

# September 20th, 2009 Part 2 of 3

## The Last Will and Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ: The Real Blessings

NIV Matthew 26:26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." 27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Grace, mercy and peace to you from the Son of God, who gave us his very own body and blood for our salvation. Fellow brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ by His body and blood given and shed for the forgiveness of your sins, in lieu of the fact that St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church will be offering the Lord's Supper on the second and last Sunday of every month beginning in October, the leaders thought it would be wise to review the great blessings of the Lord's Supper. Today we focus on the great blessings we receive in the Lord's Supper because it is the real presence of the body and blood of the Son of God, our Savior: The Real Blessings

Last week, we took a very laser-like focus to the words of Jesus in instituting the Lord's Supper. We were reminded of the power of Jesus' simple words and the real presence of His body and blood, in, with and under the bread and wine. So what is the big deal? What is the benefit and usefulness in taking the very body and blood of Jesus in the Lord's Supper?

Even if all we had to go on was the simple bare words of Jesus, "Take, eat, this is my body. Take, drink, this is my blood", that would be enough for us to obey and know that it must be for our good. Jesus Christ is the Son of God who lived, died and rose for us, which guarantees that He would command us to do nothing that would be detrimental to our salvation. Quite the opposite is true, that whatever He tells us to do it must be, because of his eternal love proven to sinners by the cross, for the salvation of our souls. Jesus our Lord and Savior is so gracious to us and understands our needs so well that He tells us plainly the great blessings we receive by taking His body and blood in the Lord's Supper.

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One of the wonders and beauties of Alaska is its size. The expanse of mountains, valleys, lakes, glaciers, and rivers is breathtaking. I loved to just sit quietly looking out at the hundreds of miles of God's created brilliance. But that very greatness also makes it very dangerous, as soon as you attempt to travel to those places of beauty you realize the dangers, whether it is by boat or plane or hike. How do I get there? Can I get there? Will I make it there?

You and I believe John 3:16 – God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

How do we get to Jesus' life and death for us? Where is it? How do I get what he did to count for me? How do I make Jesus my Savior? The ability to find Jesus, get to Him and make Him our Savior, yes hold onto Him as our Savior is missing from our life. We are not smart enough, wise enough, and faithful enough to find Jesus, get to Jesus, hold on to Jesus. So that we might have the assurance of being united to Christ, comforted by His forgiveness and guaranteed that we have him – He came to us. Notice the apostle Paul's Words – Christ grabbed a hold of him!

Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

God brought the beauty of salvation, the forgiveness of sins, yes even the very blood and body shed on the cross outside of Jerusalem on Golgotha, out of heaven and into our life in our congregation and into your mouth.

How can I be sure and certain that my sins are covered with the blood of Jesus Christ so that when God looks at me he sees only the perfect righteous life of Christ, the Son of God? We have

this nagging feeling in our stomach and reoccurring thought in our brains that if I want to know and be sure that I am a child of God, forgiven and standing in line to receive heaven then I must look at how I'm doing in life. Am I a good husband, brother, worker, and friend? Am I giving a lot to church in the way of time talents and treasures? Is God responding with rewards for my good works, like blessing me with financial success and security, loving relationships at home and in the community? WE think that if I am outwardly successful in my life than I must be forgiven and an honored guest of heaven, simply waiting to be let in. So when we wake up and see a rainbow, we know we are loved and accepted and wanted by God. But if we see a tornado, then God is angry with us, doesn't love us and will not accept us into heaven. There is no comfort, no certainty, and no assurance there. The truth is only apparent about my status on heaven's guest list, if I look at the mirror of God's Law. According to God's law my life is filled with filth, selfishness and falls short of the requirements. If I knock on heaven's door with my life's work, I will not be recognized, in fact I will be recognized as a criminal, arrested and punished with hell. That's my status under the Old Covenant of human work and sacrifices. (The parable of the unworthy wedding guest)

That is why in the Lord's Supper, Jesus came to us with a new way! A new covenant. A new deal that is not based on our human work and sacrifices from us to God. That old covenant was broken by God's people, broken by all people. We have not fulfilled that old agreement anymore than the Israelites did, in fact we aren't even close to keeping up with all the sacrifices of animal and financial to the Lord, close to 15% of everything they owned not just the cash in their pockets. Paul said as well, for we all fall short of the glory of God! So in stepped the Lord and promised a new covenant, a new deal, one in which he would do all the work for sinners. He would cancel the debt that stood against humanity. It is recorded for us in Jeremiah

NIV Jeremiah 31:33 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all

know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." In the Lord's Supper we find the very body and blood of Jesus Christ that ratified the new deal, the new covenant between God and sinners. The old deal is obsolete. Jesus Christ is the greatest payment of sins there could ever be – he is the sinless Lamb of God, yes the very Son of God. No longer is any payment needed or wanted, in fact it would be downright disrespectful to force payment to God, acting as if His payment wasn't enough. Lord's Supper is the very body and blood of the Son of God that covers our filthy sins and clothes us with righteousness in the eyes of God. It is the new covenant of Jesus' blood that gives us comfort and confidence that we are forgiven and are standing in line to be ushered into our place in paradise. What tremendous comfort and confidence we now have because of the real presence of Jesus' body and blood in the Lord's Supper for the forgiveness of our sins.

One of the best feelings in life is to be recognized by your friends. I remember walking into a wedding reception and hearing a table of fellas all shout, "Gelz!" Recognized, accepted, and wanted! In the Lord's Supper, we receive our identification badge as honored friends of Jesus Christ and His people. Our identifying badge of honor that marks us as forgiven children of God is the very body and blood of Jesus Christ. It is His body and blood that guarantee our VIP treatment by God – it confirms and seals that we will be recognized by the Lord and have the rights and privileges of His brothers in eternity in heaven. But more than that – even today we enjoy the privileges and honor as God's forgiven children because we wear the identification as a VIP –the body and blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins.

What tremendous comfort and confidence we have when we take in our mouth the very body and blood of Jesus that was shed to cancel our debt of sin with God and cover us with His perfect righteousness marking us as family members of God almighty!

When we enter into paradise the Lord Jesus will welcome us and the shouts will go up from all of our brothers and sisters in Christ, "Gelz!" Well insert your name there! That's just how personal the Lord's Supper is to each of you. Use it often for the assurance of your forgiveness and the guarantee

of your status in God's family and your certainty of your place in paradise with all of God's people.

Martin Luther wrote in the small catechism: 'What blessings do we receive through this eating and drinking? That is shown us by these words: Given and poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Through these words we receive the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.'

NIV Hebrews 13:20 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.