



## Lesson Five

# Holy Communion

## Introduction

Before Jesus went to the cross and died, he left his disciples his last will and testament. Since it was first instituted, Christians have repeated and cherished the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Goal: By the end of this lesson, you should know the three beautiful \_\_\_\_\_ in Holy Communion.

## Review: What is a sacrament?

Review the three criteria we apply to determine whether or not something qualifies as a sacrament.

1. **I**nstituted by Jesus
2. **O**ffers the forgiveness of sins
3. **U**ses an earthly/visible/tangible element

## Holy Communion—what is it?

**Matthew 26:26-29**—*While 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.”*

*Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom.”*

These are words of institution for Holy Communion. Everything that we know about Communion has its basis in Christ’s command and institution.

When did these events take place? \_\_\_\_\_

What meal was Jesus celebrating with his disciples? \_\_\_\_\_

First Jesus took \_\_\_\_\_ and said, “This is my \_\_\_\_\_.”

Then Jesus took \_\_\_\_\_ and said, “This is my \_\_\_\_\_.”

Why was this an especially fitting time to institute Holy Communion? (See next page.)

\_\_\_\_\_



Read 1 Corinthians 10:16. What do we eat and drink in Holy Communion?

Truth and error about Holy Communion

Scripture teaches: The real presence	Transubstantiation The unbloody sacrifice	Representation: Memorial meal	Spiritual reception: Jesus is not really present
Forgiveness of sins Strengthening of faith	Adoration of the host <i>Ex opere operato</i> — by doing the act	Reminder to make us think No forgiveness or grace	Reminder to make us think No forgiveness or grace

## What does God do through Holy Communion?

Like Baptism, Holy Communion is powerful because God is the one working through the sacred act.

**Review Matthew 26:26-29.** What does Jesus do for us through Holy Communion?

He offers us the \_\_\_\_\_ of sins.

**Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.** What purpose does Communion serve?

\_\_\_\_\_ what Jesus did for us (\_\_\_\_\_ of faith)

**Read 1 Corinthians 10:17.** What reality do we celebrate in Communion?

Complete and total \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

The word communion means “oneness” or “common union.” In Holy Communion, Jesus invites us to celebrate this oneness in three ways:

1. Communion between the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Communion between me and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Communion between me and \_\_\_\_\_.

## How are we to prepare for Holy Communion?

When Jesus instituted Holy Baptism, he placed no restrictions on its use; Baptism is intended for all. Holy Communion is different. Scripture warns us of serious consequences upon those who improperly receive Communion.

**Read 1 Corinthians 11:27-32.** What should a person do before receiving Communion? \_\_\_\_\_

What does an unworthy communicant do to himself? \_\_\_\_\_

What consequences may follow? \_\_\_\_\_

## Questions for self-examination

1. Have I \_\_\_\_\_ against God and my neighbor? (Confession)
2. Am I \_\_\_\_\_ for my sins against God and my neighbor? (Contrition)
3. Do I trust that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_? (Faith)
4. Do I recognize that in Communion Jesus' body and blood are \_\_\_\_\_ for the forgiveness of my sins? (Real Presence)
5. Do I sincerely desire to \_\_\_\_\_ my sinful life? (Amendment)

## Who should not receive Holy Communion?

When we receive Holy Communion, we share in something that is precious and powerful—both to forgive and to judge. For this reason we practice *close(d) Communion* and strive to admit only qualified communicants to the Lord’s Table. While we may not always know a person’s spiritual background, we wish to err on the side of caution and love in the best interest of a person’s spiritual welfare. The following should not receive Communion:

- **Matthew 5:23,24** Those with unresolved \_\_\_\_\_ with a fellow Christian.
- **1 Corinthians 11:23-25** Those who do not believe in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus’ body and blood.
- **1 Corinthians 11:28** Those who cannot or have not \_\_\_\_\_ themselves.
- **Matthew 18:15-18** Those who are living in a sin for which they are not \_\_\_\_\_ (impenitent sinners)
- **1 Corinthians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 10:17** Those who are not in \_\_\_\_\_ with one another concerning what the Bible teaches.

**KEY TERM:** Close(d) Communion: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## SELF-STUDY

Study **1 Corinthians 11:17-34**. The Christians in Corinth were abusing the Lord’s Supper. Paul gave instructions as to how they were to use Holy Communion properly.

1. Instead of “communion” (common union) among the believers, what were there? (v.18) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Describe how the Corinthians were going about celebrating their meal. (v. 20,21)

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What purpose for Communion does Paul indicate in verse 26?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What are we eating and drinking in Communion? (v. 27)

\_\_\_\_\_

5. If we eat and drink unworthily, what are we sinning against? (v. 27)

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What should we do before receiving Communion? (v. 28)

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7. What consequence follows from unworthy eating and drinking? (v. 29)

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8. How may this judgment from God show itself? (v. 30)

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9. What is the purpose of God's judgment? (v. 32)

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**True/False**—If the statement is false, explain why:

1. \_\_\_ Holy Communion is a means through which God gives us forgiveness.
2. \_\_\_ A communicant (person who receives Communion) receives forgiveness in Communion by virtue of participating.
3. \_\_\_ We should examine ourselves before receiving Communion.
4. \_\_\_ People who are not one in faith should not receive Communion together, and it is hypocritical for them to do so.
5. \_\_\_ Only baptized Christians may receive Communion.
6. \_\_\_ People who cannot examine themselves may receive Communion only if the church allows it.
7. \_\_\_ The power in Holy Communion, as in Baptism, is in the words of Christ joined to the elements.
8. \_\_\_ Communion should be celebrated regularly and frequently, as a nourishing food for our faith.
9. \_\_\_ Although he cannot see into a person's heart, a pastor serving Communion has the responsibility to try to avoid serving Communion to anyone who might receive it unworthily.
10. \_\_\_ A person who falls under God's judgment by communing improperly or foolishly may repent of that sin and find forgiveness from God.

### **For Review...**

Read about the Lord's Supper from Luther's Small Catechism:

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion** as the head of the family should teach it in the simplest way to those in his household.

### **The Institution of Holy Communion**

#### ***First: What is the Sacrament of Holy Communion?***

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ for us Christians to eat and to drink.

#### ***Where is this written?***

The holy evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the apostle Paul tell us: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

### **The Blessings of Holy Communion**

#### ***Second: What blessing do we receive through this eating and drinking?***

That is shown us by these words: "Given" and "poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins."

Through these words we receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in this sacrament.

For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

### **The Power of Holy Communion**

#### ***Third: How can eating and drinking do such great things?***

It is certainly not the eating and drinking that does such things, but the words "Given" and "poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins."

These words are the main thing in this sacrament, along with the eating and drinking.

And whoever believes these words has what they plainly say, the forgiveness of sins.

### **The Reception of Holy Communion**

#### ***Fourth: Who, then, is properly prepared to receive this sacrament?***

Fasting and other outward preparations may serve a good purpose, but he is properly prepared who believes these words: "Given" and "poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins."

But whoever does not believe these words or doubts them is not prepared, because the words "for you" require nothing but hearts that believe.