



The Preface and Proper Preface

It has been said, “*Like small steps, the Preface (cf., 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).

The Preface consists of three sections.

First, the Preface begins with a salutation and response: “*The Lord be with you. And also with you.*” Earlier these same words occurred before the readings. Now they occur before the Supper! Why?



The salutation draws our attention to where God is, for us, and how He comes to us — in Word and Sacrament. “*The Lord be with you*” focuses your attention on the Body and Blood of Christ that is about to be served to you for the remission of your sins. Therefore, you respond to your pastor by praying the same for him as he prepares the Sacrament. There, in Communion, Jesus is with us!

Secondly, the Preface continues, “*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.

Then, lastly, the Preface concludes: “*Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God. It is right to give Him thanks and praise.*” This line 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 Passover, He gave thanks to God (Luke 22:19 and 1 Cor. 11:24). Therefore, following our Lord’s example, we begin Holy Communion with thanks as well.

The thanksgiving continues with the **Proper Preface** which is a prayer thanking God for His various blessings in Christ Jesus. The Proper Preface begins with the words, “*It is good, 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 (cf. LSB pgs. 208 or 216).

The conclusion of the Proper Preface reminds us of what is about to happen in this 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 us and that will come after us.

At the altar, the entire company of heaven comes down to earth. It is the Christian equivalent of the Jewish temple’s Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant was housed. 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...!**”

The Peace of the Lord be with you,

Pastor Jeff Patterson †