

LORD'S DAY 28

Q75. How does the holy supper remind and assure you that you share in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross and in all his benefits?

A. In this way: Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat this broken bread and to drink this cup in remembrance of him. With this command come these promises: First, as surely as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup shared with me, so surely his body was offered and broken for me and his blood poured out for me on the cross. Second, as surely as I receive from the hand of the one who serves, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, given me as sure signs of Christ's body and blood, so surely he nourishes and refreshes my soul for eternal life with his crucified body and poured-out blood.

Q76. What does it mean to eat the crucified body of Christ and to drink his poured-out blood?

A. It means to accept with a believing heart the entire suffering and death of Christ and thereby to receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life.¹ But it means more. Through the Holy Spirit, who lives both in Christ and in us, we are united more and more to Christ's blessed body.² And so, although he is in heaven³ and we are on earth, we are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone.⁴ And we forever live on and are governed by one Spirit, as the members of our body are by one soul.⁵

1. John 6:35 – "Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'"

John 6:40 – "This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day."

John 6:47–48 – "Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life."

John 6:50–54 – "'This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever, and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.' The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day,'"

2. John 6:55–56 – "for my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them."

3. Acts 1:9 – "When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight."

Acts 3:21 – "who must remain in heaven until the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets."

1 Cor. 11:26 – "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

4. Eph. 3:17 – "and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love."

Eph. 5:29–32 – "For no one ever hates his own flesh, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, but I am speaking about Christ and the church."

1 Cor. 6:15 – "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!"

1 Cor. 6:17–19 – "But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun sexual immorality! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?"

1 John 3:24 – "All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us."

1 John 4:13 – "By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit."

John 14:23 – “Jesus answered him, ‘Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.’”

5. John 6:56–58 – “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which the ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.”

John 15:1–6 – “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.”

Eph. 4:15–16 – “but speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”

Q77. Where does Christ promise to nourish and refresh believers with his body and blood as surely as they eat this broken bread and drink this cup?

A. In the institution of the Lord’s Supper:¹ “The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is [broken]* for you.’ In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood;² do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’³ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” This promise is repeated by Paul in these words: “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”⁴

1. 1 Cor. 11:23[–26] – “For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread,”

Matt. 26:26[–29] – “While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’”

Mark 14:22[–25] – “While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, ‘Take; this is my body.’”

Luke 22:17[–20] – “Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves,’

2. Exod. 24:8 – “Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people, and said, ‘Here is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.’”

Heb. 9:20 – “saying, ‘This is the blood of the covenant that God has ordained for you.’”

3. Exod. 13:9 – “It shall serve for you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead, so that the teaching of the Lord may be on your lips, for with a strong hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt.”

4. 1 Cor. 10:16–17 – “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”

*The word “broken” does not appear in the NRSV text, but it was present in the original German of the Heidelberg Catechism.