

The Body of Christ and Sacred Scripture Are Most Necessary to a Faithful Soul

by Thomas a Kempis

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Body of Christ and Sacred Scripture in a faithful soul's life, and the need for purity and sanctity in the office of the priest.

Scripture: Leviticus 20:7, John 6:35, 1 Corinthians 11:23, Hebrews 11:1, 1 Peter 1:8

Topics: "Eucharist", "Sacred Scripture"

Description

Thomas a Kempis preaches about the profound happiness and devotion experienced by the soul that partakes in the banquet of the Lord Jesus, where only He, the beloved Savior, is the nourishment. Despite the inability to behold the divine brightness of Jesus, the Sacrament allows for His true presence to be experienced. The saints in heaven, who now rejoice in God's glory, patiently awaited His coming, serving as examples for believers to walk in faith and find comfort in the holy Scriptures and the Eucharist.

Transcript

THE DISCIPLE

O MOST sweet Lord Jesus, how great is the happiness of the devout soul that feasts upon You at Your banquet, where there is set before her to be eaten no other food but Yourself alone, her only Lover, most desired of all that her heart can desire!

To me it would be happiness, indeed, to shed tears in Your presence from the innermost depths of love, and like the pious Magdalen to wash Your feet with them. But where now is this devotion, this copious shedding of holy tears? Certainly in Your sight, before Your holy angels, my whole heart ought to be inflamed and weep for joy. For, hidden though You are beneath another form, I have You truly present in the Sacrament.

My eyes could not bear to behold You in Your own divine brightness, nor could the whole world stand in the splendor of the glory of Your majesty. In veiling Yourself in the Sacrament, therefore, You have regard for my weakness.

In truth, I possess and adore Him Whom the angels adore in heaven -- I as yet by faith, they face to face unveiled. I must be content with the light of the true faith and walk in it until the day of eternal brightness

dawns and the shadow of figures passes away. When, moreover, that which is perfect shall have come, the need of sacraments shall cease, for the blessed in heavenly glory need no healing sacrament. Rejoicing endlessly in the presence of God, beholding His glory face to face, transformed from their own brightness to the brightness of the ineffable Deity, they taste the Word of God made flesh, as He was in the beginning and will remain in eternity.

Though mindful of these wonderful things, every spiritual solace becomes wearisome to me because so long as I do not plainly see the Lord in His glory, I consider everything I hear and see on earth of little account.

You are my witness, O God, that nothing can comfort me, no creature give me rest but You, my God, Whom I desire to contemplate forever. But this is not possible while I remain in mortal life, and, therefore, I must be very patient and submit myself to You in every desire.

Even Your saints, O Lord, who now rejoice with You in the kingdom of heaven, awaited the coming of Your glory with faith and great patience while they lived. What they believed, I believe. What they hoped for, I hope for, and whither they arrived, I trust I shall come by Your grace. Meanwhile I will walk in faith, strengthened by the example of the saints. I shall have, besides, for comfort and for the guidance of my life, the holy Books, and above all these, Your most holy Body for my special haven and refuge.

I feel there are especially necessary for me in this life two things without which its miseries would be unbearable. Confined here in this prison of the body I confess I need these two, food and light. Therefore, You have given me in my weakness Your sacred Flesh to refresh my soul and body, and You have set Your word as the guiding light for my feet. Without them I could not live aright, for the word of God is the light of my soul and Your Sacrament is the Bread of Life.

These also may be called the two tables, one here, one there, in the treasure house of holy Church. One is the table of the holy altar, having the holy Bread that is the precious Body of Christ. The other is the table of divine law, containing holy doctrine that teaches all the true faith and firmly leads them within the veil, the Holy of holies.

Thanks to You, Lord Jesus, Light of eternal light, for the table of Your holy teaching which You have prepared for us by Your servants, the prophets and Apostles and other learned men.

Thanks to You, Creator and Redeemer of men, Who, to declare Your love to all the world, have prepared a great supper in which You have placed before us as food not the lamb, the type of Yourself, but Your own most precious Body and Blood, making all the faithful glad in Your sacred banquet, intoxicating them with the chalice of salvation in which are all the delights of paradise; and the holy angels feast with us but with more happiness and sweetness.

Oh, how great and honorable is the office of the priest, to whom is given the consecration of the Lord of majesty in sacred words, whose lips bless Him, whose hands hold Him, whose tongue receives Him, and whose ministry it is to bring Him to others!

Oh, how clean those hands should be, how pure the lips, how sanctified the body, how immaculate the heart of the priest to whom the Author of all purity so often comes. No word but what is holy, none but what is good and profitable ought to come from the lips of the priest who so often receives the Sacrament of Christ. Single and modest should be the eyes accustomed to looking upon the Body of Christ. Pure and

lifted up to heaven the hands accustomed to handle the Creator of heaven and earth. To priests above all it is written in the law: "Be ye holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy."

Let Your grace, almighty God, assist us, that we who have undertaken the office of the priesthood may serve You worthily and devoutly in all purity and with a good conscience. And if we cannot live as innocently as we ought, grant us at least to lament duly the wrongs we have committed and in the spirit of humility and the purpose of a good will to serve You more fervently in the future.

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