

Sermon for A Year with the Catechism The Lord's Supper

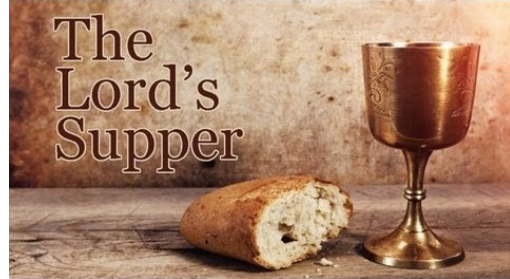
Date: March 20, 2022

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

Old Testament: Leviticus 16:2-10, 15-16, 29-34

Epistle Reading: Hebrews 10:10-27, 29-36

Gospel Reading: John 6:35-44



Sermon Text: John 6:35-44

Sermon Title: How can Bread and Wine do such great things?

Introit: Psalm 116:3-10; Antiphon: Psalm 116:1-2

Hymns:

- LSB 685 – Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus
- LSB 611 – Chief of Sinners Though I Be
- LSB 617 – O Lord, We Praise Thee
- LSB 633 – At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing
- LSB 698 – May We Thy Precepts, Lord, Fulfill

Liturgy:

Divine Service IV, p. 203

Songs:

- The Wonderful Cross
- We Believe
- Sanctus (King and Country)
- Agnus Dei (Koine)
- Where I Belong
- Yes I Will - Vertical Worship

Liturgy:

Creative Worship



Pastor James Groleau
St. John's Lutheran Church
1200 13th Avenue NW
Austin, MN 55912
Office: (507) 433-2642
Shepherd@JamesPlace.net
StJohnsAustinLCMS.org
KAUS 1480 AM Sun. 9:00am



Text: John 6:35-44

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For 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.”

So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?” Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

NOTE: Copyright information.

Pronunciation for difficult words are contained in { }

© 2021 Pastor James Groleau.

Permission is granted to use these sermons for any non-profit purpose. I only ask that credit, as to their origination, be noted appropriately.

Grace to you, and peace, in Jesus' Holy Name. Amen.

Martin Luther asks in his Small Catechism:

How can Bread and Wine do such great things?

It's not even great bread and wine. It's not like the bread that comes from the best bakeries of Germany. It not the wonderful wines of France. It's nearly paper thin bread with almost no taste and fairly inexpensive wine. So how can it do such great things? What makes it so special? What makes it so powerful?

To understand that we need to take a step back. We live in a "prove it to me" kind of culture. We want scientific facts. We are generally not comfortable relying on a person's word. We want that backed up by something else. So when we come to the Bible and it makes claims that cannot be proven scientifically we might be inclined to ask, "how can I believe that?"

We in the LC–MS confess and believe: Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who lived a perfect life and then became that one time perfect sacrifice for all sin. In doing so He became the propitiation,¹ the payment, for all sin and opened for us way of everlasting life. Jesus is the Way. Jesus is the Truth. Jesus is the Life.² Heaven is our home.³ Do you believe that? Do you? Do you really believe in a magic man in the sky who saves you when you die? Prove it.

We in the LC–MS confess and believe: in Holy Baptism when we, following Jesus' instructions, and apply water with the Words, "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" in that moment that person become a child of God,⁴ no longer a slave to sin,⁵ and our physical body becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit.⁶ Do you believe that? Did you really have your child Baptized? Are you Baptized? Do you believe this stuff? Prove it.

We in the LC–MS confess and believe: in the Lord's Supper when the Words of Institution are spoken⁷ Jesus' physical Body and Blood become present and we

1 **1 John 2:2** – He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

2 **John 14:6** – Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

3 **1 Peter 2:11** – Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

4 **1 John 3:1** – See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

5 **Romans 6:6** – We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

6 **1 Corinthians 6:19** – Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,...

7 **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** – I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My Body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this Bread and drink the Cup, you

receive them through the vehicles of bread and wine. In fact Jesus said if you willingly do not do this your salvation is called into question.⁸ Do you really believe this stuff? Magic incantations that do secret miracles? Do you believe that? Prove it! Prove these things happen. Some might say, “Show me the facts. Show me the science. Show me and then I’ll believe.”⁹”

If an angry atheist came up to you yelling in your face, demanding you prove these things, what would you say? If he, with sarcastic contempt said, “do you really believe this junk?!” How would you answer?

You’d say, “yes.”

For which he might call you gullible and uneducated.

To which you’d say, “no.”¹⁰”

His response would be to chide you to with, “prove it!”

How would you respond? You’d say, “That’s what it says in the Bible.”¹¹”

Now he might think that’s a foolish answer. Good for him. The Bible says something about him. The Bible says:

the fool says in his heart
there is not God.¹²

and

Do not reprove a scoffer,
or he will despise you;¹³

So we know where God stands on Him, and we know where God stands on us. God wants us saved.¹⁴ That’s why He sent His Son.¹⁵

proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

8 **John 6:53** – Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

9 **Matthew 27:39-42** – Those who passed by derided Him, wagging their heads and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked Him, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.”

10 **Matthew 5:37** – Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.[

11 **2 Timothy 3:16-17** – All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

12 **Psalms 14:1** – The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good.

13 **Proverbs 9:8**

14 **1 Timothy 2:3-4** – This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

15 **John 3:16-17** – God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.

Where you stand on that I cannot say, but I know where I stand.¹⁶ I have read, studies, picked at, and examined the words of the Bible nearly every day for years and years. I'm a "prove it" kind of guy. I love my empirical science. I want my facts. I'm inclined to say, "It's not that I don't trust you, I just don't trust anybody." In my previous career, in computer data security, I had two signs in my office. They read:

Paranoia is ultimate awareness.
and
*Just because you don't think they're out to get you
doesn't mean they aren't.*

Where you stand on this I cannot say, but I know where I stand.¹⁷ I believe and confess that the whole of Holy Scripture is wholly and fully true, every word.¹⁸ That's not me quoting the party line, or just going along with things 'cuz I'm not bright. (Though there are plenty of people who might think so.)

Where you stand on this I cannot say, but I know where I stand,¹⁹ and it is my prayer that as I bring the Word of God to you each week, you will each week grow stronger in the same faith that has been given to me. I want you to be where I am. I want you to go where I am going. I care about your souls. Your salvation has kept me up at night while I try to think about what I want you to know, and how I can show it to you. While Satan's work to stop that continues.

So now we come back to God's Word. Is it God's Word? If you believe that then:

- It is true and right even when it says things we don't like.
- It is true and right even when it says things we cannot prove.
- It is true and right even when it says things we cannot understand.

16 **Joshua 24:15** – If it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, *[will it be other false gods from the] land [where] you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. [Paraphrased]*

17 **Joshua 24:15** – If it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, *[will it be other false gods from the] land [where] you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. [Paraphrased]*

18 **Psalms 12:6** – The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.

Psalms 119:89 – Forever, O Lord, your Word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

Proverbs 30:5-6 – Every Word of God proves true; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you and you be found a liar.

19 **Joshua 24:15** – If it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, *[will it be other false gods from the] land [where] you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. [Paraphrased]*

- It is true and right even when it defies our culture, our conscience, and the facts of nature as we know them and perceive them through the senses God has given us.

Sacred Scripture says:

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for,
the conviction of things not seen.²⁰

Do you believe that? That's a very important question to which a Christian must respond, "yes I believe." "Yes I believe!" Where you have doubt pray like the man desperately begging Jesus for help, "I believe! Help my unbelief!"²¹

So now we get to the question for today, "How can bread and wine do such great things?" What great things do they do? Over the previous weeks' sermons we have explored what these things do. They:

- give us Jesus' forgiveness.
- give us Jesus' compassion and salvation.
- give us physical contact with Jesus Christ our Savior.
- give us eternal life.

How can bread and wine do such great things? Such things as to usher into the very throne room of God and to stand before Him.²² The answer is: When these humble things are served to you it is done the way Jesus said to do it. When we do this the way Jesus said to do it we can be certain, beyond all doubt, we will get what Jesus says we get.

...or do you believe that Jesus is a liar. God's Word is not gray. It is not a wide fence upon which you can stand and play both side. You must pick one side. You are a Christian or you are not. Where do you stand?

By God's good grace you are here. By the Holy Spirit's faith-filling call pointing you to Christ you are called to faith. Faith given by God.²³ How can you believe these things? How can bread and wine do such great things? They can't. Simple bread and simple wine can do nothing but provide you with a little physical

20 **Hebrews 11:1** [*Paraphrase*]

21 **Mark 9:24** – Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

22 **Isaiah 6:1-5** – In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above Him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "**Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!**"

23 **Genesis 15:6** – And he believed the Lord, and He counted it to him as righteousness.

Romans 4:3 – What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.

sustenance to get you through this earthly life. Martin Luther in his Small Catechism explains it this way:

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.”

So that is what we teach, believe, confess and to which we hold as we praise and give honor to God our Lord and bask in the wonder that He would stoop so low as to come to us here in such a messed up place. When you come to this altar you are standing before the throne of a holy God. There should be some trepidation and respectful fear, but never terror.²⁴ Never that. Because this almighty holy God has called you His child. Which is just another wonder of our God who is eager to forgive, eager to save, and eager to have you know of His love.

Love He sent down in Jesus.

Amen.

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



24 **Martin Luther's Small Catechism:** *Explanation to the First Commandment:*
You shall have no other gods.
What does this mean?
We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.