

# The Assistant Pastor

April, 1941

## The Means of Grace

### III

#### What Should Move Us To Receive The Sacrament Frequently?

Before we set forth some of the reasons for partaking of Holy Communion frequently, let us bear in mind that this admonition is addressed to Christians only. These are people who realize their sin and weakness, but trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins and look to Him for strength to lead a godly life. If you are such a person, you may read on.

**1) The command and invitation of Christ should move us to receive the Sacrament frequently.**

The Savior instituted this Supper "for us Christians to eat and to drink." It is therefore not optional with us whether or not we partake of this Sacrament. For very definitely He says: "*This do* in remembrance of Me." In view of this clear statement of his Lord no Christian will think, This does not concern me; I need not do this if I do not wish to do it. "For Christ did not say, Omit this, or, Despise this, but, This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, etc. Truly, He wants it done and by no means neglected or despised. This do ye, is His command." (Luther.)

Even if there were no benefit connected with the Sacrament, still the very fact that our Lord asks us to partake of it often should prompt us to do so. A Christian does not wilfully and intentionally ignore and neglect the wish and will of his Lord.

**2) The promised blessings should induce us to receive the Sacrament frequently.**

Viewed outwardly, the Sacrament is a very simple and plain affair. It is not a sumptuous banquet where one may satisfy his bodily hunger and thirst; there are no material, tangible benefits connected with it. Hence we ask: What is the benefit of such eating and drinking? Our Catechism answers: "That is shown us by 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."

This answer is in full agreement with the Bible. Holy Communion is not an empty ceremony in which we participate for the exercise of our obedience, nor is it a service by which we earn favor with God. But it is a means of grace, through and by which God offers, assures, imparts, and seals to us forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. These gifts are so great that they



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## The Assistant Pastor

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## Church Directory

**N. S. Tjernagel, Pastor**

### SAUDE CONGREGATION

Trustees: Chris Treider, Ned Borlaug, John Natvig.  
Treasurer: Milton Boleng.  
Secretary: Fred Steensland.  
Cemetery Committee: Olis Borlaug, Juel Natvig, Miss Carrie Natvig, Mrs. John Natvig, Mrs. Otto Hanson.  
Ladies' Aid: Mrs. Carl Miller, president; Mrs. Fred Steensland, secretary; Mrs. Otto Hanson, treasurer.

### JERICO CONGREGATION

Trustees: C. Cutsforth, Lloyd Roberson, C. O. Vigdal.  
Secretary: A. N. Anderson.  
Treasurer: J. A. Robinson.  
Cemetery Committee: Mrs. Theo. O. Knutson, Mrs. Thos. Roberson, Mrs. Carl Knutson.  
Ladies' Aid: Mrs. S. T. Roberson, president; Mrs. Thos. Attleson, secretary; Mrs. Jeff O. Knutson, treasurer.

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## Services

### JERICO

First and third Sundays 9:00 A. M.  
Second and fourth Sundays 10:30 A. M.  
(First Sunday Norwegian.)

### SAUDE

First and third Sundays 10:30 A. M.  
Second and fourth Sundays 9:00 A. M.  
(First Sunday Bi-lingual Service.)  
Fifth Sundays by special announcement.

### NEW HAMPTON

**Nils Osleby, Pastor**

Sunday School, 9 A. M.  
Services, 10:30 A. M.

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surpass and outlast anything this world might offer to us. Ought we, then, not to go frequently to the Sacrament?

But were not all these blessings given to us in Baptism, and are they not continually offered to us in the Gospel? It is true, the Lord's Supper offers to us no other, no greater, no better forgiveness than that which we have received in our baptism. Nor do we receive in the Sacrament a new supply of forgiveness to cover the sins we committed since our last Communion. Our daily bread we receive in portions as we need it, but the grace of God is not offered to us piecemeal, but in full and complete. Baptism, the Gospel, the Lord's Supper, are but three different ways in which God conveys to us the same complete forgiveness. Whoever trusts in the promises given him in holy Baptism has forgiveness for all his sins; the same is true of him who trusts in the promises of the Gospel and of the Lord's Supper. The Sacrament of the Altar, therefore, does not impart forgiveness in addition to that we already possess through faith in Christ.

If such be the case, why need a believer still go to the Sacrament. In the first place, in the Sacrament the Savior deals with each communicant *individually*. As each person eats and drinks under the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ, so each one should know that this body and blood was given and shed also for him personally and indi-

vidually. He may not say, Indeed I receive the body and blood of Christ, but His promise is not meant for me; but rather must he say, The promise of forgiveness is as certainly intended for me as it is certain that I received Christ's body and blood under the bread and wine.

In the second place, the promise is *sealed* to us. That no one may doubt the promise of forgiveness, Christ gives us the very body and blood He gave and shed for the remission of our sins. He says, "This is My Body, which is given for you; this is My blood which is shed for you for the remission of your sins." The forgiveness is offered to us not in the bread and wine, neither in the body and blood of Christ, but in these words "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." And the body and blood of Christ are the pledge and seal to this promise. For our sake Christ applies His promise to us individually and seals it to us with His body and blood. Thus the Lord instituted this Supper exclusively for our benefit.

### Which Are Such Benefits?

The first and chief benefit of the Sacrament is that it strengthens our faith in the forgiveness of sins.

The forgiveness of sins is an accomplished fact, which is not affected by the faith or the unbelief of man. As Christ has atoned for the sins of all men, so has God in His heart forgiven all sins to all men (2 Cor. 5:19). But this forgiveness, offered to us in an unconditional promise, becomes ours by faith. Faith is the hand that takes and holds what the promise offers. "He that believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins." God's promise of grace never becomes uncertain in itself; but when our faith weakens, it becomes uncertain *to us*. And if we lose the faith, we lose also what we held by faith. Thus it is very important that our faith in the forgiveness of sins be preserved and strengthened. And this is exactly the purpose for which the Sacrament was instituted.

Let no one say he has no need of such strengthening of faith. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). Those who, like Peter, are so sure of themselves fall most easily. As we ask God to strengthen our faith, so must we use the means by which He will do it. Those who neglect to use these means have none to blame but themselves if their faith grows weak and finally dies. One reason why there are so many weak Christians, whose spiritual life is at such low ebb, is, no doubt, that they do not partake of the Lord's Supper frequently.

The second benefit is that the Sacrament will restore peace to our conscience.

Conscience troubles and bothers us as long as we are burdened with the guilt of sin. And a guilty conscience will make life most miserable for us. There is no peace of mind, no joy of heart, but restlessness and fear and despair. It is the guilty conscience that exclaims: "Mine iniquities are gone over mine head; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me" (Ps. 38:4). Because of our sins we all have at times compunctions and pangs of conscience, and it is dangerous to continue therein.

Now, there is absolutely no other cure for a guilty



conscience than faith in the forgiveness of our sins. In the Sacrament Christ tells us: "This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of your sins." Thus He strengthens our faith, purifies our conscience from sin and guilt, and restores peace and joy to our troubled hearts. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

If there were no other benefit than this, this alone would be a sufficiently strong reason to urge us to go to the Sacrament frequently.

**The third benefit of the Sacrament is that it kindles in our hearts a fervent love to God, and helps us to lead a godly life.**

He who has not experienced the love of God in His heart cannot love God in return. For how can a sinner love Him whose just punishment he must fear? But as soon as he is assured of God's grace, his attitude changes. Now he says, "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

In the Sacrament God manifests His unchanging love toward us; in spite of our gross offenses and repeated lapses He again and again assures us of His pardoning grace. Now, it is impossible for a penitent sinner to accept the blessings of God's grace without at the same time turning to Him in fervent love. Love is the fruit of faith; where there is true faith in God, there is also sincere love to God. Because we so often forget the loving-kindness of our God, our faith grows weak, and our love waxes cold.

What shall we do? He who would warm his frozen limbs must get close to the fire; he who would warm his cold heart must get close to the fire of God's love. In the Sacrament God opens His loving heart to us; therefore let us frequently partake of Holy Communion in order that our hearts may again and again be kindled and fired with the love of God.

**A fourth benefit is furtherance of brotherly love.**

In life there are social differences also among Christians. Some are rich, others are poor; some are learned and educated, others are not so. But whenever we approach the Lord's Table, all these differences cease. No one may exalt himself above the other; no one may think he is better than his neighbor. "There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). At the Lord's Table there are no reserved seats for the millionaire and the society lady, for the famous and honored among men; they must all sit together with sinners and publicans. Nor may any one think that God favors him more than his neighbor and that he will receive greater gifts; for all receive the same grace, the same forgiveness of sins. All pride and self-conceit, all contempt and envy, and every other feeling that separates us from our neighbor ceases as we kneel at the altar of our God. The fact that we all are equally guilty before God and receive from Him the same grace certainly should induce us to forget our differences and bring us closer together.

There lies in this a very practical significance for us Christians. Since we are one body, we should be united in sincere brotherly love. The members of the body do not act strange toward one another; they do not quarrel and harm one another. There

is no suspicion, no envy, no hatred. But each serves the other according to its ability.

**The fifth benefit is comfort in tribulation.**

"In the world ye shall have tribulation," says Christ (John 16:33). And again: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). Hence, the life of a Christian is not one of undisturbed peace and happiness. Paul speaks of "a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me" (2 Cor. 12:7). In our case it may be some physical defect, a lingering illness, business reverses, loss of our savings, unemployment, family troubles, the hatred of the world, etc. Each one has and feels his cross.

When Paul asked God for relief, the Lord answered: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And so it is still; God does not always remove the cross, but the assurance of His grace helps us to bear it. For what else matters as long as God is gracious to us and leads us to heaven?

And of this grace we are assured in the holy Supper. There God tells us, My grace is sufficient for thee, and My strength is made perfect in thy weakness. And as He strengthens our faith in the forgiveness of our sins, He supplies patience and strength to bear the cross. Many pious Christians have experienced this comfort of the Sacrament. Instead of mulling continually over our troubles, let us go to the Lord's Supper, let us meditate on the grace of God and be strengthened in our faith; and our yoke will be easy, and our burden will be light.

**Finally the Sacrament strengthens our hope of eternal life.**

Very correctly Luther says: "Where there is remission of sins, there is also life and salvation." Whatever strengthens us in the certainty of the forgiveness of sins strengthens us also in the certainty of our eternal salvation. For by faith we are the children of God (Gal. 3:26), and if children, then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17).

In this hope we must not weaken; it supports us on our way through life. Without it this present life would lose its meaning, and we should of all men be the most miserable. But we know "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). This hope affords strong comfort. In the hour of death we are ready to say with Paul: "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1:23). When in that last hour money and wealth falls from our hands; when the wisdom of men fails to give reliable counsel and comfort; when friends and relatives stand helplessly by our side; when we, all alone, must pass through the valley of the shadow of death, then Christ takes us by the hand and points us to those glorious mansions He has prepared for us. Let us never lose this hope of the inheritance reserved for us in heaven.

But this hope is closely connected with our faith in the forgiveness of sins. Where faith weakens, this hope is dimmed; where faith dies, this hope vanishes. Hence it must be our constant concern to persevere and grow in the faith. We must strength-



en our faith for the last conflict with death. And since God would strengthen our faith in and through the Sacrament, we should certainly partake of it frequently.

By E. W. A. Koehler.

### HOLY WEEK SERVICES

#### Jerico

Communion Services will be held on Holy Thursday as follows:

10:30 A. M. English Communion Service.

2:00 P. M. Norwegian Communion Service.

8:00 P. M. English Communion Service.

The Easter Service will be at 2:00 P. M. on Easter Sunday.

#### Saude

Communion Services will be held on Good Friday as follows:

10:45 A. M. Norwegian Communion Service

8:00 P. M. English Communion Service.

The Easter Service will be at 10:45 Easter Sunday.

#### Anniversary

Fifteen years ago at Easter you received the first issue of the Assistant Pastor. On the cover page of that first issue your Pastor brought you the following Easter meditation:

#### HE IS RISEN!

The gruesome scene enacted on Golgatha is fresh in our memories. One who claimed to be the Son of God, the Savior of the world, with powers to tear the bands of death asunder and arise on the third day, was nailed to the cross, there to hang till dead. Towards evening He died and was placed in a guarded grave.

Many, apparently devout, there are today who will say: "Yes, I know that story and I know others similar to it. Down through the ages prophets, saviors, or deliverers have at intervals arisen. I thank God for all of them; all have done good. May the Great Spirit, by whatever name He be worshipped, speed the day when every one is a faithful follower of some great moral leader. To this great and glorious end let us all join hearts and hands in the unity of brotherly love and tolerance."

Shall we grant that our Jesus is one among several? No, no, no! HE AROSE FROM THE DEAD! Thereby He is proven to be as high above all others as God is above man. He has proven His claim to be the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the World!

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15: 20-22).

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