

Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
March 24, 2021

"COME TO THE TABLE"

I don't often give up my opportunity to write, but I came across something today so timely and important that I wanted all of you to read it. What follows is from Rev. Dr. Peter Scaer of the Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN. He was one of my professors on my seminary journey. We have been talking a great deal about "The Lord's Supper" in Bible study lately, and it will be a focus of our Holy Thursday worship next week, so I offer this insight to you.

The Lord's Supper,

the Eucharist, the Holy Communion, the Sacrament of the Altar, the Agape Feast, and the Breaking of the Bread. There are many ways to refer to the meal which Christ instituted on the night when he was betrayed, but make no mistake, it is no mere covenant renewal ritual.

We do well to think about Baptism and the Lord's Supper as the axis on which the Christian life is built. Baptism is the spring of new life, a cleansing of sin, the drowning of the old Adam, the deliverance from the land of death and Satan, a plunging into the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord. It is an incorporation into the very body of Christ. Baptism is not our work, but God's and there is no qualification as to age, for the faith of a little child is the very essence of Christianity. Harder it is for an adult than an infant to enter into God's kingdom, to be a member of the family.

Baptism, though, is not static, it points and leads us to the Altar, to the Communion, the place where we receive the fruits of the sacrifice on Golgotha, the place where we receive into ourselves Christ's body, the place where his blood now flows through our veins, like a vine and its branches. The Supper is the fulfillment of our Lord's promise, "Lo, I am with you always."

I do wonder whether our protestant culture hasn't affected the way we think of the body. Christ says, "This is my body," and we do well to believe him. This is no game, no stage, no metaphor. The Father and the Son are one, the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father, the Spirit completing the bond. So also in the eucharist, God's love extends to us. We may say with Christ that the flesh profits nothing, but then we say, wait, the Word became flesh and dwelled among us. Indeed, we now know God precisely through the flesh of Christ, through his body given, his blood shed.

And so, we do well to pray for other Christians, with other Christians. But the Supper is sacred, not merely a reenactment, or our pledge, or anything like that. It's God's Son giving himself to us, it's the body that hung on the cross, the body now risen which becomes for us the medicine of immortality. In the heavenly places, all of this will become clear to those who love the Lord. The gold will remain, while the wood and hay and straw will be burnt away, as through a refining fire.

I am somewhat amused when I hear about, say, the evangelical belief concerning baptism or the supper. Really, it is no belief at all. Only unbelief. Anyone can look at bread and say that it is bread. Anyone can look at water, say it is only water. But, seen through the eyes of faith, which are indeed the eyes of reality, they are the ongoing miracles of Christ still among us. The entirety of the miracle ministry of Jesus is encapsulated in Baptism, where Christ cleanses the leprosy of our sin, gives us ears to hear and eyes to see, raising us up that we may walk in the newness of life. And the Supper is the consummation, the communion, for he has saved us for himself, that we might be with him, and he with us, into the ages of ages.