**The Imitation of Christ by Thomas A. Kempis**

**BOOK FOUR:** INTERNAL CONSOLATION

**Chapter 2:** God’s Great Goodness and Love is Shown to Man in This Sacrament

**Quote:**

“The Disciple

TRUSTING in Your goodness and great mercy, O Lord, I come as one sick to the Healer, as one hungry and thirsty to the Fountain of life, as one in need to the King of heaven, a servant to his Lord, a creature to his Creator, a soul in desolation to my gentle Comforter. But whence is this to me, that You should come to me? Who am I that You should offer Yourself to me? How dares the sinner to appear in Your presence, and You, how do You condescend to come to the sinner? You know Your servant, and You know that he has nothing good in him that You should grant him this.

I confess, therefore, my unworthiness. I acknowledge Your goodness. I praise Your mercy, and give thanks for Your immense love. For it is because of Yourself that You do it, not for any merit of mine; so that Your goodness may be better known to me, that greater love may be aroused and more perfect humility born in me. Since, then, this pleases You and You have so willed it, Your graciousness pleases me also. Oh, that my sinfulness may not stand in the way!

O most sweet and merciful Jesus, what great reverence, thanks, and never-ending praise are due to You for our taking of Your sacred body, whose dignity no man can express!

But on what shall I think in this Communion, this approach to my Lord, Whom I can never reverence as I ought, and yet Whom I desire devoutly to receive? What thought better, more helpful to me than to humble myself entirely in Your presence and exalt Your infinite goodness above myself?

I praise You, my God, and extol You forever! I despise myself and cast myself before You in the depths of my unworthiness. Behold, You are the Holy of holies, and I the scum of sinners! Behold, You bow down to me who am not worthy to look up to You! Behold, You come to me! You will to be with me! You invite me to Your banquet! You desire to give me heavenly food, the Bread of Angels to eat, none other than Yourself, the living Bread Who are come down from heaven and give life to the world.

Behold, whence love proceeds! What condescension shines forth! What great thanks and praise are due You for these gifts! Oh, how salutary and profitable was Your design in this institution! How sweet and pleasant the banquet when You gave Yourself as food!

How admirable is Your work, O Lord! How great Your power! How infallible Your truth! For You spoke and all things were made, and this, which You commanded, was done. It is a wonderful thing, worthy of faith, overpowering human understanding, that You, O Lord, my God, true God and man, are contained whole and entire under the appearance of a little bread and wine, and without being consumed are eaten by him who receives You!

You, the Lord of the universe, Who have need of nothing, have willed to dwell in us by means of Your Sacrament. Keep my heart and body clean, so that with a joyous and spotless conscience I may be able often to celebrate Your Mysteries and to receive for my eternal salvation what You have ordained and instituted for Your special honor and as an everlasting memorial.

Rejoice, my soul, and give thanks to God for having left you so noble a gift and so special a consolation in this valley of tears. As often as you renew this Mystery and receive the Body of Christ, so often do you enact the work of redemption and become a sharer in all the merits of Christ, for the love of Christ never grows less and the wealth of His mercy is never exhausted.

Therefore, you should prepare yourself for it by constantly renewing your heart and pondering deeply the great mystery of salvation. As often as you celebrate or hear Mass, it should seem as great, as new, as sweet to you as if on that very day Christ became man in the womb of the Virgin, or, hanging on the Cross, suffered and died for the salvation of man."

**Definition:**

Sacrament – An outward and visible sign that conveys inward spiritual realities; it is a tangible expression of God’s grace and presence in our lives

**Scripture:**

Matthew 26:26-28

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

John 6:51

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

John 6:53-56

Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them.

**Concept:**

God shows His great goodness and love to man through the sacrament of communion in profound ways

**Discussion:**

Reflect on how the sacrament of communion encapsulates the idea of sacrificial love. What does this reveal about Jesus’ character.

In what profound ways does God show His great goodness and love to man through the sacrament of communion?