“Do this in remembrance of me.”
Luke 22:7-34

Few things have been so misunderstood as the Lord’s Supper. There have been many disagreements and controversies regarding the Lord’s Supper that have divided Christians. This ordinance was meant to help us but it has become the cause of much division (especially regarding how Christ is present in the Lord’s Supper). I want us to look at three practical questions to help us understand the Lord’s Supper.

First, why do we observe the Lord’s Supper?
Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper so that we would continually remember His death for us (Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). The bread which we eat is to remind us of Christ’s body given for us. The cup is to remind us of His blood shed on the cross for our sins. When we eat the bread and drink the cup we are reminded of all that Jesus has done for us. Nothing is as important to us as Jesus’ death. This is why He came into the world. This is why we have forgiveness and peace with God. If Jesus had lived and taught and preached and done miracles, but had not died for our sins, we would still be lost and dead in our sins. His death is our life. He paid the debt we could not pay. We need to be continually reminded of our Savior’s death. This is the one thing we should never forget. Jesus’ death on the cross was the perfect sacrifice for sin which never needs to be repeated (Hebrews 9:28; 10:12-14). We remember His death for us.

Second, who should receive the Lord’s Supper?
It is helpful to think first about who should not partake of the Lord’s Supper. It is not right to urge all baptized people to receive the Lord’s Supper. They must first examine themselves and be prepared for the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper is not some kind of magical medicine that works regardless of the spiritual condition of those who receive it. God commands all people everywhere to repent, but He does not command everyone to come to the Lord’s Supper. It is not to be taken lightly or carelessly. The Lord’s Supper should not be taken by those living in sin, by those who refuse to get rid of sin in their lives. To do so is an insult to Christ. It is foolish to say we want to remember Christ’s death while we cling to sin which made it necessary for Christ to die. If we continue in sin, it shows we do not care for Christ and are not thankful for what He has done for us. We must first repent of sin before we receive the Lord’s Supper or we eat and drink in an unworthy manner.

The Lord’s Supper should not be taken by those who think they can be saved by their own works. At the Lord’s Supper we acknowledge that we have no goodness of our own, and that all our hope is in Christ. We acknowledge that we are sinful and that it is because of Christ alone that we are accepted by God. We should not come if we are trusting in our own righteousness. It is God’s mercy that is our only hope.

What kind of people should come to the Lord’s Supper? It is for those who examine themselves to see whether they have repented of their sins and are trusting in Christ. Repentance and faith are necessary. Have we truly repented? Do we hate sin? Have we put our trust in Christ for salvation? If we have, we can come to the Lord’s Supper with confidence.

Our repentance may be imperfect. The question is, “Is it real?” Our faith may be weak. But if it is genuine we may come. It is not the quantity of our faith, but whether we have faith at all.
The twelve disciples to whom Jesus gave the bread and cup were weak. They did not understand everything. Their faith was weak. Their courage was weak. But they were trusting in Christ. Those who turn to God in repentance and have faith in the Lord Jesus may partake. It is not perfection, but a heart that truly feels sin and is trusting in Christ. We may feel weak. But if we know that Jesus died for us and we are trusting in Him, we may receive the Lord’s Supper.

**What may we expect from the Lord’s Supper?**

Some people think that taking the Lord’s Supper will give them a blessing. They are not sure why or what blessing they will receive. But they think it will help them somehow. Merely taking the Lord’s Supper without understanding what we are doing will not help. Jesus quoted Isaiah in Matthew 15:8-9. “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain.” The Lord’s Supper is to strengthen believers and help them better understand Christ and what He has done for us. It reminds us of the need to turn from sin and to trust ever more deeply in Christ. If we come to the Lord’s Supper in the right way, we will grow in our love for Christ and know Him better.

Receiving the Lord’s Supper in the right way will humble us. As we see these symbols of Christ’s body and blood, we are reminded of how awful sin is, that nothing less than the death of Christ could take away our sins and save us. We should be humbled afresh as we partake of the Lord’s Supper.

Receiving the Lord’s Supper in the right way will strengthen us. We are reminded of the perfect salvation that Christ has purchased for us. We are reminded of the great price He paid for us. Believing in Christ, we have nothing to fear because He took our punishment (Romans 8:31-34).

Receiving the Lord’s Supper in the right way will help us to grow in holy living. The Lord’s Supper should help us to be more thankful to the Lord and to remind us that we must live for Him who died for us. We remember what He has done for us. Is there anything to great to do for Him? Jesus bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness (1 Peter 2:24). We must live holy lives and seek to glorify Christ. We belong to Him. If we receive the Lord’s Supper in the right way we will find it harder to sin and to live like the world.

Not all Christians experience the full blessing of the Lord’s Supper. What we receive depends on our spiritual condition. We will not always receive the same blessing. But we will receive a blessing if we come with hearts full of love for Christ.

Jesus told us to do this in remembrance of Him. If we wait until we feel we have perfect hearts, perfect faith, and perfect repentance, we will wait forever. We are sinners when we first come to the throne of grace and we are sinners until we die—saved, changed, renewed, but still sinners. We are not worthy to take the Lord’s Supper if we do not deeply feel our sin.

Do not be discouraged if you do not feel like you are receiving the blessing from the Lord’s Supper you want to. Sometimes we expect too much. Sometimes we may be growing, but we do not think we are. We are not yet in heaven. We walk by faith. Nothing is perfect here on earth.

We examine ourselves and confess our sins. We remember what Jesus suffered to save us. If we let the Lord’s Supper become a meaningless ritual, we are in grave danger. It is good for us to remember our sins and confess them, to remember the Lord’s love and grace, and to pledge fresh commitment to Him.