

THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

LESSON 17

The second sacrament in the Lutheran Church is the Sacrament of the Altar. Think back to what two elements need to be present for a sacrament. List them below.

1. Visible Element 2. Invisible Element
What are the visible elements?

1. bread/body 2. Wine/blood

As in baptism, God instituted the Sacrament of the altar and commands that we do this (invisible element). Read I Corinthians 11:23-26.

Whose words are recorded here? Jesus'

There are various names used for the Sacrament of the Altar. These names point to specific aspects of the sacrament. List three other names for the Sacrament of the Altar.

1. The Lord's Supper

2. Holy Communion

3. The Holy Eucharist

Why is this sacrament referred to as "The Lord's Supper"?

The Lord instituted this Sacrament

Why is this sacrament referred to as "Holy Communion"?

1. The Union of bread and wine with Body and Blood

2. The Union of believers with Christ and with one another

Why is this sacrament called "The Holy Eucharist"? See Matthew 26:26,27.
(Eucharist is from the Greek and means "giving of thanks.")

1. The Lord gave thanks

2. *We should be thankful as we participate*

Why is this sacrament referred to as the "Sacrament of the Altar"?

We approach the altar to participate -- (also because of OT Sacrifices)

Matthew records the details of the Last Supper in Chapter 26, verses 1 - 30. Look this up and read about what happened.

What occurrence was being celebrated? *The Passover*

What happened at the original Passover? *The blood of a lamb was put on the door post so that the angel of death would "pass over" that house and spare the firstborn*

Jesus is often called "The Lamb of God." What does Jesus, the Lamb of God, have in common with the Passover?

1. *He shed His blood*

2. *Blood provides salvation*

What does Jesus instruct His disciples to do? (verses 26 and 27)

1. *Eat His body (the bread)*

2. *Drink His blood (the wine)*

What do we receive when we do this?

1. *Assurance of forgiveness*

2. *Fellowship with Christ and with believers*

3. *Strengthening of faith*

4. *Strength to live in God's Word*

5. *thankful worship and adoration (a thankful heart with which to praise God)*

6. *participation in the real presence of Christ (with all the Saints in heaven and earth)*

All of the above events took place on Thursday. We now call this Maundy Thursday. What is the next day called?

Good Friday

What happened on that day? Jesus died on the Cross

It is important to note Jesus' words when He gave us the Lord's Supper. He said, "This is my body" and "This is my blood." He did not say that the bread and wine represented His body and blood. He said they are His body and blood. This does not mean they are changed into His body and blood. The best way to put it is that they are united -- wine and blood, bread and body. This is truly something only God can accomplish. This union is called "the sacramental union." This is the only occurrence of sacramental union.

Paul has some comments to make concerning Communion. Look up 1 Corinthians 10:16.

How does Paul describe eating the communion bread and drinking the communion wine?

A participation in Christ's body and blood

Should we take communion lightly or seriously? seriously and with dignity and joyful thanksgiving

Look up 1 Corinthians 11:23-29.

What should we do before taking communion? we should "examine" ourselves.

What happens when we examine ourselves? Look on page 239 of *Luther's Small Catechism*.

1. We recognize our sinfulness and need of repentance
2. We recognize our need for forgiveness that Jesus' death and resurrection achieved
3. We recognize our need for the Holy Spirit to overcome sin and evil in ourselves.

Under which condition is it wrong to take communion? Look on page 239 of *Luther's Small Catechism*.

Not recognizing the body and blood of the Lord in the eating and drinking.(close

fellowship)

How do we “worthily” receive communion? See page 239 of *Luther’s Small Catechism*.

By faith in Jesus and in His words “given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.”

How often are we to participate in communion? The Bible indicates that in the early church communion was a part of each worship service. Look up Acts 2:42.

To what does “breaking of bread” refer? _____ communion _____

The words "do this in remembrance of Me" are part of the words Jesus used when instituting the Lord's supper. What are we to remember about Jesus?

1. He died and rose for me and for all mankind _____

2. He sits at God's right hand right now _____

3. He intercedes (prays) for us at God's throne _____

4. He is coming again _____

The Lutheran Church views communion differently from the Reformed churches and from the Catholic church. The chart below summarizes the differences.

REFORMED	LUTHERAN	ROMAN CATHOLIC
bread only wine only	bread - body wine - blood	body only blood only