

Sermon for A Year with the Catechism The Lord's Supper: What is the Benefit of Eating and Drinking?

Date: March 13 2022

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Exodus 12:10-14

Epistle Reading: Hebrews 10:19-31

Gospel Reading: Matthew 6:19-34



Sermon Text: Matthew 6:19-34

Sermon Title: The Lord's Supper: What is the Benefit of Eating and Drinking?

Introit: Psalm 136:3,10,13,17,23-24,26 ; Antiphon: Psalm 136:1

Hymns:

LSB 725 – Children of the Heavenly Father
LSB 619 – Thy Body, Given for Me, O Savior
LSB 643 – Sent Forth by God's Blessing

Songs:

Healing Begins - Tenth Avenue North
Empty Grave - Zack Williams
Grace Like Rain - Todd Agnew

Liturgy:

Divine Service III, p. 184

Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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Text: Matthew 6:19-34

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

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Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

All sin is serious. Not only those sins we consider really big and awful, but also those sins which we think are harmless and fun. Not just murder but also gossip and lies, which are just another kind of killing. Even those sins which our world declares legal. All sin is serious because all sin is a violation of the First Commandment. It is to make myself god, doing what I want, following my will, proclaiming that I know what is best and right for me. Sin is the very opposite of faith. Faith wants what God wants. Faith follows God's will and proclaims God alone knows what is best and right for me and everyone else. You can't have it both ways. You cannot serve both God and money¹, or yourself, or anything else in this world.

The author of the book of Hebrews wants us to this understand when he writes:

If we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the Truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.²

That is a serious statement. It is one we will not understand if we do not see all sin as a violation of the First Commandment. It is not the individual sins we are talking about here. If I do a particular sin more than once, or more than ten times, or more than a hundred times, then I won't be forgiven! That's not it. The problem is: all sin is the very opposite of faith in God. To continue in sin; to go on sinning in an ongoing and deliberate way; to insist that I will do what I want, that I will follow my will, that I know what is best and right... such conduct leads to, and displays, unbelief. It is to fear, love and trust in myself rather than God. It is to dethrone the true God and enthrone myself. It is to put my faith in myself, rather than God. If that is the case in your life heed this dire warning:

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.³

If we want to be saved we should not sin. That sounds easy enough, except we're not capable of it. We confess we are born sinful and unclean.⁴ Sin stains us to the marrow of our bones. We are not capable of not sinning. So what can we do? The answer is: the opposite of living in sin is not to do the impossible – to stop sinning. The opposite of living in sin is to live instead in repentance.

1 Matthew 6:24
2 Hebrews 10:26
3 Hebrews 10:31
4 Psalm 51

If all sin is the very opposite of, and a violation of, the First Commandment, it is repentance that is keeping the First Commandment. When we repent; when we humble ourselves and fall before God in regret for our sin; when we rely on Him for forgiveness; when we put our faith and hope in Him and His promise we “fear, love, and trust in Him above all things.”⁵

This is the worship He desires. The true and highest worship of God is not us serving God but God serving us with His forgiveness, life and salvation.⁶ These are His gifts that strengthen our faith and keep us in Him and in His care.

That is why we are gathered here. We come here not to give something to God but to receive from Him. We repent and receive the forgiveness of our Lord. We repent so our faith is strengthened. We repent and receive the life of our Savior in His Holy Body and Sacred Blood. The Body and Blood of Jesus is what true worship is all about.

The very night Jesus was betrayed, arrested, taken captive, and the next day crucified, these gifts were given to you, and for you. The Lamb of God laid down His life for the life of the world.⁷ He is the atonement, the payment, for your sins.

He is the propitiation for our sins,
and not for ours only
but also for the sins of the whole world.⁸

He satisfies, in His death, the justice of God against sin. He, having no sin for which to pay Himself,⁹ made the payment for our sin. He is the one time, perfect sacrifice, for all sin.

Before He does that, Jesus provides the means through which we receive the benefit of all He does for us. He puts into effect the New Contract, the New Testament, the testament of His Body and Blood. This is His “last will and testament.” This is what He is leaving behind to provide for you. This is no mere meal. This is no “one last good time together” before Jesus dies. This is, as Jesus says, “for you.” His Body for you. His Blood for you. In, with and under the bread and the wine is His Body and His Blood. There Jesus’ physical Flesh and Blood is present with us, and in us, and in this we find eternal life.

5 Luther’s Small Catechism: Explanation to the First Commandment.

6 Augsburg Confession XXI.3; Apology IV.154, 310

7 John 6:51

8 1 John 2:2

9 2 Corinthians 5:21

This is the Bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread [*mana*] the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this Bread will live forever.¹⁰

Jesus said of those who eat this Bread, “I will:

raise him up on the last day. This is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.¹¹

All Jesus is, and all Jesus has, is given for you. As you eat and drink His Body and His Blood you do not just receive a part of your Savior. You receive all of Him. Here is His cross, for you. Here is His forgiveness, for you. Here is His kingdom, for you. Here is His death, for you. Here is His resurrection, for you. This is His life, for you. This is for your life eternal.

As we here receive His Body and Blood we confess together, “Yes, this is for me.” His life for me. His forgiveness for me. His kingdom for me. His death for me. His resurrection for me... Faith receives these gifts and is strengthened. Though sin is serious, here is the One even greater than all sin, who does not hold sin against you. He forgives the guilt of your sin.

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the one
against whom the Lord will not count sin.¹²

This is not cheap grace. This is not simply overlooking, or ignoring, or excusing sin. Here is forgiveness that has come at a great price: the death of God’s Son in the Flesh and Blood of Jesus Christ. His Body and Blood given for you in love. His Body and Blood now given to you in love, to mend the separation¹³ sin has made between you and Him. It is through this Sacred Meal that you are enabled to:

live under Him in His kingdom, in everlasting innocence
righteousness and blessedness.¹⁴

Yes, this is for you. Knowing that will you repent? Will you repent so you receive what you otherwise do not have, but desperately need? There is no room

10 John 6:58-59

11 John 6:39b-40

12 Romans 4:7-8

13 Genesis 2:17

14 Luther’s Small Catechism: The explanation to Second article of the Apostles’ Creed.

for pride here. There is no place for excuses here. There is no possible justification for what you have done. The only thing we can do is repent and put your faith not in yourself but in your Savior. If He gave Himself up for you on the cross, and gives Himself to you here in His Body and Blood, He will not withhold anything from you. How can you not repent and be saved?

Jesus wants us here. He wants us here with our sin, so that His Blood can wash that sin away. He wants us here with our weakness and feeble faith, so that He can strengthen that faith. He wants us here because He is here. If He is here your sin is not. If He is here your death is not. If He is here then Heaven is here, and you have been raised to a new life. If He is here, then the hands in which we are held are not the angry hands of a holy God, offended by our sin, but the nail-pierced hands of the God who died for our sin. In those hands we are safe, we are secure, we are forgiven and free. Jesus said:

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will take them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me,] is greater than all, and no one is able to take them out of the Father's hand.¹⁵

The world will tell you your sin isn't that bad. Don't worry about it. Don't make such a fuss about it. Jesus says your sin is that bad, and even worse than you know, but don't worry about it! Because He worried about it in Gethsemane when drops of blood poured out of His brow.¹⁶ He dealt with it when drops of His blood poured out on the ground from a cross.¹⁷ He has provided here, for you, the remedy for your rebellion. So come. Come in repentance, come in confidence, come in faith. What is the benefit of eating and drinking this Sacred Meal? Here you receive His life, His forgiveness, and His salvation eternal.

Amen.

**Proclaim God's Word,
Encourage one another in faith,
Witness to God's love and
Serve all people**



¹⁵ John 10:28-31 [Paraphrased]

¹⁶ Luke 22:44

¹⁷ John 19:34