

The Sacrament of the Altar (Part II)

What is the benefit of such eating and drinking? That is shown us in these words: "Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins"; namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

1. Not only is there more than bread and wine in the Supper, there is also more than "just" the forgiveness of sins. Or, *where the forgiveness of sins is*, what else is always there? Why? (Romans 6:20–23; 1 Corinthians 15:16–22)
2. What should bring us to "hunger and thirst" to receive the Sacrament "often," as our Lord says in His Words of Institution? See Luther's *Christian Questions* on *LSB* p. 330, especially question 20!
3. Jesus speaks of how faith lives on Him alone (John 6:35–58) in terms of eating His flesh, "the bread of life," and drinking His blood. This can only make us think of what glorious promises we have in the Supper. When we rise from eating His body and drinking His blood, what great promises do we have from our Lord Christ, that we might live by them?

From Luther's *Large Catechism* (V: Sacrament of the Altar)

²⁰ Now examine further the efficacy and benefits on account of which really the Sacrament was instituted; which is also its most necessary part, that we may know what we should seek and obtain there. ²¹ Now this is plain and clear from the words just mentioned: "This is My body and blood, given and shed **for you**, for the remission of sins."

²² Briefly that is as much as to say: For this reason we go to the Sacrament because there we receive such a treasure by and in which we obtain forgiveness of sins... [Christ] bids me eat and drink, that it may be my own and may benefit me, as a sure pledge and token, yea, the very same treasure that is appointed for me against my sins, death, and every calamity...

²³ [T]here are so many hindrances and temptations of the devil and of the world that we often become weary and faint, and sometimes also stumble. ²⁴ Therefore it is given for a daily pasture and sustenance, that faith may refresh and strengthen itself so as not to fall back in such a battle, but become ever stronger and stronger. ²⁵ For the new life must be so regulated that it continually increase and progress...

²⁹ Now the only way in which it is conveyed and appropriated to us is in the words ("Given and shed for you"). For herein you have both truths, that it is the body and blood of Christ, and that it is yours as a treasure and gift.

³⁰ Now the body of Christ can never be an unfruitful, vain thing, that effects or profits nothing. Yet, however great is the treasure in itself, it must be comprehended in the Word and administered to us, else we should never be able to know or seek it...

³² [N]ow the entire Gospel and the article of the Creed: I believe a holy Christian Church, the forgiveness of sin, etc., are by the Word embodied in this Sacrament and presented to us. Why, then, should we allow this treasure to be torn from the Sacrament when they must confess that these are the very words which we hear every where in the Gospel, and they cannot say that these words in the Sacrament are of no use, as little as they dare say that the entire Gospel or Word of God, apart from the Sacrament, is of no use?