

Lesson 1, Part 12 Learning Goals:

- (1) Learn to define communion.
- (2) Learn to feed our souls and others.
- (3) Learn Communion with the Father in Love.
- (4) Learn Communion with the Son in Grace.
- (5) Learn Communion with the Spirit in Comfort.

Defining Communion

Communion consists in a giving, a receiving, and a returning.

In communion, God gives himself and all the benefits of salvation to us by virtue of our covenant union with Christ. In communion, we receive the Triune God and all the benefits by faith because of the same covenant union with Christ. And in communion we freely make returns on all that God has given freely, to build his church.

Communion with God the Father in Love

The Love of Benevolence: the love by which God wills to do good to his covenant people (Jeremiah 31:3).

The Love of Beneficence: the love of action or efficacy in God (Jeremiah 32:38–40).

The Love of Complacency or Rest: the love by which God delights in his covenant people on account of his own covenant goodness (Zephaniah 3:17).

Communion with God the Son in Grace

Communion with the Son in the rich treasury of grace means that we have fellowship with him in all that he accomplished for us in redemption.

John 1:16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. (NKJV)

The Infinite Treasury of Grace in God the Son

The endless, bottomless, boundless grace and compassion that is in him who is thus our husband, as he is the God of Zion. It is not the grace of a creature, nor all the grace that can possibly at once dwell in a created nature, that will serve our turn. We are too indigent to be suited with such a supply (John Owen, *Communion With the Triune God*, p. 161).

On this ground, if all the world should set themselves to drink free grace, mercy, and pardon, drawing water continually from the wells of salvation; if they should set themselves to draw from one single promise, an angel standing by and crying, “Drink, O my friends, yea, drink abundantly, take so much grace and pardon as shall be abundantly sufficient for the world of sin which is in every one of you”—they would not be able to sink the grace of the promise one hair’s breadth. There is enough for millions of worlds, if they were; because it flows into it from an infinite, bottomless fountain (John Owen, *Communion With the Triune God*, p. 161-162).

Returns We Make in Communion with God the Son in Grace

Every part of our salvation is found in Christ alone,

- *our strength—in his reign;*
- *our purity—in his conception;*
- *our tenderness— in his nativity and incarnation that he might learn to feel our pain:*
- *our redemption — is in his passion;*
- *our acquittal—in his condemnation;*
- *our freedom from the curse—in his own cross.*
- *our satisfaction for our sins—in his sacrifice and cleansing in his blood.*
- *our reconciliation— in his entry into Hades.*
- *power over our sins— in his tomb*
- *newness of our life— in his resurrection*
- *our immortality and heavenly inheritance— in his exaltation and reign in glory*

(John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.16.19)

Communion with God the Spirit in Comfort

John 16:4–15 4But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. “And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. 5“But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ 6But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (paraclete, “one called alongside, Comforter, Helper”) will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. 12“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them now*. 13However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come*. 14He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it to you*. 15All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it to you*. (NKJV)

Communion with God the Spirit in Comfort

What we have, then, from him, we have by the way of his energetical working. It is not by proposing this or that argument to us, persuading us by these or those moral motives or inducements alone, leaving us to make use of them as we can; but he works effectually himself, what he communicates of grace or consolation to us. (John Owen, *Communion with the Triune God*, 369-370).

Communion with God the Spirit in Comfort

2 Corinthians 1:3–7 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. 6 Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. 7 And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation. (NKJV)*