

LD 30; Heb. 7:23-28; Col. 3:1-4; Understanding the Lord's Supper Rightly I. His Sufficient Sacrifice II. His Bodily Presence

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, do you know where you are? I mean, do you know where you are physically present- currently? Well, this might seem to be a strange question. Of course, I know where I am. But understanding where someone is presently situated gets to the heart of our reading this morning. If you know where you are physically present- do you know where Jesus is physically present? Since the resurrection of Jesus was a real/ physical resurrection; what happened after He ascended? Did the body of Jesus just simply vanish or cease to exist- was His flesh vaporized and spread across the sky? Or does Jesus retain His resurrected, physical flesh still today? When we read in Mt. 26 that "this is my body, broken for you," what did He mean? In what way is the bread broken at the Lord's Supper the body of Jesus Christ? So today as we return to consider the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as we consider this theme: Jesus Christ unites His people to Himself in the Lord's Supper as He remains in glory.

I. His Sufficient Sacrifice

In our first point we will see that there is a direct connection between our understanding of the sufficiency of Jesus' sacrifice and the physical presence of Jesus Christ. If the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross as the Lamb of God was sufficient to take away the sins of the world once and for all in His one death, then His body no longer needs to be offered and His flesh needs not be sacrificed any more. But if the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was not sufficient, then it stands to reason that His flesh would continue to need to be present so that His sacrifice might continue. So then, how many times must Jesus die on the cross? How many times must He be sacrificed? Our reading from Heb. 7:27 makes it clear, Jesus died once for all. He has no need to be continually sacrificed, because He died once for all when He offered Himself up. Since the sacrifice of Jesus was perfect- no other sacrifice was needed. The reason that sacrifices were a continual aspect of the OT was because no sacrifice of animals was ever perfect and complete! Added to this, the priests in the OT had to offer multiple sacrifices because of their own sins as well. But since Jesus

is both the perfect priest and the complete sacrifice, His work of atonement was completed once and for all. To say this another way, His work secured the complete forgiveness of all our sins. In contrast to this teaching, the RCC teaches that Jesus' work as a sacrifice was not and is not complete. The Mass is the repeating or continuation of what Jesus began on Calvary. To prove this point, consider the sacrificial nature of the Mass. Complete with their own priests and altars. In this way, the RCC attempts to continue or repeat what Jesus began. But remember, as Jesus said on the cross, it is finished! When Jesus took His seat at the Father's side in Heb. 10:12, it is made clear that His work as a sacrifice was both complete and sufficient! A single and perfect sacrifice. There is no more blood that needs to be shed and no more bodies that need to be broken- His was and is enough! Now the reason that this is so important- that we understand the sufficiency of Jesus Christ's sacrifice- is because if His sacrifice was not complete, we would never have enduring comfort and peace. We would be left asking ourselves- and I forgiven now? Have I done enough? Have I forgotten some sin or committed some mortal rebellion? But since He died once for all- for our complete forgiveness- we can have complete confidence and peace in His work. Our sins are fully and completely forgiven! Now this is good news! Your sins- past, present and future- all of them have been nailed to the cross and you bear them no more! You are in Christ fully and completely forgiven! No more sacrifice and no more atonement are needed! As Heb. 7:25 assures- He has saved you to the uttermost! Completely and fully saved! But the Roman Catholics do not enjoy this comforting peace. To prove this point, consider that in the RCC there is a Mass offered for the dead! Jesus need's to be sacrificed again for the sake of the departed. Or consider their teaching on purgatory- even after death there is still more suffering that we need to endure in order to be made completely holy and forgiven. And also consider their teaching on justification. The RCC teaches that you can lose your justification and need to be justified again- you can go back and forth from forgiven and then not forgiven again! As QA 80 puts it- the RCC teaches that the living and the dead do not have their sins forgiven unless Christ is still offered for them daily. So there is no comforting assurance found in their teaching. But praise God, through Jesus

Christ all our sins have been completely forgiven- cast into the depth of the sea! We are saved to the uttermost because He died once for all! As Heb. 10:10 confirms- we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And in Heb. 10:12- Christ offered for all time a single sacrifice.

II. His Bodily Presence

Now that we have considered the sufficiency of His sacrifice, in our second point we consider how exactly Jesus is present when we celebrate the Lord's Supper. These two points are really connected- if Jesus' sacrifice as offered once on the cross- then He need not be physically present in the bread and the wine. But if Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was not sufficient and needs to be continued, then Jesus' body must be physically present in the bread so that He can, in fact, be offered as a sacrifice. So what does the LS teach- what does the Bible proclaim concerning the body of Jesus. As our QA 80 says, Christ is himself in His body now in heaven at the right hand of the Father. The Lord's Supper testifies that Jesus Christ is now in heaven in His human nature. As we confess concerning His ascension, when Jesus went up into glory He went in the body. In other words, the Scriptures teach that Jesus is in fact in heaven in His flesh. As Heb. 7:26 says, He is seated in glory and exalted about the heavens. Or as we read in Col. 3:1, Christ is seated at the right hand of God. When Jesus was lifted up in the sight of His apostles, His body was not destroyed or vaporized, but He retains all the characteristics of a true, human body. As Heb. 10:12 confirms, Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, and He sat down at the right hand of God where He waits. When Jesus is speaking to His disciples in Mt. 26, He stated, "this is my body as He held up the bread." Now His disciples understood that Jesus was speaking in covenantal terms- symbolic in their meaning. The bread in Jesus' hand was not His literal, physical flesh. This is instructive, for we continue to see that the bread at the LS does not actually become or change into the physical body of Jesus either. No, His body remains in glory. That is not to say that no union takes place, however. There is a union that takes place at the LS, but that union is brought about by the Holy Spirit. In other words, Jesus does not come down to us

in the flesh when we celebrate; but rather by the Spirit we are brought up to where Jesus is! The bread is not changed into His body- but we are being changed into His image! As Col. 3:3 says- your life is hidden with Christ! By the Spirit we are further grafted into Christ- we do not partake of His body with the physical flesh but we do in fact receive Him and grow into Him by way of the Spirit. This truth also changes how and what we worship. We do not kneel down before the elements, but rather we direct our glory to heaven where Jesus is seated. Not dragging Him down to earth- but lifting our songs of praise to heaven where He is. Listen to this quote from the Catholic Church Catechism: We acknowledge the real presence of Christ “under the bread by bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord. The Catholic Church has always offered and still offers to the sacrament of the Eucharist the cult of adoration.” So in order to avoid this condemnable idolatry as QA 80 says, we do not bow to the elements but rather bow in our hearts to Christ who is in heaven.

Since Jesus is and remains in heaven, the concept of Transubstantiation is unattainable and is not Scriptural. As you may remember, transubstantiation is the teaching of the RCC on the change of the elements into the body and blood of Jesus. The body of Jesus really eaten and His blood is really drunk. But this cannot be since Jesus is and remains bodily in heaven. No, the bread remains bread and the wine remains wine. But that is not to say that Jesus is not present! As we saw last week, Christ really does nourish our bodies and souls with His crucified body and poured our blood. So it is not wrong to say that Jesus is really and truly present when we celebrate the Lord’s Supper! As Jesus promised, I will be with you to close of the age and I will not leave you as orphans, but I will come to you. And also in Mt. 18, where two or three are gathered in His name, He will be there with them. So if Jesus is really and truly present with us- and since His presence is not physical- it stands that He is present with us by way of His Spirit. It is by way of the presence and the working of the Spirit that we are truly fed and nourished with Christ! It is by the Spirit that the presence of Jesus is received into our midst- and in this way Jesus is and will always

remain with us! Where the Mass teaching that union happens because we are eating Christ's flesh. The LS teaches that union is a product of the Spirit as we partake by faith.

As we close, the sufficiency of Jesus Christ's sacrifice is the very thing that we remember and celebrate at the Lord's Supper. If His sacrifice was sufficient and once for all, then no other blood needs to be shed!

Jesus Christ unites His people to Himself in the Lord's Supper as He remains in glory. As we read from Col. 3- set your minds on things above and not on earthly things. That is the very thing that the Mass does- it sets your mind on earthly things like bread! Rather, the LS is designed to set our minds on things above- looking to and worshipping Christ who is seated in glory! Knowing where you are- and where Christ is- helps us direct our worshipping rightly! Today we remain on earth as we direct our faith and worship to heaven where Christ is. But one day, we will be where He is and see Him face to face.