

Crumbs – Good News for the Diaspora!



Illustration: Abraham Entertains Three Strangers

A Devotional for the Week of the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

SUNDAY.

This is my body. . . . This is my blood. – Matthew 26:26 & 28.

God in His Word has revealed to us the things that are necessary for our salvation. If we do not rest upon this Word alone and completely, but permit our reason to interfere, then we shall surely err and do all manner of foolish things,

Thus it came about that the Reformed Church, with all its various and variously named branches, says that in the Lord's Supper we do not receive the body and blood of Christ, but only bread and wine, and that bread and wine "represent" the body and blood of Christ, and are mere "figures," or "images," of Christ's body and blood.

Why twist the words of Christ, and tamper with their plain meaning? Christ's words are plain, very plain, and every child can understand them: "This is my body"; "this is my blood." And Christ says that He gives us that body which was given for us, and that blood which was shed for us. And the Apostle says by inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "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?" (1 Corinthians 10:16.) And he also says: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the *body* and *blood* of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 10:27.) Indeed, in the Lord's Supper Christ gives us His body with the bread and His blood with the cup.

In place of the Sacrament of the Passover in the Old Covenant He has in the New Testament instituted the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, where instead of the flesh and blood of the paschal lamb, which was but a type and figure of the coming Christ, He now, under the bread and wine, gives us the flesh and blood of the true Lamb of the Passover, to wit, His own. This is what His words really say. And who, merely to satisfy his reason, dares to undermine the words of the divine institution of a Sacrament and the words of the Savior's divine testament?

PRAYER. – Lord, O True, Almighty, and All-wise, help me to accept and believe all Your words just as they plainly read, also those of Your Holy Supper. Guard me against the meddlesomeness and the objections of my depraved reason, lest my faith be wrecked! Amen.

Hymn 436, 4. 5.

Thou say'st: "This is my body; eat,
And orally receive me!
This is my blood; drink all of it,
And henceforth never leave me!"
What Thou hast spoken, true must be:
Thou art almighty, and with Thee
Impossible is nothing.

Although my reason cannot see
How in so many places
Thy body at one time may be,
Yet faith Thy Word embraces.
How it can be, I leave to Thee,
Thy Word alone sufficeth me,
For Thou wilt that we trust it.

MONDAY.

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? – 1 Corinthians 10:16.

It is disagreeable to be compelled to speak of false and seductive doctrine when contemplating the Gospel. But unless we do so, the seduction will spread.

– The Roman Church, the church of the Pope, whose coming was foretold in 2 Thessalonians 2, teaches that bread and wine in the

Lord's Supper is *changed* into the body and blood of Christ. But all Scripture passages treating of the Lord's Supper show that we are given bread and wine to eat and to drink, but that this bread and this wine are the "communion" of the body and blood of Christ, that is to say, that together with the bread and the wine Christ's body and blood are given us. Because the Church of Rome teaches such changing, or "transubstantiation," it also teaches that the bread and wine must be *adored*. But Scriptures nowhere say that the bread and wine are to be adored, but they everywhere command us to eat and drink the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper.

And the Church of Rome furthermore says that the bread in the Sacrament, which, according to their false doctrine, is changed into the body of Christ, is to be offered as an unbloody *sacrifice* for the sins of the living and the dead. But this is an abomination and a profanation of the atoning sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. "For by *one* offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Now where remission of these (of sins) is, there is no more offering for sin." (Hebrews 10:14 & 18.)

And lastly the Roman Catholic Church *refuses the cup to the laity*, that is, to the members of the congregation, saying, with blasphemous presumption, "Why, the body of Christ already contains blood!" But the Lord Jesus says: "Drink ye all of it!" (Matthew 26:27.)

– My dear Christian, abide simply by the words of Christ, and seek the forgiveness of your sins in the Lord's Supper; --for that is given to you through the body and blood of Christ which you receive together with the bread and wine.

PRAYER. – My Lord and God, do not let Your precious Word, the bright and unchanging light which now shines upon us, be put out and taken from us. Guard Your dear Christian Church against the specious seduction of the Antichrist at Rome! Continue Your pure Word and Sacrament with us, and grant that therein we may seek and find the forgiveness of sins. Amen.

Hymn 430, 3.

Thy body and Thy blood,
Once slain and shed for me,
Are taken at Thy table here –
A wondrous mystery!

TUESDAY.

Take, eat! Drink ye all of it! – Matthew 26:26-27.

The Lord's Supper is the true body and the true blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself. This is God's Word and the doctrine taught by Luther. But to prevent gross misunderstanding and malicious misrepresentation, it is well to show briefly what kind of eating and drinking takes place in the Holy Supper.

– Bread and wine are taken in a natural way, that is to say, in the same way in which we commonly receive food and drink. Together with this natural eating and drinking of the bread and wine with the mouth, we also eat and drink the body and blood of the Lord in a *sacramental* manner. What does this mean? It means that together with the bread and wine we receive the body and blood of Christ in a supernatural manner, in a manner wholly incomprehensible to human reason, in a way past finding out, in a manner such as takes place in this Sacrament only.

Seek not to fathom and to comprehend this, my dear Christian; for you will not succeed. Simply believe that together with the bread and wine you receive the body and blood of Christ, not in a natural manner, like the bread and the wine, but in a sacramental, mysterious manner.

And to get the real benefit of this, you must observe a *spiritual* eating in the Holy Supper. What does this mean? It means that you must know and believe through the Holy Spirit that with the bread and wine your dear Savior offers to you His body which was given

for you, and His blood which was shed for you, in order to give you forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, and to make you perfectly sure of the possession of these gracious gifts.

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, true God and man, glorified and exalted Savior, who for us, in a way past finding out, fills all things, grant me grace to firmly believe that with the bread and wine in the Holy Supper You give to me that precious ransom with which You have purchased me, a poor sinner, namely, Your body crucified, and Your blood shed for me. Grant that I may receive it in true faith, glory in it, comfort myself with it, and boast of it in the face of sin, death, and the Last Judgment. Amen.

Hymn 433.

LO, upon the altar lies
Bread of heaven from the skies:
Food to mortal wanderers given,
To the sons and heirs of heaven.

Jesus, Shepherd of the sheep!
Thou Thy flock in safety keep.
Living Bread! Thy life supply,
Strengthen us, or else we die.

Thou, who feedest us below!
Source of all we have or know!
Grant that with Thy saints above
We may reach Thy feast of love!

WEDNESDAY.

I have received of the Lord that which also I have delivered unto you. – 1 Corinthians 11:23.

Thus St. Paul speaks of the instructions he received with regard to the Lord's Supper. The Holy Supper is the Lord's Supper in reality only when it is administered in conformity with Christ's institution as recorded in Holy Writ. For this the following five points are necessary.

First there must be *communicants* who partake of the Lord's Supper. (If you would be such a communicant, you should announce yourself to your pastor. Without announcement he cannot know whether there will be any communicants. And it is his duty to see to it that no unbidden guests appear.) Secondly, there must be *bread* and *wine*, grape-wine. The pastor must see to this. Thirdly, this bread and wine must be *consecrated*, that is to say, they must be hallowed and set apart for use at the Lord's Supper in this way that the minister of the Gospel pronounces over them the words which Christ spoke when He instituted the Holy Supper. Fourthly, the bread and wine must be *distributed*, and the communicants must eat and drink them. Fifthly, it must distinctly be professed that *this Supper is the body and blood of Christ*, as He Himself has said.

These are the chief points from which thou wilt be able to tell whether the Communion celebrated in any church is truly the Lord's Supper or not. Everything beyond these five points is not essential to the Lord's Supper, and is a matter of Christian liberty. But beware of every so-called Lord's Supper which is not truly the Lord's Supper, which is not administered according to the institution of Christ.

PRAYER. – I thank You, dear Lord, that in these last days of sore distress You permit me to find places of public worship where Your Holy Sacrament is administered in its truth and purity, according to Your institution. Grant me grace, I beg You, to hold fast to such treasure, and to resist every falsification whatsoever of this holy Sacrament, lest I be cheated out of my salvation. Grant that, in firm faith, I may comfort myself with Your gift of grace. Amen.

Hymn 436, 8.

For Thy consoling Supper, Lord,
Be praised throughout all ages!
Preserve it, for with one accord
The world against it rages.
Grant that Thy body and Thy blood
May be my comfort and sweet food
In my last moments. Amen!

THURSDAY.

Given for you. Shed for you. For the remission of sins.
– Luke 22:19 & 20 and Matthew 26:28.

It has already been briefly stated in last Saturday's lesson what blessed benefit is offered us through the Lord's Supper, and that we may understand the nature of this benefit from the words: "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." In the Lord's Supper you receive that very body and that very blood wherewith on the cross Christ procured forgiveness of sins for all the world. The precious ransom with which payment was made for the remission of the sins of all the world is given you for your own individual possession. And hence forgiveness of sins is securely sealed to you.

And thus your faith is exceedingly strengthened, the blessed assurance that your, yes, indeed, your sins are forgiven you. And you are fully assured of life and salvation; for where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

Do see, do consider! By shedding His blood and dying upon the cross, Christ has procured forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation for all the world and also for you. You know this from the Gospel. But now, in the Lord's Supper, your crucified Savior comes to you and to your fellow-Christians, and, giving bread and wine to each of you,

says: "Take, eat ; this is my body, which is given for you. Take, drink ye all of it; this is my blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins." While you eat the bread and drink the wine, He offers to you His body, which was given for you, and His blood, which was shed for you.

How can you doubt any longer that He means you? How can you doubt that God gives you forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, when He who is your Righteousness and the Resurrection and the Life, with visible signs and gracious words lays Himself into your very mouth and heart?

PRAYER. – O Savior, full of love and tender mercy, what more could You do to assure me, a poor sinner, of the forgiveness of sins, of life, and salvation? Your loving-kindness is unfathomable. Open my eyes and heart by Your Holy Spirit that I may truly learn to know the superabundance of Your grace and rejoice that I may comfort myself with it in life and death. Amen.

Hymn 435, 2.

My Lord, Thou here hast led me
 Within Thy holiest place,
And there Thyself hast fed me
 With treasures of Thy grace:
And Thou hast freely granted
 What earth could never buy,
The Bread of life from heaven,
 That now I shall not die!

FRIDAY.

For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. – 1 Corinthians 10:17.

Since the Lord's Supper so greatly enhances our assurance of the forgiveness of our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, it also greatly strengthens us to lead a holy life. For a godly life proceeds only from the firm assurance that by the grace of God we have received the adoption of sons. And the stronger this faith is, the greater strength we shall receive to lead a holy life.

By partaking of the Lord's Supper we Christians become *one* body with Christ. If we firmly believe this, can we serve sin any longer? Shall we not then walk as it becomes the members of the body of Christ? And He who is our Head also gives us, His members, divine strength to lead a holy life. And His Holy Supper, too, is the very means through which He does this.

A foremost characteristic of a godly life is brotherly love which Christians should show each other. This is strengthened through the Lord's Supper. For if we commune together, we become ever more convinced that, though being many, through it we become *one* body; for we are all partakers of that *one* bread, of the *one* body of Christ. What is natural kinship as compared with this spiritual and heavenly kinship? And what is natural love as compared with this spiritual love?

The fellowship of the Lord's Supper, which we Christians have among and with one another is a testimony that, though many, we are one body, that is to say, that through *one* common faith we are most intimately joined with Christ, and through Christ with one another. Therefore we should eagerly maintain altar fellowship with those who with us confess the true faith; not, however, with those who have separated from us by adhering to a false doctrine.

PRAYER. – I thank You, Lord God Almighty, for the wondrous gift which You bestow on me in the Holy Supper. And I beg Your mercy that You would cause it to strengthen my faith toward You, to make me abound more and more in true holiness and in fervent love toward my neighbor; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Hymn 431, 3.

May God bestow on us His grace and blessing,
That, His holy footsteps tracing,
We walk as brethren dear in love and union.
Nor repent this sweet communion.
O Lord, have mercy!

Let not Thy good Spirit forsake us,
Grant that heavenly minded He make us,
That Thy poor Church may see
Days of peace and unity.
O Lord, have mercy!

SATURDAY.

Given for you. Shed for you. For the remission of sins.
– Luke 22:19 & 20 and Matthew 26:28.

If in true faith we partake of the Lord's Supper, we receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. This is most certainly true. But how can bodily eating and drinking do such great things? Thus, with scorn and disdain, those enthusiasts ask who reject the Scriptural doctrine of the Means of Grace.

And now we join Dr. Luther in asking this question, in order to arrive at a clear understanding in this matter.-Mere eating and drinking in itself surely has not the power to do these great things. There is no doubt about that. But through the words of Christ: "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins," yes, indeed, by the virtue of these words, forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are not only contained in the Lord's Supper, but offered to every one that eats and drinks. Hence, beside the bodily eating and drinking these words are as the chief thing in the Sacrament. But only such actually receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation as eat and drink not only in a natural manner, but also spiritually, that is to say, such as believe the words of promise.

Every one to whom the Lord's Supper is distributed in accordance with His institution receives the body and blood of Christ under the bread and wine. But the benefit, the blessed benefit of it, namely, forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, is received by him only who believes the words of promise: "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." Whoever eats and drinks unworthily, that is to say, without believing the words of promise, him God will visit in wrath and judgment.

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, I thank You that in the words of institution You have clearly and unmistakably stated what You desire to give me in the Holy Supper, namely, forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. O my dear Savior, grant me Your Holy Spirit, that I may fasten my eyes on Your words, gathering comfort therefrom in true faith, and thus obtaining blessing lasting through all eternity by partaking of Your Holy Supper. Amen.

Hymn 434, 4. 5.

For His true body, as He said,
And His true blood, for sinners shed,
In this communion we receive,
His sacred Word we do believe.

A precious food this is indeed,
It never faileth, such we need,
A heavenly manna for our soul,
That we may safely reach our goal.

These devotions are adapted from *Crumbs* by C. M. Zorn (1914).
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