

Daily Devotions for Communion Preparation

June 29 – July 4, 2015

Monday: June 29, 2015

1 Corinthians 11:28 – **"A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup."**

WLC #171 – They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ...

Examine for Evidence – Being in Christ

Thomas Watson wrote, back in 1665, "It is not enough to do *what* God has appointed, but *as* he appointed. 'Prepare your hearts unto the Lord' (1 Samuel 7:3). The musician first puts his instrument in tune before he plays. The heart must first be prepared, and put in tune, before it goes to meet with God in this solemn ordinance of the sacrament."

How much sweeter is the music when the instrument is in tune, so much sweeter is the heart tuned to Christ.

This self-examination is not just to see our sin, but to see our being in Christ. Robert Murray M'Cheyne said, "For every one look at your sins, take ten looks at Christ."

Do you see in yourself an interest in the covenant of grace? Then come to receive its sign and seal in the sacrament.

In the Parable of the Wedding Banquet, "The King came in to see the guests" (Matthew 22:11). Does the King see you dressed in the new wedding clothes he gives the redeemed? Then come to his Table for a holy supper.

Christ himself said to his disciples, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15). "If God has prepared a feast, we must get an appetite" (Watson).

Develop an appetite for Christ today. Tune your heart to Christ today. Take ten looks at Christ today.

Take note, today, ten ways that you see, hear, and taste Christ's redeeming love.

Tuesday: June 30, 2015

1 Corinthians 11:29 – **For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself**

WLC #171 – They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves...of the truth and measure of their knowledge...

Examine for Evidence – Truth & Measure of Knowledge

The Roman Catholic Church's view of "Transubstantiation" believes that, in the administration of the sacrament, the communion elements of bread and wine transform into the actual physical body and blood of Christ. The Lutheran view of "Consubstantiation" believes that the elements remain bread and wine, but that in the administration the actual physical body and blood become present in, with, or under, the bread and wine. The Zwinglian view reduces communion to a mere memorial meal.

The Reformed view recognizes that while the bread and wine are physically present, those who receive these signs in true faith also partake – *spiritually* – of Christ.

St. Augustine once said, "Judas ate bread with the Lord, but did not eat the Lord with the bread." When the disciples first ate the supper, it was Christ who served them bread and wine and not his physical body and blood. So it is still today, that Christ is spiritually present in the elements of the bread and the cup.

If Con- or Transubstantiation were true, there would be no need to examine ourselves. It is because of the spiritual manner that self-examination is necessary.

In 1 Corinthians 2:13 the Apostle Paul writes, "This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words."

Take the next few minutes in silent meditation to allow these spiritual truths to be heard in spiritual words taught by the Spirit.

Wednesday: July 1, 2015

2 Corinthians 13:5-6 – **Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you – unless, of course, you fail the test? And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test.**

WLC #171 – They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their...faith...

Examine for Evidence – Faith

"Adam *died* by eating; we *live* by eating. In the sacrament, the whole of Christ is served up to us, the divine and human natures. All kinds of virtues come from him: mortifying, mollifying, comforting. Oh, then feed on him. This grace of faith is the great grace to be set to work at the sacrament" (Thomas Watson).

Peter addresses his second letter, "To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours" (2 Peter 1:1).

Faith receives righteousness from Christ. The perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed – credited – to the Christian, by faith.

We come to the Lord's Table as worthy receivers, not because we are worthy in and of ourselves; but we are made worthy receivers having received Christ's righteousness by faith.

The truest faith in Christ, is the most empty of itself. "The emptier the vessel is, and the lower it is let down into the well, the more water it draws up; so the more the soul is emptied of itself, and the lower it is let down by humility, the more it fetches out of the well of salvation" (Watson).

And so Isaiah tells us that the Lord himself comes "to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isaiah 57:15). In the sacrament, the Lord himself comes to feed us – by faith.

Every time you eat today, consider your hunger and give thanks for the provision of food; and then consider your spiritual hunger and give thanks for the provision of the Lord's Supper.

Thursday: July 2, 2015

1 Corinthians 10:16 – **Is 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?**

WLC #171 – They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ...

Examine for Evidence – Being in Christ

The word sacrament comes from the Latin word meaning "sacred" and is the translation of the Greek word meaning "mystery." The Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, is a sacred mystery.

The sacrament is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace in which Christ is spiritually present to those who receive it by faith.

This is a sacred mystery, indeed!

As a sign, Communion, is a visible representation of something we cannot see. We cannot see Christ spiritually present, but his presence is signified by the bread and the cup.

Road signs, and instruction manuals, have pictures and symbols to describe something that is (as of yet) unseen.

The outward and physical signs of the bread and cup – relate to the inward and spiritual reality of the body and blood, which they signify.

Unbelievers, who are not in Christ, will not be able to make sense of this – much as we might not understand the symbols in instruction manuals.

As a seal, Communion, certifies the genuineness of the benefits believers receive from Christ.

Diplomas, and important documents, have an official seal stamped onto them, to show that they are genuine, attested, and confirmed by the proper authority.

It is a criminal act, to forge a seal; or to steal an official document from another and call it your own. So a person eats and drinks judgment on themselves if they misuse God's seal.

When you see signs, symbols, and seals today, think about the Lord's Supper as a sign and seal of the covenant of grace.

Friday: July 3, 2015

1 Corinthians 11:27-29 – **"Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord."**

WLC #171 – They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves...of the truth and measure of their knowledge...

Examine for Evidence – Truth & Measure of Knowledge

Even though I have been out of school for almost 20 years, on occasion I still have the recurring dream, that I have a test for a class that I haven't attended all semester. I need to take and pass this test in order to graduate.

There is a test we should take in preparation to receive the sacrament of communion. You pass the test by recognizing the body of the Lord in the elements of the bread and the cup, and recognizing the difference between Christ's death and every other death.

It is only Christ's death that suffered the wrath of God on behalf of his elect people. It is only Christ's death that is an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

To eat and drink in an "unworthy manner" is not a reference to those who "deserve" to come to the Lord's Table. No one deserves this, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:22). It means that we come knowing that we are unworthy. In fact, the only worthy partakers are those who realize how unworthy they are.

It is with a broken and contrite heart, that we see the body of Christ broken for us.

It is not about how much we know, but that we know. It is not the degree of our knowledge, but the reality of our knowledge. The Pharisee thinks highly of his knowledge, but it is the sinner who says, "God have mercy on me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13) who is the worthy receiver.

Take some time tonight, right before you go to bed to give thanks that Christ has passed the test for you.

Saturday: July 4, 2015

Ephesians 2:8 – **For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God"**

WLC #171 – They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their...faith...

Examine for Evidence – Faith

Today we celebrate our independence and freedom in America. Tomorrow we celebrate our dependence and freedom in Christ.

Our national Independence Day remembers the freedom gained from the tyranny of Great Britain's government by the founding fathers.

The Lord's Day, and particularly at the Lord's Supper, we remember the freedom gained from the tyranny of sin by our Savior Jesus Christ.

We continue to be independent and free as a nation, by continuing to hold fast to those principles first laid in the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution.

We continue to be dependent and free as Christians by continuing to hold fast to Jesus Christ.

It is not yesterday's faith, but today's faith by which we continue to be free from sin. Today, and every day, we must again declare our dependence on Christ.

You will see that you are in the faith – that Christ is in you – as you read God's Word and see God's Spirit convicting you to trust in the Lord. You will also see good works produced by true faith

Having prepared yourself throughout this week to receive the sacrament tomorrow morning, the last thing to do is to make sure you do not put your faith in your preparations.

Beware of self-righteousness that glories in its own actions. Come to the Table not thinking of yourself, but communing with Christ spiritually present in the bread and the cup.

Take time to prepare logistically for tomorrow, so that you can get good sleep, and be ready to receive grace by faith.

Daily Devotions
for Communion Preparation
June 29 – July 4, 2015



1 Corinthians 11:27-29 – "Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."

Westminster Larger Catechism #171 – How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it?

They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance, love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong, of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience, and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.

Worship Service with Communion – July 5, 2015
Westminster Presbyterian Church in America
420 North Main Street
Butler, PA 16001