

# FEASTING WITH CHRIST

*Meditations on the Lord's Supper*

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by  
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## INTRODUCTION

Partaking of the Lord's Supper is one of the Christian's most solemn and sweet acts of worship. Christ commands His disciples: 'This do in remembrance of me' (Luke 22:19). To those who neglect the Supper, Thomas Wadsworth says, 'I beseech you, consider whose command it is you break. It is the command of the Lord Jesus; to remember Him in this Supper is a debt you owe to Him, your Saviour, Lord, and Head; it is a command that bears the superscription of the most supreme authority in heaven or earth' (Wadsworth, 136).

Instituted by a loving Saviour for the good of His people, the Holy Supper holds forth rich spiritual benefits. Paul wrote: 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' (1 Cor. 10:16). Just as the worshippers of false gods have 'fellowship with devils' (1 Cor. 10:20), so also those who feast at the Lord's Table have fellowship with Christ by faith.

Though the bread remains bread and the wine is but wine, the holiness of Christ makes His Supper a sacred event. He chose these elements as His memorial in the church, to represent His incarnation and crucifixion, for us and for our salvation. He is present at the Supper just as He is whenever the church gathers in His name (Matt. 18:20). We do not call the Supper a ‘sacrament’ because it automatically confers grace, but because it is the sign of our sacred bond with Christ,<sup>1</sup> the new covenant in His blood. More than that, it is a means of grace, by which we commune with the risen Christ and are nourished by the life that is in Him. Thus William Fenner warns: ‘We must not rush upon the sacrament. [Something] must be done before we can receive it. “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup”’ (Fenner, 102, citing 1 Cor. 11:28).

None of us are worthy of fellowship with Christ, but the Lord Jesus is worthy of our very best. The twofold call to worship Christ is, ‘Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling’ (Ps. 2:11), and ‘Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing’ (Ps. 100:2). Fear mingles with our gladness; trembling, with our singing. Even beggars may come bowing to the king. The goal is not to become worthy partakers in ourselves, but to partake in a worthy manner. Richard Sibbes writes: ‘As we [are accustomed to] say, the king received worthy entertainment in such a gentleman’s house, not for that he was worthy to receive him, but because he omitted no compliments and service in his power fit to entertain him’ (Sibbes, 4:62).

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<sup>1</sup> From the Latin, *sacramentum*, literally, ‘a thing set apart’ or ‘the thing that sets apart’, referring to any word or act that binds or obligates a person, such as the soldier’s solemn oath of allegiance to Rome.



We do not make an idol of the bread and wine, as though they were anything more than what they are. But God is present in His ordinances, and we must not fail to honour Him with our deepest reverence and faith. Therefore the Christian regards the call to feast with Christ as an invitation he dare not ignore, but he dare not accept it without due preparation. When he does approach the Supper repenting of sins, trusting in Christ and resolving to live unto Him, he discovers that Christ is eager to sup with him (Rev. 3:19-20). What a privilege and joy to feast with Jesus Christ at His Table, and to be fed by Him, as 'the true meat and drink of life eternal'.<sup>2</sup>

Many pastors and theologians since the Reformation have preached sermons and written books about the Lord's Supper. Their writings have a richly experiential and devotional flavour. We have drawn brief meditations from these sources with the hope that God will bless their words to your soul.

The book is structured in three parts so as to guide the believer through preparing for the Supper, partaking of the Supper, and reflecting on the Supper in a Christ-centred way. Each chapter contains several short selections from classic texts on the Lord's Supper. We have briefly noted the source at the end with full information in the concluding bibliography for those who would like to read more.

Sometimes the selection does not represent a continuous quotation but collected portions; rather than mar this devotional with many ellipsis marks (...) we have chosen to

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<sup>2</sup> Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, 'Doctrinal Standards, Liturgy, and Church Order', *The Psalter* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 1999), 138.

omit them. Interested readers will spot them easily enough by comparing our text with the original sources. As spelling and capitalization varied widely in the old writings, we have conformed them to modern usage. Pronouns referring to God have been capitalized. We have also emended all Scripture citations to conform to the King James Version of the Holy Bible. Archaic words sometimes receive an explanation in brackets, but otherwise we have left the old language intact. Thus the texts were all selected, sometimes abbreviated, occasionally explained, but never paraphrased. This allows the reader to hear the sources in their own voice, and not our interpretations of them.

We wish to thank our loyal and loving wives, Mary Beeke and Dawn Smalley, without whom projects of this nature could never be completed. Thanks, too, to Ann Dykema for her labours in typing up many of these selections.

In this day when the ordinances of public worship are often corrupted, debased, or neglected, may God be pleased to use this book as one tool among many to lead His people into richer, more reverent communion with the living Christ. ‘Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen’ (Rev. 1:5b-6).

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