

CPC Adult Sunday Studies, Fall 2025  
 Total Christ: The Full Vision for His Church  
 4 | Sacramental

## SACRAMENTAL: CHRIST OUR PRIEST

*Last Week:* With the work and person of Christ defining all that we do as we seek to be gospel-centered and missional, last week we considered how God speaks to us by His Word through Christ our prophet. As a “confessional” mark, we seek to be guided by the historic confessions of the church, all under humble submission to the Word of God. Now we consider how Christ our priest mediates God’s presence to us by the Holy Spirit.

### Key Text: 1Cor. 10.14-22

- The “participation” (Gk: *koinonia*) we have in Christ includes communion, fellowship, and partaking of him. It’s much deeper than what “participate” may sound like to our ears.
- ***Union with Christ*** is the basis for Paul’s rebuke earlier in the letter against divisions/schism (ch. 3), lawsuits against believers (ch. 6), and sexual immorality (ch. 6). More than a mere representation, our union with Christ is spiritual, mystical, real, and “sacramental”; otherwise, violating the body of Christ would not be such a grievous sin.

### On Sacraments & Sacramental Union

1. **Sacraments - Signs and seals of our union with Christ** - refer to the two specific and unique means of grace Christ instituted for his church.
  1. WCF 27 - “I. Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ, and his benefits; and to confirm our interest in him: as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his Word. II. There is, in every sacrament, a **spiritual relation, or sacramental union**, between the sign and the thing signified: whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.”

2. **Baptism** - WCF 28 - "Baptism is a sacrament of the new testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church; but also, to be unto him a **sign and seal** of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life."
  3. **Lord's Supper** - WCF 29 - It is for "the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him; and, to be a **bond and pledge of their communion** with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body."
2. **Sacramental - broader experience of our union with the Ascended Christ**
1. **Christ as our Priest** - *once and for all* in his life, death, and resurrection **PLUS ongoing** now as our Ascended Priest, to whom we're united
  2. WSC 25 - "Christ executes the office of a priest in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us."
  3. **Jesus is our Worship Leader!**
    1. Hebrews 8 - "Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, 2 a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man."
    2. Ps. 22 (which starts "my God my God, why have you forsaken me?") is quoted in Heb. 2 - "That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, 12 saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; **in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.**" (Ps.22.22) . . ." (Heb. 2.12-17)
    3. Heb. 12.22-24 - "**But you have come** to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. . . "
    1. Jesus is our older brother, leading us in worship! Notice how this changes how we should determine whether I "feel" it in worship. If worship is being united to Christ, the Crucified One, then happy feelings are not the main goal. The main goal is God's glory in the midst of all our feelings, to become shaped into Christ himself. It won't always feel "happy" because of the cross and the reality of sin as well as the fact that our faith is yet to become sight.

4. *We are united to Jesus in everything, as the body of Christ*

1. Rom. 13:14 - "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." See also Gal. 3:27, Eph. 2:11-22 and John 17 for additional examples of our union with Christ individually and communally
2. **Notice the beautiful and demanding language of our confession:**  
WCF 26.1-2 - "All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by his Spirit, and by faith, have **fellowship with him** in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory: and, **being united to one another in love**, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man. Saints by profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus."
1. Notice our obligations are to flow from our union with Christ and one another
3. "As long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell within us. . . . all that he possesses is nothing to us until we grow into one body with him." (Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.1.1)
4. "Jesus ascended into heaven 'to appear for us in God's presence.' Atonement was not complete until Jesus stood before God on our behalf. . . . Jesus, our priest and mediator, appears in the presence of God, bearing our names, as a memorial to God. He is the *sign, the reminder, the pledge, the guarantee* that we belong in the presence of God. Our presence before God is as certain as Christ's presence before God. Our salvation is safe and secure as long as Christ is in heaven. . . . I can no sooner be removed from God's presence than Jesus can." (Chester & Woodrow, *Ascension* 22, 27)

5. "Christ is presented to us as the Son living a life of **union and communion with the Father in the Spirit**, presenting himself in our humanity through the Spirit to the Father on behalf of humankind. . . . He receives the Spirit from the Father for us, vicariously, in his humanity, that out of his fullness he might baptize the church by the Spirit at Pentecost **into a life of shared communion, mission, and service** . . . We are never more truly human than at the Lord's Table, when Christ draws us into his life of communion with the Father and into communion with one another." (Torrance, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace*, 30-1, 39).

### What should this look like?

#### 1. Applied to Communal Worship

1. *Worship* that is characterized by the full range of emotions fitting an encounter with the living God (yearning, wonder, joyfulness, sadness, resoluteness, humbleness, etc). This encounter "does" the gospel in its structure, rather than merely telling people about the gospel to get them to a decision.
2. *Forms vs. elements* - forms or "styles" will vary depending on locality, language, culture, etc.; elements or "essentials" are what God commands us to do in worship regardless of style, though they will always take on a certain form.
  1. Notice: Christ can't be our "worship leader" or be one with us without some specific cultural form. We want to see Christ glorified and embodied in every culture, so that the kingdom of God dwells everywhere.

#### 2. Applied to the Rest of Life

1. *Evangelism* - much deeper than (though not less than) communicating a couple facts, it's about inviting people to share life and experience the body of Christ.
2. *Engagement with Arts and Culture* - if every culture can become embodied by Christ, then we should be eager to see Christians in all sorts of expressions, talents, engagements.
3. *Other examples?*