

W @ K L J P r a J @ r J O U r n a l

DAILY BIBLE STUDIES

*“Catechism & Communion”
(Westminster Shorter -Question #92)*

Selected Scripture

May 31 – June 6, 2009

THE LORD'S DAY – This week we return to our series dealing with The Lord’s Supper and we are about to start a series of lessons entitled “*Catechism & Communion*”. We did a small 3 part series taken from The Heidelberg Catechism last year. In this new series we will first look at a few questions from the “Westminster Shorter Catechism” then Lord willing will use the “Larger Catechism” in future months. The word catechism is defined as “an elementary book containing a summary of the principles of the Christian religion, esp. as maintained by a particular church, in the form of questions and answers.” Our English word is from the ancient Greek word Katecheo which is recorded in Scripture and translated “teach, instruct, and inform” (**Luke 1:4, Acts 18:25, 1 Corinthians 14:19**). Its proper definition is “to sound towards, sound down upon, resound, to teach orally, to instruct, to inform by word of mouth”. Remember that Sacred Scripture is the final authority not “Catechisms”; but we also thank God for Catechisms based in and on Holy Scripture which help to teach us.

Suggestion for prayer: Father, teach me this week from Holy Scripture.

MONDAY – #92 of the shorter Catechism: **Question:** What is a Sacrament?
Answer: *A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.* The English word “sacrament” comes from a Latin word “sacramentum” which was an oath taken by all Roman Legionaries upon entering the Roman army. It was a promise by the soldiers to always remain faithful to the General and do what the General commanded. The General should also be a faithful leader and keep his word to the soldiers under his command. The Lord Jesus Christ has made a Covenant with His people and has promised certain things that He will be sure to give them. We, as His people have also made a covenant with Him to trust, obey, and remain faithful to Him all of our lives. The Sacraments remind us of the covenant promises. Read **Genesis 17:1-2, 9**.

Suggestion for prayer: Father, thank You for always keeping Your promises and help me to remain faithful, trusting, and obedient to Christ.

TUESDAY – “A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ. An “ordinance” is “an authoritative rule or law; a decree or command.” It is authoritative because it is made by someone in authority. The Lord Jesus

Praise & Prayer	ADORATION Hallowed be Your name. (6:9)	AUTHORITY Your Kingdom come... (6:10)	APPEAL Give us this day... (6:11)	AQUITAL Forgive us our debts... (6:12)	ASSISTANCE Deliver us from evil. (6:13a)	ADMIRATION For Yours is the Kingdom... (6:13)	Lord's Day	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

M a t t h e w 6: 9-13

Christ is the King and Head of His church. He therefore makes the rules which the church must obey. Only King Jesus can make such rules. There are two rules or ordinances that Jesus made for His church and gave to His disciples to observe and always obey. He gave one of these to His church the night He was betrayed at the last meal He ate before going to the cross and dying. He took the bread and wine from the meal; broke the bread and passed it and the wine to His disciples and commanded them to eat it and drink it in remembrance of Him. We as God's people celebrate The Lord's Supper as one of the sacraments because Jesus commanded us to. The other sacrament which the Lord Jesus gave us is found in His command for us to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them..." Baptism is the other of the Sacraments which The Lord Jesus commanded us to do. Read **1 Corinthians 11:23-25, Matthew 28:18-19**.

Suggestion for prayer: Father, help me to be faithful in the keeping of the sacraments as Jesus has commanded them for me to do.

WEDNESDAY – Besides meaning "an oath" the word sacrament also means "a visible sign of an inward grace, or an outward sign of something sacred". There are two parts in both sacraments. There is a physical part that we see, touch, and taste, and there is a spiritual part, which although it is invisible to our sight, is the true substance and reality of what the sacrament is merely a picture. When a person is baptized they feel the water and get wet and we who observe see the water as well. But the spiritual part of baptism is unseen. What baptism represents, being united to Christ in His death, cannot be seen. Jesus' death for sin and His resurrection from the dead in victory is pictured in baptism. The believer who is baptized is identified with Jesus by faith as though they had died as well and also they have been raised to live for God by the power of their new life in Christ. When believers take the Lord's Supper, we eat and drink bread and wine which we really feel, touch, and taste. These elements represent something which cannot be seen, felt, or tasted. The person who eats the Lord's Supper by faith is showing their dependence on Christ's sacrifice of broken body and poured out blood to give eternal life. Read **Romans 6:4, John 6:54**.

Suggestion for prayer: Christ Jesus, thank You for Your sacrifice to pay the penalty for my sin. Help me see the reality of this in the sacraments.

THURSDAY – Back in December of 2006 we had a lesson entitled "This is My Body" where we discussed some of the ways The Lord's Supper is viewed among professing Christians. One of those views was espoused by the Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli. This view of the Lord's Supper could be summarized in seeing it as being a "memorial sign". People remember and memorialize those who have died. Flowers are often placed at the gravesides of loved ones and friends as a memorial. Yes Christ died for us but He conquered death and was "raised for our justification" (**Romans 4:25**). The Lord's Supper is done "in remembrance of Him" (**1 Corinthians 11:24**). But it is more than just a memorial for someone who

died. For a believer, eating The Lord's Supper is a means of grace, a means to grow and know Christ better. We by faith receive and appreciate all that Christ Jesus accomplished for us His people with His death on the cross. Both sacraments are more than just memorial signs and pictures. Though they are pictures they also are means of grace where Jesus causes His people to grow into what He wants them to be. Read **1 Corinthians 11:26**.

Suggestion for prayer: Jesus, help me not only remember You and Your death in The Supper, but also receive from You spiritual nourishment for my soul.

FRIDAY –Expounding this thought of the sacraments being "means of grace" let us compare the sacraments to Holy Scripture. Both Scripture and the sacraments are given to us by God and are "means of grace". Both used properly and by the power of The Holy Spirit will cause us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus" (**2 Peter 3:18**). In order to grow a person must receive both the Word of God as well as the sacraments "by faith". The Holy Spirit uses the "means of grace" to produce change in His people's hearts. One difference which is vital to note is that God does not use the mere acts of Baptism and The Lord's Supper to convert unbelievers. He uses His Word to bring life to the dead and converts men by the gospel, the "word about Christ" (**Romans 10:17**). It is through the hearing of the Word that an unbeliever is convicted of sin and brought to faith in Jesus by The Holy Spirit. Neither partaking in The Lord's Supper or being baptized will make a person a Christian. Read **John 5:24**.

Suggestion for prayer: Father, help me always understand it was Your grace in the power of the gospel (Your Word) and You Holy Spirit which brought me salvation.

SATURDAY –As we have seen, it is only the Holy Spirit using The Word of God that saves an individual (**John 3:3-21, Titus 3:4-7**). The Word of God has value for both believers and unbelievers. The sacraments are different from God's Word because of who receives the benefits from them. The preached Word of God will bring comfort, encouragement, and cause those who are in Christ to grow stronger in Him. When the Word is preached to the lost sinner God will use it to show them their sin and their need of a Savior in the person and work of Christ (the gospel). The sacraments are only for those who are in the church or the body of Christ. Baptism and The Lord's Supper strengthen and encourage God's people but do nothing beneficial for those who are not. Scripture even warns not to partake of The Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner or else an individual will eat and drink "damnation to themselves" (**1 Corinthians 11:29**). So we see that God uses the sacraments to strengthen the faith of His people and bring them spiritual benefits. He uses His Word to benefit both the believer by growing them in Christ and the unbeliever by causing and bringing faith to one who never had it before.

Suggestion for prayer: Thank You God for Your Word and also for the Sacraments. Prepare me to receive both in a worthy manner and help me grow.