

Lord's Supper: Meditations for Disciples

Participant Handouts for Classes and Groups

If you're working with a class or small group, feel free to duplicate the following handouts in this appendix at no additional charge. If you'd like to print 8-1/2" x 11" sheets, you can download the free Participant Guide handout sheets at:

www.jesuswalk.com/lords-supper/lords-supper-lesson-handouts.pdf

Discussion Questions

You'll find 4-5 questions for each lesson. Each question may include several sub-questions. These are designed to get group members engaged in discussion of the key points of the passage. If you're running short of time, feel free to skip questions or portions of questions.

1. My Body, My Blood – Literal or Figurative?
Brief Glossary of the Lord's Supper
2. Remembering and Proclaiming Christ's Death (Luke 22:19b; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)
3. Being Sharers in the Sacrifice (1 Corinthians 10:16, 18)
4. My Body Given for You (Luke 22:19b)
5. My Blood Poured Out for Many (Matthew 26:28)
6. A New Covenant in My Blood (1 Corinthians 11:25)
7. The Cup of Blessing and the One Loaf (1 Corinthians 10:16-17)
8. Eating His Flesh, Drinking His Blood (John 6:53-57)
9. The Lord's Supper and the Great Banquet (Luke 22:16, 18; Matthew 26:29)
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1. My Body, My Blood – Literal or Figurative?

Lord's Supper: Meditations for Disciples

Bread	<i>has a relationship to</i>	Jesus' Body
Wine	<i>has a relationship to</i>	Jesus' Blood

The Words of Institution

<p>Matthew 26</p> <p>²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."</p> <p>²⁷Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."</p>	<p>Mark 14</p> <p>²²While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."</p> <p>²³Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.</p>	<p>Luke 22</p> <p>¹⁹And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."</p> <p>²⁰In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."</p>	<p>1 Cor 11</p> <p>^{23b}The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."</p> <p>²⁵In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."</p>
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Circle each of the important words in these passages, and connect the ones that are the same or similar to each other with lines. What do you learn by this exercise?

Bread	has a literal relationship to	Jesus' Body
Bread	has a figurative relationship to	Jesus' Body

How is Christ Present in Communion

1. **Transubstantiation** (change in substance), corporeal presence or Real Presence
2. **Sacramental Union** (sometimes called **Consubstantiation**, same substance), Luther
3. **Symbolic and Spiritual Presence**, Calvin

The Argument for a Literal Interpretation of the Words of Institution

1. Jesus' discourse in John 6:54-57 uses very _____ language, which can only refer to the Eucharist.

2. Nowhere in the Words of Institution is a hint that a _____ interpretation should be considered.
3. Paul's language, "Guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:27) requires that Christ is c _____ or b _____ present in the Lord's Supper.
4. The Church has taken the Words of Institution _____ rather than figuratively from the earliest times. (Argument from tradition.)

The Argument for a Figurative Interpretation of the Words of Institution

1. Jesus' words should be seen in the context of many _____.
2. Jesus held the bread in his _____ when he said "This is my body."
3. The phrase "this cup is a new covenant" (Luke 22:20) surely doesn't mean that the physical _____ is the new _____.
4. John 6:27-59 uses bold terms to explain a _____ feeding on Christ.
5. Paul's reference to "sinning against the body and blood of the Lord" in 1 Corinthians 11:17 does _____ require the Real Presence to explain it.
6. The Real Presence (rather than a spiritual presence) in the elements isn't taught in the _____ for at least 75 years and perhaps twice that.

Q1. How does your particular understanding of the bread and the wine (literal or figurative) help you grow closer to Christ when partaking of the Lord's Supper?

The Body and Blood of the Lord

"The body and blood of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:27; 10:16). How should we treat these elements?

Not "Mere Symbols"

Doctrine of the "Real Absence" of Christ in the sacrament. (Erickson, *Christian Theology*)

Q2. How can an extreme symbolic interpretation cause a person to have too little respect for the Lord's Supper and its elements? Where is the balance, do you think?

Actions on the Bread and Wine

The Real Presence controversy is based on interpreting a **verb of being** ("is"), though the original Aramaic that Jesus would have spoken wouldn't have contained such a verb. The real key to understanding Jesus' intent lies instead in observing the **action verbs** contained in the Words of Institution. Most of these are pretty straightforward words – no big mystery, no deep meanings.

Bread

"Given" (Luke), *didōmi*, here used with the meaning, "to dedicate oneself for some purpose or cause, give up, sacrifice."¹⁰ Used with a similar meaning at 2 Corinthians 8:5; Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; 1 Timothy 2:6; Galatians 1:14; Titus 2:14

"Broken for" (KJV), *klaō*, " appears as a variant reading in 1 Corinthians 11:24b. We'll discuss this further in Chapter 4.

Wine

"Poured out" ("shed," KJV), *ekcheō*, "cause to be emitted in quantity, pour out." In the cultic sense, "pour out" (compare Leviticus 4:7), especially of Jesus' death, "blood shed for (the benefit of) many..."

"Forgiveness" ("remission" KJV), *aphesis*, is actually a noun, but it describes an action. It means, "the act of freeing from an obligation, guilt, or punishment, pardon, cancellation."

Q3. Which action words used to describe the elements of the Lord's Supper, teach us that we are to be thinking of Jesus' sacrifice of atonement, when we partake of the Lord's Supper?

Meaning intended for the Lord's Supper

1. Is symbolic of _____ and _____.
2. _____ us to Christ's sacrifice on the cross in some mystical way.
3. Is a powerful way of _____ Christ's death.
4. Is a way of renewing the _____.
5. Is a way to look forward to the fellowship of all the saints with Christ on the _____.
6. Keeps us focused on Christ's _____.

Q4. Which part of the meaning of the Lord's Supper is most valuable for you at this point in your spiritual journey when you partake of and meditate on the Lord's Supper?

Answers. Literal Interpretation: 1. literal, 2. figurative, 3. corporeal, bodily, 4. literally. Figurative Interpretation: 1. parables, 2. hand, 3. cup, covenant, 4. spiritual, 5. not, 6. early church. Meaning Intended: 1. nourishment, sustenance, 2. connects, 3. remembering, 4. Covenant, 5. Last Day, 6. death.

Brief Glossary of the Lord's Supper

Words for the Lord's Supper

Lord's Supper is used directly in 1 Corinthians 11:20 to describe this ceremony of remembrance. This word is common in most denominations. The term **Last Supper** refers to the historical event which took place the day before Jesus' crucifixion at which he instituted or began the practice of the Lord's Supper.

Communion, from Latin *communio*-, *communio*, "mutual participation," from *communis*. The Latin Vulgate translates the Greek word *koinōnia* in 1 Corinthians 10:16 this way. The King James Version (KJV) translates *koinōnia* as "communion" here also. This idea of mutual sharing has come into English as "communion," and emphasizes both the way that the Lord's Supper unites God's people and the communion we have with Christ at the Table. This word is very common among Protestant groups, such as Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and others, and is often referred to as Holy Communion.

Eucharist, from Greek *eucharisteō*, "be thankful," comes from the account that Jesus "gave thanks" (Matthew 26:27, Mark 14:23, Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:24) before presenting to his followers the bread and the wine. This word is more common in liturgical churches such as Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Episcopal.

Mass is used by Roman Catholics, Anglo-Catholics, and some High Church Lutherans to refer to the service of the Lord's Supper. The word comes from Vulgar Latin *messa*, literally, "dismissal at the end of a religious service," and Late Latin, "to send." A related word **missal** is a book containing all that is said or sung at mass during the entire year.

Maundy Thursday refers to the day on which the Lord's Supper took place, which some churches celebrate with a Maundy Thursday service. Maundy comes from the Latin *mandatum*, "command" from which we get our English word "mandate." That night Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34).

Agape Feast or **Love Feast** is another term in Scripture for the Lord's Supper (Jude 12), used especially these days by the House Church movement. *Agapē* is the Greek word most often used to describe "selfless love." Generally an Agape Feast refers to a full meal that Christians have together, during which the bread and wine are eaten, such as was the practice in Corinth and the early church (1 Corinthians 11:20-22; Acts 2:46; Jude 12).

The Breaking of Bread (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7) is another way the early church referred to the Lord's Supper.

Divine Liturgy is the term often used by the Byzantine tradition – Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, and some Eastern-Rite Catholic churches. The word "liturgy" comes from Greek *leitourgia*, "public service." In English it refers to a rite or body of rites prescribed for public worship. **Holy Qurbana**, or "**Holy Sacrifice**" is the term used by the Chaldean and Syriac Christian Rites. **Badarak** is the term in the Armenian Church.

Host is a term sometimes used to describe a small, thin, round wafer used for communion, especially by those who believe in transubstantiation (see below). The word comes from Latin

hostia, "victim, sacrificial animal," and is used in the Roman Catholic tradition and occasionally by Anglicans.

Chalice, from the Latin *calix*, "cup," is a goblet intended for drinking during a ceremony.

Cup is the term used in the New Testament to refer the drinking vessel (and often the wine contained within the vessel) used in the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 21; 11:25-26).

Table of the Lord (1 Corinthians 10:21) is another way of referring to the Lord's Supper, emphasizing the host who invites people to a meal in his presence, fulfilled in heaven (Luke 22:30). In the Old Testament the term "Lord's table" referred to the priesthood's ministry of sacrifice and offering (Malachi 1:7, 12).

Sacraments vs. Ordinances

What should we call this action of partaking of the Lord's Supper? There are several terms used to describe this kind of religious act:

Sacrament (from Latin *sacrare*, "to consecrate"), is probably the most common term, defined in the dictionary as, "a Christian rite (as baptism or the Eucharist) that is believed to have been ordained by Christ and that is held to be a means of divine grace or to be a sign or symbol of a spiritual reality." Catholics recognize seven sacraments (Eucharist, baptism, ordination, penance, confession, marriage, and last rites). Most Protestants recognize two sacraments (the Lord's Supper and baptism).

Ordinance (from Latin *ordinare*, "to set in order, appoint"), "a prescribed usage, practice, or ceremony." Sometimes this word is used instead of sacrament by those who want to deemphasize what they would consider "magical" ideas that have been associated with the term "sacrament." They use ordinance to emphasize Christ's direct command and usually restrict the term "ordinance" to the Lord's Supper or baptism.

Rite and Ritual (from Latin *rites*, "number") is a more general term meaning in this context, "a prescribed form or manner governing the words or actions for a ceremony; the ceremonial practices of a church or group of churches." The Lord's Supper can properly be referred to as an ordinance, a sacrament, or a rite, depending upon your tradition. Some Christians use the term "ritual" with a bit of contempt, but if you observe them, they come to use the same prescribed words again and again, such as wedding vows or words at the Lord's Table.

Rites and rituals are not wrong. They are human ways in which we reverently set apart certain events as special, as sacred. Being critical of other Christians' rites and traditions shows our own narrowness, parochialism, and critical spirit more than the supposed purity of our doctrine or the superiority of our freedom in Christ.

The Presence of Christ in the Sacrament

Transubstantiation. (trans- = "change") The miraculous change by which according to Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox dogma the Eucharistic elements at their consecration become the body and blood of Christ while keeping only the appearances of bread and wine.

Sacramental Union (sometimes called **Consubstantiation**, con- = "same"). The actual substantial presence and combination of the body and blood of Christ with the Eucharistic bread and wine according to a teaching associated with Martin Luther.

Real Presence. Catholics believe in the *corporeal presence* or *Real Presence* of Christ in the sacrament, that the bread becomes Christ's body, and that when they partake they are taking in Christ's actual body.

Celebrate, Perform, Partake

While we're at it, let's clarify the *verbs* that describe the Lord's Supper in our day. Different traditions use different verbs. I share this so you'll be able to understand when other Christians relate the Lord's Supper in their own tradition and not be offended by their terminology.

Celebrate, in this context, means "to perform (a sacrament or solemn ceremony) publicly and with appropriate rites," such as in "celebrate the mass." Some Protestants use "celebrate" to mean to praise God with joy and exuberance. Don't confuse this connotation with "celebrate" in connection with the Lord's Supper. That's really a different and separate use of the word. The person who officiates at the Lord's Supper is technically referred to as the "celebrant."

Perform, in this context, means "to do in a formal manner or according to a prescribed ritual."

Partake of, as in the phrase, "partake of the Lord's Supper," means to eat and drink the communion elements.

Enact, to act out. In a sense we act out the Last Supper, breaking the bread, offering prayers and blessings, and distributing the elements to those present.

Most English definitions and etymologies are from *Merriam-Webster's 11th Collegiate Dictionary* (2003).

2. Remembering and Proclaiming Christ's Death (Luke 22:19b; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)

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"This is my body given for you; **do this in remembrance of me.**" (Luke 22:19b)

²³For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; **do this in remembrance of me.**' ²⁵In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; **do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.**'

²⁶For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you **proclaim** the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

The Command to "Do This" Continually (Luke 22:19b)

Present tense can carry the idea of continuous action in the present. The present imperative has a "durative force." Present Imperative: "Do this and keep on doing it."

Q1. When repeated often, doesn't the Lord's Supper run the risk of becoming mundane and lose its meaning? Why did Jesus command its repetition?

Passover as a Memorial Feast or Seder

Read: Exodus 12:14-15, 24-27

At a contemporary Seder the table is set with:

1. **Unleavened bread or Matzoh** to remind them that there wasn't time for bread to rise; they left Egypt in a hurry.
2. **Haroseth** represents the mortar used to build buildings for Pharaoh.
3. **Bitter herbs** are reminiscent of the bitter affliction of slavery.
4. **Parsley dipped in salt water** reminds them of the tears of the Jewish slaves.
5. **Roasted egg** is a symbol of Spring.
6. **Lamb's meat** was part of the meal (before sacrifices were ended in 70 AD). These days a **shank bone** reminds participants of the Passover lamb.
7. **Four cups of wine**, each with a different meaning are part of the meal – representing freedom, deliverance, redemption, and release.
8. **A fifth cup** of wine in the contemporary Jewish Seder, the Cup of Elijah, looks forward to the coming of the Messiah.

During the meal the youngest member of the family is coached to ask and answer questions, such as, "**Why is this day different from all other days?**" This prompts a retelling of the story of how God delivered the people of Israel from Egypt during the Exodus.

Q2. What was the purpose of the Passover meal for future generations? Why was it to be repeated? What was to be remembered? What would have happened if the Jews had stopped remembering the Exodus?

In Remembrance of Me

“**In**” *eis*, motion into a thing or towards a goal, used to denote a purpose, “in order to,” or for the purpose of remembrance.

“**Remembrance**,” *anamnēsis*, means “remembrance, reminder, recollection.” This isn’t just a passive memory, but an active “reliving of vanished impressions by a definite act of will.”

Q3. Why is our remembrance of Christ’s death so important? What happens to Christianity if we neglect remembering in this way? What happens to us personally when we forget Christ’s death?

Proclaiming the Lord’s Death (1 Corinthians 11:26)

“Proclaim” (NIV, NRSV) or “shew” (KJV) is *katangellō*, “to make known in public, with implication of broad dissemination.” The word is frequently used in literature of public decrees. The word is often used in the Acts and Paul for preaching the message of Jesus, for declaring the Christian gospel.

Read: 1 Corinthians 2:1-2

Q4. (1 Corinthians 11:26) In what way is the Lord’s Supper a proclamation? To whom is the proclamation made? Why is this important? What happens to the church when its proclamation shifts to a different central theme?

3. Being Sharers in the Sacrifice (1 Corinthians 10:16, 18)

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Using 1 Corinthians 10:16-22 below or in your own Bible circle all the following words:

- NIV – participation/participation/participants/have a part in
- KJV – communion/partakers of
- NRSV/NASB – sharing/partners in/sharers in

Each of these words renders the Greek word *koinōnia*

¹⁴Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

¹⁸Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? ¹⁹Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. ²¹You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. ²²Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?" (1 Corinthians 10:16-22, NIV)

Q1. Why was Paul exhorting the Corinthians about the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons? What was going on in the church? What was the danger to the believers?

Participation, Communion, Koinōnia (1 Corinthians 10:16)

Koinōnia, "participation" (NIV) also translated as "communion" (KJV) or "sharing" (NRSV). It means sharing something in common with others. The root *koinē* means common in contrast to private or sacred – common ground, common pastureland, communal property, a couple's community property. When it refers to people it means "participants, fellows." The idea is that which is shared in common with others.

Q2. What does *koinōnia* mean? What does it mean to "participate" or "share" in the blood of Christ?

Eating a Portion of the Sacrifice for Sin

Read Leviticus 6:24-26 and 10:12-15.

Sharers in the Altar (1 Corinthians 10:18)

Q3. In what way did the priests participate in the altar by eating of the Old Testament sacrifices? How does Paul connect this observation with our participation with Christ's sacrifice?

Sharers in the Cross

Communion

Q4. What are the implications for you personally, when you realize that in the Lord's Supper you are becoming a sharer in the sacrifice of the cross? How does that affect you? How does it change your understanding of the Lord's Supper?

4. My Body Given for You (Luke 22:19b)

The Lord's Supper: Meditations for Disciples

Luke 22:19b This is my body **given for you**. Do this in remembrance of me.

1 Corinthians 11:24b This is my body which is **for you**. Do this in remembrance of me.

My Body which Is Broken for You (1 Corinthians 11:24b, KJV)

Psalm 34:20. The bread in the sacrament is broken, but that is not the center of our remembrance. It is not the *breaking* of Jesus' body but the *giving* of it that we are to focus on.

Jesus' Body Given for You (Luke 22:19b)

"Given," *didōmi*, used in Luke 22:19b, "to dedicate oneself for some purpose or cause, give up, sacrifice."

Preposition *huper*, "in behalf of"

Ideas of: (1) sacrifice, (2) giving oneself, (3) voluntary giving

1. Jesus' Body as a Sacrifice

1 Peter 2:24 with Isaiah 53:5-6

Q1. (1 Peter 2:24) Why do you think the Apostle Peter emphasized Jesus' physical body, when he talks about sin-bearing?

Also Romans 7:4; Hebrews 10:10, 5-7 (*soma*, "body")

1 Peter 3:18; 4:1; Hebrews 10:19-20; 1 John 4:2-3 (*sarx*, "flesh")

Q2. (1 John 4:2-3) Why does Christianity insist on a physical birth, physical suffering, and a resurrection of the physical body? How would our faith be different if Christ hadn't fully entered the human condition?

2. Jesus Gave Himself to Rescue and Ransom Us

Verb *didōmi*, "give," with the preposition *huper*, "in behalf of." 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Galatians 1:3-4; Titus 2:13-14; Matthew 20:28 = Mark 10:45; Ephesians 5:2; also 1 Peter 3:18

Q3. Look at the verses above which include both the word "give" and a preposition that means "in behalf of." According to these verses, what was the purpose of Jesus giving himself in sacrifice?

3. He Voluntarily Laid Down His Life to Defend Us

Luke 22:42-44; John 18:11; also John 10:11, 14-15, 17; John 15:13

Q4. How does Jesus' voluntarily laying down his life for you encourage you? How does it speak to your value and worth as a person? What does it inspire you to do?

5. My Blood Poured Out for Many (Matthew 26:28)

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"This is my blood ... which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:28)

Blood Reserved for Atonement

Leviticus 17:10-11

Blood Sacrifices in the Old Testament

Hebrews 9:22

Leviticus 4:27-35; Exodus 29:38; Yom Kippur, Leviticus 16; Psalm 51:16-17

Q1. How were Old Testament sacrifices a way of God showing grace and mercy to his people?

Sacrificing the Paschal Lamb

Exodus 12:7, 12-13; 1 Corinthians 5:7

Poured Out

"Poured out" ("shed," KJV), *ekcheō*, "cause to be emitted in quantity, pour out." The expression "shed blood" is used of the violent slaying of Old and New Testament martyrs (Matthew 23:35; Romans 3:15 = Isaiah 59:7; Acts 22:20; Revelation 16:6).

Q2. Why did Jesus refer to the violent nature of his death in the Words of Institution? What did this probably mean to the disciples at the time? What did it probably mean to them later?

For Many

Matthew 26:28; Mark 10:45 = Matthew 20:28; Isaiah 53:11-12

Q3. Why did Jesus purposely point his disciples to the phrasing found in Isaiah 53? How does this chapter help explain the meaning of Jesus' death?

Christ's Blood in the New Testament

- Redemption: 1 Peter 1:18-19; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:12
- Purchase (a concept closely related to redemption): Revelation 5:9; Acts 20:28
- Forgiveness and Atonement: Romans 3:25; 5:9
- Sanctification, Cleansing, and Purification from Sin: Hebrews 9:14; 1 John 1:7; 1 Peter 1:2; Hebrews 13:12
- Freedom and Victory over Sin and Satan: Revelation 1:5; 12:11
- Reconciliation to and Peace with God: Ephesians 2:13; Colossians 1:19-20; Hebrews 10:19-20; 13:20-21

Depictions of the Blood of Christ

Songs about the Blood of Jesus

- "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood, Drawn from Emmanuel's Veins," words by William Cowper (1772), music: 19th century American camp meeting tune.
- "There Is Power in the Blood," words and music by Lewis E. Jones (1899).
- "What Can Wash Away My Sin? Nothing but the Blood of Jesus," words and music by Robert Lowry (1876).
- "Oh, the Blood of Jesus, It Washes White as Snow" (unknown author)
- "Are You Washed in the Blood?" words and music by Elisha A. Hoffman (1878).
- "The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power," by Andraé Crouch (©1966 by Manna Music, Inc.)

Poured Out for the Forgiveness of Sin

"Forgiveness" ("remission" KJV), *aphesis*, means, "the act of freeing from an obligation, guilt, or punishment; pardon, cancellation."⁶

Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 31:34; Psalm 103:12; Micah 7:19

Q4. What do the Words of Institution say to us about forgiveness? Why is it important for us to repent of known sin before taking the Lord's Supper?

6. A New Covenant in My Blood (1 Corinthians 11:25)

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Covenants in the Old Testament

Hebrew word *berît*, and the Greek noun *diathēkē*. A covenant is “a solemn commitment guaranteeing promises or obligations undertaken by one or both covenanting parties.” Between nations a covenant is a treaty, an alliance. Between individuals it is a pledge or agreement. Between a king and his subjects it is a constitution. Between God and man it is a relationship with promises of blessing for keeping the covenant and curses for breaking it. Covenants were often ratified by signs, a solemn oath, and a meal. Sacrifice was often part of the process of ratifying a covenant, too, hence the phrase “to cut a covenant” (Genesis 15:9-10, 17; Jeremiah 34:18).

God's covenant with _____ (Genesis 6:8; 9:9-17),

God's covenant with _____ and his descendents (Genesis 15:18; 17:2-21),

God's covenant with _____ and the people of Israel at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:5; 24:7-8; 31:16; 34:10, 27; etc.).

Provisions of the Old Covenant

God's Obligations

- God will be with Israel and lead them on their journey.
- God protect his people.
- God will provide for and bless his people.

Exodus 24:3-11

Q1. (Exodus 24:3-11) How was the covenant with Israel ratified? What promise did the people make twice in this passage? What was sacrificed? What was sprinkled? What was eaten?

Israel's Obligations

- Exclusive love for and allegiance to God, no other gods.
- Obedience to God's commandments.

God's Promise of a New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-13; 10:16-17.

Provisions of the New Covenant

Acts 2:38-39; Romans 8:9-11; 1 John 1:7, 9

Q2. (Jeremiah 31:31-34) How does the promised New Covenant differ from the Old Covenant? What are the promises God makes in the New Covenant? What are *our* responsibilities under the New Covenant?

Confirmation of the Covenant at a Meal

70 Elders (Exodus 24:11), Isaac and Abimelech (Genesis 26:30), Laban and Jacob (Genesis 31:46, 53-54); and Moses, the Israelites, and Jethro (Exodus 18:12).

The Lord's Supper as Confirming the Covenant

The Last Supper was a kind of covenant meal where Jesus introduces the New Covenant (Matthew 26:27-28).

1 Corinthians 11:25 extends the meal into the future.

Q3. What is the significance of the 12 Apostles drinking the Cup of the Covenant? To whom would they correspond under the ratification of the Old Covenant? (Hint: Exodus 24:11.) What is the significance of *us* drinking the Cup of the Covenant?

The Meal as Giving and Receiving Hospitality

Genesis 18:1-8; 19:1-8; John 13:18, quoting Psalm 41:9; Obadiah 1:7; Psalm 23:5; Revelation 3:20

Q4. Why is the Lord's Table such a time of intimate fellowship with Jesus? In your experience with having meals with friends, what makes the difference between a casual, forgettable meal, and one which is rich with memories? How can this insight make your experience of the Lord's Table more meaningful?

Invitation to the Covenant

Revelation 21:6; 22:17; Isaiah 55:1-3; Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 13:20-21

Answers: Noah, Abraham, Moses.

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7. The Cup of Blessing and the One Loaf (1 Corinthians 10:16-17)

Lord's Supper: Meditations for Disciples

The Cup of Blessing

Jewish meals where blessings and thanksgivings were offered to God at the beginning and end of the meal, such as: "Blessed are You, O Lord our God, who have created the fruit of the vine." The cup of blessing was a Jewish technical term for the cup of wine, for which a blessing, i.e. thanksgiving, was given to God.

Q1. (1 Corinthians 10:16). What does the "cup of blessing" teach us about our focus at the Lord's Supper? Who is to be blessed when the "cup of blessing" is lifted heavenward?

We Partake of the One Loaf (1 Corinthians 10:17)

"Bread" (KJV, NRSV, NASB) or "loaf" (NIV) is the common word *artos*, "a baked product produced from a cereal grain, bread," also, "loaf of bread."

The One Loaf as a Symbol of Unity

"Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf." (1 Corinthians 10:17)

Many things divided the Corinthians:

1. _____ to leaders. (1 Corinthians 1:10-13)
2. _____ issues. (5:1-13; 6:9-20)
3. _____ syncretism (or mixing Christianity with idolatry) (8:1-13; 10:6-33)
4. Disputes between _____ . (6:1-8)
5. _____ Distinctions. (11:17-22)
6. Spiritual _____ (Chapters 12 and 14)
7. Doctrinal _____ (15:12ff)

It's Me, O Lord

Q2. Read Mark 11:25 and Matthew 5:23-24. How do these relate to Paul's teaching on the One Loaf (1 Corinthians 10:17)? What must we personally do to achieve unity to prepare ourselves to partake of the Lord's Supper righteously?

The Scandal of Christian Divisions

Q3. In what ways do the divisions in Corinth sound familiar in our own congregations? Don't pick on another congregation; how about your own? How serious was the need for unity? Can bickering congregations partake of the Lord's Supper without sin?

Q4. (1 Corinthians 10:17) How does Paul's teaching on the One Loaf affect our relationships and love for those of other Christian denominations and traditions? How does blanket judgmentalism towards the faith of other Christian groups sometimes seem to excuse us from Jesus' command to love one another?

Answers. Dividers: 1. allegiance, 2. moral, 3. religious, 4. members, 5. class, 6. gifts, 7. disputes.

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8. Eating His Flesh, Drinking His Blood (John 6:53-57)

Outline:

1. Jesus, the True Manna (6:27-34)
2. Jesus, the Bread of Life (6:35-51)
3. Partaking of the Son of Man (6:52-59)
4. Reactions to Jesus' Teaching (6:60-71)

Themes:

1. Believing on and continuing to trust in Jesus will bring a person to eternal life and ultimate resurrection in the Last Day (6:39-40, 47, 57, 63, etc.).
2. But this is entirely from God, since no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him, and Jesus will not lose any of them (6:44-46, 65).

Metaphors or Parables:

1. **Manna**, "bread from heaven" (6:31-34, 38, 41-42, 49-50, 58)
2. **Bread of Life**, that is, bread that brings about eternal life (6:35-42, 51, 58)
3. **Flesh and blood** as "food" (6:51b-56)

1. Jesus, the True Manna (6:27-34)

2. Jesus, the Bread of Life (6:35-51)

"I AM" passages in John (6:35; 8:12; 10:9; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1; see Exodus 3:14).

verse 47	He who believes	has eternal life
verse 51a	If anyone eats of this (living) bread	he will live forever

Q1. (John 6:35-51) What does the metaphor of "eating the Bread of Life" mean in practical terms? To extend the same metaphor, what do you think might be the difference between nibbling and actually making a meal of it?

Flesh Given for the Life of the World (6:51b)

- "flesh" *sarx* "body, physical body."
- "give, given" *didōmi* "to dedicate oneself for some purpose or cause, give up, sacrifice."
- "for" *huper* "in behalf of, for the sake of someone or something."

Luke 22:19b	And he took bread , gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is	my body (<i>sōma</i>)	given	for	you...
John 6:51b	This bread is	my flesh (<i>sarx</i>)	which I will give	for	the life of the world.

Q2. (John 6:51b) What is Jesus referring to when he says, "This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world"? What similarities do you see with Jesus' teaching at the Last Supper in Luke 22:19b?

3. Partaking of the Son of Man (6:52-59)

Arguments for Taking the Passage Literally of the Eucharist

Pohle: "Nothing hinders our interpreting the first part (6:26-48) metaphorically and understanding by 'bread of heaven' Christ Himself as the object of faith, to be received in a figurative sense as a spiritual food by the mouth of faith. Such a figurative explanation of the second part of the discourse (6:52-72), however, is not only unusual but absolutely impossible."

We are not required to go as far back as the Old Testament for the metaphor, just a few verses back where he speaks of eating the Bread of Life (6:50-51a). This is a continuation and intensification of that same metaphor. Jesus sums it up in verse 58 with a reference back to his previous words about the Bread of Life:

"This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever." (6:58)

What Does Jesus Mean about Eating His Flesh, Drinking His Blood?

Ref	Consequence	Similar sayings elsewhere
6:53	Having life in oneself	The consequence of believing is to have life in his name, according to John 20:31. In 1 John 5:10-12, having life is associated with believing in the Son of God.
6:54a	Has eternal life	Eternal life is the consequence of believing in John 6:40a, as well as in John 3:15-16; 3:36; 5:24; 1 Timothy 1:16; 1 John 5:13; etc.
6:54b	Resurrection on the last day	Resurrection on the last day is the consequence of believing according to John 6:40b. Jesus also connects believing in him with resurrection and eternal life in the raising of Lazarus (John 11:25-26)
6:56	Remains or abides in Jesus	This is also a consequence of believing Jesus' words according to John 15:7. His word remaining or abiding in us is connected with eternal life (1 John 2:23-25), being true disciples (John 8:31-32), and bearing fruit (John 15:5).
6:57	Live because of me	The consequence of believing in the "I am the resurrection and the life" passage, John 11:25-26
6:58	Live forever	"Live forever" is the consequence of eating of the "living bread" in John 6:51b above. It is another way of saying one "has eternal life" (see 6:54a above). In John 11:26 Jesus connects believing in him with never dying.

4. Reactions to the Teaching (6:60-71)

Q3. (John 6:53-71) If to eat Jesus' flesh and drink his blood is a strong expression for "to believe," why does Jesus emphasize this so strongly? What was the difference between the Twelve and the crowd of "disciples" that turned away from Jesus? What is the mark of true disciples according to John 8:31-32?

The Spirit Gives Life, the Flesh Counts for Nothing (6:63)

What does "flesh" (*sarx*) refer to?

1. Eating my flesh = believing in Jesus. **The Spirit give life, believing in me counts for nothing.**
2. Eating my flesh = partaking of the Eucharist. **The Spirit gives life, eating the sacramental flesh counts for nothing.**
3. Flesh = the natural principle in man which cannot give eternal life. **The Spirit gives life; what man can understand and achieve on his own counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you – spiritually discerned and believed – bring spiritual life, eternal life.**

The Bread of Life Passage and the Lord's Supper

Q4. How does "eating the Bread of Life" (to use Jesus' metaphor in John 6) nourish our faith? How does partaking of the Lord's Supper build and nourish our faith? What does the main point of the Bread of Life discourse (John 6:25-69) have in common with "Do this in remembrance of me," in Jesus' Words of Institution (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)?

9. The Lord's Supper and the Great Banquet (Luke 22:16, 18; Matthew 26:29)

Jewish Expectation of the Great Feast

Isaiah 25:6-8; Revelation 19:6-9; 21:4; Luke 14:15

Yahweh will **recline at table**, the patriarchs and the righteous at His feet, and "They will recline at table and eat in Gan Eden," rabbinical commentary on Exodus.

"At the last coming he will lead out Adam and the patriarchs and bring them (into the paradise of Eden) that they may rejoice, as when a man invites his friends to eat with him, and they come and speak with one another before the palace, joyously awaiting his **feast**, the enjoyment of good things, of immeasurable wealth and joy and happiness in light and everlasting life," pseudepigraphical Book of Enoch

"Rise and stand, and see at the **feast** of the Lord the number of those who have been sealed," Old Testament Apocrypha.

"The **feast** of our God, which He will prepare for the righteous, has no end," Midrash on Esther.

Jesus' Teaching on the Great Banquet

It was in this context that Jesus taught. He often alluded to the Great Feast in the Kingdom of God, both in parables and in direct comments. For example:

- Parable of the Great Banquet. Luke 14:18-24; Matthew 22:2-14
- Reward for the Apostles. Luke 22:29-30
- Teachings on Inclusion and Exclusion. ;Luke 13:29-30 || Matthew 8:11
- Parable of the Delayed Householder. Luke 12:37
- Parable of the Ten Virgins. Matthew 25:10
- Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Luke 16:22
- Gathering the Elect. Mark 13:27 || Matthew 24:31

Q1. Why are so many of Jesus' teachings oriented toward the future? What kinds of associations come to mind as you think of the Great Banquet?

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

Revelation 2:7; 19:6-9

The Lord's Supper Looks Forward to the Great Banquet

Matthew 26:29 || Mark 14:25; Luke 22:16.

"Fulfillment" is the verb *plēroō*, "to make full." – "1. to bring to a designed end, fulfill" a prophecy, a promise, etc., or "2. to bring to completion an activity in which one has been involved from its beginning, complete, finish."

Q2. (Luke 22:16) In what sense does the Lord's Supper find its "fulfillment" in the Great Banquet at the end of the age? What should this do to our thoughts at the Lord's Table?

The Promise of Future Fellowship

Hebrews 10:25

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The Lord's Supper as a Promise of the Future

Q3. In what sense does the Lord's Supper point to the past? How does it point to the present? How does it point to the future?

We Shall See His Face

"O I want to see Him, look upon His face,
There to sing forever of His saving grace;
On the streets of glory let me lift my voice,
Cares all past, home at last, ever to rejoice."

John 1:18; 1 John 4:12; Revelation 22:4-5

Q4. (Revelation 22:4) When you meditate on "seeing his face," what thoughts come to mind? Why should the Lord's Supper stimulate these thoughts every time we partake of it?

10. Preparing Ourselves for the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11: 27-34)

Lord's Supper: Meditations for Disciples

Divisions between the Rich and Poor in Corinth (11:17-22)

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

Not Discerning the Body (11:29)

"Discerning" (KJV, NRSV) or "recognizing" (NIV, NJB) is *dokimazō*, "to make a critical examination of something to determine genuineness, put to the test, examine," often used of assaying the genuineness of metal... to discern, distinguish as distinct and different."

Two possible interpretations of the word "body" in verse 29:

1. "Body" refers to the Eucharistic elements.
2. "Body" refers to the church, the "Body of Christ" (see 1 Corinthians 10:17)

Greek *anaxiōs* means "in an unworthy/careless manner." (Philippians 1:27; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; Colossians 1:10; Ephesians 4:1; 3 John 6).

Sinnyng against the Body and Blood of the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:27)

1 Corinthians 8:12; Matthew 25:31-46

Q1. (11:29) Why does "not discerning the body" at the Lord's Supper constitute such a grave sin? Aren't there worse things a church could have done?

Incurring Judgment and Discipline (1 Corinthians 11:29-32)

Two words are used to describe this punishment:

"**Judgment**" (NIV, NRSV, NKJV) or "damnation" (KJV) in verse 29 is *krima*, "legal decision rendered by a judge, judicial verdict."

"**Disciplined**" (NIV, NRSV) or "chastened" (KJV) in verse 32 is *paideuō*, "to assist in the development of a person's ability to make appropriate choices, practice discipline," here, to discipline with punishment, especially the kind of punishment a parent might give to a child to help mold his or her character.

Hebrews 12:5-7; 1 Corinthians 11:30

Q2. (1 Corinthians 11:29-32) Why has God brought judgment to the offending parties at Corinth? Isn't sickness and death rather harsh? How does God's discipline actually work for our good in the light of Hebrews 12:5-7?

Self-Examination (1 Corinthians 11:28, 31)

Two words to describe this:

1. "**Examine**" yourself (verse 28), *dokimazō*, "to make a critical examination of something to determine genuineness, put to the test, examine"
2. "**Judge**" yourself (vs. 31), *diakrinō*, used twice in this passage to mean, "to evaluate by paying careful attention to, evaluate, judge."

2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 6:4-5

Q3. (1 Corinthians 11:28, 31) Introspection by a neurotic person can foster guilt and self-loathing. Where is the balance? How can we conduct self-examination and self-judgment so that it has a healthy rather than an unhealthy result in us?

Confession and Repentance

Matthew 5:23-24; Mark 11:25; 1 John 1:9; Psalm 32:5; 51:2-5; 2 Corinthians 6:1

Q4. How do confession and repentance fit with self-examination? What is the result of self-examination without confession and repentance? How do confession and repentance serve to bring spiritual health and character change?

How to Prepare for Communion

1. Take some time _____ the communion service.
2. _____ yourself to see if you are in sin,
3. _____ any sins,
4. _____ of these sins
5. _____ God's forgiveness. (1 John 1:9)

Answer: 1. time, 2. examine, 3. confess, 4. repent, 5. accept.