

Wednesday of Reminiscere , A ✕ D 2011

Hebrews 10: 1-23; Matthew 26:26-28

In the Name of the Father and of the ✕ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

1 Why do others refuse to believe the simple words of Christ? Why are the clear words of Christ—"This is my Body...this is my Blood" so difficult to take at face value? Why do contrary understandings of the Lord's Supper require linguistic gymnastics to reinterpret the words of Jesus to say something they do not: "This only represents the Body of Jesus" or "This only represents the Blood of Jesus;" any logical person knows that His Body and Blood cannot be present at a million different altars all over the world on every Sunday morning?

2 Countless Hollywood movies are driven by the deathbed memo, the last words of a person before he breathes his last. These words motivate more than a few heroes of villains to fulfill some greater purpose in life. And no one dares reinterpret these words. Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, that is, the night before He died. The Lord's Supper is Christ's last will and testament, the last words He gives His disciples before His crucifixion. There is, therefore, a significant amount of importance to these words.

3 The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul write: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

4 There is no more important part of the liturgy of Holy Communion than the Words of Institution. These are the words of Christ. They do what they say. God creates by speaking. He spoke all things into existence at the beginning. He continues to create through His Word. Faith comes by hearing. The Word creates faith, gives life, does what it says. When Christ, through the mouth of a man, speaks His Words over mere bread and wine, He creates. Why does the pastor genuflect after each consecration? Because we believe what Christ says: He is truly present; and He is worthy of our worship. Why do we kneel to receive the Lord's Supper? Because we believe Jesus is truly present; not figuratively, not spiritually, but physically, incarnationally, as certainly as He took human flesh and blood, He gives His flesh and Blood in His Supper.

5 No, it doesn't make sense. How could Jesus' Body be present both at His altar, in fact, at every altar which confesses His real presence, and also, as we confess in the creeds, seated at the right hand of God? Here is where faith and logic go separate ways. If you're willing to let Jesus be Lord over your logic, you'll be able to take as fact His simple words that under bread He gives His true Body and under wine He gives His true Blood. But if you sinfully refuse to let your logic take a subordinate seat to the clear words of Christ, you won't be able to take Jesus

at His Word, believing what He says, that He gives His true Body and Blood, not symbols thereof. Repent of your natural desire to let your logic sit on the throne over God's clear word. The Word of Christ, which creates the reality it speaks, is more logical than your own thoughts.

6 Everything we do in the Lord's Supper is because we believe these simple words of Jesus. Why do we receive the Lord's Supper weekly? Because we believe Jesus' words to do this often; because we believe His words that His Body and Blood give the forgiveness of sins, which we know we desperately need. Why do we consume all the remaining Body and Blood of Jesus? Because we believe that the Word of the Lord endures forever, that the presence of His Body and Blood does not end until everything consecrated has been consumed. Why do we distribute in vessels made of precious metals? Because we believe the true presence of the Body and Blood of God deserve the finest vessels we can afford. Why don't we have perpetual adoration or Corpus Christi parades? Because we believe Jesus' words: take, eat, drink. Everything we do is because we believe these words of Jesus: This is my Body; This is my Blood.

7 Rejoice. The clear, simple words of Jesus are for you. Just as God created with a word, so He continues to create with His Words. He creates the very presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus at His altar, for you to eat and drink, for the forgiveness of your sins. These words are for you, for your comfort and confidence. The Body and Blood of Jesus are for you, for your comfort and forgiveness, so that you might know, not only what the forgiveness of sins feels like, but what it tastes like. That's how much God cares about you. He wants the things you believe to be confirmed by your senses. So that which you eat is the true Body of Jesus, as certainly as He says it is. And that which you drink is the Blood of Jesus, as certainly as He says it is. There is nothing stronger or more certain than the Word of Christ. It does what it says.

In the Name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Jeff Hemmer