

“The Bridegroom WILL Come”

Lex orandi, lex credendi – the way of prayer, is the way of faith – and, reversely – the way we believe is the way we worship.

Lutherans believe in the real presence of Christ’s Body and Blood in the Lord’s Supper. We believe that we receive in our mouth the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ that was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, was nailed to a cross, “is risen from the dead, [and] lives and reigns to all eternity.” (Small Catechism – Second Article)

We believe what Jesus says about His Body and Blood – this it is given and shed for you, “for the forgiveness of sins.” We believe what the Apostle Paul says – that a man ought to examine himself before receiving the Lord’s Supper – because one can receive it to their harm. “Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.”

Lex orandi, lex credenda – what we believe, is reflected in how we worship. And so, we handle the bread and wine as the very Body and Blood of Christ – we practice Closed Communion – and we partake of the Lord’s Supper often.

What does it mean, then, when the Body and Blood is passed around like, well, just bread and wine? What does one believe, when that which is left over, is thrown in the trash? What does it say about what one believes when the Lord’s Supper is only offered, or received, every now and then?

Does one really believe that the Body and Blood of Christ is present, and received, in the Lord’s Supper?

Not long ago you said that you believe that Jesus Christ “will come again in glory.” Do you believe that? Do you believe that the Bridegroom will come – and those who come out to meet Him will enter into the Marriage feast of the Lamb which has no end?

Not being prepared for Christ to come again – suggests that one does not truly believe that He will.

Do you believe in heaven? Do you look forward to, and long for, that day when the Bridegroom shall come and “wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away”? (Rev. 21:4). Yes, no doubt you do believe that – and look forward to that.

So now, in light of our text for today, the question is – are you like the five wise virgins, or the five foolish ones?

Wisdom, in the Scriptures, is not about ones IQ or how smart you are. Its not being able to figure out when the Bridegroom will return so that you can get things in order. Rather, being wise, is seeing all things from God’s perspective – or, better yet – from what God has revealed to you – and ordering your life accordingly.

It’s *lex orandi, lex credendi* – what God reveals, you believe, and then arrange your life accordingly. As the psalmist says: “So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.” (Psalm 90:12).

Foolishness – on the other hand – is not ordering your whole life around God’s Word. It’s like the five foolish virgins who are unprepared when the Bridegroom comes.

It’s thinking that we can live our lives in a way that doesn’t line up with God’s Word – and that we will have time to get things in order later. It’s thinking that the Bridegroom’s return will continue to be delayed. It’s living contrary to what we say we believe – and then, it’s too late, and the door is shut.

Dearly beloved, the Lord will come again in glory – to take those who are prepared into the marriage feast of the Lamb that has no end. As we heard in the Epistle reading: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

Jesus says in Matthew 24 (v. 36): “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.” And now in our text: “As the Bridegroom was delayed, they ALL became drowsy and slept.” (25:5)

Ever since Jesus ascended into heaven – Christians have been waiting for His return. For years and years, you have confessed that He will “come again.” But His coming is delayed – and notice – the wise and the foolish ALL become drowsy and sleep.

The difference is that the wise have oil with them – and the foolish do not. Not knowing when the Bridegroom will come – the wise have oriented their whole life so that when the time comes – they will have oil, and will enter with Him into the marriage feast.

In this world, the foolish make fun of the wise for having extra oil. It’s like the doomsday preppers – you look at them as being a little odd, extreme, taking things too far. I remember as a little boy asking my grandmother why she had stacks and stacks of those green plastic baskets that strawberries come in. And the answer was, “you never know when you will need them.”

Of course, my grandmother lived through a different time – the depression, a time of scarcity – a time when pastors and their families barely had enough to live on. You, dear Christians, are to have a different mindset as well – to order your lives differently than the world – to live what you believe, and be prepared.

The oil in this parable is simply the Holy Spirit who brings Christ’s forgiveness. The wise rearrange everything in their lives to make sure their flasks of oil are full. Not only do you believe that Christ will come again – but you believe that you will not enter heaven without His forgiveness – and so you live accordingly.

You hunger and thirst for Christ’s Body and Blood because Jesus promises, and delivers in the Lord’s Supper, the forgiveness of all your sin. You gladly hear and learn God’s Word, building your house upon the solid rock of His Word. You bring your children to be baptized, and live in your own baptism, because you know that this is how Jesus, the Bridegroom, loves you.

As St. Paul writes in Ephesians 5 (25-27) of Christ's love for His Bride, the Church. "... Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."

Dearly beloved, you are prepared for Christ to come again – because Christ cleanses you, washing away all your sin, making you holy. Living in His forgiveness – the cry can go out at any time, "Here is the Bridegroom" – and with your lamp burning bright, you shall enter with Him into the marriage feast that has no end. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.