

The Exhortation in the Divine Service

Passages

1 John 1:9, If we **confess our sins**, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those **who hunger and thirst for righteousness**, For they shall be filled.

1 Corinthians 11:28 **But let a man examine himself**, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

2 Corinthians 13:5 **Examine yourselves** as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has **made me free** from the law of **sin and death**.

Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

John 6:56 “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood **abides in Me, and I in him**.

Romans 4:25 who **was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification**.

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross, and follow Me**. (Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23)

John 13:34 “A new **commandment** I give to you, that you love one another; **as I have loved you, that you also love one another**.

1 Corinthians 10:17 For we, though many, are **one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread**.

Lavabo Ceremony.--**Psalm 26:6-8** (KJV) I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD: 7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. 8 LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

Examination

1 Corinthians 10:14-22 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. 16The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? **17For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread**. 18Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? 20Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. 21 You cannot drink **the cup of the Lord** and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of **the Lord’s table** and of the table of demons. 22Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. 19For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. 20Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. 21For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

23For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

26For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

27Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28**But let a man examine himself**, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. 33Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

AN EXHORTATION TO THE COMMUNICANTS, 1525

Translated by Paul Zeller Strodach, Revised by Ulrich S. Leupold

In March, 1525, Nicholas Hausmann, a pastor in Zwickau and Luther's friend, the man to whom Luther had dedicated *An Order of Mass and Communion*,¹ sent Luther copies of a number of German masses for review. In his reply, dated March 26, 1525, Luther primarily criticized the music.² The only textual revision he suggested was this *Exhortation to the Communicants* to replace the preface with its versicles in the Roman mass. Luther sketched out this short exhortation on a sheet of paper and enclosed it with his reply to Hausmann.³

An Exhortation to the Communicants

Dearest friends in Christ: You know that our Lord Jesus Christ, out of unspeakable love, instituted at the last this his Supper as a memorial and proclamation of his death suffered for our sins. This commemoration requires a firm faith to make the heart and conscience of everyone who wants to use and partake of this Supper sure and certain that Christ has suffered death for all his sins. But whoever doubts and does not in some manner feel such faith should know that the Supper is of no avail to him, but will rather be to his hurt, and he should stay away from it. And since we cannot see such faith and it is known only to God, we leave it to the conscience of him who comes and admit him who requests and desires it. But those who cling to open sins, such as greed, hatred, anger, envy, profiteering, unchastity, and the like and are not minded to renounce them, shall herewith be barred [from the Supper] and be warned faithfully not to come lest they incur judgment and damnation for their own souls, as St. Paul says [I Cor. 11:29]. If however someone has fallen because of weakness and proves by his acts that he earnestly desires to better himself, this grace and communion of the body and blood of Christ shall not be denied to him. In this fashion each must judge himself and look out for himself. For God is not mocked [Gal. 6:7], nor will he give that which is holy unto the dogs or cast the pearls before swine [Matt. 7:6].
(Luther's Works, v. 53, P. 104)

Concerning communion with non-Christians

- 1 Corinthians 10:20-21, “No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord’s table and the table of demons.”
- 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?”

Concerning communion with the openly unrepentant

- 1 Corinthians 5:11-13 “But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. ... ‘Expel the wicked man from among you.’”
- 1 Corinthians 11:27-28, “Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.

Concerning communion with those who do not confess the presence of Christ’s Body and Blood

- 1 Corinthians 11:29-32, “For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. 32 When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.”

Concerning communion with those for whom there is not unity in doctrine and practice

- 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.

The Exhortation is not the same as Examination or Confession

²⁸ Thus we teach what a wonderful, precious, and comforting thing confession is, and we urge that such a precious blessing should not be despised, especially when we consider our great need. If you are a Christian, you need neither my compulsion nor the pope's command at any point, but you will compel yourself and beg me for the privilege of sharing in it. ²⁹ **However, if you despise it and proudly stay away from confession, then we must come to the conclusion that you are no Christian and that you ought not receive the sacrament.** For you despise what no Christian ought to despise, and you show thereby that you can have no forgiveness of sin. And this is a sure sign that you also despise the Gospel. (Large Catechism, Confession)

³⁸ We gladly keep the old traditions set up in the church because they are useful and promote tranquillity, and we interpret them in an evangelical way, excluding the opinion which holds that they justify. ³⁹ Our enemies falsely accuse us of abolishing good ordinances and church discipline. We can truthfully claim that in our churches the public liturgy is more decent than in theirs, and if you look at it correctly we are more faithful to the canons than our opponents are. ⁴⁰ Among our opponents, unwilling celebrants and hirelings perform Mass, and they often do so only for the money. When they chant the Psalms, it is not to learn or pray but for the sake of the rite, as if this work were an act of worship or at least worth some reward. **Every Lord's Day many in our circles use the Lord's Supper, but only after they have been instructed, examined, and absolved.** The children chant the Psalms in order to learn; the people sing, too, in order to learn or to worship. ⁴¹ Among our opponents there is no catechization of the children at all, though even the canons give prescriptions about it. In our circles the pastors and ministers of the churches are required to instruct and examine the youth publicly, a custom that produces very good results. ⁴² Among our opponents, there are many regions where no sermons are preached during the whole year, except in Lent. ^(tr-327) But the chief worship of God is the preaching of the Gospel. (Apology XV)

False teachers are to be rebuked and false teachings are to be corrected.

Ephesians 4:1-3, I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Galatians 6:1-2, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

2 Timothy 4:1-5 "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. **Convince**(*correct*), **rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.** 3For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

5But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” Also 1 Tim 4:13, 5:20

Titus 1:10-14, For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 **whose mouths must be stopped**, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. 12 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” 13 This testimony is true. Therefore **rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith**, 14 not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. **Titus 2:15**, “Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”

All Christians are commanded to avoid those who teach or tolerate falsehood in their midst.

1 Timothy 6:3-11, ‘**If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words**, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. **From such withdraw yourself**. 6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 **But you, O man of God, flee these things** and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

2 Timothy 3:1-17, “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. **And from such people turn away!** 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, **so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith;** 9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

10 But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**