

W @ e k l j P r a d @ r J o u r n a l

DAILY BIBLE STUDIES

*“Catechism & Communion”
(Westminster Larger -Question #162)*

Selected Scripture

August 30 – September 5, 2009

THE LORD'S DAY – This week we return to our series dealing with The Lord’s Supper entitled “*Catechism & Communion*”. We are using for our study the “Westminster Larger Catechism”; namely question 162 pertaining to The Lord’s Supper. This specific question deals with the basic understanding of the Sacraments. The following quote is from the introduction or what is technically called the "Act of approving the Larger Catechism": "...the said Catechism is agreeable to the Word of God, and in nothing contrary to the received doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Kirk; a necessary part of the intended uniformity in religion, and a rich treasure for increasing knowledge among the people of God: and therefore the Assembly, as they bless the Lord that so excellent a Catechism is prepared, so they approve the same, as a part of uniformity; agreeing, for their part, that it be a common Catechism for the three kingdoms, and a Directory for catechizing such as have made some proficiency in the knowledge of the grounds of religion." Read **2 Timothy 2:1-2**.

Suggestion for prayer: Father, help me to learn from the teaching of Your Word.

MONDAY – #162 of the Larger Catechism: **Question:** What is a Sacrament?
Answer: A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his church, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of his mediation; to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces; to oblige them to obedience; to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another; and to distinguish them from those that are without. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord’s Supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord’s body, of their faith to feed upon Him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves. We have covered much of these same truths in the past and yet they remain vital and important for us to know and understand as the people of God since repetition is a key tool in the process of learning and memorizing. As the men who prepared this catechism understood there is a "rich treasure" contained in the Holy Scripture's that we would be wise to study, apply, and obey. Solomon, the man given great wisdom by God wrote to us of the importance and need to "hammer home" if you will the great wisdom from the Lord's Word. Read his words in **Ecclesiastes 12:9-14**.

Suggestion for prayer: Father, let me learn more and more of You from diligent study of Sacred Scripture.

Lord's Day	Praise & Prayer	ADORATION Hallowed be Your name. (6:9)	AUTHORITY Your Kingdom come... (6:10)	APPEAL Give us this day... (6:11)	AQUITTAL Forgive us our debts... (6:12)	ASSISTANCE Deliver us from evil. (6:13a)	ADMIRATION For Yours is the Kingdom... (6:13)
Sat							
Fri							
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M a t t h e w 6: 9-13

TUESDAY –The Catechism begins by explaining the general definition of a sacrament when it says, "A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his church, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace..." From this beginning sentence we again are reminded of the holy nature of these Christ instituted sacraments. We see the reason for doing them and the duration of how long we should do them. It was Jesus Himself who told us as His church to "do this in remembrance of Me" and Holy Scripture also informs us that as we observe this particular sacrament of The Lord's Supper we "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:25-26). The recipients of this sacrament are to be those in His church or as the catechism states it, "those that are within the covenant of grace". This reminds us that among those who receive there needs to be an understanding of Christ's death for participation in The Supper (1 Corinthians 11:28). Not only is there a comfort to believers in the sign and seal aspect of The Supper as we see our union with Jesus and His promise to secure and save us His people from our sins, but now we will turn to look at some more of the particular benefits we receive.

Suggestion for prayer: Father, thank You that at The Table we receive from You assurance and comfort as we communion with Jesus by faith.

WEDNESDAY –We are also told in the catechism that we see exhibited to us as believers in Jesus "the benefits of his mediation; to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces". The value and benefits of Jesus death for us as His children are in some ways incomprehensible. I believe that eternity will serve to be a time when we continue to grow in our appreciation and understanding of the great significance of Jesus work for us. This is not to say that we must not understand and believe by a God given faith in this life that we are unworthy sinners that need to be rescued by Christ in order to even be saved (Romans 10:9-10, Ephesians 2:8-9), but I do not think we can totally grasp the incredible plan and wisdom of God displayed in the gospel to the fullest. Even the Apostle wrote to the "unsearchable" nature of God's plan, wisdom and knowledge (Romans 11:33-36). We do understand and are told from Scripture Christ's work of mediation. That is to say that Christ is our mediator. He is the only One who can bring men to God and make peace between sinners and Holy God. He has done this and continues to do this for His people (John 14:6, 1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 7:24-25, 9:15). As we contemplate and believe in these blessed promises, even as we come to The Supper, we are strengthened and our faith is increased.

Suggestion for prayer: Father, help me to meditate on my great mediator and Savior Jesus Christ. Strengthen me and increase my faith in You.

THURSDAY – Next we read in the Catechism that The Lord's Table serves as a time for us as the people of God, "...to oblige them to obedience..." God has covenanted with His people to forgive them, bless them and be with them forever. As we will read in our Scripture for today, God's people accepted the terms of God's covenant with them by their pledge of obedience to the covenant stipulations. We often forget and possibly overemphasize God's portion of His

promises to us without understanding that God requires obedience from us. This is what the writers of the Catechism are telling us in this portion when they remind us that at The Lord's Table we come before God and pledge ourselves to obey Him and His law. We receive His promises and at the same time we demonstrate our love for His grace by obedience. God has promised His people that they alone would be special to Him and honored by Him and that He would care for them above all the other nations. We, as "The Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16) are His chosen, holy nation (1 Peter 2:9-10). When we come to The Table and eat let us remember to pledge our obedience and live holy lives before our Holy God. Read Deuteronomy 26:16-19.

Suggestion for prayer: God, convict me for my disobedience and help me to not only pledge my obedience to Your commandments but to truly obey You.

FRIDAY –We also learn from the catechism that we are "to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another; and to distinguish them from those that are without..." We have covered this concept in the past as well when we talked about our "Union in Communion". We saw that we are united to Christ but also with one another as Christians and this is demonstrated in the "one bread" of The Supper (1 Corinthians 10:16-22). This passage in Corinthians reminds us that our union with Christ is symbolized in the Sacrament by taking the bread and wine and it also reminds us of the necessity of exclusion from idols and idolatry. Being united by faith to Christ and therefore with one another that are in Christ we need to cherish our love and communion. This is exactly what Jesus said when He spoke to how the unbelieving world would know that we are Christians. We spoke yesterday about the commandments of The Lord that we are to obey and in John 13:34-35 Jesus gave us another which He called a "new commandment".

Suggestion for prayer: Father, I ask You again to work in my heart and please give me more desire to obey You and be pure. Bring holy affections to my soul.

SATURDAY –The final thing we read in #162 of The Westminster Larger Catechism is "It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon Him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves". The summation of this question and answer reminds us of the spiritual significance in the taking of The Lord's Supper. We see that this is a Holy Supper in that it represents before our eyes the very life (body and blood) of our Holy Lord and Savior. We are instructed that one may eat this supper unworthily and knowledge to discern the Lord's body is required. We need to ask God to increase our faith as we feed upon Christ and to stir us up to repentance, love, and new obedience. Although there is a stern warning of judgment there is also the promise of great reward to those who come properly. Read 1 Corinthians 11:27-31.

Suggestion for prayer: Thank You God for The Supper. Help me eat worthily. And although I am an unworthy guest, help me come and dine by the merits of Christ.