and wants, how wretched and needy we actually are; the sincerity and measure of our knowledge, faith, and repentance; we need to evaluate our love to God and the brethren as well as our love to all men; we look to see if we are biblically forgiving those that have done us wrong; whether we find in our hearts genuine desire after Christ and actual real new obedience; and we examine and then come to renew the exercise of these graces by serious meditation, and fervent prayer. This week we will ask and answer whether or not a person should come to The Table who during that preparation is confronted with doubt as to being in Christ or whether he or she has properly prepared to partake.

The Word Applied & Suggestion for Prayer: Take time today for examination and fervent prayer.

TUESDAY – Question #172. Question: May one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to The Lord’s Supper? **Answer:** *One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof...* The Catechism begins by speaking to the issue of doubting; specifically doubting in reference to whether or not an individual is in Christ or even a genuine born-again Christian. The topic of assurance of salvation is one which can’t be completely covered in one week but question #172 helps us begin to understand and cover the matter. I have often quoted the late Adrian Rogers in saying, “*God does not do His deepest work in your shallowest part*”. God’s work of saving sinners goes deeper than the mere surface feelings of the individual He saves. Assurance of salvation is ultimately rooted in faith, not feelings. Our feelings change and are fickle while true salvation through faith in Christ’s FINISHED work is firm and forever (**John 10:28-30**). How we “feel” has much to do with whether or not we “feel” we have assurance of salvation. Sadly there are countless people, *many* in fact, who “feel” they are saved, “feel” they are loved by God, “feel” they are serving Him and according to our Lord Jesus are traveling *the broad way* and are on their way to hell (**Matthew 7:13-14, 21-24**). It is also true that there are genuine born again Christians who see their indwelling sin and at times “feel” like they are not saved, do not “feel” the love of the Lord and yet are safe and secure in Christ eternally. We should not divorce feelings completely from the discussion as God has made us with emotions and sentiments but the facts are that we are saved by faith not by feeling (**Romans 4:5**). Our feelings are dealt with in the area of our sanctification; our growing in holiness, Christ likeness and yielding to The Holy Spirit and walking in Him. When we are abiding in Christ and walking in The Spirit as we should we will see that our doubts are diminished and our understanding of our security strengthened in the joy of The Spirit. The Catechism points out to us that in the process of examination we may experience real doubt as to where we stand and it also speaks to this issue of real growth and maturity as it uses language such as: *...though he be not yet assured...* God has made us Beloved and knows our frailties and has given us the means of grace to help us to grow and be strengthened in our faith and one of these means is the Sacrament of The Lord’s Supper. Doubt is good and healthy if it drives us to a true and deeper brokenness and repentance and stirs in us a longing for holiness, forgiveness, and Christ likeness. And it MUST ultimately point us to the only One who offers it; Jesus Christ in His Gospel. As a footnote, true conversion brings a real genuine love for Jesus, “who He is”. Saved people love God as opposed to loving what God can do for them. A person who loves God’s gifts and not God Himself and merely “adds Jesus” to their life to use Him as “Christian power” to bring them health, prosperity, good times, no pain, easy life, etc... have not been born again. They just are trying to use God as their source of fulfillment for all the self serving sinful cravings they have always had. Contemplate on those thoughts and meditate on your reason for loving God and no doubt there will arise doubts within genuine Believers. Read these verses reminding us that as God’s people there are times we do doubt but God has given us remedy: **Isaiah 50:10, Psalm 77:1-15, 1 John 5:11-13.**

The Word Applied & Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, help me to love You not merely what You can do. Give me a deeper love for Jesus, deeper hatred of my sin, and real growth in holiness.*

WEDNESDAY – Question #172. Question: May one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to The Lord’s Supper? **Answer:** *One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God’s account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity:* The Catechism goes on now to explain that a person can on their account have doubt as to being in Christ but in God’s account be secure and safe. We are then informed what will accompany the doubt within the heart and soul of a genuine Believer who should come to partake and be strengthened at The Table. The first thing mentioned by the Catechism that will be manifest by someone *in Christ* is that although they are experiencing doubt they are *duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it*. A truly saved person amidst their doubts is longing for assurance. They are aware of their need and are longing for assurance and for Salvation, deliverance, rescue from The Almighty. There is a real grief and mourning here Beloved (**Matthew 5:3-4, Luke 6:21, 25**). They have an *unfeignedly desire* to truly be in Jesus Christ. The word *unfeignedly* is not used a lot today in the vernacular. It means sincere, genuine, not fake. The person who with great sincerity is longing to be found in Jesus is a person who can rest assured on Jesus’ promise not to cast away any who come to Him for salvation and deliverance from sin and its wages (**John 6:37**). As the Catechism continues it gives us the other side of the coin to the *desires to be found in Christ* and that is *and to depart from iniquity*. The door to assurance here is shown to hinge between desire to be found in Jesus and an understanding and hatred of what keeps one from Jesus, sin. The man that will find assurance in Jesus is the man who not only longs for Christ but He longs for the holiness of Christ. An interesting passage that speaks to this issue is from **2 Timothy 2**. Here the Apostle Paul describes God’s people; he says that *...the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: he then goes on to tell us what the seal (symbol of ownership & security) says describing believers: ...the Lord knows them that are His* and he continues by saying *and let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity* (**2 Timothy 2:19**). These are two marks of identification of those in Christ who although at times in doubt should come to The Lord’s Table to be strengthened.

The Word Applied & Suggestion for Prayer: Father, save me from presumption of Your grace. Please grow in me fervent desire to be found in Christ & fervent desire to be holy, fight & flee sin.

THURSDAY – Question #172. Question: May one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to The Lord’s Supper? **Answer:** *One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God’s account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity: in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians he is to bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord’s supper, that he may be further strengthened.* We are reminded in this next portion of the Catechism that the Sacrament of The Lord’s Supper is for *relief*... Jesus specifically said, “*For this is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*” (**Matthew 26:28**). It was Christ who gave the

Invitation for those *weary and heavy laden to come unto Him (Matthew 11:28)*. He promises to give *rest* for the *souls* of those who come to Him by faith. It isn't those who perceive themselves to be healthy that need a doctor but those who are sick; surely we are sick and desperate without Jesus. Even in our doubts and weaknesses, as true believers we continually come to Jesus and His means of grace for strength. We are instructed that we need to be active rather than passive in the life we live pertaining to our progress, growth and sanctification. We are to *bewail our unbelief and labor to have our doubts resolved (Mark 9:24)*. As mentioned earlier in the week, doubt is good if it causes us to look to Christ and the power and beauty of the gospel more fervently and there find assurance by faith. God is pleased when we long for Him and it is to those who ask that God gives good things (**Matthew 7:11**) and The Holy Spirit (**Luke 11:13**).

The Word Applied & Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You for such means of grace as The Supper where I can come, eat, commune and be assured of Jesus and His promise to give me rest. Thank you for the power of the gospel and that You do forgive my sin for Christ's sake.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – Question #172. Question: May one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to The Lord's Supper? **Answer:** *One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity: in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians he is to bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's supper, that he may be further strengthened.* Sometimes you may here the Sacraments referred to as "signs and seals". They give outward proclamation (sign) of an inward grace that has been worked by God Himself. They also give evidence of the secure promise (seal) of God to do what He said He will for undeserving sinners. A verse which illustrates this matter of righteousness by faith being signified and sealed is **Romans 4:11**. Speaking of Abraham, Paul writes, "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also..." Abrahams circumcision didn't save Him but it was an outward sign and seal that pointed both to his need of cleansing and to the righteousness God had already granted him by faith. It was a continual reminder of his sin and of God's grace in justifying him, and ungodly man. Truly this strengthened the Patriarch as The Sacraments do us today. We are finally reminded that God wants His children to come partake. He commands self-examination (**1 Corinthians 11:28**) and when conviction and doubt may arise in that process by The Holy Spirit's work God uses this and stirs the hearts of His people to long for Him more, to cling to Him more, and to love His Son Jesus Christ more. God knows we need strengthening and He has graciously provided The Supper to help glorify His Gospel and His Son and to assure and strengthen His people.

The Word Applied & Suggestion for Prayer: Please strengthen me at Your Table O Lord Jesus.