

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper = Communion

Communion = Common Union

between:

- 1) bread & body // wine & blood
- 2) Christ and me
- 3) me and my fellow believers

What earthly elements are "required" by Scripture:

Bread (could be any kind of bread)

"The fruit of the vine" (grape) (could be any "liquid" grape)

We use unleavened bread and grape wine because that's what Jesus used when He instituted the Lord's Supper - we know what He used because He used what was present on the table for the Passover feast, and because at that time of year grape juice could not have existed (without refrigeration it would have been spoiled if it was not fermented) - although we strive to use grape wine at all times, grape juice is an acceptable substitute, especially when there are reasons for its use.

Traditional viewpoints concerning the Lord's Supper

Transubstantiation: bread and wine change into the body and blood of Christ - this is the Roman Catholic doctrine (Under this teaching, 2 things are received: body and blood)

Representation: bread and wine represent the body and blood of Christ - this is the traditional Reformed doctrine (Most non-Lutheran Protestant churches) (Under this teaching, 2 things are received: bread and wine) (note: many reformed churches use only grape juice, no alcoholic wine)

Real Presence: body and blood of Christ are in, with, and under the bread and wine - this is the Lutheran, Scriptural doctrine (Under this teaching, 4 things are received: bread and wine, body and blood)

Oral Manducation - the traditional teaching that the body and blood of Christ are received AS we eat and drink the bread and wine (however, please note that many theologians, including Lutherans, are unwilling to state exactly when the body and blood of Christ are present with the earthly elements - some believe that the body and blood of Christ are present at the time of the words of institution)

SOME BASIC DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES

DOCTRINE	LUTHERAN	CATHOLIC	REFORMED
Baptism	Infants	Infants/infused grace	Older & immersion only
Lord's Supper	Real presence	Transubstantiation	Representation
Conversion	God's gift	God's gift	Decision
Good Works	Proceed from faith	Necessary for salvation	Legalistic approach
Demythologizing (No miracles in Bible)	Some	Some	Some

Church and Ministry

The Holy, Christian Church

Five Characteristics of the Holy, Christian, Church

1. Holy (it has been washed clean by the blood of Jesus, and it includes all believers for they have been washed clean by Jesus' blood)
2. Christian (Christ is its focus, its foundation)
3. Invisible (only God can see into hearts, so He, alone, knows who has faith and who is in the Holy, Christian Church - we look at outward actions and listen to people's words, but only God fully knows those who are His)
4. Found where the "Means of Grace" are (The Means of Grace – Word and Sacraments – are the means the Holy Spirit uses to bring people to faith and keep them in faith. Since the Means of Grace will accomplish God's purpose there will be believers – the Church – wherever the Means of Grace are found.)

Helpful reminder: Where the Gospel is preached and the Sacraments are administered, people will come to faith

5. Imperishable (even the most powerful forces of hell can never destroy the Church)

Visible Christian Churches

True Visible Church - A church which administers the Means of Grace in truth and purity. (Also called "Orthodox")

False Visible Church - A church which administers the Means of Grace along with false doctrine (Also called "Heterodox")

Cult - A group which appears to be religious but does not administer the Means of Grace OR is non-Christian
Evangelical Lutheran Church - A church which believes and teaches according to the Lutheran Confessions

Fellowship That Is Encouraged

God WANTS (expects, urges) us to enjoy fellowship with those in agreement with us in doctrine and practice. Such fellowship is clearly displayed in these areas:

- Worship (regular worship, communion, pulpit exchanges, musicians, soloists, etc.)
- Prayer (we come together in our hearts to speak to the Lord)
- Christian Education (we come together to learn from God's Word)
- Mission Work (together we share the Gospel with the world)

It is a true privilege whenever we have opportunities to enjoy such fellowship

When do we separate from others

We join with those who are one with us in doctrine and practice. Where such unity does not exist we separate:

- Out of love for God (we glorify God only when we proclaim the whole counsel of God in its truth)
- Out of love for our own souls (we are in danger when we worship/pray/learn with those who hold to false doctrine)
- Out of love for their souls (the false doctrine they hold to is destructive of a proper relationship with God and does not further their faith or salvation - we care about them and give a clear testimony of the truth so that they will see the truth and come to it)

We separate not from bowing with them, but from those expressions of fellowship which we listed above.