

Cleanse Me from Secret Sins

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Bible Text: Psalm 19:12
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The scripture reading this evening is Psalm 19. The text is Psalm 19:12. Psalm 19,

1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. 2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. 6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. 7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. 12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. 13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

So far we read God's holy word.

The text is verse 12,

12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, Psalm 19 is a very beautiful Psalm. The Psalm is divided into three main sections and there is a beautiful progression from one section to the next. In the first section of the Psalm, in the first six verses, the psalmist

meditates on the beauty of the Lord as it's revealed in creation, and he reflects on how all creation reveals God. Maybe he's even sitting outside as he begins penning this Psalm, and he's looking at the sky, whether it's the night sky or maybe it's the beautiful sunset, and he says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament," the sky, "shows his handiwork." And the sun too, and how God designed it. The sun runs as a circuit his race throughout the day. And it all speaks, all creation speaks loudly in every place, in every language of the glory and power of God. Then in the second section of the Psalm, verses 7 through 11, the psalmist is brought to meditate on the glory of God as it's revealed in his word, as it's revealed in the law, and that law is not just the 10 Commandments, but that law is the written word of scripture. "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." Oh, creation is beautiful but scripture, his glorious scripture is profitable. They reveal even more clearly if you think nature reveals God's glory, scripture reveals God's glory even more clearly. Oh, how we are to love God's word and have them as our guide all the time. But now in the third section of the Psalm, in verses 12 through 14, after meditating on God's glory, meditating on God's law, what does the psalmist now do? Well, by God's Spirit leading him, the psalmist is brought to turn his attention towards himself and towards his own sinful ways, and that's where he pauses at everything and he says, "Who can understand his errors?" Oh yes, God is so glorious, his law is so good, and I look at myself and I look at who I am of myself and what do I see? When I look at who I am of myself, I see nothing but imperfection, corruption, disobedience, impurity, pollution, defilement, guilt. I see nothing but a sinner when I look at who I am of myself. How frequently I disdain the good laws of God. So often I'm one who's ignoring God's glory. It's speaking to me loud and clearly every day and I don't even hear it. I see in myself a person who so often acts as if the law of God is evil because I choose my own way. "Oh, who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

I could ask you this evening, beloved, is that your response when you look at the glorious beauty of creation and then you look into the mirror of the perfect law of God and then you're brought to see who you are of yourself? Who can understand his own sin? I am such a sinner, I don't even realize how sinful I am. That's the response of the psalmist who's been brought to see a glimpse of God's glory. That's the response of the child of God who's been brought to see even just a little bit of the perfect law of God. And it's through that response that the child of God is driven to Jesus Christ and driven to seek God and ask God for a cleansing from all his sin. And that's how it is for us and, Lord willing, that's how it will be for us this week so that we come to the Lord's Supper next week having the Lord's Supper, having God assure us that there is a full cleansing from sin.

So as a preparatory sermon this afternoon, we take the time to focus on how great our sins are with the purpose that this week we might rightly see our need for Jesus Christ and thus also come next week to the Lord's Supper hungering and thirsting after Jesus Christ. We take as our theme "Cleanse Me from Secret Sins," and we look at that theme under three points. First, understanding my sin; second, praying for cleansing; and then third, experiencing forgiveness.

As I said, at the end of Psalm 19, the psalmist is deeply humbled as he sees God's glory and then he sees his own sin. Well, here in verse 12 specifically what we have to do is understand what sin the psalmist is talking about when he speaks of secret faults, when he speaks of errors. The psalmist is talking about a specific kind of sin and when the psalmist speaks here about errors, when he speaks about secret faults, he's not talking merely, he isn't talking about sins that he is concealing from others in his own private life. The psalmist is not talking about secret sins in the sense that other people are not able to see these sins, and he alone knows these sins that are in his life. The psalmist is not talking about those sins. There are, of course, such sins. You and I might have such sins in our own lives, sins that we commit willingly, that we commit consciously, deliberately, and that we commit in privacy. Maybe these are sins committed in the relative privacy of a small circle of friends, or maybe family members, maybe on a Friday night or in the privacy of our own home, and we try to keep these sins a secret. Maybe they are sins of gossip. Maybe these are sins committed with our spouse. Who knows what the sin might be? And these are perhaps sins that will become fully manifest only in the final day of judgment when our sins will be revealed before the world. Maybe these sins that we keep private are not just kept in the privacy of a small circle of friends or family members, but maybe these sins are sins kept even more private in the privacy of our own consciousness. Maybe these are sins of our thoughts. Maybe sinful lust of the flesh that we entertain in our minds. Or maybe envy and bitterness or hatred. Maybe it's even stealing or lying, and we are the only ones who know about these sins.

These are all sins too, that will not become known until we stand before the judgment seat of Christ. There are such sins. These are the kinds of sins that the psalmist is referring to in verse 13, the next verse when he writes, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins." Presumptuous sins are sins that we do willfully, sins that we commit deliberately. We make a choice to commit them, and we deliberately carry out these sins even when God's word is pricking us. These are intentional sins. Those are presumptuous sins, and we commit them in our own privacy. We commit them maybe in public. These are sins of great offense to the Lord, and they must highly offend us. Also, we must sorrow and repent over such sins. We become hypocrites when we know such sins and we refuse to confess them and we refuse to forsake them.

But those are not the sins that the psalmist is speaking of in verse 12. In verse 12, the psalmist is talking about errors and he's talking about secret faults, and what the psalmist is referring to in verse 12 are the sins that he doesn't even realize he is committing. He's talking about sins here that are found in the hidden corners of his heart beneath the level of his own consciousness, his own awareness. These are sins he's committing that are hidden from his own view, secret sins even to himself. He doesn't know he's committing them. And there are also these kinds of sins in our lives, sins committed perhaps an error, sins committed through our own ignorance, our own blindness. We don't know any better. We don't know the scriptures as we ought or we are not as spiritually sensitive as we ought to be. Our consciences perhaps are misguided, and so we commit sin even when perhaps we think we're doing good. This is in no way to excuse our sin, but this is an explanation. Maybe we're so proud that we don't even bother to study whether we

have these kinds of sins in our lives or we investigate to see if there is sin of this nature in our life.

These are errors, they are false, but at the same time they are real sins, sins we are responsible for, sins committed in our sinful natures, sins that we must repent over. Sometimes we've had that experience, haven't we, where we've noticed, we've been brought to see these secret sins, these faults that we had been committing and we didn't know about it before. Maybe we look back at how we lived as children or young adults, and we see just how sinful sometimes we were acting and we didn't even know it. We were being irreverent towards our parents or our school teachers or other parents or others without realizing how sinful our actions were. Perhaps we were living very reckless lives and we just thought that was normal. Or maybe there is something about them being presumptuous and we did know better, maybe there was an element where we didn't know better. Maybe we were singing along to the music of the world, not realizing what the lyrics were and then you get older and maybe you listen to those songs again and you come to realize what the music was all about and we realize how horrible we were acting. How many of us have not been there, done that? God's children singing filthy songs without even realizing it, without that sin even bothering us at all. As we grew up in our Christian life, we grow up in discernment and as we reflect upon the past, we recall to mind things done in former days that were shameful, or at least things that we would not do today because we know better and we didn't even realize we were sinning. Maybe it was even something that had to do with our misunderstanding of biblical doctrines and we were confessing something that was not proper or we were way on the one side of the pendulum and we weren't handling the doctrine rightly.

Well, the reality is even now, even now we are not as spiritually knowledgeable or as spiritually sensitive as we should be. In this life, we never attain perfect spiritual perfection. Even now, there are those unconscious motives of our sinful natures. Even now, there are impure habits that we don't see, things we have to be educated on. Sometimes there are things that other people can easily see in us. Rude gestures we have. Selfish attitudes. Arrogant talk. Our pride, our egotism, our judgmental spirit. But we ourselves are oblivious to these things because maybe these things have just become such a part of our lives that we don't even see them. And we all have them. We all do. And consider this, perhaps it even comes to the point where we forget that these kinds of sins even exist in our life. We go about our day, not even thinking about these things.

These secret sins, these unconscious thoughts, these motives and habits that are offensive to God, but we don't see them in ourselves, these are the sins that the psalmist is talking about in the text. "Who can understand his errors?" And what is implied is this: no one. No one can perceive all his sins. That's what the psalmist has in mind, these kinds of sins. Now to go a little deeper and understand these sins more fully, let us see why there are such sins. Why do these kinds of sins exist? Well, there are a number of reasons. First of all, as it's implied from the context, there are these unperceived sins in our lives because we so often fail to grasp just how deep and just how perfect the law of God is. Ultimately, we cannot fathom just how deep and how perfect God's law is because it is so deep. That's what really brings the secret errors of the psalmist to his attention. He's meditating

on the Law of God and the law of God, it seems in one way so simple to us, right? The 10 Commandments, so easy, so simple, but when you come to put it into practice, you find that it is quite impossible to keep it fully. We have only a small beginning and our amazement increases when we find that the law not only applies just to our outward conduct, but it applies to the deepest matters of the heart and every single one of the commandments applies to the deepest matters of the heart. And it doesn't just forbid us from doing certain things, it also requires us to do many things, many things we simply forget to do or that we're not aware of.

And there is not one aspect of our entire being and life that does not fall under the supervision that the rule of God's law, as the psalmist says in Psalm 119, God's law is very broad. God's law is vast. It is immeasurable. And that's true not just with respect to what the law demands and how strict the law is, but that's also true with respect to how good the law is and how virtuous the law is. To know the fullness of the law is not within our finite capacity. Even in heavenly perfection, we will continue to unfold the layers of the goodness of God's law. And we cannot grasp the depths of God's law and if we cannot grasp the depths of God's law, then how will we be able to grasp the depths of our sins and appreciate the gravity of our sins when we sin against God? As infinitely deep as the law is, and as infinitely good as the law is, so great is our sin. That's why we have these sins that we don't see and we can't see them. They are secret errors.

Second of all, and in close connection with what I just said, there are these unperceived, these unnoticed sins in our lives because we fail to grasp just how holy and glorious God himself is. Oh, we might think about God now and then during the day but, congregation, who really contemplates God like he ought to contemplate God? Where is found the contemplation of the spotless holiness and the unblemished purity of him who is so pure that he cannot even behold sin and corruption? Where is the remembrance of God's infinite holiness that causes us to tremble before his majesty and hide our faces in shame before the glory of his countenance? Who really, truly sees the glory of God like he ought to see it? Think of Isaiah 6 when the prophet of the Lord catches a glimpse of God's glory and he falls down, "Woe is me!" Think of John on the island of Patmos when he sees the risen and glorified Jesus, and he falls down. And we might say, where is that among us? Who sees God's glory like it ought to be appreciated?

We would die on the spot if we saw the fullness of it, and you see, when we sin against God's law, we're not just sinning against God's law, we're sinning against God himself so that even these sins that I know I commit, these presumptuous sins, these willful sins, there are aspects even of those presumptuous sins that are beyond what I recognize. So I weep over my sins, I weep over what I can see, but how much is there of these known sins in my life that I don't even see and that I ought to be weeping over? My presumptuous sins are worse than I realize and that itself is a lack of appreciation. That itself is an unknown sin that I commit without feeling remorse. How can I appreciate the sin? And it's all because I'm sinning against the most high infinite majesty of God. The one against whom I'm sinning is one infinite in glory, and therefore my sin is infinite in severity. Before you can know your own defilement as you ought to know it, your eyes

must look into the unutterable glory of the divine character and then like Isaiah catching the glimpse of his unutterable glory, you'll get a sense of your sin for what it really is.

Third of all, there are these unseen sins, these unperceived sins in our lives because we do not appreciate and we cannot fully appreciate just how great our fall into sin was.

Through the fall into sin in father Adam, our eyes have been so blinded. My vision is so ruined that though we have the glimmerings of natural light, and we can vaguely detect the blackest of sins, the reality is this: all the different shades of sin's darkness we are unable to discern. The fall affected not just our ability to keep the law of God, the fall affected just how sensitive we are, how sensitive we are to the law of God. We become more and more desensitized to sin, even as the world increases in iniquity, and sins are put in front of us all the time. It's hard to keep track sometimes of what is right and what is wrong and that's where you also have the preaching that brings us the 10 Commandments very, very detailed, very strictly preached because we need that because we're so easily desensitized to it.

And the thing is, our minds themselves deceive us to think less of sin than what it really is. Our sinful natures refuse to acknowledge the gravity of sin, and that itself is an unknown sin we are committing. No one has the ability to judge himself as he ought. Even now, as these things are being set before us in the preaching, we're not appreciating our sins like we should. How vicious is my sinful nature? Of myself, I am so debased and so vile, so debased and vile by nature that even the inspired scriptures themselves cannot fully tell how base and vile a man's heart is. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?"

We are attracted to sin even when we would refuse the sin, even when nature is repulsed by it we could be attracted to it, and there already we are guilty of sin. The reality is this: if we were to appreciate just how great our sins are and the depth of our sins and the depth of our sinful nature, we would first have to pass through the darkest depths of hell itself. In hell is revealed just how sinful we are. But I would have to suffer hell not just for a moment, but for all eternity. We would have to go through an eternity of hell under the unspeakable agony of the wrath of God before we would come to know the awful character of sin. In fact, we would have to go through hell and drink every drop of God's wrath against our sin and be able to cry out, "It is finished," before we could understand all our secret errors and understand the guilt of our sin. But of course, that would be impossible and the point here is this: Jesus knows your sins. Jesus understands the awfulness of our fall into sin not because he himself was fallen but because he experienced the punishment for it, the exact full punishment that our sins deserve. He experienced it and he could appreciate it for what it is.

Fourth of all, there are these unseen sins in our lives because we commit sin not just as creatures of the dust but we commit sins as the blood-bought and adopted children of God. I aggravate my sin even more, my secret sins, my errors, by committing all these sins as a redeemed child of God. I've been given such a very high calling of God to live as a redeemed child of God, I don't deserve that, and yet I grumble and complain. He gives me a place in the body of Christ, he gives me a dignified purpose in all my work, to

bring him glory, and yet in all these things I commit sin and I even commit sin without realizing it. And further, when I sin, I give myself as an example for others in the body of Christ. How often haven't my own sins, even my own errors, my own unknown sins been a snare to others in their Christian walk? Maybe my own family members or children? Think of office bearers and their secret sins, sins that they don't even know they are committed. And yet, we never discern these sins. Perhaps later in life I do discern some of them, but the vast majority I'm never aware of and that's how I'm living as a child of God.

Do you see that, congregation? I am such a sinner. Should I offer my works as the basis of my righteousness that then we say, "My best works are as filthy rags. What judgment I deserve." And I say that and I still don't even appreciate what I'm saying. I weep over my sins but I don't weep over them as I really ought. Not that there's anything meritorious in weeping over our sins, as if we say, weep more, weep more. That's not the point. But let's appreciate the sin for what it is. We don't weep over our sins as we really ought. And maybe some even say this, "I forget the last time I was really sorry for my sins." How often maybe doesn't that have to come before our minds, "When was last time I was sorry for my sins?" I see sin in my life that I am able to discern. I see sin that I commit thoughtlessly. I commit it mechanically. I commit it habitually. Sometimes I catch myself in the middle of committing a sin that I didn't realize at first I was committing and that all leads me to the conclusion that somewhere within me there is a hidden fountain of darkness that I cannot see. And that, of course, is my sinful nature, my old man.

And we're all in the same boat, aren't we? This is the experience of every single one of us. That's what the psalmist is struck with in the text. "Who can understand his errors?" God's law is so glorious, his law is so perfect. I'm so blessed to be his redeemed child and here I am enjoying his creation, inspired by the Spirit to write this Psalm, and then I look at myself and I transgress his good commandments over and over and over again. That's why eternity in heaven will never get boring, because I will have all eternity to contemplate and to uncover more and more the depths of what Jesus did for me through his sufferings on the cross and through his entire life, and through all of history, working my salvation for such a sinner as me, who of myself am only a sinner. Every day, I will stand more amazed at his infinite love for me, and it will stir up my heart with joy all over again in heaven.

Well, what does the psalmist do? He's studying himself, he's reflecting on his sinful nature, and what he does is this: he acknowledges his sin. These unknown errors and faults, he knows they are there. He acknowledges them. He confesses his sin and he prays for cleansing. "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults." The psalmist has gotten a glimpse of God. He's seen the glory of God in the heavens and the firmament. He's seen the glory of God in the scriptures. He's turned to himself again, he sees his own dark sins. He's gotten a sense of how deep his sinfulness goes. It goes right down to the deepest corners of his heart and he is bothered because he knows he's guilty. The psalmist does not try to excuse himself by pleading that he didn't know he was committing sin. Oh, he knows. He knows he's responsible. He knows he's guilty, worthy

of punishment. Even for these hidden faults, these secret stirrings that he carries within him even against his own will, he knows he must stand condemned.

There's a dark depth of corruption that lurks somewhere in the recesses of his soul. He knows it. A hideousness in him that he can never fully understand and the reality is the psalmist knows that all of it, although he can't discern it, all of it stands as an open book before his God. And David's soul is filled with sorrow. His conscience bothers him even for these unknown sins, and his heart stirs up within him and he cries out to God, "O God, cleanse thou me from secret faults." Cleanse me. And the word there is striking. The idea is more this, "Clear me or acquit me," or as some versions translate it, "declare me innocent of hidden faults." And all of this emphasizes that David felt himself to be responsible and guilty for these hidden sins. He says, "Forgive me." The only way he can have peace is if the Lord is gracious and if the Lord forgives him. That's his only hope. You see, David is not just praying, "Lord, sanctify me. Lord, deliver me from my sinful nature." No, David is owning up to the fact that he needs to be forgiven for his sinful nature. Yes, David yearns to be holy, he's praying for sanctifying grace, but before that David prays for forgiveness for his sinful nature. "I'm sorry for my sinful nature."

And notice where David directs his prayer. He looks nowhere else for his cleansing than from the very one against whom he has sinned, the very one against whom his sinful nature is at enmity, the glorious majestic God of heaven and earth, the one upon whom he was just meditating, the one with whom he is awestruck, the one whose glory is so captivating to him, and now he goes to that same one with his sins seeking forgiveness. And just as David knows that it is impossible for him to know every sin he commits, so he knows it is impossible to do anything of himself to cleanse him of that sin. He looks to the Lord.

That must be our response as well, beloved. Do you weep over your unknown sins? It's quite a question really. Are they a grief to you? The fact that you do not know about a sin does not relieve you from deserving punishment. And even more important for the child of God, it does not take away from the fact that God is offended with these sins. He is offended with these sins. If it's easy for me to ignore my presumptuous sins, my sins of rebellious pride, these conscious, willful, deliberate sins, how much easier is it not for me to ignore my unknown sins and my sinful nature? Is your sinful nature a burden to you? For the child of God, the answer, of course, is yes. Is your battle with your old man of sin a constant struggle? Have you considered by yourself the curse due to you for your sin, for your sinful nature, for your unknown secret sins? We'll read that in a moment. That's one of the purposes of self-examination, to consider by myself my sin and the curse due to me for them to the end that I may abhor myself and humble myself before God.

It's a pretty blunt question: do you abhor yourself, people of God, your sins and who you are of yourself? There's not much of that going on in the world today, is there? Abhorring ourselves, not having low self-esteem in that sense. Abhorring my sins. Abhorring my sinful nature. If you do abhor yourself, which you must, then do as the psalmist does and confess these things to the Lord. Confess your sins. Go to the Lord in prayer and ask forgiveness. Pray for forgiveness. Pray for it every day again. Pray, "Declare me

innocent, O Lord, of my secret sins. Declare me innocent of my sinful nature. I don't even know them. I couldn't even mention them by name if I had to, but I know they are there. I feel them and I know because of past experiences, I know they're there and there are more than I can count and I am sorry for them. I want to be perfect. I'm sorry. Thou art the glorious God worthy only of perfection, and I cannot of myself, I cannot give thee the first beginning of perfection. I'm sorry. I'm sorry." And as you do that and you make that confession, remember that God, your awesome glorious Creator God, rather than leaving your sin unpunished, rather than leaving even your unknown sin unpunished, has punished the same in his beloved Son Jesus Christ with the bitter and shameful death of the cross.

Confess your sins, even the ones you do not know about. Pray for forgiveness and experience forgiveness. And experience forgiveness. It's exactly in the way of confessing our sins that we experience forgiveness. What is forgiveness? Forgiveness is God speaking to your own soul, declaring you innocent. That's what he's praying for. "Declare me innocent. Cleanse me. Clear me. Acquit me." Forgiveness is God saying to you in your heart, "I do cleanse you of your secret errors. I will not hold any of them against you." And he gives you the assurance that your sins are forgiven by giving you a sense of his favor and his peace.

That's what happens in the way of confessing our sins and humbly asking forgiveness. In one sense, we could even say the very fact that one makes this prayer is evidence that one's sins are forgiven. It's not natural to dwell on our sins this way, seeking forgiveness of our Creator, of our God, of our Father. It's not natural to confess unknown sins to God. That itself is the evidence of God's grace already operating within the heart of the sinner, bringing him to confess these sins, truly being sorry for these sins, repenting over these sins. That is an infallible proof of the grace of God and in the way of confessing our sins, God gives us the joy of forgiveness.

And what is the basis for this forgiveness? Well, there is only one basis, we all know it: the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ. Mention is made in verse 14 at the very end of the Psalm of who God is as Jehovah, his strength and his Redeemer. And that's the context in which he writes this verse, right? Not as one who's afraid of hell like I'm not a child of God, but one who loves God, who sees his glory, who knows who he is from God's law. He's read the scriptures. He knows the gospel. And then he says, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults."

My sins are like a swelling flood unto heaven but the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ rises higher than my sins. My sins are spread out like a sheep before the Lord, but the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ extends wider than my sins. I am not better than I think I am. No, I am worse than I think I am. I am a greater sinner than I realize. But Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ is a greater Savior than I realize. Jesus Christ is a greater Savior than I can appreciate. He's a greater Savior than I even think he is. He's a greater Savior than I can fathom. Oh, my sins might rise higher than heaven, but the heaven of heavens cannot contain Christ's merits. My sins go deeper than the bottomless pit of hell, yet Christ's shed blood and his atoning blood goes still deeper. Such is the greatness of the boundless

love of God. Such is the glory of God, a love and a glory that even covers all my faults. That glory that is declared to me in the heavens, that glory that I read of in the scriptures is a glory that manifests itself in the powerful blood of Jesus Christ because it's a glory that covers all my faults. It's a glory that covers all your faults, beloved, because it's a glory that has come in the flesh, and it's a glory that offered up himself on the cross.

This week, beloved, humble yourself before the Lord. Take the time to contemplate his glory. Take the time to contemplate your wretchedness. Pray for forgiveness. Pray for the forgiveness of your unknown and hidden sins, for they are many, they are more than you can count. And then also experience the glory of God in forgiving you all your sins, only for the sake of Christ's broken body and shed blood, and then come to the Lord's Supper next week empty handed, bringing nothing in your hand because you've already been emptied of everything that you could bring in your hand. But come to the Lord's Supper and live day by day clinging to the cross of Jesus Christ, boasting only in his name. Magnify his name. And then also come to the Lord's Supper next week, eager to have your faith strengthened, knowing you will be received. You are made a worthy partaker of the Lord's Supper, and he will nourish your soul and he will strengthen your faith so that you might continue to magnify his name more and more as it ought to be magnified.

Congregation, it's good to consider our sins and the curse due to us for them, but God says also, "Look at me. I am the Lord. I am your strength. I am your Redeemer. I am the awesome God, the God of your salvation." May the Lord strengthen our faith, cause us to know that, and may even the weeping over our sins bring that glory to his name that he is worthy of, because that brings glory to him. And then resting in the cross of Jesus Christ. May that bring glory to his name too. Amen.

Let's turn to the form for the administration of the Lord's Supper. It's found on page 91 in the back of the Psalter. We read the first part.

"Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, attend to the words of the institution of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, as they are delivered by the holy Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29.

For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me. And after the same manner also, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me; for as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

That we may now celebrate the Supper of the Lord to our comfort, it is above all things necessary,

First. Rightly to examine ourselves.

The true examination of ourselves consists of these three parts:

First. That every one consider by himself, his sins and the curse due to him for them, to the end that he may abhor and humble himself before God: considering that the wrath of God against sin is so great, that (rather than it should go unpunished) he hath punished the same in his beloved Son Jesus Christ, with the bitter and shameful death of the cross.

Secondly. That every one examine his own heart, whether he doth believe this faithful promise of God, that all his sins are forgiven him only for the sake of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, and that the perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed and freely given him as his own, yea, so perfectly, as if he had satisfied in his own person for all his sins, and fulfilled all righteousness.

Thirdly. That everyone examine his own conscience, whether he purposeth henceforth to show true thankfulness to God in his whole life, and to walk uprightly before him; as also, whether he hath laid aside unfeignedly all enmity, hatred, and envy, and doth firmly resolve henceforward to walk in true love and peace with his neighbor.

All those, then, who are thus disposed, God will certainly receive in mercy, and count them worthy partakers of the table of his Son Jesus Christ. On the contrary, those who do not feel this testimony in their hearts, eat and drink judgment to themselves.

Therefore, we also, according to the command of Christ and the Apostle Paul, admonish all those who are defiled with the following sins, to keep themselves from the table of the Lord, and declare to them that they have no part in the kingdom of Christ; such as all idolaters, all those who invoke deceased saints, angels or other creatures; all those who worship images; all enchanters, diviners, charmers, and those who confide in such enchantments; all despisers of God, and of his Word, and of the holy sacraments; all blasphemers; all those who are given to raise discord, sects and mutiny in Church or State; all perjured persons; all those who are disobedient to their parents and superiors; all murderers, contentious persons, and those who live in hatred and envy against their neighbors; all adulterers, whoremongers, drunkards, thieves, usurers, robbers, gamesters, covetous, and all who lead offensive lives.

All these, while they continue in such sins, shall abstain from this meat (which Christ hath ordained only for the faithful), lest their judgment and condemnation be made the heavier.

But this is not designed (dearly beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord), to deject the contrite hearts of the faithful, as if none might come to the supper of the Lord, but those who are without sin; for we do not come to this supper, to testify thereby that we are perfect and righteous in ourselves; but on the contrary, considering that we seek our life out of ourselves in Jesus Christ, we acknowledge that we lie in the midst of death; therefore, notwithstanding we feel many infirmities and miseries in ourselves, as namely, that we have not perfect faith, and that we do not give ourselves to serve God with that zeal as we are bound, but have daily to strive with the weakness of our faith, and the evil lusts of our flesh; yet, since we are (by the grace of the Holy Spirit) sorry for these weaknesses, and earnestly desirous to fight against our unbelief, and to live according to all the commandments of God: therefore we rest assured that no sin or infirmity, which still remaineth against our will, in us, can hinder us from being received of God in mercy, and from being made worthy partakers of this heavenly meat and drink."

Let us go unto the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, we thank thee that it was none other than the inspired psalmist who wrote these words, and that is a comfort for we know we experience that the same Spirit that lived in the psalmist is the same Spirit that lives and dwells in us and that gives us comfort, and that also makes these words only meaningful. Lord, our prayer is, "Cleanse us from secret faults." Give us that humility to confess, "Who can discern his errors?" Give us the grace to abhor ourselves, our sins, our sinful natures and what we have done through the fall into sin to ourselves, and then cause us to take great consolation, comfort and joy in knowing and understanding what thou hast done for us in thy mercy through thy Son Jesus Christ. Help us in this week to prepare for coming to the Lord's Supper, and give us next week to rest again in the finished labors of Jesus Christ. We thank thee for this day and we pray that thy word might be our guide and our lamp in this week ahead. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.