

**For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,<sup>24</sup> 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.”<sup>25</sup> In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”<sup>26</sup> For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.**

**<sup>27</sup> Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.<sup>28</sup> A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.<sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. (NIV84)**

Theme: Irony of the Passion: “Do This in Remembrance of Me”

When you are not going to see someone for a while or maybe never again, you might give him a gift as, “something to remember me by.” Before many people die they put in their wills that they would like to give certain gifts to special people in their lives—knowing that they might treasure them more than others—and so that their loved one would have something special to remember them by. A grandmother might give her tea set to her granddaughter because they would have enjoyed having tea parties together. A father might give his son his ’65 Corvette because they spent countless hours rebuilding the thing. You want those gifts to be special—you want them to mean something to the one to whom you gave it; perhaps they consider it a small piece of you, something to love, cherish, and carefully use.

That is what Jesus did almost 2000 years ago on the night we call Maundy Thursday. In a matter of hours Jesus would be betrayed and arrested. By 9 a.m. the next morning he would be nailed to a cross and six hours later he would die. Jesus knew that in a short time he would be taken from them.

So that night, as they were eating the Passover meal, Jesus took some of the unleavened bread and gave it to them saying, **this is my body**. Then after supper he took a cup holding grape wine and said, **this is by**

**blood**. This is the gift that the Lord decided to give his disciples and us—his entire church before he died—the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, a gift for us to eat and to drink, to love and to cherish.

But the Lord didn’t just give us some bread and some wine—that wouldn’t be all that special. His words make it as clear as can be: **this is my body**. **This is my blood**. In the Lord’s Supper Christ’s true body and blood are present in, with, and under the bread and the wine. When we eat the bread and drink the wine we aren’t just eating bread and drinking wine, we are partaking of Christ’s true body and true blood. Can we taste it, or see it, or otherwise somehow notice it? No. But it is truly present because Christ says they are truly present. We don’t have to understand it or perceive it for it to be true. Paul talks about the relationship between the body and blood and the bread and the wine in this in the chapter before our text, **Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?** The Greek really calls this relationship a communion. There is a communion—a common union between the bread and Christ’s body; and the wine and Christ’s blood! All four are truly present. So then, the very thing—his own body and blood, that Christ gave up to pay for our sins on the cross is given to us every time we partake of the Lord’s Supper!

Matthew records Jesus saying when he gave the disciples the cup, **This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins**. For the forgiveness of sins—that is the purpose of this sacrament; that is why Jesus gave us his true body and blood, so we can have a tangible forgiveness, so we can taste and see the Lord’s love and forgiveness.

Paul doesn’t use the word forgiveness in his account, rather he simply has, **this cup is the new covenant in my blood**. A covenant is an agreement between two parties. The Old Covenant was given to the people on Mount Sinai through Moses. It was a two-sided agreement—if you obey my teachings I will save you, if you do not obey you will be condemned. And we all know that we can’t hold up our end of that agreement. The New Covenant, ushered in by Christ’s is a one-sided agreement. It is simply this: you have been saved by Christ when he gave up his body and shed his blood. In the Lord’s

Supper we are given the New Covenant; we are given the forgiveness of sins!

That is the gift that the Lord gave to us to remember him by.

Whenever you give a special gift to someone you don't want them to throw it in a box or put it in storage and never think about it again. You want them to love it and treasure it; to love it so that every time they look at the item or use it, Many great feelings and memories start coming back.

In the same way, whenever we partake of the Lord's Supper we are remembering Christ. We are remembering what he did to save us: everything from giving up the glories and riches of heaven and taking on human flesh, to living a perfect life, to his suffering, death, and resurrection. We remember Jesus as our Lord and Savior and all the great things he has done for us. That is why Paul says in verse 26, **whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.** By partaking of Christ's body and blood we are proclaiming to everyone present that by his death on the cross the Lord has forgiven all our sins—a forgiveness that we also receive in this sacrament.

So it is true that in the Lord's Supper we remember the Lord and all the great things he has done for us. But the sad and ironic thing is that many Christians claim that this is all there is in the Lord's Supper—that it is simply a memorial meal, a way to remember Christ and nothing more. They will readily say that in the Lord's Supper we remember all the great things Christ has done for us; but the Lord's Supper itself isn't one of those things for them! They make it into something that we do for Christ and to show our faith in him and something by which we remember him; but they deny what the sacrament is actually for.

You can go online and look at the websites of many different churches or church bodies to see what they say about the Lord's Supper. Sadly, many don't mention the forgiveness of sins; they deny the real presence of Christ's body and blood. Here is one such quote which is typical of many "The Lord's Supper is a reminder of what Jesus did in the past, a symbol of our present relationship with him, and a promise of what he will do in the future." No mention of Christ's body and blood being present, and not even a hint of receiving the forgiveness of

sins in this sacrament. The Lord's Supper to them isn't a means of grace, but a means by which we show our faith in the Lord.

By over-emphasizing the remembrance part of the Lord's Supper, they deny the essence of what the Lord's Supper truly is and gives us. The two false teachings go hand-in-hand. If someone denies that Christ's true body and blood are present, they will also deny that the Lord's Supper is a means of grace, that it doesn't give us the forgiveness of sins.

And what does Paul say about such people? They are partaking of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner; they are sinning against the body and blood of the Lord and are eating and drinking judgment on themselves.

Of course, no one is really worthy to receive this gracious gift of God. We are not any better than anyone who partakes of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. So then, what constitutes as one who is a worthy partaker of the sacrament? One who has properly prepared by examining himself. And what does it mean to examine yourself? It really boils down to three questions: 1. Do you know you're a sinner? 2. Do you believe that Jesus paid for your sin by his death on the cross? 3. Do you believe that his body and blood are in the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper and that through them you are given the forgiveness of sins?

Recognizing that the same body and blood of Christ that he shed on the cross for our forgiveness is also given to us in this sacrament for the forgiveness of sins is what it means to be properly prepared. As Luther famously says in this Small Catechism, "he is properly prepared who believes these words, 'Given' and 'poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins'...because the words 'for you' require nothing but hearts that believe."

Conclusion: The Lord loves you so much that he gave you a special gift to remember him by. And that gift is his body and blood given to you for the forgiveness of sins! He didn't give you this gift to keep it locked up or to only pull it out only on a rare occasion. With all the blessings we receive through this gift, we want to make use of it as often as possible! Love this gift, treasure it, and make use of it on a regular basis. For it is a gift given to you—it is a gift of the forgiveness of sins. Amen.