

Maundy Thursday

1 Corinthians 10:16,17

March 30, 2024 at St. Matthew, Port Washington, WI

### **A Meal to Satisfy Our Spiritual Appetite!**

What would you say was your favorite meal ever? A pizza buffet? A pot roast with potatoes and carrots and onions? A T-bone steak? A barbeque of brats and burgers? Sauerbraten with red cabbage, German hard rolls and Rhine wine? Your wedding reception? It's probably impossible to pick one meal as your favorite out of all the meals you have eaten. No doubt there have been several that were especially good. No matter how good a meal was, though, it only helped you for a short time. It only gave you strength for another day and then you had to eat some more. But when you partake of the Lord's Supper, it provides spiritual strength that lasts an eternity. Tonight we see that the Lord's Supper is a meal to satisfy our spiritual appetite.

As the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians about the Lord's Supper, he managed to fit into two verses enough theology to literally fill books. A key word I'd like to focus our attention on tonight is the word "participation." It is also translated as fellowship, or communion. There are three kinds of participation in the Lord's Supper. This is explained wonderful in a new hymn. Please, open your hymnals to Hymn 669 – In this Holy, Blest Communion. I'll be referring to it soon so please put a bulletin or bookmark at that hymn.

#### Communion of elements

Notice how Paul refers to four things we receive in the Lord's Supper. Verse 16, **"Is not the cup of thanksgiving [1 – the wine in the cup] for which we give thanks a participation in the blood [2] of Christ? And is not the bread [3] that we break a participation in the body of Christ [4]?"** Here, Paul is telling us that the wine and the blood of Jesus participate in the same time and place. They have a fellowship, or communion union. Likewise, the bread and body of Christ participate in the same time and place. they have a fellowship, or communion. Entire books have been written on this subject alone. The wine that is drunk in the Lord's Supper is not just wine. Jesus' blood is also present. And the bread that is eaten is not just bread. Jesus' body is also present. This does not make sense to human logic, which is fine. We will simply admit that God is smarter than we are. His Word is always true and that we can believe what he says even if it does not make sense to us.

Consider this quarter. When you look at it right now, you see the image of President Washington. But I would tell you that there is a bald eagle on the quarter. Just because you can not see the eagle, does not mean that it is not part of the quarter. You just can't see it. In the same way, when we look at

the bread and wine, we only see, smell and taste bread and wine. God, however, tells us that his body and blood are also there. All four accounts of the Lord's Supper quote Jesus as saying, "This IS my body. This IS my blood." He did not say that it symbolizes or changes into something else. Martin Luther coined the phrase, "in, with, and under the bread and wine are Christ's body and blood." It does not explain it, as such. It simply states the truth that Jesus' body and blood are somehow present with the bread and wine. This is explained for us in stanza one of hymn 669. Please join me as we read it together:

**1            In this holy, blest communion  
              plain and precious gifts combine:  
bread is truly Jesus' body,  
              blood of Jesus joins with wine.  
What a blessing Christ is giving;  
              what a loving, gracious host,  
in his supper well providing  
              what his people need the most!**

#### Communion of believers with God

That stanza ended by saying that in the Lord's Supper, God gives "what his people need the most." Why do we need Jesus's body and blood so much? Because we are infected with sin and we sin every day. We fall far short of God's standard of perfection. We do not love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. Jesus does not always have first place in our hearts and lives. Since we are sinful – full of sin – we can not expect to survive in the presence of a holy God. In the Lord's Supper, Jesus takes our sins away. St. Matthew explained that the Lord's Supper is given to us (26:28) "**for the forgiveness of sins.**" The Lord's Supper does not "assure" you of forgiveness, or symbolize forgiveness, or kinda sorta like remind you about forgiveness. The very act of partaking in the Lord's Supper gives you the forgiveness of sins! Instead of being dirty with sins, we are made pure and holy. The second communion, or fellowshiping, or sharing that the Lord's Supper gives is our communion with God himself. We were separated from God because of our sins (Isaiah 59:2), but through the Lord's Supper our sin is removed and we are united with God. We do not need to fear him. We rejoice to be with him. Through the Lord's Supper, Jesus' body and blood are in us and so we are connected to him.

I noticed an article<sup>1</sup> in the national news this morning with this tag-line, “On Holy Thursday at the Last Supper, Jesus gave us the gift of himself.” Here are some quotes from some so-called prestigious scholars. “Jesus’ actions at the Last Supper were an act of love as an example to others.” The Lord’s Supper is NOT an example for us. It is salvation. Again, “By giving us himself, his entire body, blood, soul and divinity through Holy Communion, Jesus shows that the heart of Christian life is love – a total self-gift.” Not a word about forgiveness or salvation or peace with God here and eternally. I could give you more quotes from the article, but I do not want to waste your time. Since there is so much misunderstanding about the Lord’s Supper which would rob us of the joy of salvation, we need to keep listening God’s Word and reminding ourselves about the truth. Again, hymn 669 does this wonderfully. Join me, now, as we read the second stanza of the hymn.

**2 In this holy, blest communion  
Christ and sinners join as one—  
they, the Father’s ransomed children,  
he, the Father’s rightful Son.  
Here the lofty feeds the lowly,  
each his highly cherished guest;  
here the guilty taste forgiveness,  
here the weary find their rest.**

#### Communion between believers

So the first fellowship is between the bread and wine and body and blood of Christ. The second fellowship is between the believer and the Lord. The third fellowship is between believers. St. Paul wrote (:17), “**Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.**” He says that we can think of believers as one body, one united group, and we express our oneness in faith by going to communion together. In the Lord’s Supper, we are reminded that we are all together as a close-knit family of believers. Our faith not only connects us to Jesus, it also connects us to each other. We are all sinners. None of us is better than the other. Through the Lord’s Supper though, we are all equally forgiven. Our bond of faith and love is strengthened.

I am sure that most of you can remember the “Magic Slate” toy that was a standard toy for decades. They had a sheet of slightly opaque plastic laid on a piece of black paper covered in wax. You used a stylus to press down on the plastic to write and the plastic stuck to the wax so the plastic looked darker in those spots. To erase the page, you lifted the plastic to

separate it from the wax. Then you had a clean slate, and could start all over again — with no charging cord needed.

Since we are all sinners who interact with each other, there are times that we hurt one another with our sins. A husband and wife have a spat about how to discipline their children or spend their money. Someone at church says something that the other person takes the wrong way and feels hurt. Sometimes, we do things in our homes or here at church that damage our relationship with each other. We have all sinned. Think of writing the word “SIN” on that Magic Slate. In the Lord’s Supper, the plastic sheet is pulled up and the sin disappears. We are all equally forgiven. The husband can not be angry with his wife for any of her sins because her sins are gone. The church member can not hold a grudge against another member because every sin is gone. Instead of barking at each other because of our sins, we rejoice together because we have all been saved. The eternal heat of hell is replaced by the eternal happiness of heaven. This is explained beautifully in the third stanza of hymn 669. Please read that with me.

**3 In this holy, blest communion  
saints are gathered side by side,  
joined together, brothers, sisters,  
in one body unified,  
faith in Jesus, hope of heaven,  
love for others all increased  
by the fullness of the banquet,  
by the richness of the feast.**

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus could have been focused on himself and the horrific suffering and death he was going to endure. Instead, he thought of his disciples. He thought of you. He did not have any bags of gold or a piece of property to leave his Church on earth as an inheritance once he died. And so, he gave himself to us. “**My body, my blood, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.**” No amount of money in the world could give us what Jesus gives us for free. No earthly meal can compare to the benefit of this spiritual supper. It satisfies our spiritual appetite. With eagerness and joy, we rush forward for this Sacrament. Draw near and take the body of your Lord. Draw near and drink the blood for you outpoured. Come to the table of love and live forever. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/holy-thursday-last-supper-jesus-gave-gift-himself-minnesota-priest>