

SHORTENED FORM OF CELEBRATING THE LORD'S SUPPER



fa

Institution

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ

Listen to the words of the institution of the Lord's Supper as described by the Apostle Paul in the first letter to the Corinthians:

"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 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 recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself" (1 Cor. 11:23-29).

In order to partake, to our comfort, in the Lord's Supper we must first search our hearts and then keep to the purpose for which the Lord Jesus Christ instituted it: the commemoration of His death.

Self-examination

True reflection encompasses the following three points:

First: Let everyone consider his sins and accursedness that he may detest and humble himself before God.

Second: We must all search our hearts whether we believe the sure promise of God that all our sins are forgiven solely because of the atoning death of Jesus Christ and that the perfect righteousness of Christ is given us.

Third: We must have the sincere intention to show true thankfulness to God and follow His ways with his entire life and live in sincerity love and unity our neighbour. God will assuredly receive in grace all who are so inclined and deem them worthy to sit at the table of his Son, Jesus Christ. They who, however, do not find this testimony in their hearts, eat and drink judgement upon themselves. Therefore, we urge all who know themselves to be guilty of the following offensive sins to abstain from the table of the Lord, and we declare to them that they have no part in the kingdom of Christ: all idolators, sorcerers and fortune-tellers and all who believe in them; all who seek to divide, conspire and stir up the church and state; all who lie and are disobedient; all murderers and trouble-makers; all adulterers, drunkards, thieves, usurers, robbers, gamblers, the greedy, slanderers and all who lead offensive lives.

Yet we do not come to the Lord's Supper to declare that we are perfect and righteous in ourselves. On the contrary, we seek our life outside of ourselves in Christ and thereby acknowledge that we are dead in ourselves. We know all our sins and shortcomings: lack of faith, devotion in God's service, love for God and our neighbour. When do, however, by the grace of Holy Spirit sincerely repent and strive to live according to all God's commandments and therefore, we may rest

assured that God receives us in His grace and makes us worthy of partaking in this heavenly food and drink.

Remembrance

The Lord teaches us the purpose of the Lord's Supper when He says: "Do this in remembrance of me." In order to do so we must steadfastly believe that the Father sent Him to the world, that He became flesh and as Lamb without blemish bore God's eternal wrath in our stead, every day of His life here on earth. In complete obedience and righteousness He kept God's law. He then suffered immeasurable hate that we may not be put to shame. He was innocently sentenced to death that we may be held blameless before the judgement seat of God. He allowed His blessed body to be nailed to the cross together with the guilt of our sins to thereby bear the burden of our accursedness and grant us His infinite blessing. He suffered pain, sorrow and the fear of hell, calling out: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" – that God may receive us and never forsake us. Finally, with His death and the shedding of His blood He brought to fulfilment the eternal covenant of grace in saying: "It is finished."

In this way as often as we eat the bread and drink the wine, we are reminded that He gave Himself for us and that He feeds and refreshes us with His body and blood. The living Christ thereby assures us, through His Spirit, of His love and that we also share in the covenant of grace. Therefore, as we partake of the Lord's Supper we longingly look forward to the wedding feast of the Lamb.

The Lord's Supper teaches us to embrace the unfathomable sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross as the only basis of our salvation. There His body was broken and His blood poured out in complete atonement of our sins and became the true food and wine of eternal life. Through His death He obtained for us the life-giving Spirit – who binds us in true fellowship with Him and share in all His riches, eternal life, righteousness, and glory. By the same Spirit we are also united in true brotherly love as members of one body. As we share in the one bread, so we are also members of one body. We who have been grafted into Christ in faith, must also show this unity with brotherly love to one another in word and deed. May God help us in this through His Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer

Let us now humble ourselves before God and call on His grace in true faith.

Merciful God and Father,

We thank You that we may commemorate the glorious sacrifice of the bitter death of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. We pray You will work in our hearts, by Your Holy Spirit, that we surrender ourselves all the more to Your Son in sincere faith that we may be fed by Him, the only heavenly bread that we may no longer live in our sin but in Him. Help us to deny ourselves, to confess our Saviour and await with eager expectation His return to take us with Him in all eternity. Hear our prayer, o God and merciful Father, for Jesus's sake. Amen

This is followed by an appropriate Psalm. The minister goes to the table and says:

Upliftment of heart

Lift your hearts to heaven to Jesus Christ our Intercessor, sitting at the right hand of His heavenly Father and be assured that as surely as we receive the bread and wine in remembrance of Him, we are strengthened with His body and blood.

Formula

The bread that we break is communion with Christ's body. Take, eat, remember and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was broken in full atonement of all our sins.

The cup of thanksgiving is communion with the blood of Christ. Take, drink, remember and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was poured out in full atonement of all our sins.

Praise

Beloved in the Lord, since the Lord has now fed us with heavenly bread, let us worship His Name, in thankfulness, saying in our hearts:

“Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases; He redeems my life from the pit and crowns me with love and compassion. The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger forever. He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him...”

(Psalm 103:1-4; 8-13)

Therefore, I will proclaim the Lord with mouth and heart, now and forevermore.
Amen

**Prayer of
Gratitude**

Merciful God and Father,

We thank and praise You for confirming the glorious promises of the Gospel with the Lord's Supper. Thank You for giving us Your only-begotten Son as Mediator and Sacrifice for our sins. Thank You also for granting us true faith that we may share in the sacrifice of Your Son. We pray that by the proclaiming of His death and the working of Your Holy Spirit we will increase in faith daily and in fellowship with Christ. This we pray for His Name's sake. Amen