**SERMON: Luther’s Confession, on the Lord’s Supper (1528, part II).**

We had a look at Luther’s understanding of what Confession is last week, which is the first part of his personal confession, written in 1528. Now we are coming to Luther’s understanding of what the Word of God is saying regarding the Lord’s Supper. He starts off by saying, *“… no one should be compelled to commune at any special time, but that this should be left free.”* That point was made last week.

And this was **directed against the Roman church which also did not serve members both elements**, the bread and the wine. They argued, *“Simple people cannot understand those words, so we [the church - priests/bishops, etc] decided, it is not good for them to use both, they should only use one.”*

**Luther could not understand this reasoning.** How can you say this when Christ instituted it? *“You are simply human beings[[1]](#footnote-2).”* If you can read and understand the Bible, then so all human beings can for the words of institution is so clear. We will use both elements, bread and wine. Because people around him were weak, because the Roman church was weak, Luther decided - *“I am not going to give up the clear understanding of the Words of Christ as He instituted the Supper because of their weakness.”*

**Have you ever asked yourself,** *“How come Christ instituted it?”* Christ intended it to be a token and mark whereby we might be identified as Christians. For if we were without it, it would be impossible to tell where to find Christians, and who are Christians, and where the Gospel has borne fruit. But when we go to the Lord's Supper people can see who they are that have heard the Gospel; moreover, they can observe whether we lead Christian lives.

**So this is a distinctive mark whereby we are recognized**, whereby we also confess the name of God and show that we are not ashamed of his Word. We take both elements - saying, ***“I abide by the Word of God.”***

When you do go to the Lord’s Supper, **make sure you are assured that you know why you are going.** Make sure you know the foundation and reason that you are doing the right thing. You need to do this in order that you be armed when attacked, and that you are able to defend yourself with the Word of God against the devil and the world.

**For that reason, you dare not commune on the strength of another’s faith.** You must believe for yourself, even as I must, just as you must defend yourself as well as I must defend myself. Therefore, above all you must know the words Christ used in instituting the Lord's Supper. They are these: *"Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks. he broke it and gave it to his disciples and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." "After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying: Take, drink ye all of it; this cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.”*

**These are the words which neither our opponents nor Satan are able to deny**, on them we must stand. Let them make whatever comments they please; we have the clear Word of God, saying, the **bread** is **Christ's body** given for us; and the **cup** his **blood** shed for us. This he bids us do in remembrance of him; but the pope commands that it be not done. Well, they say, we are only erring laymen, we do not understand, nor are we able to explain the words.

**Well, they say, we are dumb laypeople**; we are not able to explain these words. We say, as you, we do not have to explain the words; we *are commanded* to believe in Christ, to confess our faith, and to keep all the commandments of God, just as you. We have the same God as you, so, how are we to believe without knowing and understanding of God’s Word? My faith must be as good as yours, therefore, I must have and must know the Word as well as you.

**When I go to the Lord’s Supper,** I listen to the words spoken by the pastor, and I am assured they contain the whole treasure on which I am standing and rely, for these words are spoken to me. Christ declares, “*My body is given for you; my blood is shed for you.*” Is is given for me just to eat and to drink? No, Christ gives it to me for the remission of my sins.

**This is what strikes you;** and everything else that is done and said has no other purpose than that your sins may be forgiven. But if it is to serve for the forgiveness of sins, it must be able also to overcome death. For where sin is gone, there death is gone, and hell besides; where these are gone, all sorrow is gone and all blessedness has come.

**Therefore, you must act so that the words** mean **you** [*saying - when sins are forgiven, it is your sins that are forgiven].* This will be when you feel the sting and terror of your sin, the assault of the flesh, the world, and the devil. At one time you are angry and impatient; at another you are assailed by the love of money and the cares of life, etc.; so that you are constantly attacked, and at times even gross sins arise, and you fall and injure your soul. Thus, you are a poor and wretched creature, afraid of death, despondent*[discouraged]*, and unable to be happy.

**Then it is time, and you have reason enough to go**, make confession, and confide your distress to God, saying, Lord, thou have instituted and left us the sacrament of thy body and blood that in it we may find the forgiveness of sin. **I now feel that I need it.** I have fallen into sin. I am full of fear and despair. I am not bold to confess thy Word. I have all these failings.

 For this reason, I made the statement that the **Lord' Supper is to be given only to him who is able to say that this is his condition**; that is, he must state what troubles him, and must long to obtain strength and consolation by means of the Word and the symbol. Let him who is unable to use the Lord's Supper in this way remain away, nor let him do like those who wretchedly torture themselves at this time, when they come to the sacrament, and have no idea what they are doing.

This is the Lord’s Supper, meant for you who confess your sins and seek forgiveness.

**AMEN**

1. This is saying - “lay people are dumb. Incapable. We will rule over them.” Mohammed did the same. The followers of Melanchthon did the same when they said - do not read Luther. Read Melanchthon, for he is the only one who understood Luther. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)