Body Language ~ Lord's Day 25

Our faith is weak; God gives the gospel to hear, see, touch, and taste. These things are called the Sacraments.

Christ appointed two: baptism and Supper.

SIGN: ordinary elements point to cleansing and Christ's sacrifice.

SEAL: God confirms His covenant promise. Romans 4:11: circumcision sealed the righteousness Abraham already had by faith.

Thomas Watson said they are like a tiny piece of wax with little value in itself; bearing the king's seal on a deed confirms a great inheritance. Water, bread, wine are ordinary; their worth is the promise and authority of Christ. Our inheritance: forgiveness, adoption, eternal life.

WHY WERE THEY GIVEN? (Q. 65, 67–68) Because God is gracious to weak believers. His Word is perfectly true, but He knows how often we doubt. John Calvin called a sacrament an outward sign by which God seals His promises upon our consciences to sustain our weak faith. Both Word and sacrament direct us to Christ's one sufficient sacrifice.

GOD'S BODY LANGUAGE. A husband's words of love are true; an embrace confirms those words personally. The sacraments are the gospel made visible, like God's body language. They assure us of what He has already declared in His Word.

REAL COMMUNION WITH CHRIST. These are more than reminders. The Holy Spirit truly nourishes believers through Christ's appointed means. The elements are not magical; their power belongs to God. John once reclined near Jesus' breast. Though Christ is bodily in heaven, the Spirit unites us to Him. By faith we enjoy His fellowship, as though taking Him into our bosom. Watson: "The word preached begets grace, the Lord's supper nourishes it."

HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH THEM? Value them. They are gifts Christ commanded for His church, not empty routines. Approach them reverently. Examine yourself, repent, and seek peace with others (1 Cor. 11). Yet come as a needy sinner who trusts a sufficient Savior, not as one who has made himself worthy.

TAKE COMFORT. When conscience accuses, remember the promise declared in your baptism. When you come to the Table, hunger for Christ and receive His gifts by faith. The sacraments add nothing to the cross; they strengthen our confidence in the Savior whose work is complete.