

Bible e-Study - “Living Life Worshipping God” #6
Sacrament

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. [1 Corinthians 11:26](#)”

“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” [Romans 6:4](#)”

NUGGET – Sacraments do not stand apart on their own. They are given to us as yet another way to proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is their aim, purpose and goal as we see in the nugget verses above. We partake, receive and are given these things for us to be touched by God according to His will. These things are not ours to manipulate, disguise or hide away from others. And they are not for us to use as a litmus test. The sacraments are the means, they are the method by which God wants us to know He has entered this world and touched us personally with His grace.

God is the one who works in them and through them, so they’re not for us to be puffed up or arrogant about. We are not the actors or initiators of the sacraments. But rather that we would be reminded by them and touched by them with the grace of God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is what the sacraments bring to us. Christ’s death and resurrection. The wine, bread and water are simply means by which we’re reminded of His grace to us through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Additionally they tell the world that God the Father, through the resurrection of Jesus [Colossians 2:12](#), has paid the debt of sin. That He has accepted the work of Jesus Christ in our place.

The sacraments touch us with that reality and truth. They are not man’s work or doing. Rather we are changed by them, [1 Peter 3:21](#), because they deliver the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ to us. He washes away our sin in baptism because He has died and risen again. He delivers forgiveness to us through bread and wine because He has died and risen again.

These things that we are touched by are the things that touch us with God’s mercy and the gift of faith and life. The sacraments are not ours but they are the ministry we’ve been given by which we share God’s mercy in this world. There is no one who does not need the grace the sacraments give. We say we have the ministry of word and sacrament. And in the sacramental ministry we are simply being obedient to the command of God to proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The word is what tells of the gospel. The sacraments are what deliver the touch of the gospel by God’s command and gift. We seek to be faithful in the sharing of word and sacrament so that more people may know and receive the gifts of God of faith, life and mercy.

APPLICATION –

1. As you next come to Holy Communion think what takes place in the speaking, and the doing that reminds you that God is the One acting.

PRAY – Ask God to guide and grant you to know the forgiveness of sins is yours as He touches you with the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

GOING DEEPER

Service of Holy Communion – Benediction

3. *What is included in Divine Service - Liturgy*
 - c. Service of Holy Communion
 - i. Preface / proper preface
 - ii. Lord's prayer
 - iii. Words of institution
 - iv. Peace and angus dei
 - v. Post communion canticle / nunc dimittis
 - d. Benediction
 - i. Aaronic
 - ii. others

The Service of Holy Communion

Because what you **do** reveals what you **believe**, so in communion we are reminded that God comes and delivers His gift of salvation to us through the very body and blood of Jesus Christ. Not some shadowy unknown or mere memory of a past event, Holy Communion delivers to us, today, God's gift of redemption through the presence of Christ's body and blood in the elements of the bread and wine. Luther's small catechism asks, "*How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?*" And his answer, "*Certainly not just eating and drinking do these things, but the words written here: 'Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.'* These words along with the bodily eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament. Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say: 'forgiveness of sins.'" In Holy Communion we proclaim the death of Jesus, the Son of God, as paying the penalty for our sins. Also, that He rose again for our salvation to eternal life with Him in heaven. That is what Holy Communion delivers into our very mouths for our spiritual strengthening as we go through this life.

Preface / Proper preface/ Sanctus

The preface and proper preface serve as our transitional link, the renewal of our personal and congregational exchange with the Host of the coming meal, Jesus Christ. In the preface itself, which is the same every time, our dialogue, while spoken between pastor and congregation, is done in the presence of our God who is the One who is Himself presenting this meal for us. This exchange is done to bring our hearts together to rejoice.

Then we hear the proper preface, which changes with the seasons. This gives us opportunity for specific thanks for God's provision for us given what the theme of the season is. We then together respond to this using the Sanctus.

The words we sing here help us remember the words of Isaiah 6:3 that tell us of God's holiness, His otherworldliness. We are made mindful that God is not just a big human, but is perfect and altogether pure. Also we remember from Matthew 21:9 that Jesus came as a man to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday in the words from the gospels, "*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord*".

The first thanksgiving prayer / Lord's Prayer

The first thanksgiving prayer is simply giving thanks for what we are about to receive from the hand of God. In this prayer we acknowledge before the throne of

God that Jesus has become truly man, took upon Himself our sin and carried it to the cross. We further express our trust that God will deliver to us His promised forgiveness through the body and blood we partake of through elements that are to be consecrated with the words of institution.

We follow this prayer with the prayer our Lord taught us. I've read, "*as we are about to enter the New Testament 'Holy of Holies' (Holy Communion), we want nothing on our lips but prayer... Here His words become our words. His thoughts guide our thoughts.*" So this prayer at this point gives us Jesus' words for our aid and comfort in setting our hearts fully on the gift of God we are about to receive, Christ's own body and blood. [And for those times when we are not celebrating Holy Communion, these words again set our hearts and minds fully on the fact that we have received the grace and pardon of God through faith in Christ alone.]

Words of Institution

The Words of Institution are the words of Jesus Christ spoken to His disciples and through them to us. These words signify the entire meaning of the meal we partake in together as believers. As one author has put it so well; "*This feast is truly special. There is no comparison on this earth. Here are real bread and real wine for eating and drinking. But Jesus says this is His body and blood. Both statements are true, even though we cannot understand how. We know that the bread and wine are not changed into something other than bread and wine. Nor do the bread and body (or the wine and blood) combine to form a third substance. Nor is Christ's body and blood somehow confined to the physical space of the bread and wine. Nor do the bread and wine 'represent' body and blood. So, how can Holy Communion be bread and body, wine and blood? Christ does not explain it; He only says that's the way it is. His words are clear, 'This is my body...this is my blood' (Mt 26:26, 28). Faith believes what Jesus says.*"

Also remember that Jesus pronounced these words regarding His flesh/bread and blood/wine, and after each He said this was "for you!" In this way, Jesus gives to each of us to eat and drink of His last will and testament that we may have life eternal and life to the fullest while still on earth, in His name. We are thus strengthened and renewed because Jesus' death and resurrection, both of which we proclaim in this eating and drinking, are now made ours. And these words of Jesus we say institute, or bring into being, by their declaratory power, the reality of His forgiveness and grace through the bread and wine being thus the body and blood of Jesus "for you!"

The Pax Domini are the Latin words for Peace of the Lord. We use because that is what Jesus brings to us in the sacrament. Based on [John 20:19](#), these words remind us that Jesus work is finished and that that what is being delivered to us is complete.

The Agnus Dei is a song that is sung to glorify Christ as the Lamb (Agnus) of God (Dei). Agnus Dei is Latin for Lamb of God. In Jesus alone is our peace with God and our unity as believers. We use this song at this time to remind ourselves that the Paschal Victim, the Lamb of God (John 1:29), was sacrificed for our peace. Important to read [Exodus 12:1-14](#).

The post-communion canticle is a song of thanksgiving for what we have received. The canticles we sing in the hymnal are taken from various texts of

scripture that express praise and thanks to God. This is appropriate because under the forms of bread and wine God has just fed us with the body and blood of Jesus Christ. We, together, respond with one voice and express our thanks in song using words of Holy Scripture. The Nunc Dimittis, Latin for I now depart, is sung based on [Luke 2:29-32](#) and are the words of Simeon when Jesus was presented at 8 days old in the temple in Jerusalem.

This is followed by another expression of thanks, the Thanksgiving Prayer. As you would with any host, before you depart the table, more than one expression of thanks for His gracious meal is right and proper. In the Thanksgiving Prayer we remind ourselves of the benefits to our faith from God we have been given in this meal. Our thanks is now combined in this prayer with acknowledging to God what specifically He has given us, peace with Him and refreshment for our daily lives and the strengthening of faith.

- a. Benedicamus and Benediction
 - i. Aaronic
 - ii. others

The benedicamus is taken from [Psalm 103:1](#) and is used to give voice to the truth that the name of God which we are about to hear placed on us, is holy and worthy of all praise. It is an expression of fullness and joy in what God has done for us. We speak personally to God in these words and thereby acknowledge our relationship with Him that He has granted to us by grace.

We finish the series, appropriately, with the Benediction. God through Moses commanded Aaron to bless the nation of Israel with what we call the Aaronic Blessing found in [Numbers 6:24-26](#). We most often use those words to close our time of worship with God. In receiving this blessing from God, by the hand and voice of the pastor, we are sent out under the protection of the Name of the Triune God. Just as we began our worship through the sign of the cross made at our baptism, so we again receive and make the sign of the cross marking us as people redeemed by Christ and at peace with God through the cross of Jesus.

We go from worshipping together as the body of Christ, out to the places that God has placed each of us individually. But we do not go alone. We bear the name and the light of Christ and so we go as His representatives into the world of darkness that needs Jesus. His blessing and benediction upon us as we leave serves to remind us we are under His direction alone and we have been granted, by His grace alone, the peace that comes from God alone, that the world cannot overcome.