

Lutheran Confessions

Formula of Concord, SD, VII, 61-66

61] There is, therefore, a two-fold eating of the flesh of Christ, one spiritual, of which Christ treats especially **John 6, 54**, which occurs in no other way than with the Spirit and faith, in the preaching and meditation of the Gospel, as well as in the Lord's Supper, and by itself is useful and salutary, and necessary at all times for salvation to all Christians; without which spiritual participation also the sacramental or oral eating in the Supper is not only not salutary, but even injurious and damning [a cause of condemnation].

62] But this spiritual eating is nothing else than *faith*, namely, to hear God's Word (wherein Christ, true God and man, is presented to us, together with all benefits which He has purchased for us by His flesh given into death for us, and by His blood shed for us, namely, God's grace, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and eternal life), to receive it with faith and appropriate it to ourselves, and in all troubles and temptations firmly to rely, with sure confidence and trust, and to abide in the consolation that we have a gracious God, and eternal salvation on account of the Lord Jesus Christ. [He who hears these things related from the Word of God, and in faith receives and applies; them to himself, and relies entirely upon this consolation (that we have God reconciled and life eternal on account of the Mediator, Jesus Christ),—he, I say, who with true confidence rests in the Word of the Gospel in all troubles and temptations, spiritually eats the body of Christ and drinks His blood.]

63] The other eating of the body of Christ is *oral or sacramental*, when the true, essential body and blood of Christ are also orally received and partaken of in the Holy Supper, by all who eat and drink the consecrated bread and wine in the Supper—by the believing as a certain pledge and assurance that their sins are surely forgiven them, and Christ dwells and is efficacious in them, but by the unbelieving for their judgment and condemnation, **64]** as the words of the institution by Christ expressly declare, when at the table and during the Supper He offers His disciples natural bread and natural wine, which He calls His true body and true blood, at the same time saying: *Eat and drink*. For in view of the circumstances this command evidently cannot be understood otherwise than of oral eating and drinking, however, not in a gross, carnal, Capernaïtic, but in a supernatural, incomprehensible way; **65]** to which afterwards the other command adds still another and spiritual eating, when the Lord Christ says further: *This do in remembrance of Me*, where He requires *faith* [which is the spiritual partaking of Christ's body].

(Bente, F., *Concordia Triglotta, Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997*).

Put it into Practice

These questions have been put together to help you as you extend and apply tonight's Scripture to your life.

Prayer

Grant, we implore You, almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of Your grace may be mercifully relieved; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **AMEN** (*Fourth Sunday in Lent, Laetare*)

Word of God: St. John 6:1-15 (on back)

Questions to Ponder in Prayer

There is a change in time, as well as in location, of Jesus' ministry. Jesus has left Jerusalem and crossed over to the region of Galilee.

1. In terms of numbers, Jesus is at the height of his ministry. Why was a great crowd following him? Because of his teaching? (also Jn 2:22-23, 6:26,36)
2. Jesus crossed over the Sea to have some time away from the crowd to teach his disciples. Where did Jesus take his disciples in Galilee? Read Exodus 24:1, 9-11. Or Matthew 5:1,
3. While teaching his disciples, the crowds came to him. What is Jesus' concern already when he sees them coming (v.5)?
4. The Jewish Passover Feast (Jn 2:13, 11:55) mentioned in 6:4 is the second (or third) Jesus will celebrate with his disciples a year before he dies. Does the nearness of the Passover have a greater significance?
5. Why does Jesus ask, "Where shall we buy bread for this people to eat?" What two things did He hope the disciples would come to realize?
6. From their words in verses 7-9, did they realize their own inadequacy and Jesus' sufficiency? (Also see Luke 9:12-13)
7. Though Jesus had compassion on the crowds when they first appeared, from the parallel accounts when did the Twelve urge Jesus to send the crowds away (Mt 14:15f, Mk 6:35, Lk 9:12)?
8. With verse 10, Jesus has the "men"(people) sit down. Why?
9. Why is it important that there is plenty of grass? Were the people "in want"? (See Psalm 23)
10. What three parts form the table blessing in verse 11?
11. Read Deuteronomy 18:15-20 to see what "Prophet" they referred?
12. Where would they take Jesus to make him "king"?
13. Though they saw the sign, what kind of a king did they think He was?
14. Why did Jesus withdraw from them? (John 18:36)
15. Why did the primitive church depicted the feeding of the 5,000 (Both the bread and the fish (ΙΧΘΥΣ)) on the catacombs and bas-reliefs as a symbol of the Eucharist, the Bread that never fails? (John 6:32-33, 6:35f, 6:48f, 53-58)
16. Finally, how does Jesus regard the crowd who has followed him around the sea? (John 6:25-27, 36)

6:30 PM "Learn by Heart"

Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest...

Hymn #99, stanza 3-4
Christian Questions with their
Answers, 1-9
John 6:33

7:00 PM "Catechesis"

+ Opening Verses
"O Lord, open my lips..." p.224

+ Ascription of Praise
"Praise to you, O Christ.
Lamb of Our Salvation." p.225

Reading
St. John 6:1-15 (back)

Hymn
"Not All the Blood of Beasts" #99

Catechesis on... (back)
St. John 6:1-15
Liturgy
Catechism

--prayer based on reading
+ Responsive Prayer for Catechesis (insert)

Ten Commandments
Lord's Prayer
Apostles' Creed
Psalm 73
Collect of the Day
Prayers based on the text
The Collect for Peace
Benedicamus
Benediction

Catechesis on St. John 6:1-15

¹ After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is *the Sea* of Tiberias. ² Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. ³ And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. ⁵ Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" ⁶ But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. ⁷ Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little." ⁸ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ⁹ "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" ¹⁰ Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. ¹¹ And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." ¹³ Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵ Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone. (NKJV)

The Promised Provisions of God

"How would it be possible for a person to starve to death who serves God with fidelity and furthers His kingdom?"

After all, He gives the whole world more than enough. The earth would have to run out of bread or the heavens would have to run out of rain before a Christian would die of starvation; indeed, God Himself would have to starve to death first. Now, since He has created and given so superabundantly and **given**

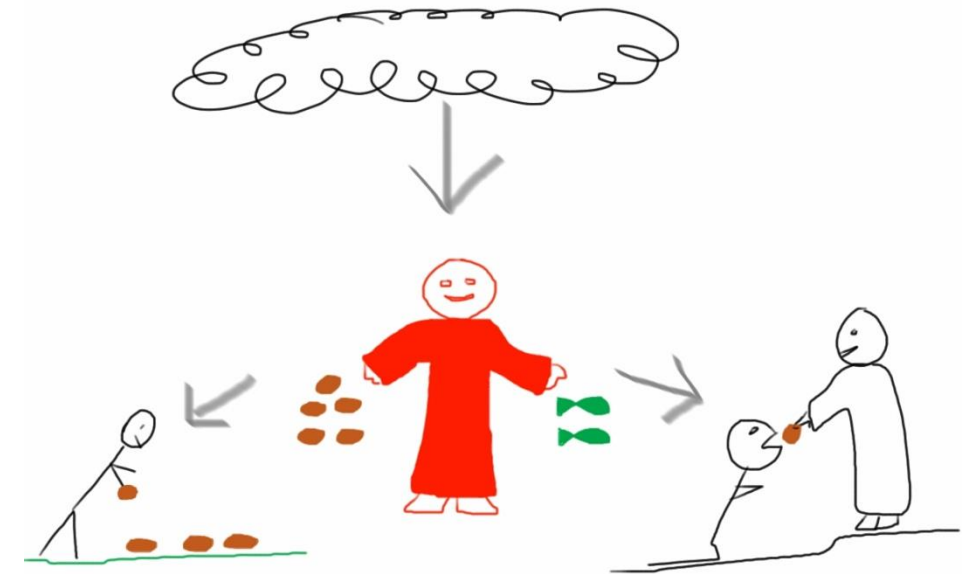
such a sure promise that He will give enough and will do so before we look around or become aware of it, why plague yourself with this terrible anxiety and greed? Everywhere, but especially in the Psalter, Scripture is full of statements like these (Ps. 33:19): "He feeds the pious in time of famine"; and (Ps. 37:19, 25): "I have never seen a pious man beg for bread." **He will not let your situation make a liar out of Him. Just believe!** If the present world of noblemen, peasants, and city people refuses to do this, He can find other people or other means through which to give, and to give more than they can ever take away from you" (Luther's Works, volume 21, p.207). Matthew 6:33, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, **and all these things shall be added to you.**" Matthew 7:7-8, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

The Bread from Heaven

Matthew 4:4, "But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" (*which is taken from Dt 8:3*) Deuteronomy 8:3, "So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord." (*the context of John 6*) John 6:31-35, "Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, **but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.** ³³ For **the bread of God** is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' ³⁴ Then they said to Him, 'Lord, give us this bread always.' ³⁵ And Jesus said to them, '**I am the bread of life.** He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.'"

"There is, therefore, a two-fold eating of the flesh of Christ, one spiritual, of which Christ treats especially John 6, 54, which occurs in no other way than with the Spirit and faith, in the preaching and meditation of the Gospel, **as well as in the Lord's Supper**, and by itself is useful and salutary, and necessary at all times for salvation to all Christians; without which spiritual participation also the sacramental or oral eating in the Supper is not only not salutary, but even injurious and damning [a cause of condemnation]" (FC SD VII 61).

Catechesis on St. John 6:1-15



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Christian Questions with their Answers

“The Lutheran Church differs from all other churches in being essentially the Church of the pure Word and unadulterated Sacraments.” (Preface to the Book of Concord).

Public Confession of Faith and Lord’s Supper

“...In them the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession is repeated, and some articles are explained at greater length from God’s Word, and, besides, the cause and grounds are indicated, as far as necessary, **why we have abandoned the papistical errors and idolatries, and can have no fellowship with them**, and also why we know, and can think of, no way for coming to any agreement with the Pope concerning them (FC SD Rule and Norm, para. 7)

“However, **lest there be silently ascribed to us the condemned errors of the above enumerated factions and sects** [“of which evil the papistic tyranny, which persecutes the pure doctrine is the chief cause”]... **we could not forbear testifying also against them publicly, before all Christendom, that we have neither part nor fellowship with their errors, be they many or few**, but reject and condemn them, one and all, as wrong and heretical, and contrary to the Scriptures of the prophets and apostles, and to our Christian Augsburg Confession, well grounded in God’s Word” (FC SD XII 7-8).

“Dr. Luther, who, above others, certainly understood the true and proper meaning of the Augsburg Confession, and who constantly remained steadfast thereto till his end, and defended it, shortly before his death repeated his faith concerning this article with great zeal in his last Confession, where he writes thus: ‘I rate as one concoction, namely, **as Sacramentarians and fanatics, which they also are, all who will not believe that the Lord’s bread in the Supper is His true natural body**, which the godless or Judas received with the mouth, as well as did St. Peter and all [other] saints; he who will not believe this **(I say) should let me alone, and hope for no fellowship with me**; this is not going to be altered [thus my opinion stands, which I am not going to change].’ 34] From these explanations, and especially from that of Dr. Luther as the leading teacher of the Augsburg Confession, **every intelligent man who loves truth and peace, can undoubtedly perceive what has always been the proper meaning and understanding of the Augsburg Confession in regard to this article**” (FC SD VII 33-34).

Acts 2:42 “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

1 Corinthians 1:10 “I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.”

1 Corinthians 11:26, “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

Romans 16:17, “I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.”

Closed Communion based on Unity in Doctrine

“Again, according to the Gospel or, as they say, by divine right, there belongs to the bishops as bishops, that is, to those to whom has been committed the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, no jurisdiction except to forgive sins, to judge doctrine, to reject doctrines contrary to the Gospel, and **to exclude from the communion of the Church wicked men, whose wickedness is known, and this without human force, 22] simply by the Word**. Herein the congregations of necessity and by divine right must obey them, according to Luke 10, 16: He that heareth you heareth Me. (AC XXVIII 21-22).

“In the pure churches and schools these public common writings have been always regarded as the sum and model of the doctrine which Dr. Luther, of blessed memory, has admirably deduced from God’s Word, and **firmly established against the Papacy and other sects**; and to his full explanations in his doctrinal and polemical writings we wish to appeal, in the manner and as far as Dr. Luther himself in the Latin preface to his published works has given necessary and Christian admonition concerning his writings, and has expressly drawn this distinction namely, **that the Word of God alone should be and remain the only standard and rule of doctrine**, to which the writings of no man should be regarded as equal, but to which everything should be subjected” (FC SD Rule and Norm, para. 9)

“But those who are unwilling to learn it {*The Small Catechism’s teaching*} should be told that they deny Christ and are no Christians, **neither should they be admitted to the Sacrament**, accepted as sponsors at baptism, nor exercise any part of Christian liberty, but should simply be turned back to the Pope and his officials, yea, to the devil himself. (Small Catechism, Preface 11)

“Thus [According to this doctrine] the churches will not condemn one another because of dissimilarity of ceremonies when, in Christian liberty, one has less or more of them, **provided they are otherwise agreed with one another in the doctrine and all its articles**, also in the right use of the holy Sacraments, according to the well-known saying: *Dissonantia ieiunii non dissolvit consonantiam fidei*; “Disagreement in fasting does not destroy agreement in the faith” (FC SD X 31).

Hebrews 13:9-10, “Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.”

2 John 10-11, “If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; 11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.”

Matthew 7:15-16, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?”