

## Daily Bible Study

### *“Catechism & Communion” Westminster Larger #173*

#### *Selected Scripture*

*June 27 – July 3, 2010*

**THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY** – It has been a couple months since we last studied the Lord’s Table from our series entitled “*Catechism & Communion*” and we now return and take as an outline The Westminster Larger Catechism; specifically **Question #173**. **Question:** May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord’s Supper, be kept from it? **Answer:** *Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord’s Supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ hath left in his church, until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.* This week, like the last time when we studied **Question #172**, we will continue to look at the issue of who should come to The Table. We mentioned last time that the importance of preparation in coming to The Lord’s Table cannot be understated. This is a time that was ordained for us by Jesus Himself that we as His people are to come and *remember His death* and commune with Him by faith. The Lord’s Supper is a special time for God’s children just as The Passover had been a special time. It is true that in all of our lives as Christians, 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**). The Christian life is not boiled down to 30 minutes in front of the Communion Table. The Holy Spirit through the pen of The Apostle Paul reminded us that a constant *walking circumspectly* and in Him, *in the Spirit* is key to victory, sin mortification, and glorifying God (**Galatians 5:16**). While that is true, we also see from Sacred Scripture, namely **1 Corinthians 11:27-32** that preparedness in coming to The Lord’s Table is stressed and a command for examination, introspection, and confession before we come to partake of the Sacrament is stressed. Here at The Table, we publicly testify before God and men to be in Christ and beneficiaries of Jesus substitutionary death for us. Last time we looked at “*Catechism & Communion*” you will recall we addressed the **Question (#172):** 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.* In short we saw that even though true believers may at times have doubts the person truly desiring Jesus, His righteousness, repentance and faith, may come to The Table and find relief and be strengthened in communion with Christ through The Holy Spirit.

*The Word Applied & Suggestion for Prayer:* *Examine, pray, & prepare to come to The Table.*

**TUESDAY – Question #173. Question:** May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, be kept from it? **Answer:** *Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ hath left in his church, until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.* As we have seen from the previous study of **Question #172** the attitude or heart of the worshiper is what God sees and which is of the utmost importance when speaking of who should come to The Lord's Table. As we will see this week, as unloving as some people think it sounds, there are individuals who should not come to The Lord's Table. In actual fact, it is actually an expression of God's merciful love that they are warned and commanded to not eat and drink. God's Word gives the warning and He does the ultimate judging, but as the question and answer tell us, He (Jesus) has given authority to His church concerning such church polity matters and as Jesus Himself said, we are in fact to "*judge with righteous judgment*" (**John 7:24**). This entire matter of who should or should not come to the Lord's Table and participate as well as the warning to examine oneself before partaking have through the years been referred to under the heading of "Fencing the Table". Charles Spurgeon in a sermon concerning The Lord's Supper said this concerning this issue of "Fencing The Table", "See with what holy solemnity this humble feast is fenced and invested. There is a divinity which doth hedge the simple ordinance of Christ lest men should trifle with it to their eternal ruin." This statement by Spurgeon is a great summary of this issue; it emphasizes the point we made in saying it is God's mercy and love that extend the warning of Sacred Scripture that not everyone should come and eat. Tomorrow, we will look at some more details but today read The Holy Spirit written Apostolic warning from Sacred Scripture in **1 Corinthians 11:23-32** and meditate upon it, asking The Holy Spirit to point out where you need to apply this, His command.

*The Word Applied & Suggestion for Prayer: Father, by Your Holy Sprit, come and convict me of my sin and cleanse me as I confess it in preparation to live for Your glory this week and come to Your Table Jesus to partake of The Supper with You by faith. .*

**WEDNESDAY – Question #173. Question:** May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, be kept from it? **Answer:** *Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ hath left in his church, until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.* It is very important to notice the first phrase and the words in it from the Question of the Catechism. May any who profess the faith... If we look back in the Gospel accounts of when Jesus took the Passover meal and transformed it to the celebration and sacrament of The Lord's Supper we will notice a personal language and specific individuals mentioned. Jesus uses the pronouns "*you*" often as well as the word "*many*". The passages are as follow: Read them for yourself and observe the language; **Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:17-20**. We have often spoke of the corporate nature and the unity both pictured and realized in the Sacrament; namely in the "one bread" but that is not to say that there is not a personal element here either. We are told that Jesus death was for "*many*", specifically for "*you*" as He spoke to the repentant and believing disciples who were His. We spoke in the past briefly to the debate over whether or not Judas Iscariot partook of The Supper. The betrayer Judas

was in the upper room and was eating of the Passover meal in general but as to his actual involvement of the sharing of the broken bread and wine there has been through the years much debate. The answer may be found in remembering that the gospel records are individual accounts of the same events and need to be brought together often to fill in details that one of the writers did not include. As a side note let us look at this matter briefly. John records for us in **John 13:1-30** that Jesus washes the feet of the 12 and in this text He quotes **Psalm 41:9** concerning the betrayer. Here Jesus explains that one of them will betray Him which causes concern on the behalf of the disciples who all ask (including Judas Iscariot) in turn, “*Is it I?*” (**Matthew 26:25**). Peter as usual is persistent in finding out who so he asks John who is leaning on Jesus to ask Christ (**John 13:23-25**). Jesus answers the question in **John 13:26**. We find this recorded not in such a personal and precise way by the other gospel writers (**Matthew 26:22-23**). John then informs us that Satan entered Judas and Jesus tells the “*son of destruction*”, “*what you do, do quickly*” (**John 13:27**). You can follow this timeline as well in **Matthew 26:20-25** without all the personal and intimate details added by John. It is then as Matthew records in **Matthew 26:26-29** that Jesus takes and consecrates “The Supper” by prayer and blessing and then shares the meal with His sheep, the “*you*” and the “*many*” that He has come to save from their sins. We can add some more weight to Judas’ absence by noticing the promise to be reunited with Jesus to eat the supper again in the consummated Kingdom (**Matthew 26:29**). Judas along with all those apart from genuine faith in Christ will not participate in that glorious culminating feast.

*The Word Applied & Suggestion for Prayer: Father, Thanks for loving me an individual sinner so much, You sent Jesus to die & live in my place. Jesus thanks for such loving, gracious sacrifice.*

**THURSDAY – Question #173. Question:** May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord’s Supper, be kept from it? **Answer:** *Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord’s Supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ hath left in his church, until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.* We saw yesterday that even in the first celebration of the Lord’s Supper there was a warning and a fencing of The Table. The writers of the Catechism understood what God has made plain in His Word to us, that sinful people attempt to justify themselves by their own good works, even religious works such as taking communion. The sin of pride, which God hates (**Proverbs 6:16-19**) is so clearly demonstrated when a sin loving unrepentant sinner seeks to appease God by being religious. Many people profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord’s Supper. But not everyone should come because there are many who partake unworthily. That would include both the unsaved and the saved (**1 Corinthians 11:27-32**). The catechism reminds us that many who would hypocritically desire to come and partake of The Supper *are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith*. Everyone *desires* the peace and happiness that comes with forgiveness. Even the reprobate if he were honest does not want to stand under the Divine wrath of an omnipotent God. Regardless of the proud, hero language men do not want to go to hell, at least not God’s hell. They joke about a hell of their own imagination and thinking but it is NOT the hell of God, the real and only hell to which sinners will be sent for eternity apart from true repentance and faith in Jesus (**John 3:36, Revelation 14:1-12**). The catechism says concerning keeping a person *found to be ignorant or*

*scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, away from The Table that indeed they may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ hath left in his church.* This point of the power left by Christ to His church is one that is so very misunderstood; namely because men both saved and lost are so sinfully arrogant and proud. Unless one understands God, His person and character, His exalted and holy place and also sees themselves and their sin and depravity for the wicked rebellion it is they can't begin to understand the church correctly. Calvin said, "It is evident that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he have previously contemplated the face of God, and come down after such contemplation to look into himself." People don't see the authority of Christ's church as they ought for they don't see God, Christ, and themselves and mankind as they ought. Regardless, that does not sweep away the fact of the God ordained authority of Christ's church. Read **Matthew 7:6, Matthew 16:19, 1 Corinthians 5.**

*The Word Applied & Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me understand Your greatness, holiness, and authority over all things, including me. Forgive me of my pride and rebellion.*

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY – Question #173. Question:** May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, be kept from it? **Answer:** *Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ hath left in his church, until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.* Finally, we see that men who are living in unrepentant sin, *ignorant or scandalous*, are to be kept away from partaking of the Lord's Table. When there is instruction given to these living *ignorant or scandalous* through solid Biblical and Godly exhortation, admonishment, and correction and *they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation* then they are to be allowed to come partake of The Supper with God's people. This is a family dinner Beloved. It is not for those outside of the family to participate. It is not only the "clergy" who are to fence the Table. You as individual members of the body of Christ are also to do your share in the work of making sure the seriousness and reality of the gospel and its declaration at communion is understood as well as to fulfill the duty of encouragement, admonishment and discipline of your brothers and sisters. This is what we see take place in **2 Corinthians 2:3-11**. In speaking of such a matter as fencing The Table, personally I take comfort in the fact that God is the final judge who knows all hearts (**Romans 12:19**). We have been commanded to proclaim His Word, warn men not come if they are not in Christ or living in obedience, and leave God to be the righteous judge.

*The Word Applied & Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me always be prepared to commune.*