

MESSAGE MINDER

September 19, 2010

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which 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 He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

1 Cor 11:23-25



Communion: Renewing Your Relationships

By Jonathan Stone

When Jesus instructed us to participate in the so-called communion He taught us to do it in "remembrance" of Him. This is more than an instruction to simply recall the life and work of Christ. The Lord's Supper also reconnects us to Christ and each other. It anticipates his coming while announcing his death. And it helps us recommit ourselves to our relationship with Him and others.

The context in which our Lord instituted this sacrament was both intimate and universal. There are few things that are as common to the human experience as the supper table. It is around the supper table that we renew our strength, fellowship with close ones, negotiate with associates, and get to know acquaintances. It is around the supper table that memories are

recollected, connections strengthened, discoveries made, and commitments renewed. It is within this daily ritual that Jesus taught us to remember him.

Consider what transpires when you sit down and eat with a friend or loved one that you have not seen for a long time. There is almost always some recall that happens. The two of you laugh or cry or simply say, "Remember when..." Over the course of such remembering you begin to sense a moving together. You can feel the reconnecting happening. There is a renewal of the relationship.

As your time begins to wind down you begin to realize how much you have missed the relationship and how much you desire to do a better job of keeping the relationship going after you part

ways. So, you say things like, "We need to do this more often." "Let's not allow so much time to pass next time." "Let's stay connected." Both of you heartily agree and you recommit yourself to stewarding the relationship.

Communion should lead us through this same process in our relationship with the Lord. It is more than a prayerful thanksgiving (though it certainly is that too). It is a means of grace by which we recall the work of the Lord in our life, reconnect ourselves to Him, and recommit ourselves to stewarding that relationship. And we do that around His table with His children, with our brothers and sisters. In so doing we not only commune with our Lord, but with our spiritual family as well.

**Bread of Heaven, On Thee I feed,
For Thy flesh is meat indeed;
Ever may my soul be fed
With this true and living bread;
Day by day with strength supplied,
Through the life of HIm who died.
Vine of Heaven, Thy blood supplies
This blest cup of sacrifice;
'Tis Thy wounds my healing give;
To Thy cross I look and live.
Thou my Life, O let me be
Rooted, grafted, built on Thee.**

Josiah Conder

A Communion Prayer

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou are the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us.

Family Activities at Home

- 1) Have a communion service with your family. Take the opportunity to recognize your spouse and children as more than members of your household, but also as members of the body of Christ. Contemplate the reality of spending eternity with them in the Kingdom of God as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- 2) Commit with your spouse to rise early in the morning each day for a month in order to have communion together. Read I Cor 11:23-26, partake of the elements, and pray for one another and the day ahead. Take notice of the ways that the two of you grow more closely together over the course of the month. Consider your relationships with other brothers and sisters in Christ and ask yourself how communion might help you grow closer to them as well.

“If we show the Lord’s death at Communion, we must show the Lord’s life in the world. If it is a Eucharist on Sunday, it must prove on Monday that it was also a Sacrament.”

Maltbie Davenport Babcock

