

## SERMON NOTES

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**Sacraments (Communion): Touched by God**

*Isaiah 55:1-2,6-11; 1 Corinthians 10:1-5, 16-22, Mark 14:22-25*

Communion (“The Lord’s Supper”)

*A little piece of bread . . . a sip that barely reaches the throat*

### Questions

*So, Why do we do it?*

*and, What’s so special about/ happens to the bread and wine?*

*and, What happens to us as we eat and drink?*

### **1. WHY DO WE DO IT?**

#### Answer:

*Jesus told us to do it!*

Communion: Mark 14:22-25

Baptism: Matthew 28:19-20

*But, Jesus didn’t prescribe the details*

Bread – Leavened or Unleavened? Wafers? Rice-Cakes?

Wine – Alcoholic (what Jesus certainly used, probably diluted)

Or Non-Alcoholic (what we use, not because we have to, but so as not to exclude those who have a problem with alcohol)

### **2. WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BREAD AND WINE? AND US?**

#### Catholic Understanding:

The Ordained Priest holds the power to consecrate the elements so that

the Bread and Wine become the true body and blood of Christ. This is called *Transubstantiation*.

The Congregation literally receive Jesus /Salvation as they eat and drink.

The Focus of Faith is in the power of the Priest (and thus in the power of the church which alone can ordain)

Scriptural Basis: “This IS my body/my blood”

### Presbyterian Understanding

Ordained Ministers “of Word and Sacrament”

Must be present to celebrate communion.

Not because of special spiritual power, but to preserve good order.

The Bread and Wine: Nothing happens to them! They remain bread and wine  
They are only symbols, but they are not ‘any old symbols’ – they are divinely appointed symbols!

The congregation places its faith in Jesus’ ability to offer himself to us through these symbols even today, just as he offered himself to his disciples at the Last Supper.

Scriptural Basis: This is my body/blood – is not literal, but is a very strong statement, implying a real connection with Jesus’

### **WHAT HAPPENS AS WE EAT AND DRINK?**

#### The Sacraments are Parallel to Preaching

God is at work through what is simple, fallible and human (Isaiah 55:1-2, 11)

#### The Power of ‘Mere’ Symbols

i. Some symbols are passing

ii. But some symbols are filled with meaning and power

Think ‘brand names’

Think ‘national symbols

White House, Capitol,

and especially: Flag . . . just a piece of material??

iii. Bread and Wine have the power (1 Corinthians 11)

To remind us of all Jesus has done for us in Life and Death

To Bring us into a deep communion with God

*As if God was touching us . . . entering us . . . holding on to us until we meet face-to-face*

To Bring us into a deeper communion with one another

*Binding the family together: think Christmas or Thanksgiving*

To Nourish our faith

*feed us, strengthen us, satisfy us*