

Lesson 21: The Lord's Supper – Benefits

“But those who feel their weakness, who are anxious to be rid of it and desire help, should regard and use the sacrament as a precious antidote against the poison in their systems. For here in the Sacrament you receive from Christ's lips the forgiveness of sins, which contains and conveys God's grace and Spirit with all his gifts, protection, defense, and power against death and the devil and all evils.”

- Dr. Martin Luther, *Large Catechism*: The Sacrament of the Altar

Thesis:
God forgives our sins through the Lord's Supper.

Key question:
What is the benefit of the Lord's Supper?

Catechism:
Sverdrup's Questions 367-372

Accompanying Bible Story:
Matthew 26:17-30 – Jesus Celebrates Passover

My questions:

It happened around 1500 B.C. Jewish people today still celebrate it as they have been year after year since then. Compare that to 1776 A.D., the celebrated independence of the United States.

For the children of Israel, the celebration is really two festivals: The Feast of Unleavened Bread and Passover. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is a whole week. Passover is just one day at the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Both events originally happened on the eve of the Exodus, the day God freed His people from slavery in Egypt. According to the Bible, the Exodus is the beginning of the independent nation of Israel. That night in Egypt the people of Israel prepared and ate bread with no yeast. The dough they took with them on the journey would spoil if there was yeast in it, so God told them to prepare unleavened bread. They also ate roast lamb. The father in each home had butchered a lamb and spread its blood on the front door-frame of the house. That night God visited Egypt. He put to death all the firstborn in the homes with no blood. He passed over the homes with blood on the door frames.

This last of the plagues finally broke the Pharaoh's resistance. Not only did he let the Israelites go, he ordered them out of Egypt.

On the night that Jesus was betrayed, the day before He was crucified, He ate the Passover with His disciples. For as long as anyone can remember, the Passover meal (called *seder*) has had fifteen specific parts in a specific order. Twice during the meal unleavened bread (*matzah*) is broken and passed around the Table. Four times during the meal, a cup of wine is shared with those at the table.

It is likely that Jesus took the second breaking and sharing of bread with the last drinking of the cup to institute our sacrament of Holy Communion. When He did so, He revealed to His disciples the true meaning of these elements of the Passover meal. The bread, He said, is His body. The cup, He said, is His blood. The breaking of His body and the pouring out of His blood, He told them, is for the forgiveness of sins.

The promise is for us as well as for the disciples. The promise is in the words “for many” and in the words “for the forgiveness of sins.”

* Copy from your Lutheran *Small Catechism* the answer to the question, “What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?”

* Read Luke 1:76-79. The end of Luke 1 is a prophecy spoken by Zacharias when his son John was circumcised and named. According to John’s message, what would happen as the result of the forgiveness of sins?

* Read Luke 24:46, 47. What message did Jesus give His disciples to proclaim to the world?

* Read Ephesians 1:7, 8a. What do we get through the forgiveness of sins?

Through what do we get forgiveness of sins?

According to which attribute of God do we get forgiveness of sins?

* Read Colossians 1:13, 14. List three things that are also part of the forgiveness of sins.

* Read Hebrews 9:22. What is necessary for the forgiveness of sins?

* Read 1 John 1:1-4. Why did John proclaim the things he had seen, heard, and touched?

* List all the gifts God gives us when He forgives our sins.

What did I learn in this lesson (three or four sentences)?