

The Lord's Supper

The Sacrament at the Altar

Scripture

Mat 26:26-29 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." (27) And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, (28) for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (29) I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Mar 14:22-25 And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." (23) And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. (24) And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. (25) Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Luke 22:15-20 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."

1Co 11:23-26 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." (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.

Luther's Large Catechism

What is the Sacrament of the Altar? Answer: It is the true body and blood of the Lord Christ, in and under the bread and wine, which we Christians are commanded by Christ's word to eat and drink. And just as we said of baptism that it is not mere water, so we say here, too, that the sacrament is bread and wine, but not mere bread and wine such as is served at the table. Rather, it is bread and wine set within God's Word and bound to it.

We go to the sacrament because there we receive a great treasure, through and in which we obtain the forgiveness of sins.

The Book of Concord

Concerning the Lord's Supper it is taught that the true body and blood of Christ are truly present under the form of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper and are distributed and received there. Rejected, therefore, is also the contrary teaching.

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1. What are the elements?

- a. Our Lord was celebrating the Passover. The elements for Passover and the Lord's Supper were unleavened bread in one lump or loaf and red wine from grapes.
- b. Bread
 - i. The only bread present at the Last Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ had to be unleavened bread, because our Lord used the bread of the Passover Supper, which had to be unleavened bread, which is why the Passover Feast was also called the Feast of Unleavened Bread ([Luke 22:7-20](#); [Exodus 12:1-20](#)). Our Lord Jesus Christ certainly used unleavened bread for instituting the Lord's Supper.
- c. Wine
 - i. The Fruit of the Vine is a clear reference to grapes
 - ii. Because the grape harvest was in the Fall and Passover was in the Spring, the grape juice must have been fermented – thus it was wine.
 1. Wine was generally mixed with water. It would not have been strong wine.
 - iii. The Christian Fathers, as well as the Jewish rabbis, have understood "the fruit of the vine" to mean wine in the proper sense. Our Lord, in instituting the Supper after the Passover, used the expression regularly employed by his countrymen in speaking of the wine of the Passover.
 1. Furthermore, the drink offering that was poured out before the Lord at the Passover and on other occasions was wine not grape juice (Num. 28:24; cf. Num. 28:14 where the drink offering is specifically identified as wine, Hebrew word: *yayin*). It would certainly follow that the Lord used wine at the Passover celebration (and at the institution of the Lord's Supper) with His disciples in Matthew 26:29.
 - iv. There was a Greek word available to the writers of the New Testament which might have been used to refer to grape juice ("trux") if they had wanted their readers to understand that the common beverage used by Christ, the disciples, Timothy, the presbyters and deacons, and the Corinthian believers was unfermented grape juice. However, that word is not used.
 1. There is therefore no reference in the New Testament to unfermented grape juice, but all references are to fermented wine.

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2. What does Scripture have to say about wine?

- a. In his book, *What Would Jesus Drink*, Brad Whittington breaks down the biblical references of alcohol into three types. In all, there are 247 references to alcohol in Scripture.
- i. **145 are positive (sign of God's blessing, use in worship, etc.),**
 - Deu 7:13 He will love you, bless you, and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock, in the land that he swore to your fathers to give you.
 - Psa 104:14-15 You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth (15) and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart.
 - Pro 3:9-10 Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; (10) then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.
 - Exo 29:40 And with the first lamb a tenth measure of fine flour mingled with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and a fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering.
 - ii. **40 are negative (warnings about drunkenness, potential dangers of alcohol, etc.),**
 - Gen 9:20-21 Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. (21) He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent.
 - Luk 21:34 "But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.
 - Rom_13:13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.
 - Gal_5:21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
 - 1Pe_4:3 For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.
 - iii. **62 are neutral (people falsely accused of being drunk, vows of abstinence, etc.)**
 - iv. **Conclusion: The Bible is anything but silent on the issue of wine.**
 - It is seen as a blessing, and received with thanksgiving among those who drink it.
 - Like all alcohol, it must be treated carefully, it must not be abused. The old saying is true, "Wine is from God, drunkenness is from the Devil."

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3. What if we think that drinking any wine is a sin?

- a. You must then come to the conclusion that Jesus was a sinner.
 - i. His first miracle recorded in John was turning water into wine.
 - ii. He drank with others and was thus accused of being a drunkard.
 - Mat 11:18-19 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' (19) The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."
- b. The Lord's Supper becomes a sinful act.
 - i. Instead of forgiveness of sin, sin is given.

4. But weren't the Corinthians chastised regarding the use of wine at the Lord's Supper?

- a. 1Co 11:20-29 When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. (21) For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. (22) What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not. (26) For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (27) Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. (28) Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. (29) For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.
- b. Although wine was clearly abused by the Corinthian believers in conjunction with the Lord's Supper, Paul does not condemn the Corinthian Christians for using wine, nor does he prohibit the use of wine in the Lord's Supper.
 - i. Paul's correction is directed toward their sinful abuse of wine not their lawful use of it.
 - ii. If wine was not lawfully to be used in the Lord's Supper, here was the ideal time for Paul to demonstrate where the use of wine would lead those who broke God's law by using it in the Lord's Supper.
 - iii. The silence concerning any prohibition of wine in the Lord's Supper at this point is emphatic.

5. What about those who can't or shouldn't drink any alcohol?

- In the case of addictions or medical reasons, non-alcoholic wine or juice can be substituted.
- We should strive to maintain a biblical approach to the Lord's Supper while allowing a compassionate approach.

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6. What freedom do we have?

Romans 14:1- 12

14 As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. ²One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

⁵One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. ⁷For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. ⁸For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

¹⁰Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; ¹¹for it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”

¹²So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

7. Does it really matter?

- a. Since the Lord's Supper is not merely symbolic, what we use in the Lord's Supper is not merely a case of using something that resembles wine or even resembles blood. It is a matter of faithfully carrying out the institution of the Lord Jesus.
 - i. The Lord commanded, “this do”
 - ii. To alter those words or elements is to change the sacrament.
- b. If the elements do not matter, would it be okay to use Oyster Crackers and Mountain Dew?