

THE BLESSINGS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Second: What blessing 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 forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in this sacrament.

For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

Dear Fellow-Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb:

“I need it,” said the dying woman from her hospital bed. A sliver of the wafer and a drop of the wine were all her cancerous throat could handle, but oh, what they meant for her. “Thank you, pastor,” she murmured quietly, and shortly afterward she fell asleep in Jesus’ wounds. Certainly we can die without Holy Communion. But what marvelous assurance this sacrament brings us that our Savior God loves us and that all is well between him and us. Such assurance we don’t want to reserve for just our dying day, but we want to use many days in our life.

WHAT BLESSINGS THE LORD OFFERS IN HIS SUPPER

We don’t come to the Lord’s Supper to *do* something for him. When he commanded **“Do this in remembrance of me,”** he wasn’t requiring some service of us, something we need to fulfill. Nor was he asking us to come to some church ritual, some tradition that we can take or leave with little loss or gain either way. His words **“Do this”** are more invitation than command. In the Supper, we don’t come to him, he comes to us. And in his hands, he brings his blessings of “forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.”

Christianity is all about forgiveness of sins. So is the Lord’s Supper, as the Savior’s words, **“Given and poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins,”** plainly indicate. As the Savior gave his disciples his body and blood together with the bread and wine that Thursday evening, he coupled with them forgiveness of sins. The body and blood he gave his disciples would be given and poured out the next day on the cross in payment for all their sins. With that perfect sacrifice, he would once for all prepare forgiveness for the world’s sins. In his Holy Supper, he’s at work bringing the blessings of that first Good Friday into the present. With his Supper he assures us that he who died and

rose again is right here. His forgiveness is present—as surely as his body that was once given and his blood that was once poured out for sins. We who have the blessings of forgiveness also have the only life that counts—blessed life with God in heaven and for him on earth. Salvation is ours, not just in promise, but in reality. We are redeemed, restored, forgiven, and assured of this blessing by the body and blood of the one who paid for them.

How often might we want to use this blessed Sacrament with its assurance of forgiveness? Like the dying woman in the hospital, let our many daily sins and our ongoing need for forgiveness prompt our answer. And let the knowledge of what rich food his Supper offers bring us here frequently.

Now as individuals, let us of consider: WHAT BLESSINGS THE LORD OFFERS IN HIS SUPPER TO ME

When you and I stand or kneel before the Communion Table, Jesus' words **“for you”** become singular. **“For you”** becomes “for me.” It is for me that Jesus suffered and died. It is for me that he spreads his Table. That is the appealing beauty of Holy Communion. In the gospel, as the pastor proclaims it, God's forgiveness is sounded to all. In his Supper, he comes to me individually, personally. Those who are with me at his altar are important. They are my brothers and sisters in the faith, standing or kneeling with me in the “common-union” of faith at the altar. But his blessed words **“Given and poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins”** are for me. I need those words. It's my sins that make me weary and heavy laden. It's my sins that I've lugged with my tears of repentance to the altar. Here I need to feel my Savior's arm around my shoulder and see his loving eyes locked on me as he tells me: “Here, my body, I gave it *for you*. Here, my blood, I poured it out *for you*. *You* can go home in peace.

“I need it,” said that dying woman. So do we. Forgiveness of sins is something we can't live or die without. In the hour of trial and temptation, in the times of distress and disappointment, the promise of his forgiveness is our strength and comfort. And in the hour of death, that promise is the pillow on which we can cradle our heads in peace and safety.

Together, let us pray: Thank you, Jesus, for giving your body and pouring out your blood for me! Amen.