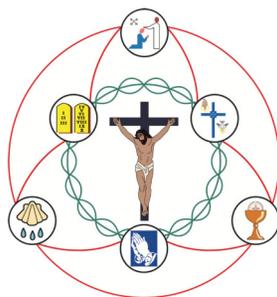


Our Moment Before God: Part XIV **The Preface & The Proper Preface**



It has been said, *"Like small steps, the Preface (LSB pg. 160, TLH pg. 24) moves us from that part of the service that centered on the Word of God (readings, sermon) toward that part of the service that centered on the meal Christ instituted"* (Meaningful Worship, Brauer).

Let us look at the Preface *in* three sections:

1. The Preface begins with a salutation, *"The Lord be with you. And also with you"* (*"And with thy Spirit"*) Earlier these same words occurred before the readings. Now they occur before the Holy Communion. Why? The salutation focuses us where God is for us and how He comes to us — in Word and Sacrament. *"The Lord be with you"* focuses the attention of the congregation on the Body and Blood of Christ that is about to be given them for the remission of sins. The congregation responds to the pastor by praying the same thing for him as he prepares the Sacrament. There in the Holy Communion God is with us and God is for us!
2. The Preface continues with, *"Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord."* Here we encourage one another to worship God rather than being tied to worldly thoughts (Lamentations 3:41, Ps. 25:1). Origen said a Christian must, *"lift up his soul before lifting up his hands; lift up his mind before lifting up his eyes, and, before standing to pray, lift up his spirit from*

things of earth and direct it to the Lord of all."

3. The Preface concludes with, *"Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give Him thanks and praise."* This recalls Jewish prayer before meals. Also, at the Passover, the head of the family would speak similar words. The Scripture points out that when Jesus was celebrating the First Holy Communion at Passover He gave thanks to God (Luke 22:19, 1 Cor 11:24). Following Jesus example, we begin The Communion with thanks as well. (Luther Reed)

The thanksgiving continues with the Proper Preface which is a prayer thanking God for His various blessings in Christ. The Proper Preface begins with the words, *"It is good (meet), right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You..."* What follows is based on the season of the church year (see LSB pg. 208 & 216 for general versions).

The conclusion of the Proper Preface reminds us of what is about to happen in the Sacrament, *"Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven..."* As Christ comes to us in His Body and Blood, heaven meets earth, and we join with the entire Christian Church that has gone before and that will come after us. At the altar, the entire company of heaven comes down to earth. In this Sacrament we are truly given a foretaste of the Feast that is to come, and we join in the praise that is offered before His throne *"...with angels and archangels..."* as we rejoice in this Moment Before God!