

Dear Lutheran Watchman,

Please tell me where it says in the Holy Scriptures that the Lords Supper is a way by which our sins are washed away. According to the Holy Bible, It says by Faith are you saved...not by works (what you or I do to please God). I realize that the Lords Supper creates faith or strengthens our faith in Jesus...but I believe it does not forgive my sins. That would mean just because I read the Bible I am forgiven of my sins because I am doing something that creates faith. Before I receive the Lords supper, I ask Jesus to forgive me of all sin...and He does. My sins are gone! I am white as snow! It is faith in the Blood of Christ that saves me...not an act of the remembrance of Jesus death and resurrection. Jesus said...do this in remembrance of Me...He did not say...do this so that your sins are washed away. It's His Blood that washes me clean...His sacrifice that allows me to have a relationship with God my Father. Jesus died for me once and once alone. I know the Catholic church taught much like Luther taught...maybe I'm missing something here...but I find no where in Scripture where The Lords Supper is a means by which I am saved...Believe... the Bible says...Faith in Christ's death and ressurection! I just haven't read it anywhere in the Bible. I'd appreciate your response...please do not quote Luther...I follow no man's interpetation....I follow God's Word and His Word alone!!!

Dear Friend,

Let me first say, I fully understand and can certainly empathize with the initial aversion one may experience when we first find there are terms or words for things in our faith-life discussions that tend to remind us of Roman Catholicism, because it is the "religion" of the Roman Papacy and hence The instrument of the Very Anti-Christ.

But how does one escape entirely the seeming necessity to use the words and phrases to which we are limited by our own language when we speak of the Gospel, Man's sin, Christ's Work of Man's Redemption, how God calls us to believe in Him, the believer's sanctification in this life, The Lord's Supper, Baptism, etc.?

Perhaps the fault doesn't lie so much in the language to which we are limited, but rather, the fault lies in us and in our proper understanding of the True doctrines (teachings) of the Bible, itself.

Would any of us advocate we discontinue the use of particular words and phrases in our faith-life discussions simply because a certain church body we know which teaches and practices contrary to Scripture uses the same words? I would certainly

hope not.

NOTE: Any "religion" or church which impenitently teaches and/or practices anything contrary to Scripture is in error of God's Word and when we recognize this to be the case, we should, according to Scripture (Romans 16:17-18 and others), separate ourselves from such false churches.)

Perhaps recognizing Roman Catholicism as being in opposition to the Gospel, and having the Full Truth of God's Word before us in our Bibles, we can recognize such aversion at the use of these terms for what it truly is, (and that is) yet another method of subtle attack upon would-be Bible-believing Christians by the Father of Lies, The Devil.

We know the Devil will use half-truths and sometimes even Whole Truth, to deceive us... to make us turn away from the Truth of God's Word, to destroy our faith and to bring us back into Slavery to Sin. Let's not let him do that to us and our faith because we do not recognize such attacks for what they are.

In addition, we must also come to an understanding that what is known as the "Lutheran" faith is in fact, the "Christian" Faith; **NOT** because of any name taken from the Protestant Reformer, Martin Luther, nor because Martin Luther was infallible by any stretch of the imagination, (neither did he ever claim to be so), but because the "Lutheran Confessions" are in full agreement with and an accurate mirroring of the Full Truth of Scripture. In fact, the name "Lutheran" is more of a way to distinguish this group of believers by their "Confessions" (what we believe) from what other groups, such as The Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah Witnesses, etc. believe.

See? Here we have a perfect example...the use of the word "Confession"! Some of you may have immediately pictured a priest and a sinner in a "confessional". But, it is just a word. Yes, each word has a definition and words are important... Very often important! But each and every word simply means what it means and they all may be used by many religions to explain "What they believe". Words do not exclusively "belong" to any one religion. The nature of "religion" simply necessitates the use of common words across the "spectrum of religions", because they all attempt to deal with basically the same thing: How does man get to heaven?

The other thing we must remember is that **In Christ, ALL THINGS ARE OURS.** That includes our God-given right as Christians to use whatever words and phrases are available to us in whatever language we choose to use. YES?

Moving on... And here it is we discover "words have meaning".

First, we must understand that it is **NOT** (in your words): "...*faith in God and His sacrifice and His resurrection...* " *that saves you.* Neither is it (in your words): " ... *faith in the Blood of Christ that saves me.* "

It is, in fact, the suffering and death of Jesus **ALONE** that redeems (or saves) mankind, by washing away sin and making us wholly righteous in the sight of God. Christ's pure righteousness becomes ours... it is imputed to us... just as Adam's sin was imputed to all mankind and brought death upon all mankind. (See Romans 5: 18-20)

The redemption of Man has been accomplished, **IT IS FINISHED...**
NOT by man's faith, **BUT BY JESUS' SUFFERING AND DEATH ALONE.**

It is so vitally important to understand that faith does **NOT** merit salvation. Neither does faith add anything to Christ's work of redemption.

Faith is no more and no less than the means or instrument God implants in man's heart by which man lays hold of, grasps and personally apprehends the Gift of the Forgiveness of Sins, Life and Salvation.

To believe otherwise is to make of "faith" a work of man by which he could merit salvation.

Can we see how one little word makes all the difference in the understanding of people? It is with that one little word that the Scriptural teaching of Salvation by Grace through faith in Christ Jesus is in effect denied and rejected by those erring teachers (the wolves in sheep's clothing about whom Jesus warns us) who seek to make faith a meritorious work of man. So subtle is the Devil in his bid for the believer's soul!

The Bible tells us in Ephesians 2:8-10: "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*"

So we see from Scripture that we are **NOT** saved "by" faith, but rather "through" faith.

There is a BIG difference!

Now, when we speak of the "Means of Grace" then, it is important (first) for us to have a proper understanding of what the definition of "Means" is.

One student dictionary defines the word "means" this way: "**Means**" - **a. What a**

thing is done by; agency;

method." (One could also rightly add: "instrument", as in "God used the Ark as the His **instrument** to save Noah and His Family from the Flood. (See First Peter 3:18-21)

God's Grace, is the gift of the Forgiveness of Sins, Life and Salvation freely given to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, **which Gospel IS the fundamental means (or instrument used) as well in Baptism and the Lord's Supper.**

The Bible teaches that in order to convey to man the merits which Christ has secured for the world by His death on the cross, (See II Corinthians 5:21 and Romans 5:18) God employs certain external, *visible* means through which the Holy Spirit works faith in man's undeserving heart, preserves that faith and thus accomplishes the sinner's salvation.

The "Means of Grace", then are "**the agency or methods" God uses to bring about a person's conversion or bestow upon him/her justifying faith, thus making him/her a believer, and which He also uses to produce the sanctification of the believer.**" This is *ALWAYS* the Gospel, the Word of God.

The Bible teaches that the Means of Grace (The methods God uses to bestow His Grace upon mankind) are:

1. **The Word** (i.e. hearing and/or reading it, etc. See Romans 10:17 and Ephesians 2:8-10),
2. **Holy Baptism {Instituted by God in Matthew 28:18-20}** (See also I Peter 3:18-22), and
3. **The Lord's Supper, ALSO Instituted by God** (See Matthew 26:26-28))

Note: When Jesus speaks of the Cup as being the "new testament in my blood" in the Word's of Institution of the Lord's Supper, He is speaking of the "new covenant" of the Forgiveness of Sins He makes with man in Christ's suffering and death. (See Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Romans 11:27).

In the Means of "Hearing the WORD" of the Gospel, we truly receive faith and the strengthening of our faith *through* which we believe in the Gospel, Forgiveness of our Sins. It has absolutely nothing to do with what WE (who were dead in trespasses and sins) could ever possibly do or merit, (And that is NOTHING!) but, *IT IS GOD ALONE* who is doing the work of bringing us to believe in the Gospel and to live a sanctified life in Him.

So too, in our Baptism and in the Lord's Supper, it is *NOT we* who are doing the

work, *NOT WE* who merit anything by being baptized or by receiving the Lord's Supper, (For indeed we deserve NOTHING, but punishment!)
IT IS GOD ALONE who works it in us through the Word connected with the earthly elements.

So, in Baptism it is *NOT* the application of simple water only that grants us the Forgiveness of Sins, Life, and Salvation and hence saves us.
IT IS THE WORD OF GOD, (THE GOSPEL), ***CONNECTED*** WITH THE WATER.

(Please also read the sermon posted under "Archives" in the navigation bar.)

Likewise, in the Lord's Supper, it is *NOT* the physical eating and drinking of the bread and wine (earthly elements) that grants the Forgiveness of Sins and strengthens the faith of the believer.

IT IS THE WORD OF GOD, (THE GOSPEL), THAT TELLS US THAT OF A TRUTH, WE ARE RECEIVING THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST ***IN, WITH AND UNDER THE BREAD AND WINE.***

Jesus said: "Take eat; this is my body"...(and) "Drink ye all, of (from) it (the Cup); For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission (forgiveness) of sins." (Matthew 26:26-28) Jesus here was certifying to us the new covenant (The Forgiveness of Sins in Christ Jesus) made by God, between God and Man, is in his body and blood, which we receive in the Lord's Supper.

Further Scripture proof that the body and blood of Christ are, indeed, received in the Lord's Supper:

* First Corinthians 11:27, "*Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*"

* First Corinthians 10:15-17, "*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*"

Furthermore, the Bible tells us in I Corinthians 11:29 "*For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*"

("Not discerning", **that is: to not recognize and believe that what they are receiving is the body and blood of Christ, in the which is the Forgiveness of Sins, Life and Salvation, by virtue of Jesus' Words that the "new testament",**(

the New Covenant, which IS the Forgiveness of Sins), is "in My blood."

It follows also then, that if the UNWORTHY communicant eats and drinks Christ's body and blood unto damnation, because he/she is NOT DISCERNING the body of Christ (the SACRIFICE of Christ's body and blood in the which is the Forgiveness of Sins), then the **WORTHY** reception of the body and blood of Christ must offer, *through the Word of God connected therewith*, the Forgiveness of Sins, or the "new testament" in His blood, as Christ, as Himself has stated. For it is the REJECTION of the Gospel, namely the "Forgiveness of Sins" (*UNBELIEF*) that damns.

Ask yourself this: **IF**, (as many false teaching churches assert) we do NOT receive the Forgiveness of Sins ("the new testament in My blood") in the Lord's Supper, how can we possibly be eating and drinking it to our damnation? How can the eating of that little bit of bread and drinking that little bit of wine, be done to our eternal damnation when they are (supposedly) nothing but symbols, or representations and the act of eating the bread/body and and drinking the wine/blood doesn't involve the rejection of the Gospel, The Forgiveness of Sins, itself ?

It is precisely *unbelief*, the "not discerning the Lord's body", and ultimately the *REJECTION* of the free gift of the Forgiveness of Sins, Life and Salvation (*the "new testament" or "new covenant" God made with man in Christ's Work of Redemption*) in the Lord's Supper that damns.

Why in the world would anyone, rightly professing to be a Christian and rightly understanding his/her need for the gracious forgiveness of his/her sin, desire (in effect) to "limit" God to simply granting to them, as a communicant of the Lord's Supper, only "faith" and "the strengthening of faith" in the Lord's Supper when there is no such "limit" on God in Scripture?

The answer is plain: Such a person is deceived and caught in the sin of unbelief.

And if "only" faith is received in the Lord's Supper, then faith in what?
Faith in faith?

That is NOT faith worked in the heart by the Holy Spirit.

"*Faith in faith*" is the work of the Devil. It is a horrible deception.

To say that we receive faith and the strengthening of it, but **NOT** the Forgiveness of Sins in the Lord's Supper is to actually REJECT The Faith and the very precious body and blood of Christ of which we claim we are there at the Lord's Table to

partake!

This is *unbelief* and is the cause of a man's damnation!

Rather, we should believe that we receive, not only, faith and the strengthening of that same faith, but also that we receive the gift of the Forgiveness of Sins, Life and Salvation offered in the body and blood of Christ--- the "... my blood of the new testament (covenant), which is shed for many for the remission (forgiveness) of sins." !

My Dear Friend, In the Lord's Supper, Jesus wants to give you so much more than simply faith ... He wants to give you , and indeed He *DOES* give the believer, the Forgiveness of All Sins, Life in Him and eternal Salvation to all who believe it is truly the body and blood of Christ ... the "new testament" (the new covenant, which is the reconciliation of sinful man to God in Christ) in His blood...given and shed for all of sinful man for the remission of sins. Receiving the Lord's Supper without this proper understanding (discernment) would be to take it to one's damnation. (See I Corinthians 11:29)

Is it not foolish, then to reject the Forgiveness of Sins, the "new testament in My blood", offered to us in the Lord's Supper and thus spend an eternity in the fires of hell, where there will be forever "the weeping and gnashing of teeth" ?

It is nothing less than *unbelief* to reject the gift from God in the Gospel of Christ, namely the forgiveness of your sins, given to you in the Lord's Supper. And we know that it is *unbelief* that damns.

Let us humble ourselves before God, confessing our sins and repent!
And *by* Grace, *though* faith believe the Gospel! And then let us live all the more boldly for Christ!

In Christ Jesus, Our Precious Lord and Savior,
The Lutheran Watchman