

March 15

How Can It Be?

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 *“For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, ‘This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.”*

One of the themes we have been discussing in some of these Lenten devotions is stewardship of the mysteries of God. Communion is one such mystery. You may ask—and I know I have—how simple pieces of bread and a small sip of wine can do anything. How can just a short sentence or two spoken over them, change them? How can this seemingly small thing do anything?

That’s part of the mystery to us. We can’t fully understand how it works. If we look at the wafer that is placed into our hands or the wine that is in the cup, they don’t look like Jesus’ body and blood. They don’t taste like flesh or blood. But they are. How?

The answer is a simple one. Jesus’ words are what makes the Sacrament what it is. As with His institution of Baptism, it is the words of Jesus that cause it to be the saving and forgiving gift to us. If it weren’t for His words, we would be eating only bread and drinking only wine. But because of His words, we are receiving His body and blood. We can’t fully wrap our mortal minds around this mystery, but that’s the truth about it. And this is the truth that Paul is reminding the floundering church in Corinth about.

In this section of 1 Corinthians, Paul is admonishing the Corinthian church (which had loads of problems) specifically for their failure to observe the Lord’s Supper with the care they should. And as he reminds them of what this Supper is about, he tells them that this is not something he just came up with. He is delivering to them what he “received from the Lord” (v. 23). He is acting as a steward of the mystery. The Apostles had the wonderful blessing of being with Jesus during His earthly ministry and directly receiving the charges He made to the Church. They did not keep these great mysteries a secret but, instead, went into the whole world to share the news of Jesus and His teachings.

So, we also receive the great gifts of Christ and spread the good news of what He has done and what He does daily in our lives as He forgives us and renews us. We don’t always understand everything. But that’s ok because our words aren’t the ones that make the difference. It’s Jesus’ words that matter. And we share with others what we have received, what Jesus has taught and done, and the great gifts those things offer.

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, we have received all good things from You, and so we share them with others. You have given us the wonderful gifts of faith, forgiveness, and an eternity with You. You have given us the Sacraments and Your Word. Thank You. Forgive us for the times we stumble and scorn You and Your gifts. Keep us in the faith until You call us home. In Your Name we pray. Amen.*