

Preparatory Reading for Communion

Minister: As we consider our Lord Jesus Christ's invitation to His Holy Table, let us remember that Scripture calls us to examine ourselves before God. We are taught that eating and drinking unworthily brings judgment upon ourselves (1 Cor. 11:28-29). Let us therefore ask God for the proper spirit in which to celebrate the sacrament.

Almighty God, before whom can be neither secret thought nor hidden deed, grant us your Spirit that we may know our hearts, our lives, and our inmost thoughts as you know them.

Grant us your grace that we may repent sincerely of all sin, retain peace with you through our Lord Jesus Christ, and grow in assurance of salvation in him.

May the celebration of our Savior's infinite love in his redeeming death bring glory to you by bringing joy to us.

***All:* We thank you, heavenly Father, for the atoning power of our Savior's death and for our share in his victory over sin. Open our hearts as we prepare for this celebration, that it may strengthen us in our faith, establish us in our hope, and confirm us in our love. In his name, Amen.**

Minister: Brothers and sisters, let us first examine our faith. We all confess the truth of God as taught by Scripture and summarized in the creeds of the church. By this faith we take to ourselves Christ and all his benefits, so that for us to live is Christ.

***All:* Lord God, author and finisher of all true believing, confirm our faith as we prepare for the holy sacrament.**

Minister: Let us, further, examine our hope. All Christian hope rests upon the finished work of Christ as Savior. The holy gospel teaches that all our righteousness is in him alone.

God's children rely wholly upon the merits of Christ, find in him their strength and victory, and confidently expect his return in glory. They look forward to celebrating this holy supper anew with him in the kingdom. They will surely be received by God at his table.

***All:* Most merciful Father, fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may abound in hope.**

Minister: Let us also examine our love, both for God and our neighbors. Remember the great and first commandment to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Let us consciously determine to live a life of loving service to him, through Christ our Lord.

Let us also search ourselves to determine whether we love our neighbors as Christ commands. Do we unselfishly live for the welfare of others? Do our lives reflect the godly virtues of obedience, fidelity, integrity, justice, humility, and contentment? Do we seek reconciliation with our neighbors in all cases of offense?

All: Dear Father, daily increase in us the greatest gift of all, our Christian love.

Minister: If these marks of spiritual life are not increasingly evident in us, and if we have no desire for them to be evident in us, we may not presume to approach his table. Those, therefore, who live in self-righteousness, who hope in works or virtues of their own, and who do not show love to God and neighbor, have no true place at the Lord's Supper.

Yet we should not be deterred by any sin lingering within against our will. As we find faith, hope, and love within us, we ought gladly to obey our Lord's command and come with full expectation to God's open house of mercy.

All: Gracious God, we love and adore you in Christ our Lord. We thank you for reconciling us to yourself in him. We rejoice in being received as your children.

Prepare us by your Holy Spirit for the sacrament. Help us to come in the assurance that by it we shall be spiritually revived, and strengthened in faith, hope, and love, through Christ our Lord. Amen.