

1 Corinthians 11:23-32

“A Precious Gift”

March 24, 2016

I am going to carry on with a sub-theme that I have had the last few Sundays. When Christ died on the Cross at Calvary as payment for our sins and to open the doors of heaven to us, we were given no obligations to perform in payment for this gift. It was a gift to us with nothing required of us. Instead we are given the freedom to express our praise and thanks in any way we choose as long as it is to the glory of our God and the Savior Jesus Christ.

Our text helps us to understand this sub-theme a little better. If we choose to take the Lord's Supper as a way of expressing our praise and thanks. Part of taking the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner is that we recognize that this is the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Part of taking the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner is examining our lives so that we can see those areas where we need to repent of our sins. Part of taking the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner is recommitting to the Lord Jesus Christ. Part of taking the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner is working at changing our sinful ways.

Sadly when some come to take the Lord's Supper, they are not prepared. We Lutherans recognize that we are taking the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. However how often does it hit our awareness that we are taking the Body

and Blood of Jesus? He is our holy God and we are receiving His Body and His Blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

We are to examine ourselves before we take of the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior. How many of us actually spend time before worship to examine our self and seek to understand those areas where we have been selfish in our relationship with God and each other? Then when we come to worship, we can refresh our memories of those sins we are to repent? We could go on and on about how we could be better prepared to take the Lord Supper. That also means that we have decided to make it part of our thanksgiving to God for the blessings given to us on the Cross at Calvary.

There is a warning that goes with our text. We are told that if we take the Lord's Supper without recognizing the Body and Blood of the Lord, Jesus Christ then God will discipline us by making us weak, sick and even cause some to die. Therefore it is important to our God that we exercise our freewill by taking the Lord's Supper to the glory of God by recognizing that we are receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord. How blessed we are that our God in His undeserved grace and mercy will reverse the discipline for our sake. How blessed we are that even under discipline, we will go to heaven.

We are encouraged by our God to take the Lord's Supper often. Therefore to avoid the Lord's Supper just because we fear that we cannot take it in a worthy manner is not an option. Rather in that spirit of thanksgiving and praise we struggle to take the Lord's Supper to God's glory. One of the struggles of being a Christian is that we can do nothing perfectly. Christ had to die because we in our sinful flesh are such failures at doing things like taking the Lord's Supper with the right heart and in a perfect manner. We live in His undeserved grace and mercy while rejoicing in His discipline because it means we are part of His Kingdom. Amen.