

The Daily Bread of Life

Feed your household with the bread that endures to eternal life.
Feast on the words of God and works of Jesus.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

When you look at Christ, you see God

At first glance it may seem like Christ is saying that he is less than God, because he had to learn from the Father and get his authority from the Father. He is actually making the point that he is equal to the Father, because he does the things that the Father does. Because he is also a true man, he was given authority to do these things, and he learned from the Father. As the Scriptures tell us, when Jesus was a boy he sat among the teachers at the temple, listening and asking them questions. "He grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men," Luke 2:52.

In the context of this story from John 5, the Jews were offended that Jesus would claim to be God, though he appeared to be only a man. They tried to accuse him of sinning by working on the Sabbath, because he had healed a lame man on that day. In Jesus' reply, he points out the things that he does and will do which clearly show his divine nature as the Son of God. He calls on us to believe in him, in spite of the humble appearance in which he comes to us.

The Text

John 5:19-21

¹⁹ Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only **what he sees his Father doing**, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. ²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so **the Son gives life** to whom he is pleased to give it.

Keys to Understanding

I tell you the truth. Literally, *truly, truly*. This is Jesus' characteristic way of introducing a very important point.

What he sees his Father doing. In everything that Jesus does, we see what God does. There is perfect harmony between Jesus' will and actions and the Father's will and actions. Everything he does is done with the same authority and power of God the Father himself.

Greater things. Jesus had healed a man who had been an invalid for 38 years. He now promises greater things—greater than making the crippled man stand, Jesus will make the dead stand and walk.

The Son gives life. The present tense verbs and the context show that this is something that Jesus is doing now. He is giving spiritual life to all who believe in him, a life that will result in a bodily resurrection to eternal life also.

Keys to Applying

Jesus' point is that the things he does are the things that God the Father does. Just like a son sees what his father is doing and learns to do the same, as a true man Jesus has learned to do everything that God the Father does, and with just as much authority. The Jews had accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath law by healing a man on that day. Jesus replies that he could not possibly have broken the law, because he does nothing except what God the Father himself does and has taught him to do. He is the Son. But he also promises greater things as proof of his divine authority—they have seen a lame man walk, but they will also see the dead rise to life and walk. Jesus is talking first about those who are spiritually dead who will be given life from hearing his words, but then he also says that all the dead will rise. Those who have believed have received life in him, and will rise to live eternally; but those who have not believed will rise and be judged guilty of sin and condemned to eternal death in hell. Jesus says that this authority was given to him because, as a man, he would not have that authority. But because he is God and the Son of God, the man Jesus has been given authority to give life and to judge.

Questions

1. How do you react to this information that Jesus, as true God, would have to “learn” from God the Father?
2. How does your sinful nature react to the simple, earthly appearance of the gifts that Jesus gives in the water of Baptism, the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, and the human preaching of his Word?
3. How does your faith react to Jesus' words that all of this, what he has said and given, is from the Father?

Because we are Lutherans... From Luther's explanation to the Second Article

I believe that Jesus Christ, *true God*, begotten of the Father *from eternity*, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.

Jesus is the eternal Son of God, but he has not always been a man. He was born as a little baby in Bethlehem. Today he is still both true man and true God, and will be forever.

Bible Story

The Transfiguration

Matthew 17:1-5

1. When the disciples saw Jesus' bright appearance on the mountain, they saw that he is God.
2. When the Father said, "This is my Son," the disciples knew that Jesus is God.
3. When the Father said, "Listen to him," we know that we are to listen to Jesus' words just as much as if God the Father were to speak to us.
4. This means that we need to learn the stories about Jesus, read the Bible and study it, and be in church where God speaks to us through the preaching of his Word.

In Liturgy and Song

Use this hymn verse as a closing prayer. Notice that it takes the thought of the day, that Jesus is God, and gives us words to respond in love for what he has done as our Savior and God.

434:1,3

1 Lord, you I love with all my heart; I pray you ne'er from me depart;
With tender mercies cheer me.
Earth has no pleasure I would share; Heaven itself were void and bare
If you, Lord, were not near me.
And should my heart for sorrow break, My trust in you no one could shake.
You are the treasure I have sought; Your precious blood my soul has bought.
Lord Jesus Christ, **My God and Lord, my God and Lord,**
Forsake me not! I trust your Word.

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In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

If we honor God, we should honor Jesus

The Text
John 5:22-23

²² Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

Keys to Understanding

judgment determining the eternal fate of each person, whether they should live or be condemned.

Honor. To treat him as great and trustworthy.

Keys to Applying

Because he is a man, and to sinful human eyes appears to be nothing more than a man, Jesus offers this other proof of his deity: The Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son. In court cases, the most serious cases are decided by the highest authority. In matters of eternal life and death in hell, we would expect the highest authority in heaven to be the judge. This is a job for God alone, and it is a job that has been given to the Son. From this Jesus tells us that the Father wants Jesus to have every bit as much honor and worship as he has, because he also is true God. What does it mean to honor Jesus? It means that we hold his words in the Bible as very important, talk about them often, and be there to listen when the pastor explains them at church. It means that we will baptize our children, because we respect the power of Christ's word and command about baptism, *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved*, Mark 16:16. Honoring Jesus also means that we will make every effort to be there when he offers us forgiveness of sins and eternal life in his body and blood at the Lord's Supper.

Questions

1. Since Jesus is the judge, what is the bad news for people who are religious but don't believe in him?
2. Is it possible to honor Jesus, but not honor his desire that we gather together in church to hear his Word?
3. Is it possible to honor Jesus, but neglect his command that we gather together and celebrate the Lord's Supper?
4. Consider the greatness of the gifts that Jesus offers to us at church in Word and Sacrament. Aside from being dead, violently ill, or worshiping somewhere else (even if you can only do it by yourself in your home), are there actually any good reasons to miss church and miss that opportunity to honor Jesus?
5. What danger do we put ourselves in if we neglect his gifts?
6. Jesus continues to reach out to us with Word and Sacrament, though we may scarcely notice, seldom appreciate, and mostly neglect it. His gift of life is always the same, full and free.

Because we are Lutherans...

From the Small Catechism, Martin Luther's explanation of Baptism

FIRST

What is baptism?

Answer: Baptism is not merely water, but it is water used according to God's command and connected with God's Word.

What is this Word of God?

Answer: As recorded in Matthew 28:19, our Lord Christ said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."¹

From the Large Catechism

⁶ Observe, first, that these words contain God's commandment and ordinance. You should not doubt, then, that Baptism is of divine origin, not something devised or invented by men. As truly as I can say that the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer are not spun out of any

¹ *The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. 1959 (T. G. Tappert, Ed.) (348). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

man's imagination but revealed and given by God himself, so I can also boast that Baptism is no human plaything but is instituted by God himself. Moreover, it is solemnly and strictly commanded that we must be baptized or we shall not be saved. We are not to regard it as an indifferent matter, then, like putting on a new red coat.²

²⁴ To put it most simply, the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is to save. No one is baptized in order to become a prince, but as the words say, to "be saved."

²⁵ To be saved, we know, is nothing else than to be delivered from sin, death and the devil and to enter into the kingdom of Christ and live with him forever.

²⁶ Here you see again how precious and important a thing Baptism should be regarded as being, for in it we obtain such an inexpressible treasure. This shows that it is not simple, ordinary water, for ordinary water could not have such an effect. But the Word has. It shows also (as we said above) that God's name is in it.³

Bible Story

Philip Baptizes the Ethiopian

Acts 8:26-39

1. By this time, Jesus had already ascended into heaven.
2. Philip honored Jesus by speaking about what Jesus had done.
3. Philip honored Jesus by speaking about baptism, so that this eunuch understood what baptism was and wanted to have it.
4. The Ethiopian eunuch honored Jesus by being baptized and by believing in the power of his baptism.
5. This would be a good time to remember that baptism works because Jesus has commanded us to do it, and he has promised that it washes away all our sins.

² *The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. 1959 (T. G. Tappert, Ed.) (437). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

³ *The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. 1959 (T. G. Tappert, Ed.) (439–440). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

In Liturgy and Song

208

1 Great God, what do I see and hear? The end of things created;
The judge of mankind shall appear On clouds of glory seated.
The trumpet sounds; the graves restore The dead which they contained before:
Prepare, my soul, to meet him!

2 The dead in Christ shall first arise At that last trumpet's sounding,
Caught up to meet him in the skies, With joy their Lord surrounding.
No gloomy fears their souls dismay; His presence sheds eternal day
On those prepared to meet him.

3 But sinners filled with guilty fears Behold his wrath prevailing,
For they shall rise and find their tears And sighs are unavailing;
The day of grace is past and gone; They trembling stand before his throne,
All unprepared to meet him.

4 O Christ, you died, and yet you live; To me account your merit,
My pardon seal, my sins forgive, And cleanse me by your Spirit.
Beneath your cross I view the day When heav'n and earth shall pass away,
And thus prepare to meet you.

This hymn captures both the joy and terror of judgment day. Christ will come with the authority to judge. For us, it will be a day of joy because he comes to rescue us. For those who have not believed in him, it will be a day of terror and punishment. The fourth verse of this hymn is the Christian's prayer as we await Judgment Day. Our hope is in our Savior and his gift of forgiveness given through Word and Sacrament.

Prayer

Use the 3rd verse from hymn 434 as a prayer.

3 Lord, let at last your angels come; To Abram's bosom bear me home
That I may die unfearing.
And in its narrow chamber keep My body safe in peaceful sleep
Until your reappearing.
And then from death awaken me That my own eyes with joy may see,
O Son of God, your glorious face, My Savior and my Fount of grace.
Lord Jesus Christ, My prayer attend, my prayer attend,
And I will praise you without end.

The Daily Bread of Life

Feed your household with the bread that endures to eternal life.
Feast on the words of God and works of Jesus.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Gives God's Gift of Life

The Text

John 5:24

²⁴ "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

Keys to Understanding

Whoever hears... Not only hear, but also receive it as true. The word implies belief.
Believes him who sent me. We accept Jesus' word because it is the Word of the Son of God, spoken with equal authority and power as God the Father himself.

Keys to Applying

People fear the unknown, especially the unknown of death and what may follow. God's judgment may be a fearful thing, especially for those who have not seen God and don't know what he might think about them. But in Jesus, our fears are taken away. We see God, and we hear what he has to say to us. He has given us a promise of life and forgiveness for all who hear him. Since he is the one who judges, we know that there will be no surprises in the Last Judgment. Indeed, the gift of life has already been given to us through faith in Jesus. He has made our souls alive and able to hear his words, love him, and obey him. We have a relationship with him, a life with him that will never end—not even with physical death. Our souls will live on until the day when our bodies are raised to life also, and body and soul are united to live with him forever.

Questions

1. Though we have sinned much, especially by neglecting God's Word and the blessings he gives in the Sacraments, it is actually quite easy to get on God's good side. What is asked of us?
2. What actions will we take, if we intend to listen to his Word and believe in him?
3. What confidence does he give us regarding the end of our life and his second coming?

Because we are Lutherans... From the Large Catechism

²² In other words, we go to the sacrament because we receive there a great treasure, through and in which we obtain the forgiveness of sins. Why? Because the words are there through which this is imparted! Christ bids me eat and drink in order that the sacrament may be mine and may be a source of blessing to me as a sure pledge and sign—indeed, as the very gift he has provided for me against my sins, death, and all evils.⁴

This precious gift of forgiveness in the Lord's Supper is something that Christ has given and commanded us to use because he knows how best to care for our souls. It is presumptuous to think that you don't need it often, as often as it is offered. Neglecting to come to the Lord's Supper is not honoring Christ, but dishonoring and despising him.

⁴² Now it is true, we repeat, that no one should under any circumstances be coerced or compelled, lest we institute a new slaughter of souls. Nevertheless, let it be understood that people who abstain and absent themselves from the sacrament over a long period of time are not to be considered Christians. Christ did not institute it to be treated merely as a spectacle, but commanded his Christians to eat and drink and thereby remember him.

⁴³ Indeed, true Christians who cherish and honor the sacrament will of their own accord urge and impel themselves to come. ⁵

⁴ *The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. 1959 (T. G. Tappert, Ed.) (449). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

⁵ *The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. 1959 (T. G. Tappert, Ed.) (451). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

Bible Story

Jesus Forgives the Paralytic's Sins

Matthew 9:1-8

1. The Jews were right when they thought that only God can forgive sins.
2. Jesus showed that he had the authority to forgive sins by doing another thing that only God can do—making this man walk.
3. Jesus has also given us the authority to forgive each other's sins, John 20:23.

In Liturgy and Song

384:3,4

3 His oath, his covenant and blood Support me in the raging flood;
When ev'ry earthly prop gives way, He then is all my hope and stay.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

4 When he shall come with trumpet sound, Oh, may I then in him be found,
Clothed in his righteousness alone, Faultless to stand before his throne.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

The bold words remind us of the power of the Sacraments to keep us strong. Jesus said, "This is my blood of the covenant," and after receiving the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper you hear the words, "May this true body and true blood of our Lord Jesus strengthen and keep you in the true faith until life everlasting." Paul wrote in Galatians, "All of you who have been baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ." Treasure the Sacraments as God's way of keeping you with him until he comes on Judgment Day.

Prayer

O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home. Amen.

Hymn 441:1