**DIDACHE:**

**Session 9**

**The E2 of Christian Theology: Epistemology and Ecclesiology**

**Summary of Session 8:**

**\*On the night of the Passover Meal, the night before Jesus’ crucifixion and**

**death, He gave to the New Testament Church He was establishing a**

**holy meal of their own. Christians believe, because of what the Holy**

**Scriptures proclaim and teach, that in the Lord’s Supper they do**

**actually receive the very Body and Blood of Christ, in a divine,**

**miraculous, and mysterious (mystical) way, in, with, and under the**

**bread and wine. Yes, we admit this a profound and unexplainable**

**thing! But this is what Jesus instituted and gave to His Church for**

**all the ages! As in Baptism, the power to do the miracle is clearly**

**in the power of the Word of God attached to water, bread, and wine.**

**This holy meal is not our meal to do with as we wish, but Christ’s**

**meal and gift to us, to administer according to His design and Word.**

**\*Christians receive wonderful benefits in participating in this holy meal—**

**forgiveness of sins, and where there is forgiveness of sins, there is**

**salvation and eternal life.**

**\*God’s Word clearly teaches that those who misuse or abuse the Sacrament**

**of Holy Communion sin against what is really present in it—the true**

**Body and Blood of Christ. First, it is only through faith that the**

**benefits given in Communion are received. False teaching about this**

**holy meal is a misuse of the gift, rather out of ignorance or deliberate**

**rejection of Biblical doctrine.**

**\*We practice a restricted or closed Communion because the Bible clearly**

**states that not everyone who receives the bread and wine, that is the**

**Body and Blood of Christ, receives it to his/her benefit. In fact, some**

**can actually receive it to their spiritual harm and judgment.**

**--we receive it worthily when we have faith in Christ and**

**believe His Words about His Holy Supper**

**--we are unprepared and unworthy of it, and should not**

**receive it if: we do not believe in Christ and His Word;**

**we are stubbornly aware yet unrepentant of sin and**

**refuse to change our lives, yet speak and act as if we are**

**in good standing before God and His Church; we refuse**

**to be reconciled to a brother or sister in the faith**

**\*The congregation is responsible for the stewardship (proper management)**

**of this heavenly gift as it is for faithfulness to the whole Word of God.**

**According to Scripture, pastors are the administrators of the Supper.**

**OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION**

**Introduction**

**Ecclesiology is the word for “the study of the doctrine and things pertaining to the Christian Church.” In this session we will introduce four major topics: one, how the Word of God defines the New Testament Church as the very creation of God, fulfilling and then including the Old Testament Church into a global, eternal community of the priesthood of all believers; two, how and for what purpose Christ has instituted the Office of the Holy Ministry; three, the essence of the Christian life of faith regarding repentance and forgiveness in the relationship of God and the believer, the sanctified life as a witness of service to the neighbor, prayer, and vocation. Finally we will introduce the Christian epistemology (source, norm, and definition of truth.**

**I. The New Testament Church: Definition in Scripture**

**A. The word *ecclesia* (assembly, church) in the Gospels**

**1) Matthew 16:13-19; 18:15-20**

**B. The testimony in the Book of Acts**

**1:12-2:1; 5:11; 8:1; 11:20; 12:5; 14:23; 16:5; 20:28**

**C. Key Scriptures in the New Testament Epistles—Peter and Paul**

**1) The introductions to the letters: *to the church in***

**2) To Corinth: First, 1:2; 5; 12:28; 14:4, 12, 33-34**

**Second, 8:24**

**3) To Ephesians: 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23-29**

**4) To Colossians: 1:15-24**

**5) To Thessalonians: First, 2:14**

**6) 1 Timothy 3:5, 15-16**

**7) 1 Peter 2:9-11**

**8) Revelation 1:4; (2 & 3 are 7 Letters to Churches) 2:7; 22:16**

**II. The Office of the Holy (Public) Ministry and Its Relationship to the**

**Priesthood of All Believers**

1. **The Office and Power of the Keys *the special authority which Christ has***

***given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to***

***withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent***

1. **Matthew 16:19 *I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.***

**(Matthew 18:18 and John 20:22-23**

1. **The proclamation of the Gospel 2 Corinthians 5:17—6:2**
2. **The Head of the Church**
3. **Pastors (under-shepherds in and of the flock; assistants to Christ) and People working together without “lording it over the other”**

**III. The Christian Life**

1. **The Vertical Relationship: The Triune God and the Redeemed,**

**Individual Believer—Commandments 1-3**

1. **No other god(s) before His Face; fear, love, and trust in God above**

**all things**

1. **Respecting the honor of the Triune God by respecting His Name**
2. **Respecting the Word of God by using it faithfully and living daily**

**in the promises of Baptism by daily repentance (Confession and**

**Absolution**

1. **The Horizontal Relationship: The Love and Service of the Neighbor—**

**Commandments 4-10 (where God is also still ruler of the world, even in**

**its fallen state, where the institutions of church and state are better separated among us people) Matthew 5:13-16**

1. **Respect for authority**
2. **Respect for the sanctity of human life**
3. **Respect for the divine institution of marriage and family as the**

**basic unit of life together on the planet (society) [connected to 4]**

1. **Respect for God’s arrangement to lease and entrust personal**

**property ownership**

1. **Respect the dignity and honor of every individual person (justice)**

**9 & 10) Individual respect and self-discipline of the mind and heart (the**

**root and source of disrespect in the mind, heart, and spirit)**

1. **The Christian Life of Prayer**
2. **How the Scriptures define prayer: what it is and what it is not!**
3. **How to pray: who, where, when, what, how, why**
4. **The “model prayer”—The Lord’s Prayer**

**D) Vocation**

**IV. Epistemology**

**Preluce: the Pilate Syndrome**

1. **The Third Commandment and the Fourth Petition of the Lord’s**

**Prayer: Luther’s Explanation**

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**[Addendum]**

**The Christian faith and doctrine is in one way a complex and deeply substantive**

**body of teachings derived from the Word of God as it has been revealed in the**

**books of the Bible. The Christian Church has a long, two-thousand year history.**

**But at the heart of the Christian faith is the confession that Jesus of Nazareth, born**

**somewhere around 4-5 B.C. (we guess from historical references in the Bible, early Church historians whose writings have been preserved, and also with the help**

**of records preserved and now discovered from the Roman Empire) was and is the**

**Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, in human flesh and form, who**

**came to be the fulfillment of the ancient promise to the Jews that God would send a**

**Messiah (in the Greek language, Christ—Savior) for them and the whole human**

**race.**

**A Christian is someone who has come to faith, to believe in Jesus as the Son of God**

**and Savior. Christians confess Jesus is also their Lord. This means that they trust**

**Him in life and death because He has died for them that they might belong to God.**

**Belonging to God, they desire to live for God and serve Him.**

**The Christian’s source for this knowledge about—who God is and what He has done in creating the universe and all things; who human beings really are and why they are who and what they are; how God is disposed to humanity; what is truth; and many other subjects and issues—is the Word of God, kept and preserved for**

**us in the collection of 66 documents we call the Bible.**

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**B. What is the Bible?**

**1) “Verbal inspiration,” “infallible,” and “inerrant?”**

**2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21 and 3:15-16; John 10:35**

***Scripture cannot be broken*** [not even on one word]**; 17:17**

***Sanctify them in the truth; Your Word is Truth***

**2) POWER! Genesis 1; Isaiah 55:10-11**

**3) Relationship of God’s Word and the human gift from God of**

**reason**

**4) Using the Word Colossians 3:16 1 Timothy 4:4-5**

**Titus 1:9 and 3:10**

**[appendix to Small Catechism, pp. 354-357, 369-371**

**Conclusion**

**From one man and his family (Genesis: Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham-Isaac-Jacob (Israel) to the Chosen People/Nation-Theocracy of the Old Covenant to One Man and HIS FAMILY (Jesus the Christ) and His New Covenant with His Church on earth flowing into the Population of the New Heavens and Earth, which is the ultimate end result of God’s enterprise in history—HIS story, the reclamation and restoration of His original intention, design, and creation.**

**Coming:**

**Session 10 A Brief, Brief Glimpse at the History of God’s New Testament**

**Church**

**Session 11 Christian Worship—The Divine Service as the center piece and place**

**of our Life Together in Christ**

**Session 12 Eschatology: A study of the last things—death, the state of souls**

**between death and resurrection, Judgment Day, hell, and heaven**

**Forward any questions, comments, suggestions to:**

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**Three sessions remaining in this study:**

**Session 10 is a brief overview of the history of Christianity in: the Apostolic**

**age, the Early Church (AD 100-324), the early, middle, and late Middle Ages,**

**the Renaissance, the Continental and English Reformation; the Age of**

**Enlightenment and Rationalism; the American Church; the Global Mission;**

**Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Contemporary Church. This is merely**

**a glimpse, a skeleton outline, for our purpose in this course, to see the**

**connections that are maintained. For those interested in further study, the**

**outline will guide your research**

**Session 11 will be How Christians Worship: Biblical date; a study of the**

**Divine Service, addressing the meaning of each part, the relationship of**

**theology and practice.**

**Session 12 will be a study of Eschatology, the doctrine of the last things—**

**death, the state of souls between physical death and the Last Day, the Day**

**of Judgment, the resurrection of the dead, and the afterlife (hell and heaven).**