

# The Spiritual Power of the Lord's Table

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Preacher: Jon Moffitt

[ 0 : 0 0 ]    you're listening to the sermon podcast of grace reforms church in spring hill tennessee to learn more about us visit our website at [grace.reformed.org](http://grace.reformed.org) and now today's sermon well this uh last past week we just finished covering first peter chapter four we're going to be going into chapter five but taking a break from that um we are going to be reflecting a little bit on what we covered at the grace reform network assembly this week so i will pray for us and then we will begin for those of you who are visiting we normally work through books of the bible verse by verse we're working through first and second peter at the moment and we will pick that up back next week let's pray our father we now ask that you will calm our anxious hearts that we would be able to open our hearts and our minds that we might receive from your word not only what we have heard in words that have been read in song and prayer but lord now in the preaching of the word in christ's name amen please be seated if you would turn with me to luke chapter 22 we will eventually be there this week we had our very first grace reformed church general assembly and those who attended were from not only all over around the united states but also two other countries new zealand and romania and we now have 15 churches last year we had 10 this year we've added five more so we have 15 churches that are now a part of a like-minded network where we are gathering together our resources and our fellowship for the sake of church planting and it's exciting to announce to you that in six months we are going to be able to participate in a church plant that's going to be taking place in romania and this church will be one of our very first international churches and covenant baptist church of asheville north carolina is the leading church that's going to be helping this church plant and we as a church part of the network will have opportunities to participate in watching this young church come to birth and uh steve cobb is going to be helping us as far as leading in communication what that opportunity will be for us but this is exciting to think about our little church through its prayer and the small finances that we give will be participating in church planting in a city that has no other reformed baptist churches in them so this will be the one and only and there are very few less than a handful of churches that hold to the confession in the entire country so this is exciting to know the potential of what could take place in romania it's a good and healthy reminder for us to remember that there's more going on than what happens in this room right there's more going on in the family of god and that it's a part of our confession and it says that we should partner with other like-minded churches for our own edification and for the advancement of the gospel and so we're going to give you a full update of what happened at the ga the general assembly in september at our next business meeting so i'm not going to spend our time doing that but we did pick a theme we had a pre-conference to strengthen our faith to talk about theological subjects that really influence us and are relevant to our time and so this year we focused on reclaiming the ordinary means of grace specifically the supernatural nature of what god is doing and all of those lectures and sermons are available will be available online we'll send them to you uh later in the coming weeks and i would all encourage all of us to listen to them if you can this is for our network and for our church and i think they're going to help shape our hearts and our minds and unity around what it is

we are doing when it consider when we're concerning the preaching and the teaching of god's word but this morning i want to present to our church one of the lectures that i did at the ga well it's the foundation of it it must have changed so if you heard it it'll sound familiar but it's not the same because when we hear something together in person it's very different than when we're driving in a car or washing dishes while listening to a podcast so most of us here today are likely familiar with the lord's table because at our church we take it every week but thinking about why we come to the table may vary and you might be visiting with us so this might be a great introduction to our church as far as why we take the lord's table every single week from my conversations with most of you and through the membership interviews that we've had as elders we would say it's fair that the majority of people coming from this church or in this church are coming from an evangelical background which means you would at least take the table a few times a year it's very rare that i know of a lot of churches that take it every single week and the attitudes of churches toward the table is often very different than i would say what is presented historically in scripture and what we try and accomplish here at church many would probably hear these type of phrases when about to approach the table whether in the coming weeks or months this is a serious moment of reflection concerning your life so the emphasis is on you how have you been living have you been repenting of your sins have you been hiding your sins be ready to come to the table clean and obedient or don't come at all this the feeling and sentiment that you feel when you're about to approach the table i've had even people tell me that in their old church they would skip communion sunday because they weren't sure if they had repented of all of their sins and if they were rightly coming to the table so they would rather not take it than to take it wrongly which is a complete opposite view of what the table is when we see that the lord's table is an obligation instead of a spiritual nourishment we end up approaching it as a examination table or a judgment seat waiting for us to be exposed for the ways in which we have failed for others the table has no meaning in their life at all they never really understood the practice the church would offer the meal but it never really explained why it was important it was just a thing we did we didn't want to do it every week because we didn't want to be confusing it or abusing it and so we would just save it for a few times a year so missing the table has zero impact on your life you don't know the significance of it why it matters or what it's doing so missing it doesn't really matter

I think neither of these experiences benefits the body of Christ because they're not at the heart of what the table is for and why it has been so significant for the church throughout the 2,000 years of its existence so this morning we're going to examine what the scriptures teaches us about the table and the benefits that it's supposed to have and it's not just psychological benefits or emotional benefits I'm going to be arguing that there is a supernatural spiritual significance to our faith when it comes to us and the taking of the table so my prayer is at the end of the sermon you will have you're going to never want to miss another opportunity to receive the Lord's table because you understand its significance and its wonder to our faith sometimes I ask this question what is more important according to scripture the preaching of the word or the table what is more important the preaching of the word or the table and if you were to ask me this question my answer would be yes they're both just as important they're both seen in scripture of giving us extreme value to our faith and this is why we can't just read or listen to sermons and assume we will have the same spiritual fulfillment because the preaching of the word and the table are always seen hand in hand

I know there are many who coming through COVID it caused them to go to online services and to really learn just to sit and experience church through a screen and the conclusion basically was I could get everything I needed which was spiritual information and encouragement without actually ever participating in the assembly the standing in the presence of it and that caused many to leave the habit and really leave what they didn't even understand was their own spiritual nourishment before we jump into this outline this morning I just want to read to you a book that I read this over the last few weeks it was very helpful for me it's by a pastor by the name of Thomas Watson he's a Puritan preacher in the 17th century and he wrote this little book on the Lord's table and in it he's doing a little bit of a Q&A; for his congregation why are we participating in this table it's a great book if you want to read it just remember it's written in the 17th century so question but why was the sacrament of the Lord's table appointed is not the word sufficient to bring us to heaven answer the word is for engrafting the sacraments are for confirming of faith the word brings us to Christ the sacrament builds us up in him the word is the font where we are baptized with the Holy Ghost the sacrament is the table where this is the point where we are fed and cherished the Lord condescends to our weakness in the table what a great quote so this morning

I really want to unpack the heart of what Thomas is getting at and what the church has been teaching for years and years during the Reformation there was a reclamation we were reclaiming we were reforming we were putting ourselves back up underneath the significance of the Lord's table and what was lost during the Reformation many felt that the Lord's table was a work by which you performed to gain salvation instead of it being a place where we are fed and we are cherished and we are cared for so we're going to look at three spiritual perspectives from the Lord's Supper this morning if you want to write out this outline three spiritual perspectives of the Lord's Supper we're going to be all over scripture but we're going to start in Luke chapter 22 so if you'll turn with me to Luke chapter 22 and we will look at verse 19 and here's our very first point that we learn about the spiritual view this is the way we have to look through eyes of spirit not physicality it's this the focus is on

[ 11 : 34 ] Christ not us this is point one the focus is on Christ not us in the Lord's table this is what Christ says in Luke 22 19 it says this 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 remembrance of what of me which is the flip side of why we come to the table isn't it this is John Murray in his book on the table I found fascinating he says this it is the Lord that we are remembering so frequently believers become so introspective the preoccupation with themselves excludes the preoccupation with Christ so every time we come to the table we are thinking more about my performance and what I have done and how I'm feeling and Jesus hands it to them and says when you hold this you are not thinking of oneself you are thinking of me he goes on to say what are we remembering by the way quote Murray it is not simply a recollection that the death of Christ took place and not simply a remembrance of its focal place and the accomplishment of redemption it's a celebration it is an event in which we glory so the difference being every time we come to the

Lord's table we only think about one event Jesus' death this is not the point Jesus hands this to them and he doesn't say remember my death he says remember me because Christ's significance on the cross only matters if it's all of Christ on the cross therefore if he is not born of a virgin he isn't truly man and God and he didn't live a perfect life and his righteousness is not imputed to us then it doesn't matter that he died there's a lot of people who died on crosses so he isn't calling you to only remember his death he says remember me the significance of who I am this is this is powerful because I can't tell you how often that when we think about the table we're always thinking about it in ourselves in our context but the very point that Jesus says when he institutes this table and he hands the physical elements over to it that means every Sunday when you sit here and you hold it he wants you to take your eyes off of your life whether it be your failure man I am not doing well or it be your success wow look how far

I've come he doesn't say remember your past remember your progress remember me because without Christ it does not matter about your past or your progress so this is this is an important part of the Lord's table because I grew up underneath the entire focus of the Lord's table of it being how well was I performing at that moment did I was I worthy enough to receive the table as if as if it was some kind of spiritual candy reward well done child you obeyed this week here is your body and blood it's so strange right but no God in his kindness says every week I'm going to have you hold something in your hand that reminds you to take your eyes off of yourself and put it on that which you see in word which is Christ not just his death but all of Christ for you and this really sets us up for the next point so when we're thinking about the table to receive the spiritual benefits of it you cannot come into the table and be only contemplating self there is no spiritual benefits for you there there is no gospel there there is no guidance there there is only death destruction and failure and total frustration so when we come to the table we have to remember we are coming to be reminded of not only what Christ has done but who he is for us which puts us to point number two look at that we are really moving this morning

I have to make an admission I have two sermons in one two outlines with three points the second one is really fast so we'll get there so we have first of all the focus is not you it's Christ right the focus is on Christ not me number two the function is participation not observation so when we actually are receiving the table the function of it the reason why it is instituted the reason why we take of it is because we are actually participating in something not that we are adding but that we are receiving and we are not just observing what is going on turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 10 this passage I have been consuming for a while and it has really really rocked my world when I am thinking about what happens every Sunday Paul writing to a very carnal church a church that is really wrapped up in their sin he is trying to change them from the inside out using supernatural means to control their flesh so they will walk by the spirit and not walk in this debauchery that they had been walking in and he starts the letter by saying

I want to come and preach to you the gospel and then he begins to end the letter by this is how the gospel becomes part of you in the table so this is 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and look at verse 16 sometimes before we read the letter people might be thinking wow John participating sounds very heretical thankfully I'm just quoting the verse the cup of blessings 1 Corinthians 10 16 the cup of blessings that we bless is it not a participation in the blood of Christ the bread that we break is it not a participation in the body of Christ oh okay so what does that mean right that's what we're going to unpack Bavik in his book on the Lord's table says this of primary importance is the Lord's supper is what God does not what we do the Lord's supper is above all a gift of God a benefit of Christ a means of communicating his grace so this is what Paul is getting at is that when we come to the table and we receive of it

[18:31] God's gifts of blessing are poured out so that we are participating in the very blessings that Jesus received for his obedience when Jesus heard the words from his father well done that we participate in that when Jesus rose victorious over the grave and rose to new life Paul is saying that power that rose Jesus from the grave you participate on that when when are you participating in it at the moment of the table is when that blessing is coming to us afresh and new notice he says here the cup of blessing it is so this is why it's so healthy we have we have to be careful that we just don't read verses and they become numb to us because well we don't understand the phrases so we often overlook this powerful statement when considering what Paul is writing to the church here he is teaching us that when we receive the cup which he has titled the cup of blessing we receive all of the benefits that flow from

Christ at that moment afresh and new sometimes the word blessing or to bless can lose its significance in today's world because well we use it more as a condescending phrase bless your little heart as a means of like I don't want to say you're dumb so I'll just say bless you or we'll use it after the phrase or after someone sneezes have you ever wondered why we say bless you after someone sneezes it's a very common practice in our culture and it's been around for a very long time whether this is true or not I think it's probably close this is from a commentary he says this it may well go back to the middle ages when sometimes a plague the bubonic plague swept away a large portion of the population in Europe it was regarded as an indication of the curse of God's judgment and guess what sneezing was one of its common symptoms and so saying bless you wow the timing of that was epic thank you

I appreciate that bless you he had in here a reference to COVID I took it out but I don't think she has COVID bless you was actually a kind of prayer it was saying may you not be under the curse may you be blessed may the curse be turned away from you so the word blessed there was a hope a favor or a prayer a favor that you may have sneezed therefore you actually may have the plague and I'm going to pray that you don't and that blessings would be upon you instead which is you guys ever wonder why we see after someone sneezes may a blessing be upon you every time we come to the table that is a concept that Paul is wanting you to understand that the cup we have the cup that you are holding is a cup filled with all of the wonders and the blessings and the encouragement and the filling so what we are going to consume in our soul is the blessing of

God by means of the work of Christ and so we are participating in the receiving of the blessings every time we take the symbol of the cup it's reminding us of the spiritual nature of the blessing that is inside the cup I think this before well yeah I want to make a little bit of an application here before we go on to explaining kind of this the duality of the cup here it is very important to understand that as elders when we stand up here and I proclaim to you thus saith the Lord I am to only proclaim to you what God has said that is my requirement and I am to protect you and our church from any outside controversy that would be attacking this therefore it is important that I make sure that

I only proclaim that which is promised and I don't add anything to it because I will be held accountable for what we say in this particular context I think it's important to understand that what is being promised from Paul cannot be received outside of the context so let's think about his context he's writing to a church who's functioning in a service underneath the means of grace and as they come to the table and they receive the cup they are saying there is a significant spiritual blessing that comes to you where you participate in all of the favor and love of God in that moment in a way in which cannot be participated elsewhere if I were to word it a little bit more plainly you are not going to get this blessing anywhere else in its significance because nowhere in scriptures does it say that the cup of blessing that is related to the promises of Christ can come to you in any other means this is why the means of grace have been so prominent in the church because of the next verse look at verse 17 he goes ahead and makes this the application 1st

[ 24 : 15 ]    Corinthians 10 17 because there is one bread we who are many are one body for we all partake of the one bread so he immediately makes the application that the way in which we receive the spiritual blessings of the table is understanding that we do so as one as one so we do not have private communion we do not partake of it in a private matter because there is a unification there is a union which is the body describes it as that we have union with Christ that Jesus and I are one and our life has become one there's a there's a this is why it's called union because we're one with Christ that means we are one with you and that if I'm participating in the bread I'm participating with you how many times did he say in Colossians Ephesians and Galatians when our body participates in the preaching and reading of the word the fellowship and the table he says you grow with a growth that comes from

God a growth that comes from God when the spirit works church we have records that when they would gather they would gather around and they would have the word prayed sung preached and then they would take the table every time they gathered because they understood the symbol of receiving God's blessing in all of the means so this is why we are told not to forsake the assembling of ourselves because there is a spiritual implication of how we are nourished and physical or disciplined way you cannot have these promises according to scripture well let me put it this way there's no guarantee of the promise that they come in any other form or fashion as wonderful and helpful as our time alone might be and

I would encourage all of you to meditate constantly on the wonders of God's word there's many forms and fashions to do that is supplementary to the actual diet to which God promises here and that we receive a blessing that cannot be found anywhere else when you come to the table remember we are here to focus on Christ not ourselves and that in focusing on Christ in our union with Christ we get to participate in the blessings of Christ a spiritual nourishment a spiritual frenzy of feeding that cannot be experienced anywhere else if you're not feeling uncomfortable yet you don't fully understand the way in which the reformers would word it is like this the actual presence of Christ is in above and under the experience of Jesus comes to us in unique ways that cannot be experienced in any other form than at his table and this is why the table has become so significant to the church and why

Christ instituted it and Paul re clarified it in the church of Corinth because it is so valuable to us so the focus is on Christ not us the function is a participation not observation and number three the future is in sight not only the present the future of our hope is in sight not only the present turn with me to Matthew chapter 26 we're going to have to look at a lot of passages here but I want you to see them all so I will do my best to give you time to turn there Matthew 26 and we're going to look at verse 29 Jesus makes a very interesting statement that can be flippant but it is profound for our weekly communion he says this talking to the disciples about to leave I tell you so Matthew 26 29 I tell you

I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom that's a weird thing to say right well all throughout Matthew and all throughout the Bible if you turn with me now to Psalm 75 you're going to understand what he's pointing to there is an imagery of a cup being used the cup of blessing and the cup of wrath it's a picture that's been instituted and used by the prophets and then Jesus picks up and uses it not only here but in the garden of Gethsemane and you will of what is the wrath of the cup so this is Psalm 75 verses 7 and 8 it says this Psalm 75 7 but it is God who executes judgment putting down one and lifting up another for in the hand of the

[ 29 : 37 ] Lord there is a cup with foaming wine well mixed and he pours out from it all the wicked of the earth shall drain in it and shall drain it down to the dredge so this is God taking the sins of the earth and preparing it as equal deserving the poison which they are going to receive for their disobedience and he says when I pour out my wrath it will be drained till it's all gone till it has no drops left if you turn to Luke chapter 22 you'll remember Luke chapter 22 Jesus is about to go to the cross he's in the garden of Gethsemane and while in the garden he leaves his disciples for a moment to pray and he himself goes off to pray and it's a very important moment where the psalm of 75 and

Jesus is reality of what is about to take place come together and using the imagery of the cup this is Luke 22 look at verse 41 I love how descriptive Luke is and within and he withdrew from them about a stone's throw and knelt down and prayed saying father if you are willing remove this cup from me nevertheless not my will but yours be done so Jesus is describing what we would call a swap of cups you see at that moment in the garden when he goes to the cross he is grabbing our cup of wrath and he's going to drain it till it's dry and when he does so what he then replaces in our hand is not an empty cup that we must fill in order to receive the blessing of the father no he puts a cup in our hand and he says this is the cup of blessing so good you see when you hold the cup of his blood he's saying inside of this is all of the work

I have done and promised to do and it is filled not with empty promises that you must fill with your obedience but the cup that you hold is filled with all that I am and all that the father will give me and every time you consume of it you are renewed and refreshed and reminded spiritually that you are mine see that cup is not just something for you to remember it's something for you to participate in because he removes the cups he switches them and the one that held our wrath is dry and the one that holds his blessing runneth over it never can be depleted so every week we come and be reminded by that that we are holding the cup of the blessing of the covenant now that's a word that we don't use very often the blessing of the covenant we'll get to that in a moment I want to turn to you one more passage do you remember earlier when I said

Jesus says I'm not going to participate in the blessing cup with you yet with you in your presence I'm not going to do it but I will turn with me to Revelation 19 Jesus says this is the last time I'm taking this supper with you because I'm leaving you and therefore this supper will be what sustains you your faith and your strength will be sustained and grow as you participate in my body and the cup of my blessing and I will feast with you in this cup once again but it won't be until this moment look at Revelation 19 verse 6 Revelation 19 6 then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude like the roar of many waters like the sound of mighty peals of thunder crying out hallelujah for the Lord our God the almighty reigns let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory for the marriage of the lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready it was granted her to clothe herself with the fine linen bright and pure for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints he is describing the table at which we will sit with the lamb and we will worship him and we will sing of his blessings and we will drink of the blessed cup together

I love how he describes the roar of the hallelujah it's like that of roaring water if you've ever heard the rush of water before there in the cup every time that we come dear church we are reminding ourselves of everything there is to remember about Christ we'll speak of this in a moment we are then reminding ourselves that the cup we hold is not the cup of wrath but the cup of his blessing so we can think about what has Christ done for us in our past this is worthy and good to think of what has he done for me in my past he has cleansed me from my sin and he took the wrath that I deserved and he drank it in its completion and then we can think of Christ in our present we come to the table so that week after week we can be reminded of the blessings that we have in Jesus the spiritual nourishment as Jesus says in John 6 you will be sustained by feeding on me just as the children of

[ 35 : 46 ] Israel ate manna that fell from heaven I am manna and so spiritually we come to the table we take up the bread reminding us that we are spiritually nourished by Christ and then we hold the cup of his blessing all the promises that come to us in our present reality that is to help us sustain us through every struggle of life but then the cup of the table is not just or the table itself is not just what happens in our past and our present but every time we come to the table we are reminded we have not reached the end yet there's a reason why it's a scrap of bread and a small cup of juice they're not even appetizers they're just reminders that one day we will feast in the house of Zion do not get distracted and think that it will be now that all of our present suffering and all of the struggles that we have there will be a future hope and so when we think about the table there is a future in sight not just what's happening in our presence so turn with me to Matthew chapter 6 as we come towards the latter part of the sermon so that's the first outline that covers the spiritual nature of our understanding of the table hopefully when you come to the table today you will come focusing on Christ anticipating the cup of his blessing and being reminded of the future that is waiting for us and not get stuck in self examination only

I want us to read this next section Matthew 26 there's a word that she used here there's a phrase that she used here that I think we need to unpack just for a few minutes this section really is about what happened to the supernatural perspective of the means of grace how it's just turned into a memorial something we remember but we don't think there's actual something magical happening I know that word makes us all nervous but I like making people nervous so when you hold the cup and the bread and the gospel if you hold the cup and the bread in your closet then well you're just eating weird things at weird times that's just strange don't do that but when you hold it in the presence of God's people under the proclamation of the gospel there isn't something that just happens in a memory there is something that happens magically this is what we're trying to get back to the significance of why we gather so this is Matthew chapter 26 and verse 27

Jesus uses again he's instituting the table and it says this and he took verse 27 and he took a cup and when he had given thanks he gave it to them saying drink of it all of you for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins what covenant is he talking about so he's saying as you hold in your hands this symbol of my blood you need to remember it is a symbol of the covenant that I have made with you this is talking about the covenant of grace this promise of the gospel this promise of the new covenant where God will come and live inside his people and forgive them of their sins and give them a new life so when he says you hold every time you hold this cup it's not only the cup of blessing reminding you of what it is that I am blessing you with but it's also pointing to a promise I made to you and that promise is encapsulated in a story

I'm going to try and do this as fast as I can so there's here's I have a three point outline I'm stuck on this three point outline just deal with it right now it's how my brain is working but here's what I want to show you everything about the covenant of grace this promise of the gospel to us by Jesus Christ is 100% a story of a promise of supernatural fulfillment so when you hold the cup you have to be realizing you're holding a promise that was fulfilled by a supernatural work and you would not be holding it and believing it unless the spirit lived with inside of you so this is here's the outline the covenant of grace was protected by God's power you cannot get three chapters into the Bible before you are met with a promise Adam and Eve failed they have sinned against the holy God he comes before them and he says I make a promise with you that I'm going to make this right and the very first promise check this out ready the very first promise is a promise that Adam and Eve cannot fulfill you know what it is that a child would come from seed from the seed of

Eve seeds don't come from women they come from men it's very specific that he says that it's going to come from Eve which is a picture of the virgin birth from the very outset he's telling them I'm going to save you by a power that has nothing to do with you zero and you'll notice this theme gets picked up because Abraham and Isaac have a problem what is it they can't have a child and so you see already in shadow form that in order for them to have a child it will take a supernatural work as you unfold this entire story God protects it not by the capacity of humans all of these stories when we get to Genesis 6 and you start following on to the armies and how the nation of Israel gets down to one person and how Esther frees them I mean it's just one giant story where humans fail there's an army of evil spirituals beings that are trying to attack us and God faithfully finishes the work of protecting the seed until it arrives in Jerusalem that's all held he says the cup of the covenant the covenant started in



[ 41 : 55 ] Genesis chapter 3 second point the covenant of grace was fulfilled by God's power this is the part of the Bible that gets me extremely frustrated when I talk with people somehow we've turned the Bible from being this story about the wonder of God's power revealed in our lives to here's the moral obligations and the disciplines and the obedience you must do in order to get God's favor that is not the story of a covenant of grace by the word the word grace literally means unmerited you can't earn it you can't keep it you can't do anything unmerited favor and blessing I will make a promise to you humanity that I will save you and you will not be involved that's the cup of blessing that we're holding so when we think about just even how Jesus fulfills the promise from Genesis 3 his birth is miraculous there's no explanation

Jesus has no earthly father number two his life is a miracle we were able to observe for 33 years that Jesus never once violated the law of God he perfectly was in obedience to his father which no human has ever done proving he could be a perfect sacrifice for us and then the fulfillment of his final part of his life is that he rose from the grave when he says you're holding the cup of the covenant you're remembering all of what Christ has done and that it was supernaturally fulfilled this is important because when we take communion we can sometimes simplify it too much and I think it needs to remain complex because that's what it is it's so deep and so full and so we think of God's faithfulness to sinful people who cannot remain faithful his supernatural fulfillment of Christ and then the effects of us in our own lives and that we were dead in our trespasses and sins we were not able to make ourselves alive and we hold the cup and the cup is the fulfillment that supernaturally by God's magical power he brought me to life

I hold that cup of remembrance in my hand and then thirdly so you have the covenant of grace was protected by God's power the covenant of grace was fulfilled by God's power and the number three see look at that I did a whole sermon in like five minutes the covenant of grace spreads by God's power the whole point of the table is to hold it and say what a powerful God what a powerful God you see the only reason that all of us are gathered here and we I have to stop just for a moment imagine if I invited you to come on Tuesday night to an event with me and you show up and it's out in this field it's dark there's a fire pit and standing around the fire pit is about 20 people in black robes and they're all mumbling something in unison and then you see one of them go over to a table and they pick up a part of an animal that has been sacrificed and they pick up a cup and they start spreading it around to each other and then they all lift their hands and they all start singing some weird strange music you're like bro I will see you in the car

I'm not going near that well it sounds cultish right I think I'm the next sacrifice I don't even know what's on that table just stop for a moment and think how strange what we do here we gather and we mumble a prayer together standing by the way and then we sing about a guy who died by brutal beating and being literally pierced onto a piece of wood and we smile and cry about it and then we go back to a table that has the semblance of cannibalism do you know that the early church was literally crucified and imprisoned because they were practicing cannibalism they weren't practicing cannibalism but they took the word seriously this is my body broken for you and word got out to the emperor the Christians really think they're eating a body and they started imprisoning them but it is a very strange thing that we do when we look at cult people and we think that's strange

Paul's like oh what we do is even stranger this is why I'm not ashamed of it you see the only reason that you're sitting here today and you're in your right mind and you actually think what I am saying is a good idea hopefully is because there is something spiritual that happened to you it's called regeneration it's called the spirit of God came into your heart by means of the gospel he opened up your eyes and you can now see that this actually makes sense where the world looks at it and says this is a disgrace this is why Paul says the Jewish call it foolishness and the Greeks call it a stumbling block but we who are saved call these means the power of God which is crazy but this is how God has designed it so the spread of the power of this grace is by the means by which he chooses so he chooses to take these spiritual means that brought us to life and sustain them with us it's not that we come to life through regeneration by magical means but it's that we are sustained by them and then they strengthen us what are these means the preaching of God's word the prayer privately and corporately singing fellowship baptism in the

[ 47 : 47 ] Lord's table are the means by which he uses to continue the work of the supernatural faith that was given to us so what do we do with this every week when we come to the table by faith we hear the gospel proclaimed and what I hope you remember is not how well you performed this week take your eyes off of yourself remember who Christ is in his sufficiency in his death and who he is now remember that you're holding not the cup of wrath but you're holding the cup of his blessing that you will receive from him a supernatural blessing and encouragement and strengthening of all that he is in Christ sorry in the father and then number three remember that this will all come to you not because you want it to or not because you've conjured something up in your heart and mind that the blessing of Christ through the table will come to you because it comes to you by means of the covenant and the covenant comes to us by means of a supernatural gift of grace do you see how it all connects

I don't want to miss the table I don't want to miss all of the means by which God will strengthen me because I cannot get them anywhere else in the universe than outside or than inside his fellowship so as a church hopefully we don't look at Sunday mornings legalistically as oh God would be disappointed if I don't go we look at it as that I don't know what I would do if I'm not sustained I don't know what I would do if I'm not filled where will my heart wander where will my mind go and so we gather each and every week to be reminded of what Christ is for us so that as Stephen said in his prayer we might learn how to obey for him the strength of our obedience always comes from the strength of his covenant amen let's pray father I am thankful that I am in a church and the family here lets me speak with confidence the full entirety of your word that we have elders who long to shepherd and preach when it's popular and when it's not and may we as a congregation come to the table this morning longing for the wonder of what you have for us in the cup of blessing and the cup of the covenant in Christ's name amen thanks for listening to the sermon podcast of

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