

Greetings to you all in the name of Jesus, the risen Lord!

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Emmaus Conference planners for inviting me to participate in this event. As director of the Seminary Chorus of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary I have been privileged to visit Tacoma and Seattle several times over the years. This visit allowed the company of my wife, and we've enjoyed the sights of the Sound over the last several days. I am also pleased to greet brothers from the ELS whom I have not had the pleasure of meeting and to renew acquaintances with men I had in class at the seminary. When I read Dr. Just's essay last week, I realized a professor of liturgics and homiletics may not be as qualified to react to his presentation as a New Testament man or someone who teaches hermeneutics, but I have done my best and am happy to be here with you.

I would also like to say a very sincere thank you to Dr. Just not only for this essay but for everything he has done for the church. Anyone who studies and thinks and writes knows the effort it takes to produce professional theological work, and anyone who reads, assimilates, and reacts knows that Dr. Just's work is of the highest caliber. His own synod owes him a debt of gratitude, but we who still read the writings of men from our long-time sister synod also are grateful. I had not read his 1991 volume, *The Ongoing Feast*, until last week, but his Luke commentary has been helpful to me as I work with homiletics students during the C year. *Heaven on Earth* is, of course, on the "must read" list of any student of the liturgy.

I am especially thankful to Dr. Just for the courageous and confessional position he has taken concerning the liturgical worship of the Lutheran Church. A brother suggested to me awhile ago that the best way to understand Art Just is to read his conclusion to *Heaven on Earth*. I had read it, but read it again in preparing for this conference. Speaking for too much of contemporary Lutheranism, Dr. Just wrote:

As modernists we were caught up in the culture's inability to grasp the mystery of the Creator of the cosmos deigning to humble Himself under the means of simple words, simple water, simple bread and wine. With our scientific worldview we ceased to believe in such miracles as that which the liturgy proclaims--that with "angels and archangels and all the company of heaven" we here on earth join the worship of heaven in the person of Jesus. This was just too incredible for modern men and women to believe. We wanted more, and catechized by a secular culture bent on entertaining itself to death and a religious culture that exalted experience and feelings, we succumbed. Forgoing over the greatest possible treasures on earth we settled for trinkets from the world's marketplace, when in the Divine Service we were being offered heaven itself (page 178).

The synod I serve also grapples with this post-modern phenomenon. I will not judge the hearts of those who abandon the liturgical theme--for I honestly believe they have souls in mind--but I will question their judgment. When challenged, too many of my brothers are too quick to protest that "everything is permissible" without remembering that "not everything is beneficial." My class notes include words that Dr. Just wrote in *Lutheran Worship History and Practice*:

A battle is taking place for the heart and soul of our church. This battle is being waged between those who want to move toward an American form of Protestantism with Calvinistic roots and those who want to regain historic Lutheranism. At stake...is nothing more and nothing less than the very ethos of our church (page 23).

While I share Dr. Just's concerns, I cannot hope to feel the passion he feels on this issue. The liturgical malaise is not as widespread in my synod as it is in his, and is not supported by synodical administration. He is fighting bigger battles than I am. Whether on defense or on offense, whether in warring or winsome words, Dr. Just stands on a battlefield in his own church body, holding up the cross of Christ and the means of grace through which the Spirit would convey Christ to us all.

The brother's advice to begin with Just by reading how he concludes was good advice, and it has helped me understand, in a small way perhaps, where the essayist may be coming from in this essay and his other work. You have given us much to think about, Dr. Just, and much of it is outside our traditional experience and understanding. The questions I raise are not to be construed as criticism but constitute an honest attempt to get a handle on what you are sharing with us.

Premise

The focus of the essay is the conversation on the road and the meal in the home of the Emmaus disciples recorded in Luke 24:13-35. The essayist makes it clear why he considers this account to be of such importance:

Page 47 - The Emmaus meal is pivotal because it continues Jesus' pre-resurrection table fellowship and begins the church's table fellowship in celebration of Easter. As an act of "the breaking of the bread" (24:35), it serves as the "connecting link" between the earlier meals of Jesus with his disciples and the later celebrations of the Lord's Supper by the early Christian church. Jesus' post-resurrection meals reminded the disciples—and remind the church today—that the risen Lord intends for his church to continue to gather at table in remembrance of him and in anticipation of the eternal banquet. The Emmaus meal in particular reminds the church of the reality of Christ's presence with his church at table. And the Emmaus meal, like the Lord's Supper, is a revelatory proclamation that Jesus, who suffered and died, is now risen (cf. 1 Cor 11:26).

The essayist wants to demonstrate for us why the Emmaus meal on Sunday evening has an extraordinary stature and how it sets a pattern for our Word and Sacrament worship today.

What is the third day?

We confess in the Apostles' Creed: "The third day he rose again from the dead." I am probably demonstrating my failure to read widely in theological literature when I confess I have never seen the concept of the "three days" or "the third day" used in any other context than that of the time Jesus spent in the grave after his death. But the discussion in the essay offers a different definition of the third day.

Page 3 - Of the synoptic evangelists, Luke takes the greatest care to show that the three-day period of Jesus' passion and resurrection begins on the Day of Preparation (Friday—Thursday night in modern terms) with Jesus' Passover (22:14) and ends with the Emmaus meal on Sunday, the first day of the week.

Page 11 - [The three days] began with the Day of Preparation (Good Friday -- *but cf. above*), when the hour of the passion began and the power of darkness arrived.

Page 34 - Throughout the gospel, Luke uses “on the third day” (□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□) exclusively as a reference to the final day of the three-day sequence, when Jesus rises from the dead.

I re-studied the passages in which these terms are used, and came away scratching my head. Especially Matthew’s account of Jesus’ conversation with Pharisees looking for a sign reinforced the traditional thinking: “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40). We all know the old rule of thumb: to the Jewish mind “any part of a day is a day.” Other references are not quite as specific, but consistently connect the third day timeframe to the crucifixion, i.e., the day of Jesus’ death. This has been our common understanding. We sing:

’Tis the spring of souls today:
Christ has burst his prison
And from three days’ sleep in death
As a sun has risen. (LSB 487:2)

Dr. Just notes that the other evangelists may have written differently before the passion and resurrection account, but contends

Page 5 - As soon as Easter Sunday, the first day of the new week, is introduced by Luke in 24:1, there is a shift in how this day is to be perceived.

Luke 24:46 might give some justification to the connection of third day with the entire suffering experience, but 24:7 and even 24:21 connect the third day to the crucifixion, the Savior’s death day. The question remains, therefore: Why define the third day as something different from our traditional and historical understanding?

The essayist makes his rationale clear.

Page 12 - Luke frames this three-day period with meals. It began with Jesus’ Passover as the Day of Preparation began at sundown (Maundy Thursday according to our calendar). It concludes with the Emmaus meal as the first day of the new week (Easter Sunday—the eighth, eschatological day) draws to a close.

Page 49 - The three days of passion and resurrection are capped by the Emmaus meal. The revelation of Jesus as the risen Christ, who lives forevermore, gives table fellowship an added eschatological dimension. The new era of salvation that has begun will never end, and the resurrection life revealed at Emmaus will continue at the eternal banquet in the presence of Jesus, whose glory will then be fully revealed.

It is part of Dr. Just’s argument that the Emmaus meal is connected to the Sacrament. His definition of “the third day” makes the connection. We have to ask--politely, of course--if this is exegesis or eisegesis.

What is the significance of Sunday?

Dr. Just joins many Lutheran pastors in lamenting the attitude too many of our members have over against the Lord’s Day. The custom of Sunday worship is hardly a given anymore, even in the Midwest, and I hear it hasn’t been a social custom in the Pacific Northwest for generations. We’ve lost something important, I think, in the mad dash to

the 6:30 p.m. Monday night “special”: the 35 minute version of the Sunday high mass sans Bible class, Sunday school, church clothes, and the pot roast. Dr. Just wrote:

Page 1 - A clear sign of this loss of time as sacred is our thorough neglect of Sunday as the central day of worship.

Page 58 - Today we like to say that Sunday is a little Easter. But for early Christians, Easter was a *big* Sunday, *the* day of worship. We must restore Sunday not only as the day of worship, but also restore it as the day in which the Lord’s Supper is celebrated as the moment when heaven and earth come together in Christ. The more we learn to live eschatologically, that is, to live knowing that Jesus Christ, the eternal one, lives among us and within us, the more local congregations will reflect in their worship the confidence and authenticity of Christ’s redeeming action.

I could not agree more.

It becomes clear, however, that the essayist is looking to restore much more than the early *practice* of the New Testament Church or the long *tradition* of the Christian Church and of western culture. The question must be asked: What is the significance of Sunday worship the essayist finds in the account of Jesus and the Emmaus disciples?

Page 30 - The Christian hearer of the gospel knows that Sunday, the first day of the week, the third day in the sequence of Jesus’ passion and resurrection, is theologically significant as the first day of the new creation, the day of the resurrection, the eighth, eschatological day.

How is Sunday, the first day of the week, theologically significant? According to Dr. Just,

Page 3 - If we look carefully at both the Old and New Testament understandings of the Sabbath we shall see that the Sabbath, like the Temple, was provisional until the Messiah came to fulfill both temple and Sabbath by his presence in the creation, as well as through his suffering, death, and resurrection.

Page 33-34 - Throughout the gospel, Luke uses “on the third day” (□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□) exclusively as a reference to the final day of the three-day sequence, when Jesus rises from the dead. “The third day” is used in 24:7, 21, 46 to portray Easter Sunday as the final, climactic day in salvation history. This was anticipated throughout the gospel, reaching fulfillment in this final chapter (24:21), where it becomes a fundamental part of the Lukan kerygma that is to be proclaimed by the emerging church in Acts (Lk 24:46). There can be no doubt that “on the third day” is part of Luke’s resurrection Christology, a reference to the resurrection occurring on the first day of the new week of God’s new creation, the eighth, eschatological day. The “third day” (24:21) prepares the hearer for the risen Christ to open the scriptural meaning of his resurrection to the disciples. In that way it is a necessary link to the next verses.

(You’ll note, of course, that this interpretation relies on the new definition of “the third day” which I addressed previously.)

Perhaps I have missed the essayist's point, but I come away from my read with the impression that the essay has made public worship on Sunday prescriptive for the church rather than descriptive.

Page 6 - This third day, which was anticipated at various points earlier in the gospel, now reaches fulfillment and shifts from being a stumbling block (cf. 24:21) to a fundamental part of the kerygma that is to be proclaimed by the emerging church (24:46) because it was foretold in the OT Scriptures.

Isn't it true that our time-tested and confessional opinion concerning Sunday is that, while it deserves honor precisely because it is the day of the Savior's resurrection and has special significance as such, it is no more "holy" than any other day of the week? I don't want to be misunderstood. Luther was extraordinarily sensitive about the traditions of the Church--and so am I--but he understood that believers honor traditions not because they are dogma but because they are the faith-wrought legacy passed down from other Christians.

What about the general precepts of the church, the fast and festival days?
Answer: What has been established of old by the agreement of the church and out of love for God and for just reasons must necessarily be observed, not because it is of itself necessary and unchangeable but because the obedience of love which we owe God and the church is necessary (*What Luther Says*: 903).

I think I understand his purpose here, but I ask: Has Dr. Just made dogma of tradition as he contends that Sunday is a "fundamental part of the kerygma that is to be proclaimed by the emerging church"?

Let *Augustana* speak to that:

How, then, should Sunday and other similar church ordinances and ceremonies be regarded? Our people reply that bishops or pastors may make regulations for the sake of good order in the church, but not thereby to obtain God's grace, to make satisfaction for sin, or to bind consciences, nor to regard such as a service to God or to consider it a sin when these rules are broken without giving offense...The same applies to the regulation of Sunday, Easter, Pentecost, or similar festivals and customs. For those who think that the Sabbath day had to be replaced by Sunday are very much mistaken. For Holy Scripture did away with the Sabbath, and teaches that after the revelation of the gospel all ceremonies of the old law may be given up (AC, Art XXVIII:53, 57-59).

Incidentally, I'm not quite ready to agree that Augustine would contend for the temporal understanding of the Sabbath in the New Testament Church. The citation in footnote 4 (page 5) seems to allude to a spiritual Sabbath which we all understand and believe (Hebrews 4:9).

What is table fellowship and how does it relate to the means of grace and Holy Communion?

The critical theme in this essay, as well as in Dr. Just's several books on worship and his commentary on Luke's Gospel, is the table fellowship concept. Note how table fellowship intersects with the definition of "the third day" and the mandate of Sunday.

Page 12 - Luke frames this three-day period with meals. It began with Jesus' Passover as the Day of Preparation began at sundown (Maundy Thursday

according to our calendar). It concludes with the Emmaus meal as the first day of the new week (Easter Sunday—the eighth, eschatological day) draws to a close.

Page 7 - The Emmaus meal occurs “on the first day of the week.” It is the climax of Luke 24, which is itself the conclusion of the gospel. The table fellowship of Jesus, highlighted in the Emmaus account, has been a prominent aspect of Jesus’ ministry throughout the gospel, a manifestation of God’s eschatological kingdom present among people.

I’m not sure this is the most succinct identification of the table fellowship concept, but it seems to present a decent summary:

Pages 7-8 - The Emmaus meal is part of God’s pattern of table fellowship with his people—a pattern that stretches back to the creation and will continue in the Christian church through these last days until the Lord returns. The Emmaus meal is particularly important because it is the first post-resurrection meal described in Luke-Acts, and it helps define the significance of all Jesus’ fellowship meals, both before and after the resurrection.

The first question that arose in my mind was:

Is table fellowship in Luke 24 Holy Communion?

It seemed impossible that a Lutheran could contend for such a suggestion. Lenski snoots: “Imagination had made this the sacrament. A strange sacrament--broken off in the very first act of it and never completed” (Luke, page 1192). Article XXII of the Apology is willing to grant that the Emmaus meal may be the Sacrament but only if one grants that “the naming of one element also includes the other.”

Does Dr. Just see synecdoche in Luke 24:35? Obviously, he understands the dilemma here:

Page 46 - The narrative of the Last Supper indicates that the cup of wine is essential for celebrating the Supper

and admits that

Page 46 - None of these three accounts mentions wine.

But I searched for clarity that I didn’t find in this:

Page 46 - Even though the accounts of Jesus’ two post-resurrection meals in Luke 24 do not mention wine, they are part of Luke’s depiction of Jesus’ table fellowship. In 24:35 the disciples will look back at the Emmaus meal and describe it as “the breaking of the bread,” a phrase that later will denote the communal celebration of the Lord’s Supper by the early church (Acts 2:42; cf. also Acts 2:46; 20:7).

And then in the footnote:

⁶⁶ However, Jesus and the Emmaus disciples reclined (Lk 24:30), indicating a typical Jewish meal of table fellowship, and such a meal normally would include wine. If a Jewish supper lacked wine, it would be considered deficient or even scandalous, especially on a festive occasion (cf. Jn 2:1–11).

Words earlier in the essay failed to resolve the question.

Page 8 - The Emmaus narrative is the place where other threads are woven in together into Luke's table fellowship matrix. These include Luke's geographical perspective, the theme of divine revelation, proclamation from prophecy and pattern, and the eucharistic motif.¹⁴

Of course, this doesn't say that the Emmaus meal was Holy Communion, but the footnote that accompanies this point is more pointed (page 8--highlighting is mine):

¹⁴J. Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1557–59, sees four motifs in the Emmaus narrative: (1) geographical; (2) revelatory; (3) Christological as fulfilling OT prophecy; and (4) **eucharistic**. R. Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses*, 69–155, argues that 24:35 recapitulates the major theme of the Emmaus story, namely, that the mission of the church will be centered in the apostolic community's table fellowship, which involves both the words of Jesus and the **Meal of Jesus**. J. Dupont, "The Meal at Emmaus," *The Eucharist in the New Testament*. Ed. J. Delorme (Baltimore: Helicon, 1964), 105–21 maintains that the focus of the story is the breaking of bread, where Jesus **distributes the Eucharist**.

On the other hand, the essayist notes a difference between the Emmaus meal and Holy Communion.

Page 48 - The Last Supper of Jesus is different from all prior meals, for it is there that he first declared the bread to be "my body, which is being given on behalf of you" and the cup to be "the new testament in my blood, which is being poured out on behalf of you" (Lk 22:19–20). The Last Supper is the only meal that Jesus instructed his disciples to repeat in his remembrance (22:19).

Frankly, I find it difficult to ascertain if Dr. Just sees an essential difference between Holy Communion and the Emmaus meal. He seems to hesitate in his equivocation. I'll write with a smile that I couldn't help but feel that he would like to make a single thread of the two, but knows he can't do that among his Lutheran associates (although he could do it with his Roman friends). I think the following is illustrative of this possible explanation:

Page 47 - Though most commentators classify the Emmaus meal either as the church's first Eucharist or as an ordinary meal, this commentator views it as a unique meal within the Lukan table fellowship matrix. In the teaching and at the meal Christ himself is present, revealing himself, strengthening faith in his atoning death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins, and uniting his disciples with God.

This of course, leads to the next question:

If the Emmaus meal is not Holy Communion but table fellowship, what was the specific value of the table fellowship?

Previously I summarized the essay's table fellowship concept in these words:

Page 7 - The Emmaus meal is part of God's pattern of table fellowship with his people—a pattern that stretches back to the creation and will continue in the Christian church through these last days until the Lord returns.

One can certainly understand the Emmaus meal as part of a continuum with all the other meals at which Jesus participated both as the pre-incarnate Christ (e.g. with Abraham) and as the incarnate Lord (e.g. with the sinful woman). Surely the presence of Jesus at table and meal, either before his resurrection or after it, brought with it grace and truth, for where he spoke, there are the words of life.

According to the essay, however, it is not the Savior's speaking alone that makes the Emmaus account significant, but rather that Jesus revealed himself "in the breaking of the bread." The first question that arises is: What is the connection between the revelation of Jesus to the two disciples and the breaking of the bread? Is there a connection of agency or simply a connection of time? Must we see "the evangelist's careful shaping of the table fellowship matrix" (page 47) in this Gospel account or might we simply be reading the Spirit-breathed words of a careful historian ("he took bread, broke it, and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him."). When the disciples reported the events of the day to the eleven, did they see in the breaking of the bread the mode through which Jesus revealed himself or simply the time at which they recognized him ("Then the two disciples told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.")?

But it is not necessarily the specific association of the breaking of bread and the revelation of Jesus that is the most thought-provoking piece of the essay. What catches the attention of any Lutheran is the apparent interpretation that the Word of Christ was insufficient to bring the Emmaus disciples to faith in the risen Savior.

Page 14-15 - By the time this fourth circle is completed, a dramatic change has come over the disciples. The mystery of the things that have happened has been revealed by the risen Lord. But the disciples recall that during Jesus' conversation with them on the road, even though the Lord spoke to them and opened up the Scriptures to them, they still did not have opened eyes (24:32). The catechesis on the road—the exegetical lesson in hermeneutics—*by itself* did not enable them to recognize the presence of the risen Lord. The instruction in the Word was a necessary precondition for recognizing Jesus, but Luke demonstrates in his conclusion that the Word is to be combined with the breaking of the bread (24:35, where □□ □□□ □□□□, "in the way," occurs again). The teaching alone was not sufficient but was complemented with the meal. Nor would the meal alone be enough. The meal must be received with knowledge of the prior catechesis, which furnishes the proper understanding of the passion and resurrection facts according to the Scriptures.

Page 53 - Faith's certainty (□□□□□□□□; 1:4) comes only when Christ interprets the passion and resurrection facts and reveals himself in the breaking of the bread.

Page 54 - But the full knowledge of faith comes not only from understanding the passion facts, but also from recognizing Christ in the breaking of the bread.

Three questions present themselves immediately: 1) Were the women returning from the tomb and Mary Magdalene uncertain in faith because they did not participate in the breaking of the bread? 2) Were the eleven on Easter evening or Thomas a week later unsure because they did not participate in the breaking of the bread? 3) How could John have come to recognize and believe that Jesus was present among the seven when he did not participate in the meal of bread and fish until after the revelation?

Another question must be raised: Did Jesus reveal himself to the two men to awaken faith or to strengthen faith? Had he resuscitated their faith already on the road and then solidified it at the table? Is there no significance to the disciples' own words, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" Is it so hard to understand that their eyes of faith were opened to believe that the verities of the Old Testament Scriptures had been fulfilled in Jesus (as Simeon and Anna believed them) before their eyes were opened to recognize that the risen Christ himself was with them?

Does the Emmaus meal set a pattern for our celebration of the Lord's Supper?

Of course, this is the main issue. And the main issue is not whether both Word and Sacrament are gifts from God. The main issue is whether the gift of the Sacrament is essential to complete or fulfill the gift of the Word.

Page 54 - But the full knowledge of faith comes not only from understanding the passion facts, but also from recognizing Christ in the breaking of the bread. At the end the Emmaus journey, as the disciples sit at table, Jesus is made known to them as the crucified and risen Savior. Luke's theological passive "was known" (□□□□□□; 24:35) implies the same agent as his passives in 24:16 (□□□□□□□□□□, "were held back") and 24:31 (□□□□□□□□□□□□□□, "were opened"): God alone opens eyes by imparting faith (cf. 1 Cor 2:6-16). The recognition of Jesus in the breaking of the bread (Lk 24:31) is so important that the disciples emphasize it again in 24:35. Most significant in the evangelist's summary (24:35) is the way in which the two elements, *Jesus' exegesis of "the things in the way" and the recognition of him "in the breaking of the bread" complement each other*. Teaching and eating, Word and Sacrament, form the foundation of Christian worship, in which catechesis prepares for and leads to Eucharistic fellowship (see Acts 2:42).

Page 49-50 - The first fellowship meal in the new era begun with Jesus' resurrection comes at Emmaus, where the order once again is clearly set forth: teaching then eating, *the Word of God followed by a meal with God*. In Acts this same divine pattern of teaching and eating is followed in the table fellowship practice of the church (Acts 1:1-4; 2:42). Luke's summary of the entire Emmaus episode lays the foundation for early Christian worship: "And they were expounding the things in the way and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread" (24:35). *This is the pattern preserved in the Divine Service: the Service of the Word followed by the Liturgy of the Lord's Supper*.

Our Lutheran and confessional fathers have been very careful to assert that the Word is sufficient for faith and that the sacraments do not convey something less or more than the Word. We subscribed to this in the Apology:

For surely our hearts ought to be certain that when we are baptized, when we eat the body of the Lord, and when we are absolved, God truly forgives us on account of Christ. And God moves our hearts through the word and the rite at the same time so that they believe and receive faith just as Paul says [Rom. 10:17], "So faith comes from what is heard." For just as the Word enters through the ear in order to strike the heart, so also the rite enters through the eye in order to move the heart. The Word and the rite have the same effect (*Apology*, Art. XIII:4-5).

After extolling the Sacrament because of its many blessings, Franz Pieper wrote:

Still, there is no absolute necessity of the Lord's Supper, because the remission of sins is not divided among the various means of grace, but each one of them offers the full remission of sins provided by Christ's *satisfactio vicaria* and works, or strengthens faith. All means of grace have the same purpose and the same effect. Hence he who believes the preached or written Word of the Gospel is, through his faith in the Word, in possession of the full remission of sins and salvation, though circumstances keep him from using the Lord's Supper (*Pieper*, Vol. III, page 392).

Are we reading something different in this essay?

Toward a conclusion

A number of years ago a middler student at the seminary wrote a 22 page paper for his dogmatics class in which he worked to discredit defenses for an every-Sunday communion. He gave me a copy of his essay and asked for my reaction. I replied that I found no errors in it, but added: "What kind of an ecclesiastical world do we live in that leads you to waste all this time and all this paper on discouraging the Sacrament."

I don't like to be in a position in which some might perceive a view that devalues or discourages the Sacrament. The Sacrament's blessings to us are inestimable. But in my love and appreciation for the Sacrament I cannot say more than the Scriptures say to defend and encourage it. I wrote at the beginning of this reaction that Dr. Just has given us much to think about. Perhaps he has given us more than we need to think about.

In the conclusion to *Heaven and Earth*, the essayist relates a conversation with his five-year-old that led him to a new perspective in the public worship debate: "It was time to go on the offensive, not in a polemical or contentious way, but in a positive or winsome manner. It was time to highlight for people the gifts that are contained in our liturgical tradition" (page 272).

I cannot hold a candle to you, friend, as an exegete or liturgical theologian. I am much more your student than I am your teacher. But I make bold to suggest that the simple words of Jesus, "given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins" and "Do this in remembrance of me" will create far greater love for and loyalty to the Sacrament and our liturgy than discussions on Lukan structures, textual interpretations that flirt with allegory, and logical conclusions that no layman can understand. I daresay that these former studies may do more to deconstruct allegiance to the liturgy because men who may be foolish in their regard of adiaphora are not stupid in their knowledge of the Scriptures.

The Protestantization of American Lutheranism besets us on one side and post-modernism on the other. Perhaps we live in the final stage of the end times. But there is such a thing as trying too hard. Whether the sword is of steel or sophisticated scholarship, we do well to sheathe it. *Unus sensus simplex*. That has been our Lutheran hermeneutical principle for generations. But in that one simple sense the Holy Spirit employs the gospel to call, gather, enlighten, and sanctify the whole Christian Church on earth and keep it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In our desire to defend the truth we dare not lose ourselves among those who are unable "to grasp the mystery of the Creator of the cosmos deigning to humble Himself under the means of simple words, simple water, simple bread and wine" (*Heaven on Earth*, page 178). In his day Luther

saw a similar sacramental malaise, not only among the simple folk but also in his theological opponents. His remedy in the Large Catechism was to apply the Scriptures with its simple command (do this) and simple promise (for the forgiveness of sins)--and he didn't expect all would hear or believe. So we live and work and pray: Come, Lord Jesus.

J. Tiefel
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