

These Holy Mysteries - Eucharist, 2 of 2, Sacrifice & Real Presence

by Michael Flowers

The Eucharist is a sacred meal that emphasizes spiritual union with God and humanity, and is also a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, made possible by the real presence of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 17:46

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 6:60-61, John 6:63, 1 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 1:3

Topics: "Eucharist"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the power of confession and the transformative nature of God's word. He explains that just as God created the world through his creative power, all of creation is now headed towards renewal through the redemptive act of God becoming a human being. The speaker also discusses the significance of the Eucharist, highlighting its Jewish roots and the spiritual union it brings between God and humanity. He references John 6, where Jesus speaks about the hard saying of consuming his flesh and blood, emphasizing the real presence of Christ in the sacrament.

Transcript

In the name of God, the Father, God, the Son and God, the Holy Spirit. Amen. May be seated.

Today is number seven in our series called Why? And it's the the second part of our reflection on the Eucharist, these holy mysteries, which is taken from the second sending that we shall do again today. It's a beautiful sending and it speaks of the sacraments as these holy mysteries. And so last week we began to contemplate the Jewish roots of the sacred meal Jesus inaugurated in the upper room, commonly called the Lord's Supper.

That tells me that Southern style, because in the South you have breakfast, what? Dinner and supper. Right. OK, good.

Makes me feel at home. It can also be called communion, which emphasizes the aftermath of consuming spiritual union with God and humanity. Or if you're Roman Catholic, it can be called the mass.

You know what the mass means? You Latin guys, Misa comes from Misa. What does Misa mean? Go. I know it's not a language test.

I'm sorry. But, you know, these are common things. I think if we connect the dots, they'll make more sense.

But Misa means go like dismiss. Right. Misa.

And so the mass for Roman Catholics is is how to get out of there, how to go. Right. No, no, it's basically the sending out, having partaken of word and sacrament.

The emphasis is on now you're ready to go. That's the mass. And so the priest would say the mass has ended.

That's one of the last things he says. Right. Well, if you're Eastern Orthodox or Anglican, it describes the sacred meal as the Holy Eucharist.

It can be called other things. That's speaking about the fulfillment of the Passover Passover meal. Now, here's something to just remember, because I think it just speaks so much.

The Orthodox call the actual bread and wine that's mingled together in a in a chalice. You know, in the Orthodox Church, you're fed communion with a spoon. So when you come up, the priest feeds you with a little spoon.

Right. And that comes out of Isaiah six. OK.

And it's the mingled bread and wine is called the lamb. It's a beautiful picture of the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Beautiful pictures.

All of these are describing the meal in various ways. They're all valid and they carry different angles of meaning. Last week, we began looking at how the Lord's Supper pointed to the one and final sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

And Paul makes this connection in First Corinthians five, seven and following Christ. Our paschal lamb has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the feast.

Not with the old leaven of malice and evil, but with the bread of sincerity and truth. We're looking at the Eucharist as meal, as sacrifice and as real presence. And we sort of halted right in the middle of sacrifice.

So that's we're going to pick up today. The Eucharist is a specific sacrifice each time it is offered a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for the once and for all sacrifice we read about today in Hebrews nine. It's a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for the once and for all sacrifice made by Jesus Christ, never to be repeated.

Amen. Hebrews nine. And so when at the altar we pray, we celebrate the memorial of our redemption.

Oh, Father, in this. Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, recalling his say it with me, death, resurrection and ascension, we offer you. There's the sacrifice we offer you.

It's an offering. We offer you these gifts. What are we offering back to God in terms of the basic fundamental nature of what we're offering? We're offering the wheat and the grapes that he's given us creative power to transform into bread and wine.

That's as good as we can do. We can transform wheat into bread, but we can't transform it into the body of Christ. It takes the Holy Spirit to do that, right? It takes the words of Jesus and his institution to do that because they're effective signs because why Jesus said it.

OK, everything he says has created power because it's divine logos and fleshed in human form. The one who called the world into existence by his word holds all things together by the word of his power. And so therefore, we using that delegated authority that he gives us, he says, go in all the world and do what I told you to do.

Do this in remembrance of me is one of the things that we do almost every day. Praise the Lord. So that's why it has power.

That's why it has effectual power to become the body and blood of the Lord, because we offer you these gifts and then we pray this, sanctify them by your Holy Spirit, set them apart. This common bread and this common wine is port, but it's cheap port. All right.

But it tastes good, right, especially after we pray over it. And so, yeah, sanctify them by your Holy Spirit. We're asked.

This is all prayer. We're just saying Holy Spirit, come and set these elements apart to be for your people, the body and blood of your son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. And then the reason why we do this is because every time we need to be set apart to receive it, to sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy sacrament and serve you in unity, constancy and peace.

And at the last day, bring us all with your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom. All this we ask through your son, Jesus Christ, and we offer it back up to him by him, with him and in him in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, almighty father, now and forever. And then the church says the big man.

Yes, it's the big amen, because there we have the sacrament. All right. Well, I'm excited about this.

It's great. There's nothing more powerful than the sacrifice of Jesus. And so how is this mystery accomplished? We call it the epic places and the epic places is the calling down of the invocation of the Holy Spirit.

It's setting apart, it's consecrating the elements. It's an ancient Eucharistic prayer and we're asking God, the Holy Spirit, to set apart the matter, the physical gifts of his creation. Amen.

That's called the epic places. The Holy Spirit can transform normal bread and wine into the promise of life. Why the entire work of God in making and saving the world is accomplished by God, the father, God, the son of God, the Holy Spirit.

But that entire work is carried out by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit sent to the world to be God with us. Emmanuel, I will be with you always, even until the end of the age. This is the promise of Christ sending his spirit on the day of Pentecost so that he could be with us without measure, without, you know, without any kind of locational issues.

He can be there. He is here. God is present.

Amen. And so it's by the power of the Holy Spirit, he is the one who dwelt in Jesus, making him in a sense, the Christ Messiah means the anointed one. Isaiah 61 said, The spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach good news to the poor, etc., etc.

At his baptism, we see the epiphany of the Holy Spirit coming down upon him and anointing him and sending him into ministry. And we see the voice of the father rending the heavens open, saying, This is my beloved son, God, the father, God, the son, God, the Holy Spirit. Amen.

So he is the one who dwelt in Jesus, anointing him as the Christ. It's not his last name. It's titled Jesus Christ.

He is the one by whom Christ was conceived, the Holy Spirit. Incarnate of the Virgin Mary. He is the one who led Christ to the cross as we saw that today in the reading of Hebrews nine, the innocent victim, the one who raised him, the spirit raised him from the dead as the triumphant victor.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit makes the Eucharist his real presence. It's the Holy Spirit that makes the Eucharist his real presence, his super substantial bread, his risen presence, filling all things. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of Christ who universalizes Christ's promise to be with us always until the end of the age.

So, number three, we're into real presence. Let's consider real presence now. We've considered meal.

We've considered sacrifice, which is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, offering back to God what he's given us as a gift. And then we present that as the gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you and feed on him in your hearts by faith with Eucharistic thanksgiving.

So the gospel today is a powerful section on the Eucharist, and if Jesus wanted to get out of a lot of trouble, he could have after people started him hauling around about, gosh, you mean that we have to literally eat your flesh and drink your blood? He could have toned that down and he said he could have said, no, I'm just I'm just speaking in symbols. I'm just speaking in metaphors. But he didn't say that.

In fact, he drove it home even more. And many left because of that. So when they protest, he just drives it in deeper and deeper.

No, this is what I'm talking about, even though you didn't have the capacity to understand it. Now, in a sense, later on in that same book, when the Holy Spirit comes, he will reveal to you what I'm saying. OK, so it's going to take the Holy Spirit for his disciples to get this, for the church to get this.

But he's laying it out beforehand. Now, there's two common words in the Greek for eating, there's one for chewing and there's one for gnawing. OK, and Jesus even uses the word for gnawing like an animal, unless you gnaw on my flesh.

He doesn't say unless you just chew my flesh with your mouth closed, prim and proper. But he uses the word for now, like an animal, unless you gnaw on the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will have no life in you. Many of that day left him and after fifteen hundred years of church history, the meaning of the Eucharist became a dividing point within the Protestant reformers for the first fifteen hundred years.

It was never disputed that this is the real presence of Jesus Christ. Amen. And so Jesus says to his disciples, do you want to go to? You can always do that.

And Peter gets it and says, no, you have the words of eternal life. Let's follow Peter, many of his disciples left him over his interpretation of the sacred meal. Real presence, how let's connect the dots here, he says this in verse 60 of John six, when many of his disciples heard it, they said, this is a hard saying who can listen to it.

But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling, his disciples were grumbling. Disciples don't grumble, do they? His disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending where he was before? Here's the key. It is the spirit who gives life.

The flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to your spirit in life, Jesus is giving the interpretive key, which they couldn't understand at that moment. But he's saying that it is going to be my risen and ascended body and blood that you shall partake of my risen and ascended body and blood that is shared to us in the Eucharist.

This is how that the bread and the wine become the body and blood of Christ. It's not the Christ on the cross because of his death, resurrection and ascension. We can offer him these gifts.

You see, he's not limited anymore to Palestine. This is the key to understand what occurs at the altar. Many of our words in life are just merely descriptive, descriptive words.

They don't change reality. They merely describe reality. However, there are types of speech that's transformative.

If an officer comes up and tells you you're under arrest, whether you like it or not, you can resist arrest, but you're under arrest because the officer has the effective power and authority to arrest you. There's authorization behind the words you're under arrest or when an umpire says you're out or you're safe either way. I caught myself there.

My wife would have told me that if I did. Yeah, OK. She's the baseball fanatic.

That's great. Got to have one. If the umpire says anything, it can be contested, but it generally does no good.

And how many games have you walked away from going like that was wrong? But it didn't change because he has the authority to say you're out. And this is why confession with our lips carries such power. When it comes to confessing Jesus Christ, if you confess Jesus Christ with your lips and believe on him in your heart that God raised him from the dead, what happens? Something creative happens inside of you, you shall be saved.

There's effective power by the confession of your lips because God has told us this is the way in through confession and it's the way on through confession as well. Isaiah sums this up as rain comes down from heaven and waters the earth, so my word comes and accomplishes its purpose. It accomplishes its purpose for which it was sent, Isaiah says.

And so I go back to the very first verse in the beginning, let there be light. God creates through his creative power. He creates through that eternal logos and it comes into existence.

Therefore, through the redemptive act of God becoming a human being. All creation is now headed towards renewal. And the word of Jesus, the word of the gospel.

Matter matters because the creator, God has joined himself with his creation in the body of Jesus Christ, in the person of Jesus Christ and heaven and earth are being reunited from the split. And so the words of Jesus have effectual creative power. Therefore, when he says this is my body given for you, it carries that same created power as let there be light.

Let us eat this bread and drink this wine as the promise of Christ to feed and nourish us on his body and his blood. John 6:35, I am the bread that came down from heaven, that new manna that we read about today, if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

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