

Sermon Notes on I Cor. 11:23-29, Maundy Thursday

1. The words of the institution of the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion, Eucharist) are found four times in the NT, Mt. 26:26-28; Mk. 14:22-24; Lk. 22:17-20. The fourth account is our text. The four vary verbally but differ none in substance. Very likely Jesus spoke Aramaic. We have it in the Greek.
2. The Lord's Supper is a Sacrament. A Sacrament is a divine institution, a means whereby God's grace and forgiveness comes to man, using external elements. St. Augustine said: "The elements approach the Word and it becomes a Sacrament." There are only two Sacraments: The Lord's Supper and baptism.
3. The Lutheran Church observes the Lord's Supper as it was observed in the early church. At Luther's time Martin Chemnitz wrote a book entitled "The Lord's Supper" (Latin: De Coena Domini) in which he proved that Lutherans returned to the belief and practice of the early church. Lutherans teach, believe and confess that the Lord's Supper is a Sacrament, instituted by Christ, in which in, with and under the bread and wine all recipients receive Christ's body and blood. The bread and wine are not changed into Christ's body and blood.
4. The Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church believe, teach and confess that the Lord's Supper (the Mass) is both a Sacrament and a Sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead. They believe in transubstantiation which means that bread and wine are changed into body and blood. That is why they adore the host (the bread) when they celebrate the Mass.
5. The Reformed Church which began at Luther's time believe, teach and confess that the Lord's Supper is only a rite, a ceremony, which does not forgive sins. They say that bread and wine only represent Christ's body and blood. They refuse to believe what they cannot understand.
6. Lutherans adamantly insist that Christ made only ONE Sacrifice for the sins of man when He was crucified for us. Read Hebr. 10:8-18. Vs. 14 reads "By ONE sacrifice He (Christ) has perfected forever those who are sanctified." And vs. 18: "Where there is forgiveness of these sins there is no longer a sacrifice for sin." Just before Jesus died He cried "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30). His saving work was done. It needs no addition. To say that the Mass is an unbloody sacrifice for sin denies what Christ did and what the Bible says.
7. When the Reformed tell us that the word "is" in "This is My body" means "represents" we must tell them that, in any language, "is" always means "is". If I show someone a picture of my wife and say: "This is my wife" I do not mean "This represents my wife." Of course in this case the word "wife" is figurative, meaning "picture of my wife." But the word "is" always means "is".
8. That Christ's body and blood are truly present is plain from vss. 27-29 of our text. See also the plain words of I Cor. 10:16.
9. In the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church children commune at an early age. Lutherans teach that, according to I Cor. 11:28-29, people should not commune until they have arrived at an age when they can examine themselves, about the age of fourteen. The Christian questions and answers, written by Martin Luther, found on pages 33-35 of the Russian catechism, are used in the Lutheran Church to prepare for reception of the Lord's Supper.
10. Confessional Lutherans practice close(d) communion which means that they commune only with people who take vss. 27-29 of our text seriously. Each communicant must examine himself thus: "Do I confess that I am a sinner? Do I confess that here I receive forgiveness of sins and everlasting life in the sacrament? Do I confess what the Bible says about the person, Word and work of Jesus Christ? Do I believe that my salvation is only by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ? Do I promise to amend my sinful life? Do I believe that in this Sacrament I truly receive Christ's body and blood?"
11. Lutheran altars for Lutherans only.

Sermon Outline on I Cor. 11:23-29, Maundy Thursday

Theme: WHY I GO TO THE LORD'S SUPPER

Introduction: Today is Maundy Thursday. "Maundy" comes from the Latin word "mando" which means "I command." On this day Jesus commanded His disciples to wash each other's feet and to continue to observe the Lord's death by going to communion. The Lord's Supper is Jesus' last will and Testament to be observed until He comes again.

I-I Go Because He commanded Me To Go

Twice in our text (vss. 24 and 25) Jesus says: "Do this to remember Me." He does not tell us how often. But we need the forgiveness of sins constantly and therefore should remind ourselves to go often. What should we do to remember Jesus? We should take and eat because it is His body. We should take and drink because it is His blood. When we do this we will remember what His body and blood did for us. With His body and blood He made one sacrifice on Calvary for the sins of the whole world. Hebr. 10:11-18. He is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. Jn. 1:29. On the cross He cried: "It is finished." Jn. 19:30. What was finished? The salvation of all people. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law by being cursed in our stead. Gal. 3:13. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. He made Christ to be sin in our stead. II Cor. 5:19. These are the things God commanded us to remember in the Supper.

II- I Go Because He Attached a Promise to the Supper

Our text says that He said: "This is My body which was given for you." Vs. 24. At Mt. 26:28 Jesus said: "This is the blood of the Covenant which is shed for you." Our text also says: "This cup is the New Testament in My blood." Vs. 25. When Jesus shed His blood He gave His life so that we might live forever." Now He says: "Because I live you too shall live." And Luther said: "Where there is forgiveness of sins there is life and salvation." Four times in Jn. 6 Jesus says: "He who sees the Son (of God) and believes in Him has everlasting life and I will raise him up on the last day." Receiving Christ's very body and blood in the supper gives me the assurance that God is gracious to me in Christ Jesus and that I will be with Jesus forever.

III-I Go Because in This Way I Show His Death Until He Comes. Vs. 26

When I go to the Lord's Supper I, with other communicants, am proclaiming the Lord's death to all people. It is an act of testimony both to the world and to the church. I declare myself a disciples of Christ. And I announce what He did for me.

IV-I Go Because He wants Me to Examine Myself

At II Cor. 13:5 we are told: "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves." And our text says: "Let a person examine himself and thus let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." No better advice can be given to a Lutheran than to read and study the Christian Questions and Answers on pages 33-35 of the Russian Catechism. Christ invites us to partake of the Lord's Supper but He wants us to come in the correct spirit. He wants us to confess our sins, believe in the words of Jesus and promise Him to rededicate our lives to Him. Without Him we can do nothing. With Him we can do all things which He wants us to do.

Conclusion: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. We are sinners. The only cure for our sins is to come to Him Who says: "Come unto Me all ye who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Mt. 11:28. The Lord's Supper is a foretaste of heaven. At Lk. 22:16 Jesus said: "I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God." The Passover was a type of the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Supper is a type of heaven. Let us show His death until He comes again.