

Do this in remembrance of Me – Sunday 22nd March, 2015

“ And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”²⁰ And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood” (Luke 22:19-20).

Beloved in The Lord,

Psalm 103 begins with the words:

***Bless the Lord, O my soul, And all that is within me, bless His holy name.
2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits;”***

It is of vital importance that we never forget what God has done for us. By developing a habit of remembering what God has done for us, we will be less likely to drift away from Him. We are less likely to go astray as we will have our focus upon Him.

This is one reason Jesus instituted The Lord’s Supper. He gave it to us as a remembrance feast. As we partake of The Lord’s Supper we are reminded of His great love and sacrifice on our behalf.

Last Sunday we considered the fact that Jesus gave His all for us. Loving us, He shed every last drop of His Holy and Precious Blood. He gave up His life for us, in order to save us from sin and eternal death. He took our punishment upon Himself, to set us free from having to bear the punishment. He did it because of His incredible love for us. In light of His love, I asked you to think about how much you are willing to give God in return. We saw that God requires all of us. Everything.

If we have surrendered all to Him in faith, then it is extremely important that we continue to do so. We must not start to take back control of our lives, once they are surrendered to Him. In order to help us, in order that we may keep Him foremost in our heart and mind, Jesus gave us The Lord’s Supper. He instituted it on the night He was betrayed and He left a command that His followers are to observe it.

When we celebrate Holy Communion, then we remember Jesus broken body, and His shed blood, that He poured out for us. Holy Communion is a reminder of what Jesus did for us. It reminds us of the awesomeness of God’s love for us.

It is important that we are reminded of God’s love on a regular basis, because we live in a dirty, sinful fallen world, that has so many distractions that lure us away from living a Godly life.

We need Holy Communion because it is a faith strengthener. It is food for our soul and spirit. Because Holy Communion is so powerful and so important, the enemy of our faith – Satan – does everything he can to keep us away from The Lord’s Table. He does not want us

to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, because it was by His death on the cross, that Jesus crushed Satan's head.

Jesus last words were ***"It is Finished."*** He had shed His blood and so paid the sin debt of man in full. Everyone who appropriates His blood through faith in Him is set free from Hell, set free from the clutches of Satan.

One of the very powerful lies the Devil has employed throughout Church History is the one that says you shouldn't partake of The Lord's Supper too often, because by taking it too often you degrade the Holiness of it and it becomes an everyday event with little meaning. This is a blatant lie. Holy Communion does not lose its meaning and holiness and power with regular observance. In fact you cannot not partake too often. Martin Luther taught that if possible you should partake of the Body and Blood of Jesus every day.

There really is only one time when we should not partake of Communion, and that is if we have not repented of sin in our life. Paul writes that we can cause ourselves problems if we partake of The Lord's Table in an unworthy manner. In the Corinthian Church there was a problem, in that people were abusing The Lord's Supper. They treated it as a feast where they ate and drank and even got drunk.

We read: ***"But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸ For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it. ¹⁹ For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you. ²⁰ Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, ²¹ for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. ²² What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you."*** (1 Cor.11:17-22)

It seems that the Corinthians were very carnal in their service to God, and they had forgotten the real meaning of The Lord's Supper. Paul was not at all happy about this development. One of the things that he stressed in his letter was that there were divisions amongst the Christians. To me, one of the great things about coming to The Lord's Table, is that we are all the same. When you kneel down at this altar, then it is not important who you are, what your social status is, how educated you are, how honourable you are etc. We all kneel before God as sinners who rely totally upon the Grace of God. In this we are united, because no one is more important than anyone else.

Paul then goes on in the text with the words of Institution and then he gives a solemn warning:

"Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly." (1 Cor.11:27-29)

This warning is given to us, in order that we maintain a correct balance in our understanding about Holy Communion. If we come with a right attitude and a clean heart then it is a tremendous blessing to us. If, however we have a wrong attitude it will cause us problems. So then the only time we should abstain from The Lord's Table is when we have a wrong attitude toward God.

It is for this reason that we always have confession before Communion. This gives us an opportunity to set our heart right before God. If we confess our sins with a truly repentant heart then God forgives us and Jesus blood cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Then we are ready to partake of The Lord's Supper.

We read in 1 John:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

Herein is our security. If we confess our sins truthfully and faithfully then we always receive forgiveness. This is why in our liturgy after confession, the Pastor asks for acknowledgement from the congregation that this has been their true confession. Upon receiving that acknowledgement the good news of forgiveness (absolution) is pronounced. You are then worthy to partake of Christ's Body and Blood.

Another lie the Devil likes to use is this one: *"You are no sinner. You haven't done anything wrong so no need to go to Communion."* This is a potent and blatant lie. Let's look again in 1 John:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us." 1 John 1: 9-10

You see, to say you have no sin is to call God a liar and that is a terrible sin right there. Put on a pure white garment and go and walk around in the mud and then come back inside and try to convince yourself that your robes are spotless and white.

Holy Communion is God's gift to us, given to strengthen and preserve our faith, to bring us close to Him. Jesus instituted it for us. He gave it to us as a gift that reminds us of His love for us.

When we partake of The Lord's Supper then not only do we remember what Jesus has done for us, we also receive His Body and His Blood via the bread and the wine. This is our spiritual food. When we come to His Supper, then we are being obedient to His command ***"Do this in remembrance of Me."*** We are reminded of His grace and love and as I said at the outset that keeps us on the right path.

Christ has loved us so very much, that He shed His Blood for us. May we never ever forget that. May we never lose focus upon Him. As we remain focused on Him we will be blessed. Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.