

Tonight instead of Communion, I thought it would be good to have a little refresher.

As Christians we confess that we receive the very body and blood of Christ—in, with and under the bread and the wine—in our hands and in our mouths. We confess it even though as the Small Catechism states: It is a profound wonder and unexplainable mystery.

The words in, with and under are used to express the mystery of the body and blood in the Lord's Supper. The "in" reminds us that where the bread and wine is, there is the body and blood of Christ; the word "with" reminds us that with the bread and wine, we receive the body and blood of Christ; and the word "under" reminds us that the body and blood of Christ are hidden yet present under the bread and wine, since bread and wine still continue to exist.

We know it was instituted by Jesus on that first Maundy Thursday, when they were having the Passover meal. It was there Jesus said of the bread and wine that it was His body and blood. He added that in the drinking, they would be partaking of His blood, which was poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

We are reminded of that prior covenant of the sacrifice of those many animals whose blood was thrown against the altar which was a temporary fix for sins until in the new covenant, Jesus, the Messiah's would come to take away the sins of the world, past present and future by His suffering and shedding His blood.

In the Formula of Concord, the Solid Declaration it explains Holy Communion this way: "In an assembly of Christians, bread and wine are taken, consecrated, distributed, received, eaten, drunk, and the Lord's death is shown forth at the same time" Note: It starts with an assembly of Christians. It makes this statement because it is not an individual thing. We are united in this meal with those we are partaking it with as God described it through Paul in his 1st letter to the Corinthians: Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

It is important to understand that not all who eat and drink in the Sacrament receive Christ's body and blood and so are offered the benefits He has promised. But it is only through faith in Christ's words that we receive the benefits offered in His testament.

We know from the Catechism that there are those who are not worthy to partake of the Lord's Supper. It says we are unworthy and unprepared to partake of the Sacrament when we don't have faith in Christ's words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."

The Sacrament as the Small Catechism explains should not be given to those who are not Christians or haven't been baptized; those who can't examine themselves such as infants or very young children, those who have not had proper instruction in the Christian faith, or the unconscious; others who shouldn't are those Christians of a different confession of faith, since the Lord's Supper is testimony of our unity in faith and doctrine or teaching; those who are openly ungodly and unrepentant, also those who living contrary to God's Word and finally those who are unforgiving, refusing to be reconciled with their neighbors.

In examining ourselves before receiving the Sacrament, we should be aware of our sins, believe what Jesus said in the Words of the Sacrament and we should intend with the Help of

the Holy Spirit, to live as forgiven sinners resisting the devil, saying no to sinful desires, and walking in newness of life.

For a fuller explanation you can go to Luther's Small Catechism which has many Bible verses to support the doctrine of Holy Communion.