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# COMMUNION SUNDAY

## *REMEMBERING CHRIST*

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A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter  
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on June 4, 2017

### INTRODUCTION

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For nearly 2,000 years Christians have celebrated, remembered, and proclaimed the person and work of Christ through the ordinance of Communion (or Lord's Supper). However, many professing Christians disagree about what this ordinance means or what Christians actually do when they participate in it. In this message, we shall take a brief look at the three major views of the Lord's Supper, noting the strengths and weaknesses where we find them. We shall also emphasize the meaning and value of remembering Christ in this special way.

### **LUKE 22:14-20**

14 And when the hour came, he [Jesus] reclined at table, and the apostles with him.

15 And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

17 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. 18 For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

## THE POINT I'M AIMING AT TODAY:

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**Communion (or Lord's Supper) is a tangible reminder of who Christ is, and what He did, and what He does.**

## MESSAGE OUTLINE:

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**(1) THE ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW: *TRANSUBSTANTIATION OR SUBSTANTIAL PRESENCE***

**(2) THE LUTHERAN\* VIEW: *CONSUBSTANTIATION OR REAL PRESENCE***

**(3) THE REFORMED VIEW: *MEMORIAL OR SPIRITUAL PRESENCE***

**(4) WHY DOES IT MATTER?**

\*Many Lutherans have attempted to distance themselves from the word/label "Consubstantiation," and Martin Luther never actually used it. This term has been a theological designation more than anything else, and for this reason it has remained in use.

## MESSAGE

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**(1) ROMAN CATHOLIC: *TRANSUBSTANTIATION OR SUBSTANTIAL PRESENCE***

- The Council of Trent
  - "(Ch1) in the sacred sacrament of the holy Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, *is truly, really, and substantially contained under the species of those sensible things...* (Ch4) *by the consecration* of the bread and of the wine, *a conversion takes place of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ* our Lord, and of *the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood.*"<sup>1</sup>
    - This clear articulation of the doctrine is followed by a full embrace of the term, "transubstantiation."

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<sup>1</sup> The Council of Trent decrees concerning the Eucharist: <http://www.ecatholic2000.com/trent/untitled-36.shtml#Toc385685550>

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church
  - “The Eucharist is the **efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life...** (1325; p. 369)”
    - “*efficacious*” and “*cause*” are both terms regarding the causal basis for something.
      - In this case, the claim is that the Eucharist is the causal basis for participation in “divine life” (i.e. salvation).
        - This is typical language of **sacramentalism** – the belief that sacraments are efficacious for salvation.
  - “At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, **by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ’s Body and Blood** (1333; p. 371).”
    - “*hoc est corpus meum*” – once this phrase is uttered, the elements are believed to be transubstantiated
      - Possibly the origins of “hocus pocus”
        - Illiterate priests, who also did not know Latin, learned the phrase (and other priestly language) by listening to other priests. They mimicked what they heard, but inaccurately said, “*hocus pocus*” instead of “*hoc est corpus meum*.” The parishioners were even less instructed than were the priests as to the meaning behind their liturgy, and thus they imagined the phrase to be a magic chant of sorts. When the phrase was used for other “magic tricks,” it became part of common parlance.
  - “Because it is the memorial of Christ’s Passover, **the Eucharist is also a sacrifice...** [it] **re-presents** (makes present) **the sacrifice of the cross...** And since in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, **the same Christ** who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and **offered in an un-bloody manner...**this sacrifice is **truly propitiatory** (1365, 1366, and 1367; p. 380-381).”
    - The Eucharist is perceived as a repetitious and real offering of Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice on an “un-bloody” altar.
      - This is where the term “altar” (in the context of Christian churches) comes from.

## (2) LUTHERAN\*: *CONSUBSTANTIATION OR REAL PRESENCE*

\*Many Lutherans have attempted to distance themselves from the word/label “Consubstantiation,” and Martin Luther never actually used it. This term has been a theological designation more than anything else, and for this reason it has remained in use.

- The Lutheran view<sup>2</sup>
  - Jesus Christ’s “*true body and blood are truly present and distributed to those who eat...*”
  - According to Lutheran theology, “A Biblical view of the Real Presence rejects two aberrations...”

(1) “Any effort to make the ‘*This is*’ [Matt. 26:26, 28] *something less than a clear word...is a departure* from Christ's words.”

The Lutherans take Christ’s words as literally as they may each time Christ is recorded saying, “*This is my body...*” (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

Historical side note: Luther’s own refusal to hear Zwingli’s argument regarding the memorial nature of the Lord’s Supper was clearly presented when he excessively repeated “*Hoc est corpus meum!*” or “*This is my body!*”

(2) “On the other hand, it is also *fruitless to engage in theories about how the body and blood are present* in, with, and under the bread and wine [as in the Roman Catholic dogma of *transubstantiation*].”

- While Lutheranism rejects *transubstantiation*, the church has retained the language of “altar” for the table upon which the Lord’s Supper is set.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “Theology and Practice of the Lord’s Supper” by the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod: [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=15&ved=0ahUKEwihyJWko5jUAhUFwYMKHXv8ANkQFghsMA4&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.lcms.org%2Fdocument.fdoc%3Fsrc%3Dlcm%26id%3D421&usg=AFQjCNFk6tZ4QXt1STA0ZmGb5QQnmp\\_Hxw&sig2=hdG411Klrhf04\\_YA4epmvA](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=15&ved=0ahUKEwihyJWko5jUAhUFwYMKHXv8ANkQFghsMA4&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.lcms.org%2Fdocument.fdoc%3Fsrc%3Dlcm%26id%3D421&usg=AFQjCNFk6tZ4QXt1STA0ZmGb5QQnmp_Hxw&sig2=hdG411Klrhf04_YA4epmvA)

<sup>3</sup> See this official Lutheran handbook on altar vestments and arrangements: [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwj7ievbspjUAhUq0YMKHegdCagQFggqMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.peaceaustin.org%2Fpdfs%2Fhandbooks%2FAG\\_9-09.pdf&usg=AFQjCNHYugKDcazf83fMpdbSbMWoi\\_q1WQ&sig2=f3B\\_qeO80NpXr\\_IZC\\_VReA](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwj7ievbspjUAhUq0YMKHegdCagQFggqMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.peaceaustin.org%2Fpdfs%2Fhandbooks%2FAG_9-09.pdf&usg=AFQjCNHYugKDcazf83fMpdbSbMWoi_q1WQ&sig2=f3B_qeO80NpXr_IZC_VReA)

- The Methodist View
  - The Methodist statement: The “*Holy Mystery*” of Communion includes “*the real, personal, living presence of Jesus Christ*. For United Methodists, the Lord's Supper is anchored in the life of the historical Jesus of Nazareth, but *is not primarily a remembrance or memorial...*”<sup>4</sup>
    - While Methodism rejects *transubstantiation*, the church (like Lutherans before) has retained the language of “altar” for the table upon which the Lord’s Supper is set.<sup>5</sup>
      - The Anglican and (primarily) Methodist use of “altar” have had the biggest impact on the Baptist use of the term.
        - While Baptists are notoriously averse to anything that smacks of high liturgy, it is strange that Baptists nearly universally embrace the term “altar” as referring to the front of the auditorium. This is largely due to the Methodist revivalism during the Second Great Awakening, from which Baptists most prolifically benefitted. Revival meetings in the Methodist church building or led by Methodist preachers would climax with an invitation for people to “come to the altar.” Baptists (often former Methodists in those days) kept the lingo, and it remains common among Baptists today.

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<sup>4</sup> FAQs of the United Methodist Church: <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/do-united-methodists-believe-the-communion-elements>

<sup>5</sup> See this explanation of the use of the term on “What we believe” at umc.org: <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/glossary-altar>

### (3) REFORMED: *MEMORIAL OR SPIRITUAL PRESENCE*

- The Reformed View
  - Anglican
    - Article 28 of the Anglican *39 Articles of Religion*: “The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, **only after an heavenly and spiritual manner**. And **the mean whereby** the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, **is Faith**.”<sup>6</sup>
      - Note the purposeful use of the **manner** in which the “*Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten*.”
        - This is a participation in Christ’s Body by “*faith*.”
  - Baptist
    - FBC Diana Confession of Faith: “We believe the Lord's Supper is a **symbolic act of obedience** whereby members of the church, who are in good standing with this local congregation or another of like faith and practice, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, **memorialize the death of the Redeemer** and anticipate His second coming.”<sup>7</sup>
      - Note the terms “*symbolic*” and “*memorialize*” regarding the work of Christ.
        - This statement is true, but it provides more of an instructional guide for the ‘who’ and the ‘how,’ rather than the deep meaning of the ordinance.
    - Wayne Grudem: “Certainly there is a **symbolic presence of Christ**, but it is also a **genuine spiritual presence** and there is genuine spiritual blessing in this ceremony.”<sup>8</sup>
      - Note the terms “*symbolic*” and “*spiritual*” regarding Christ’s presence in the Supper.
        - The elements are symbols, and Christ’s presence with His people is spiritual in the Lord’s Supper.

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<sup>6</sup> The 39 Articles of Religion by the Bishops, the Clergy, and the Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America: [http://anglicanonline.org/basics/thirty-nine\\_articles.html](http://anglicanonline.org/basics/thirty-nine_articles.html)

<sup>7</sup> See the full Confession of our Faith here: <http://www.fbcdiana.org/we-believe-at-fbc/>

<sup>8</sup> Excerpt From: Wayne A. Grudem. “Systematic Theology.” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/vkcYx.l> Wayne Grudem is the author of “Systematic Theology” (among many other books and articles), which is commonly used in Southern Baptist seminaries. He is a currently Research Professor at Phoenix Seminary.

## (4) WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- Three “levels” of meaning
  - According to J.I. Packer, the Lord’s Supper has three levels of meaning. He says, “**First**, it has a past reference to Christ’s death which we remember. **Second**, it has a present reference to our corporate feeding on him by faith, with implications for how we treat our fellow believers. **Third**, it has a future reference as we look ahead to Christ’s return and are encouraged by the thought of it.”<sup>9</sup>
    - We considered the second level earlier this year (Feb. 5), in a message titled “*Communion with One Another*.”
    - **Today, we are considering the first level.** We intend to “*Remember Christ*.”
      - However, I also want to add something to Packer’s first and second levels.
        - ***Christ is our mediator/intercessor right now.***
        - So, let’s remember (1) who Christ is; (2) what Christ did; and (3) what Christ does right now

### 1. Remembering who Christ is

- ***The central figure of our faith and practice***
  - We do this in remembrance of Him
    - “19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “***This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.***” 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “***This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.***”
- ***The Messiah/Christ***
  - He is the Savior of sinners, sent from the Father
    - “***given for you...***” (v19)

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<sup>9</sup> See J.I. Packer’s article here: [https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/packer/lord\\_supper.html](https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/packer/lord_supper.html)

- He gave Himself... this implies forethought, purpose, and design

- ***The God-man***

- He is the God of the universe in human form
  - ***“the new covenant in my blood”*** (v20)
    - The only way Jesus can offer a “new covenant” is if He is at least equal to the One who offered the Old Covenant.
      - Passover Lamb (Ex. 12:1-11); The smoking fire pot and the flaming torch (Gen. 15:7-21)

## 2. Remembering what Christ did

- ***He lived for us***

- Christ represented us better, living perfectly on behalf of sinners
  - ***“For as by the one man’s [Adam] disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous”*** (Romans 5:19).

- ***He died for us***

- Christ was the sacrifice, the propitiation, the satisfying offering to God for our guilt
  - ***“...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith...”*** (Romans 3:23–25).

- ***He conquered death for us***

- After His death, Christ conquered mortality itself and became the sure and sublime hope for all who trust in Him.

- *“The first man [Adam] was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man [Jesus Christ] is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven” (1 Cor. 15:47–49).*
  - *“What a foretaste of deliverance, how unwavering our hope... Christ in power resurrected, as we will be when He comes.”*

### 3. Remembering what Christ does

- ***He intercedes for us***
  - *“This makes **Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant**. The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because **he continues forever**. Consequently, he is able to **save to the uttermost** those who draw near to God through him, since **he always lives to make intercession for them**” (Heb. 7:22–25)*
- ***He sanctifies (renovates) us***
  - *“When Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has **perfected for all time those who are being sanctified**” (Heb. 10:12–14).*
- ***He keeps us***
  - *“Therefore, brothers, since **we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus**, by the new and living way that **he opened for us through the curtain**, that is, through his flesh, and since **we have a great priest over the house of God**, let us draw near with a true heart in **full assurance of faith**, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for **he who promised is faithful**” (Heb. 10:19–23).*

**Major Point:** Communion (or Lord's Supper) is a tangible reminder of who Christ is, and what He did, and what He does.

## Partaking of the Lord's Supper

### 1 Corinthians 11

23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 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.***"

Let us partake of the bread together...

25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "***This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.***"

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Let us partake of the cup together...

### SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

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***The Lord's Supper*** by J.I. Packer

[https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/packer/lord\\_supper.html](https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/packer/lord_supper.html)

***The Lord's Supper*** by J.C. Ryle

<https://www.monergism.com/lords-supper>

***An Overview of the Lord's Supper*** by Charles Hodge

<https://www.monergism.com/overview-lords-supper>

***The Battle for the Table*** by R.C. Sproul

<http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/battle-table/>

***Re-Thinking the Lord's Supper*** by Michael Horton

[http://www.onthewing.org/user/Ecc\\_6%20-%20Rethinking%20Communion.pdf](http://www.onthewing.org/user/Ecc_6%20-%20Rethinking%20Communion.pdf)