

By Faith Lesson 26

## **Holy Communion, The Sacrament of the Altar**

The words of institution of Holy Communion: "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, 'This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me'.

"Likewise, also the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.'" (Luke 22:20)

"It is the true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, given unto us Christians to eat and drink, as it was instituted by Christ Himself." (The Small Catechism, Part VI)

### **Communion has been instituted by Jesus**

This is the way, the meaning of Holy Communion, or the Sacrament of the Altar, is explained in the Small Catechism. The instituting words are from the Gospel According to St. Luke. Jesus instituted this supper for His own.

In the old Finnish Catechism, Communion is explained in question and answer form.

### **What benefit is there in the Lord's Communion for us?**

Our faith is strengthened and assured of the forgiveness of sins.

We become united with Christ, so that He is in us and we in Him. Our faith in the resurrection to eternal life is strengthened.

Matt. 26:28. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for the remission of sins.

Gal. 2:20 .... I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

### **How should we conduct ourselves as we proceed to the Lord's table?**

When we have received absolution by the office of preaching, we should-

1. Step forth in true repentance, putting away all foreign and worldly thoughts;
2. While partaking of the sacrament, conduct ourselves in godly, sober and meek manner, remembering that we are not communicating with man but with God.
3. When we leave, we should rejoice in spirit over God's renewed grace, and praise Him from our heart for this, retaining good intention and will to walk in the new life.

### **Should the unconverted partake of Communion?**

No, for they shall receive no benefit from it; but shall bring a greater condemnation upon themselves. (I Cor. 11:27,29)

### **Should they then remain in their unconverted state?**

No, for it is unto them both a great sin and a danger to the soul. (Matt. 18:8, Ps. 7:13,14; 95:7)

**Cannot the unconverted be converted and receive forgiveness for their sins by partaking of the Lord's Supper itself? No.**

**Who are the proper and acceptable guests to the Lord's Supper?**

Only the believers; be their faith weak or strong, only that it is right and living.

**Who are unacceptable guests at the Lord's Supper?**

All who do not have living faith upon Jesus, their Savior.

The preceding quotations which are from the Catechism of Swebilius, teach us that Communion is above all a supper of remembrance, instituted for the strengthening of faith.

**What kind is a meet (acceptable) Communion guest?**

The text below, that is borrowed from the old Catechism teaches us what an acceptable Communion guest is like.

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The child of God feels timidness and sinfulness when going to Communion. He wants to put away barriers to faith, sins, and hear a personal blessing of the gospel. Neither the unbeliever nor the believer receives forgiveness of his sins in Communion, for God has instituted in His kingdom the office of preaching, by which man is released from his sins through the Holy Spirit.

**Communion strengthens faith**

Communion serves this marvelous and precious gospel. In Communion, the child of God can believe in a childlike way that when I partake of the Body and Blood of Jesus in the form of the bread and wine, it is true that even my sins are forgiven in that gospel, which I heard and believed in the name and blood of Jesus. I belong to the family of God and shall one day partake of the great Communion in heaven.

You also, young child of God, have permission to partake often of this feast of the people of God.

**Exercises**

1. Who instituted Holy Communion? For whom was it instituted?
2. What are the two elements present in Communion?
3. Place in the correct order the following parts of the practice of Communion during the time of the Apostles: (Acts 2:38,41,42): doctrine, preaching, baptism, Communion, faith.

4. What is the meaning (or effect) of Communion?

a. to believers

b. To unbelievers

5. During Old Testament times, what corresponded to the sacrament of Communion?