

John 6:30-40

sec 5 – “The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to Him crucified, as that, truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body & blood of Christ; albeit, in substance & nature, they still remain truly & only bread & wine, as they were before.”

A. I like that our church has moved to the practice of waiting to eat together & drink together when taking the Lord’s Supper.

1. Just before we eat together, our Directory for Worship recommends the minister say something like this: “Our Lord Jesus said, ‘Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’”
2. Just before we all drink together, I am to say, “Our Lord Jesus said, ‘This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins; drink of it, all of you.’”
3. Someone might say, “How can you say such things about the bread & wine if you do not hold to the doctrine of transubstantiation?” The answer is given in Sec 5 as we read earlier: “The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to Him crucified, as that, truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body & blood of Christ albeit, in substance & nature, they still remain truly & only bread & wine, as they were before.”
4. For the minister to call the bread “the body of Christ” and the wine “the blood of Christ” is to use the language of Scripture.

B. Some have taken certain figurative words of Jesus to extremes; one such passage is **Jn 6:30-40**.

1. In **v33**, Jesus said He is **“the bread of God . . . which comes down out of heaven, & gives life to the world.”** In **v51** He said, **“I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.”**
 - a. Some of the Jews argued, **“How can this man give us His flesh to eat?”**¹
 - b. The manna was the type or prefigurement of Christ; Jesus Himself was the fulfillment — the bread of God come down from heaven.
2. In the midst of their confusion, Jesus answered them even more boldly in **vv53-55**: **“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man & drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. ⁵⁴ He who eats My flesh & drinks My blood has eternal life, & I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ For My flesh is true food, & My blood is true drink.”**
3. We find in **v60** **“many of His disciples, when they heard *this* said, ‘This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?’”** They departed from Jesus & the other disciples.²
4. Dr. Hendrickson wrote that as food & drink are “assimilated by the body, so is this sacrifice [of Christ] assimilated by the soul. As those nourish and sustain physical life, so this nourishes and sustains spiritual life.”³

¹ Jn 6:52

² Jn 6:66-67

³ Hendricksen, William. NT Commentary on John, p242.

5. The Roman Catholic Church interprets **John 6** as fulfilled in the partaking of the mass wherein the recipients actually partake of the literal body & blood of Christ because the elements are transformed into the very substance of Christ's body & blood.
6. After coming to Reformed, Protestant faith, I have come to understand **Jn 6** as being parallel to Jesus telling the Samaritan woman at the well about the importance of her partaking of **“living water”** that only He could give. → Turn to **Jn 4:7-15**
 - a. Why not have a worship service wherein a priest has ordinary water transformed into holy, living water to drink?
 - b. That is not done because everyone knows that **Jn 4:7f** is figurative; **Jn 6** is a similar passage that should be taken figuratively as well.

Sec 6. “That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread & wine, into the substance of Christ's body & blood (commonly called transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant, not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense, & reason; overthroweth the nature of the sacrament,...”

- A. Thomas Aquinas sought to distinguish between substance & accidents in philosophy to explain why the elements in the Roman Catholic Church did not feel like flesh or taste like blood after transubstantiation. No matter how it is argued, the doctrine of transubstantiation continues to defy common sense & reason.
- B. Sec 6 concludes: that the doctrine of transubstantiation **“is the cause of manifold superstitions; yea, of gross idolatries.”** This is strong language against the practices of the mass; however, I do not believe everyone partaking of the sacrament in the Roman Catholic is an idol worshipper based on this section.
- C. I have met & heard of Catholics who are true believers in Jesus Christ.
 1. Such regenerate persons don't accept every single thing the Roman church has taught them; they prayerfully read & study their Bibles for themselves.
 2. We had a Roman Catholic neighbor who said she did not pray to Mary or the saints but to God alone through Jesus Christ.
 3. I met a young man a seminary who became a Reformed, Calvinistic Protestant because that his priest taught him such doctrine. Of course, his priest asked him to be cautious about telling others where he and his family 1st learned about Protestant & Reformed theology.
 4. Roman Catholics can & have been saved because they savingly believe in Christ; however, that is very often in opposition of many doctrines the Roman Catholic Church has taught them.⁴
- D. In conclusion, we believe that the Lord's Supper is more than a mere remembrance. When taken in faith, the Holy Spirit helps us to use this beautiful, blessed means of grace to spiritually feed upon the crucified, resurrected, & exalted Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ Consistently holding to Roman Catholic doctrine (i.e. denial of justification, Mary as a co-mediator with Christ, & praying to saints, etc) can be very dangerous for one's soul.