

Preparing for the Lord's Supper

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.”
~ 1 Corinthians 11:28 ~

“If we come to it well prepared, it must be most effectual in stirring up the inward senses of the dull heart.”
Robert Bruce, *The Mystery of the Lord's Supper*, 39

I. Objective Considerations: Why the Lord's Supper is Only for Communicant Members

A. Passover Principle

1. Similarities between the Passover and the Lord's Supper

- a. Redemption - Lk 9:30-31
- b. Requirement - Lev 23:5, 1 Cor 11:33
- c. Preparation - Exod 12:15, 19, 1 Cor 11:28
- d. Admittance - Exod 12:48-49, 1 Cor 11:29

2. The Place of Public, Formal Membership in the People of God

B. Boundary Principle

1. Legal Age/Status

2. Marriage

C. Holiness Principle

1. God is Holy - Lev 10:3; Heb 12:28-29

2. Those who draw near to Him must be holy

II. Subjective Considerations

A. What to Avoid

1. Morbid Introspection

2. Careless/Non-Existent Preparation

B. What does it mean *to examine* yourself?

1. δοκιμάζω / dokimazō -

- a. to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals
- b. to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy

2. Other uses: 1 Cor 3:13, 1 Cor 16:3, Phil 1:10, 1 Tim 3:10, 1 Pet 1:7, 1 Jn 4:1

C. What to Consider: WLC 171: *They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves*

1. Faith

- a. Of their being in Christ
- b. Of their sins and wants
- c. Of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance

2. Love

- a. Love to God
- b. Love to the brethren, charity to all men

3. Grace

- a. Forgiving those that have done them wrong
 - b. Of their desires after Christ
 - c. Of their new obedience
4. Disciplines [by renewing the exercise of these graces]
- a. By serious meditation
 - b. By fervent prayer

III. Some Practical Helps: How Can We Do a Better Job of Preparing for the Lord's Supper?

A. Make it a Commitment

B. From Thomas Haweis: *Self-Examination: A Necessary Duty before Coming to the Lord's Supper*

1. Repentance
 - a. Sorrow for sin - Joel 2:13
 - b. Hatred of sin

Thomas Goodwin, Vol 5, 287: "If thou wouldst see what sin is, go to mount Calvary. It is true that the utmost real evil of the thing itself which we call sin consists in this, that it is the transgression of the command of the great God. But the utmost representation to make that evil known to us, is the cross and the curse of the Son of God, blessed forever... So whilst we view sin in its direct and proper notion, and that it is an injury against the great God, so we should never have seen the full vileness of it."
 - c. Forsaking sin
 - d. Evident change in heart and life
2. Faith
 - a. Marks to consider
 - b. Signs of a Living Faith
 - 1) Living faith directs us to Christ as our only propitiation
 - 2) Lively faith lays hold of the strength of Christ as well as His atonement and righteousness
3. Thanksgiving
 - a. Sensibility of our fallen state
 - b. Gratitude as a Motivation in Life
4. Obedience
 - a. Examine yourself in a negative sense
 - b. Examine yourself in a positive sense

Closing thoughts from Robert Bruce

Warning: "Whoever comes to this Table with an evil purpose and without intending to repent, he comes to mock Christ, to scorn Him to His face, and to eat his own present condemnation... If you come with a dissolute life (I am not speaking of public wickedness) and do not intent to amend, but continue in sin, then for God's sake abstain."

Encouragement: "And therefore he goes to the Table to get strength in his misery, to lay hold upon mercy at the throne of grace, to get remission of forgiveness of his sins, to get the gift of repentance, that more and more he may seek to live uprightly, holily, and soberly all his days." [49]