

I.N.I.

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
October 13, 2019
The Sacrament of Holy Communion
Words of Institution

In Christ Jesus, Who instituted for us believers the precious Sacrament of His Supper, in which we receive the forgiveness of sins, everlasting life and salvation, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

We started our journey through Luther's Catechism back on June 23rd. Our first study was of the 10 Commandments. In this study we came face to face with the ugliness of our sins. We were shown in unmistakable terms and simple words that we, everyone one of us, are guilty of sin, guilty of breaking every single one of God's holy laws and commands. For the very purpose of the Law is to drive us to our knees, to lead us to see our lost spiritual condition, to forsake ourselves and to look upon our works as nothing but worthless dung, always falling short of the perfection that God demands of us.

But in our journey in September we were also shown through the words of the Apostles' Creed that our Heavenly Father did not let us remain in this sorry state. He could not, for He is LOVE. He had already in eternity, before time began and before He created mankind, planned our salvation. When the fullness of time had come He sent His Son into this world, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary to be our God-Man Savior. This God-Man lived under the Law, but it could not convict Him of sin, for He had no sin and committed no sin. This perfection, this righteousness of Jesus is applied to every one of us who believe and trust in Him. But Jesus did even more. He took that perfect life of His and offered it up on the cross as a perfect, satisfactory sacrifice for every single sin ever committed by every single sinner. The Father showed that He accepted this perfect sacrifice by the resurrection of His Son from the dead on Easter.

Two weeks ago we learned in our study of the Ministry of the Keys and Confession that Jesus has given to us, His Church of believers, the privilege and responsibility to proclaim to all people that the Kingdom of heaven is open for all through Christ, the forgiveness of sins is theirs through Jesus. But we as believers also have the solemn responsibility to declare to the unrepentant that the door to heaven is shut and locked to them, because of their unbelief and rejection of Jesus and stubborn refusal to acknowledge and repent of their sins. We also saw the importance of confessing our sins which can only condemn and destroy us, confessing them before God and receiving that blessed assurance, "Son, daughter, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you."

Last week we studied the first of the two Sacraments God has given us: Baptism. In Baptism we receive the washing away of our sins by the Word of God in and with the water. We were shown from the Scriptures that we are baptized into Christ's death and the power of His resurrection gives us new life in this Sacrament.

One thing certainly stands out very clear in all of these chief parts, these chief teachings of God's Word, and that is—we must give up on ourselves. We cannot trust in, rely on, or have any confidence in anything that we can do. Our good works, our prayers, our offerings, even our worship does not and cannot save us or somehow pay for our sins and earn for us salvation. It has all been done for us by Jesus. This Good News is what has created saving faith in our hearts through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Many of you learned all of this in your confirmation study years ago. You were led to believe that these words were not man's words, but God's Words. And now after a review of these chief parts we come to this fifth chief part, the Lord's Supper.

This Sacrament, unlike the Sacrament of Baptism, is not intended for all people. In Baptism the Lord says we are to go out and baptize all nations. But the Lord's Supper is intended only for the believer, for those who can examine themselves, acknowledge and repent of their sins and believe Jesus died for them. It is a most precious meal, far greater than any earthly meal we could ever receive; it is a meal for our souls.

The words that make up this morning's text are, as we said, taken from 4 places in the Bible—Matthew, Mark, Luke and I Corinthians. What is written in our catechism is what we read every

communion Sunday prior to partaking of the meal. We call them the “words of Institution.” Some read these words facing the congregation holding the elements, others facing the elements to show that these wafers and this wine is what we are now setting apart as our food to eat and to drink in this sacramental meal.

This meal was given and intended not only for His disciples but for all believers for all time. Luther’s first question in his catechism is this--*What is the Sacrament of Holy Communion?* He answers by writing: **It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, given to us Christians under the bread and wine to eat and to drink, as it was instituted by Christ Himself.** We look at the words of institution and we read: **Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; after the same manner He took the cup.**

Two elements are present in our Supper—bread and the cup of wine. It is unleavened bread and grape wine that we receive as we did last Sunday.

But is that all, is that all we receive? By no means! Let’s look again at the words of institution--**He brake it (the bread) and gave it to His disciples, saying, “Take, eat; this is My body... He gave it (the wine) to them saying, “Drink ye all of it; this cup is the New Testament in My blood.**

Our Savior is very clear in what He wants us to do in this Supper. He wants us to come to Him to be fed, both physically and spiritually. We receive **BREAD** and **WINE** physically with our mouths to eat and we also receive in a supernatural way the very **BODY** and **BLOOD** which Jesus shed for us on the cross. How can this be?

No one can reason out or completely comprehend this Sacrament. People have tried and they have come up with two teachings, both contrary to the truth of the Scriptures. One group says that Jesus must have meant, “Take eat, this represents My body” that is, this bread is a symbol or picture of My shed body, broken for you on the cross. And they say Jesus must have meant, “Take drink, this cup represents My blood” that is, this wine is a picture or symbol of My blood which I poured out for you on the cross. That is the Reformed teaching of Representation.

Another group teaches that when the priest blesses the bread and the wine they miraculously change into Christ’s body and blood and there no longer is any bread and wine on the altar. That is the Catholic teaching of Transubstantiation.

Both of these teachings are to be rejected as false teachings of God’s clear and simple words.

God’s Word tells us in I Cor. 10:16 **THE CUP OF BLESSING WHICH WE BLESS, IS IT NOT THE COMMUNION OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST? THE BREAD WHICH WE BREAK, IS IT NOT THE COMMUNION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST?** What does the word “communion” mean? It means “the gathering together,” “the combining together.” Paul tells us the bread through the power of the Word of God is gathered together with the body of Christ and the wine through the power of the Word of God is gathered together with the blood of Christ. Nothing changes into, nor is it merely symbolical. It is truly present. Bread and wine together with the body and blood of Christ as we eat and drink of it.

Martin Luther states in his Large Catechism: **IT IS, I AFFIRM, THE WORD THAT MAKES THIS SACRAMENT WHAT IT IS AND DISTINGUISHES IT FROM ORDINARY BREAD AND WINE; THE WORD CAUSES IT TO BE CHRIST’S BODY AND BLOOD AS IT IS RIGHTLY TO BE CALLED—WHEN THE WORD IS JOINED TO THE EXTERNAL ELEMENT, IT BECOMES A SACRAMENT.** Like Baptism, without God’s Word the Lord’s Supper would not be a Sacrament.

So what is the reason that Jesus gave us this meal? We look again to our text, the words of institution—**“This do in remembrance of Me... This do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.”** One of the reasons Jesus gave us His meal is as a memorial, a meal of remembrance to Him and a testimony to the rest of the world of what He did for us. Paul writes in I Cor. 11:26 **FOR AS OFTEN AS YOU EAT THIS BREAD AND DRINK THIS CUP, YOU PROCLAIM THE LORD’S DEATH TILL HE COMES.** Therefore, every month we celebrate the Lord’s Supper as a reminder to all of us of Christ’s suffering and death. We do this also as a demonstration and proclamation to the world that we believe Jesus suffered and died for us. It is a feast, a meal in memory of our Lord.

But there is another reason, an even greater reason that Jesus gave this supper to us. We read again in our words of institution-- **which is given for you...which is shed for you for the remission of sins.** Through this supper we receive the individual, personal assurance of the forgiveness of our sins. It is the Word that gives this power to the Sacrament. The words **GIVEN AND SHED FOR YOU FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS,** shows us that God gives forgiveness of sins, life and salvation through this Sacrament, because of Jesus' bloody sacrifice upon the cross. Bread and wine do not forgive sins and strengthen faith, but the Word of God which is connected to that bread and wine does. This is just like baptism. It is not the water that does anything, but the Word of God which is connected to that water and because of Jesus' bloody sacrifice upon the cross.

What greater blessing can anyone ever ask for or want? Day after day our many sins cause us grief and sadness. We know that everyone of them, even the ones we have grown accustomed to, that we slip so easily into and commit without so much as a thought, everyone of them damns us. But here in this meal of Jesus, Christ is calling out to us, **"COME TO ME, ALL YOU WHO LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST."** In our hectic, trouble-filled, stressed, worried and guilt-ridden world the Lord gives us a moment of peace and spiritual rest. He says "Cast all your cares upon Me, for I care for you. Bring your sins to Me, cast them upon Me, and then receive My gracious, loving meal of forgiveness, my very body and blood which I shed on the cross for you, yes, for you individually and personally."

That brings us to the last point. *Why should we partake of this Lord's Supper?* Is it only to fulfill a command of Christ or of the church—you just got to in order to be a good Christian? Is it because we feel that by doing this good deed we somehow are earning some brownie points with God—He will now look down upon me with more favor than before? No, we will be moved to want to come as often as this supper is given in order to strengthen our faith by receiving that personal assurance that my sins are forgiven by Christ.

Therefore we need to examine ourselves in order to prepare ourselves for the partaking of this meal. The Apostle Paul tells us in I Cor. 11: 28-29 **BUT LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF, AND SO LET HIM EAT OF THE BREAD AND DRINK OF THE CUP. FOR HE WHO EATS AND DRINKS IN AN UNWORTHY MANNER EATS AND DRINKS JUDGMENT TO HIMSELF, NOT DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY.**

Luther put it this way in his Small Catechism, **A PERSON IS TRULY WORTHY AND WELL-PREPARED WHO HAS FAITH IN THESE WORDS, "GIVEN AND SHED FOR YOU FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS." WHOEVER DOES NOT BELIEVE THESE WORDS OR DOUBTS THEM IS UNWORTHY AND UNPREPARED. THE WORDS, "FOR YOU" REQUIRE NOTHING BUT BELIEVING HEARTS.**

That is why it is so important to prepare ourselves for participation in the Lord's Supper every time we partake of it. First to realize our great need for such blessings. We are miserable, lost sinners in and by ourselves. No matter how hard we try--we have not and we cannot--meet and satisfy God's requirement of the Law, which is **BE HOLY AS I THE LORD YOUR GOD AM HOLY.** We have broken everyone of God's commandments in our thoughts, words or deeds. We stand condemned before God. We need to be led to repent of our sins, promising with the help of the Holy Spirit to change our sinful life and live according to God's Word. Secondly we then will be led to seek the full and free forgiveness which is freely given to us through this precious Sacrament, believing that Jesus did suffer and die to cleanse us from all of our sins.

Thank the Lord that He gave us this communion meal for us; a communion meal in which Christ's body and blood communes together with the bread and wine; a communion meal in which we commune with Christ's body and blood with the bread and wine; and a communion meal in which we commune together as like-minded believers.

As you come to the Lord's Supper may your eyes of faith be fixed upon Jesus, your Lord and Savior who went the way of the cross for you and me. He willingly gave His life as a sacrifice for you and for me and for all people. He shed His blood for you and for me and through the power of His Word His body and His blood are present in, with and under the bread and wine for us to eat and

to drink.

Every time we receive the Lord's Supper we proclaim to the whole world that Christ gave His body and shed His blood to redeem us sinners and all of lost mankind. We remember His death, that pivotal, that crucial event upon which the salvation of every man, woman and child depends. Every month we have the special opportunity to partake of a meal of forgiveness for all of our sins, a monthly communion, participation, gathering together and fellowship with the very body and blood of our Savior, a most intimate union of faith.

Celebrating the Lord's Supper separates us from the rest of the world. It marks us as believers, God's children who walk in the light of His Word. This precious Sacrament will help us to grow day by day in grace and holiness of living before God and by partaking of it we also confess to the whole world that we belong to Jesus, our one and only Savior.

Amen.