

ILLINOIS LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

Topical Bulletin, December 2023

In this month's Bulletin, we will continue from where we left off last month. Therefore, our topic for consideration is: **The Lord's Supper (part2)**

Again, we will follow the general order of the subject material as put forth in Luther's Small Catechism (Concordia Publishing House, 1943 edition). Additional Scripture verses will be quoted and commented upon to thoroughly cover the topic.

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:26-28)

*Comment: In last month's Topical Bulletin we noted, in reference to the above quoted Scripture passage and others, that **IT'S A FACT THAT IN, WITH, AND UNDER THE BREAD AND THE WINE CHRIST GIVES US HIS TRUE BODY AND TRUE BLOOD— this is known as the REAL PRESENCE**. Indeed, bread and wine do not merely represent the body and blood of Christ; the body and blood of Christ are truly present and received by the communicants, because the Lord Jesus says so!*

ACCORDINGLY, THE REFORMED AND BAPTISTIC CHURCH GROUPS, WHICH DENY THE REAL PRESENCE AND TEACH MERE REPRESENTATION OF CHRIST'S BODY AND BLOOD, ARE WRONG. Sadly, in regards to the Lord's Supper, they also err in another way, as we shall presently consider.

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:26-29)

"When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (1 Corinthians 11:20-26)

*Comment: Reformed and Baptist churches insist on using grape juice in their 'supper'; which renders it **NOT** the Lord's Supper. Note the words underlined in the above quoted Scripture passages: one **CANNOT***

get drunk on mere grape juice! Thus, the drink the Lord Jesus Christ used, when He instituted His Supper, is that drink made from the fruit of the vine and fermented: WINE, NOT mere grape juice!

*Another example of a 'supper' of one's own making is that over 20 years ago it made news that a 'church' used hotdog buns and coca-cola for their 'communion' service. Disgraceful! To such who ignore God's truth, Holy Writ declares: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:20) Yes, Jesus Christ says, in no uncertain terms, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." (John 12:48-50) **HENCE, IT IS SINFUL AND FOOLISH TO DISREGARD THE WORDS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!***

TAKE IT TO HEART THAT NO SINFUL HUMAN BEING HAS THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THAT WHICH JESUS CHRIST COMMANDS; SUCH ALTERATIONS RESULT IN A SUPPER OF ONE'S OWN MAKING, RATHER THAN HAVING THE LORD'S SUPPER!

The real Lord's Supper, as instituted and commanded by Christ, is quite beneficial to those who rightly partake of it!

Luther's Small Catechism says: "**II. THE BENEFITS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER** *What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?* That is shown us by these words, "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins"; namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation."

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:26-28)

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."
(1 Corinthians 11:26)

*Comment: Note well that the words "given and shed for you for the remission of sins" – being based on the Scripture passages quoted above – tell us that **IN THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR (THE LORD'S SUPPER) CHRIST GIVES TO EVERY COMMUNICANT, AS A PLEDGE OF THE REMISSION OF SINS, THAT SAME BODY AND BLOOD WITH WHICH HE EARNED FOR US THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS!***

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:5-7)

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Hebrews 9:11-12)

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

Comment: THE HOLY BIBLE MAKES IT QUITE CLEAR THAT WHERE THERE IS FORGIVENESS OF SINS, THERE IS ETERNAL LIFE AND SALVATION!

Accordingly, we approach the Lord’s Table for three main reasons—

1.) Chiefly to receive the forgiveness of our sins and thus to be strengthened in our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; “And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.” (Luke 22:19-20) *Indeed, fellow Christians, “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:22-24)*

2.) To obtain strength for a holier life; “And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:15 & 17) *Yes, Jesus says, “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:4-5)*

3.) To bear testimony that we are of one faith with those who commune with us. “For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” (1 Corinthians 10:17) “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42) “So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” (Romans 12:5)

Additional comment: SO CALLED “OPEN COMMUNION” – WHERE ANYONE IS FREE TO COME TO THE LORD’S SUPPER – IS FORBIDDEN BY THE LORD GOD IN HIS HOLY WORD, WHICH INSTRUCTS: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” (Romans 16:17-18) JESUS, WHEN HE INSTITUTED THE LORD’S SUPPER, GAVE IT TO HIS DISCIPLES, NOT TO EVERYONE WHO COULD COME IN OFF THE STREET!

Luther's Small Catechism says: **"III. THE POWER OF THE LORD'S SUPPER** *How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?* It is not the eating and drinking indeed that does them, but the words here written, "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins"; which words, besides the bodily eating and drinking, are the chief thing in the Sacrament; and he that believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins."

"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." (Mark 14:22-24)

"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:19-20)

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:26-28)

Comment: Notice that in the Lord's Supper, Christ's WORD is attached to the bread and the wine—"Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." Hence, it is not the eating and drinking indeed that imparts the forgiveness of sins; but Christ, by His WORD, has placed the forgiveness of sins into the Sacrament, and there He offers, gives, and seals it to all communicants. CHRIST'S WORDS, THEREFORE, ARE THE CHIEF THING IN THE SACRAMENT! "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16) Thus, we receive the benefit of the forgiveness of sins, which is placed into the Sacrament, ONLY BY BELIEVING THESE WORDS, "GIVEN AND SHED FOR YOU FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS." Indeed, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6)

Luther's Small Catechism says: **"IV. THE SALUTARY USE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER** *Who, then, receives such Sacrament worthily?* Fasting and bodily preparation are indeed a fine outward training; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words, "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." But he that does not believe these words, or doubts, is unworthy and unprepared; for the words "for you" require all hearts to believe."

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.” (1 Corinthians 11:28-29)

Comment: The true worthiness of a communicant must be considered because of the dire consequences involved if one fails to examine himself (or herself) and eats and drinks unworthily! INDEED, EATING AND DRINKING UNWORTHILY RESULTS IN DAMNATION RATHER THAN SALVATION!

Now, we also note, as does Luther's Small Catechism, that it is not necessary to fast before partaking of the Sacrament of the Altar, for Christ Jesus our Lord nowhere commands nor forbids fasting. Furthermore, no other bodily preparation is commanded for true worthiness; but a proper regard for the Lord's Supper should induce us to appear at the Lord's Table with modesty and reverence.

1 Timothy 2:8-10 *instructs*: “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.” Proverbs 16:18 *adds*: “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” *And*, James 4:10 *commands*: “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

Should one choose to fast, it is wise to remember what Jesus says, Matthew 6:16-18, “Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” Yes, “the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

REALIZE THAT TRUE WORTHINESS CONSISTS IN FAITH IN THESE WORDS, IN REFERENCE TO THE BODY AND BLOOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: “GIVEN AND SHED FOR YOU FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.” A PERSON WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE THOSE WORDS, OR WHO DOUBTS THOSE WORDS, IS UNWORTHY AND UNPREPARED; FOR THE WORDS “FOR YOU” REQUIRE ALL HEARTS TO BELIEVE.

We will continue with the topic of **the Lord's Supper** – to its conclusion – in next month's bulletin.

m.e.l.