



Why do some churches say the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper "represents" Jesus' body and blood?

This question came from a person who was confirmed in an LC-MS congregation and was taught that - as Jesus said - the bread and wine is His body and blood. This person is now attending a non-denominational church which teaches that communion is not a powerful meal in which Jesus comes to us personally, but is simply a reminder of what Jesus did for us on the cross.

My answer: As human beings we seem to have a need to understand things. That desire to understand things poses problems for us at times when it comes to things of God. Because He's God and we aren't, there are naturally going to be things He does and things He says that we just aren't going to be able to understand.

When God says or does something we can't understand, we tend to search for an explanation that we can understand - even if it's wrong! For example, we have a tough time understanding how God could create everything that exists in just six days (because we couldn't do that!). So we end up believing the theory of evolution that tells us it took billions of years. (That we can understand, because it would take us that long!) The problem is, God clearly tells us in the Bible that He did NOT create "stuff" and let it just evolve into other stuff purely by accident or chance! He created everything distinct from everything else and with a unique design, purpose and plan!

Same with the Lord's Supper. How the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper can also be the body and blood of Jesus is one of those things we can't "wrap our minds around." So, instead of taking Jesus at His word when He says, "This is my body... This is my blood," we say things like, "Well, what he meant was that it represents His body and blood."

We would do much better to simply acknowledge, "If God said it, then I believe it. And if I can't understand how it can be, that's okay!" Remember, God never asks us to 'understand'. He does, however, ask us to believe.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net