

Worship - Communion

Worship is an action. It's a time where we honor Jesus. He is the center of attention. We display our love for Him, we adore Him.

The last few weeks we have looked at how we worship in praise, singing, prayer, preaching, and tithing, today we are going to look at worship in communion.

At Connection Church we intentionally try to honor Jesus every time we take communion. It's part of the reason we typically observe it on the first Sunday of the month instead of weekly. It's not wrong to do it weekly or even daily. But we choose to do it a little less often and give it a little more attention when we do.

Think about a restaurant that has something special...something you can't get anywhere else. It's part of why you go there. You don't go there daily, just occasionally, and because of that, every time you have it, it's special. If you were able to have it every day, it's still good, it just loses a little something, it becomes common.

Communion is special. It's a time we share together, it requires participation, not just of our body holding the elements and ingesting them, but we must participate with our soul (mind, will, emotions), fix your heart on Jesus.... It's a time of worship, together!

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (NKJV)

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

This is written by the Apostle Paul, once a murderer of Christians until he had an encounter with the risen Jesus. In Acts 9, Paul is on his way to Damascus to arrest and kill followers of Jesus but when he had this encounter with Jesus, he lost his sight.

Physically, he could not see...this is a big deal. Think about a time when you are focused. A time where you are locked in. You ever been working on something and you aren't even aware of what else is going on around you? This is Paul...marching down the road, focused, locked in...can't see anything but the mission at hand...

But Jesus shows up, Paul falls to the ground and when he opens his eyes, he saw no one. Paul was blind, but now he could see. What do you think Paul thought about as the men with him led him into Damascus? What do you think he thought about for three days of blindness, no food or water? Jesus!

He was blind but now he could see. The things he was focused on prevented him from seeing the truth. What Paul thought was worship (he was persecuting Christians in the name of religion) was the very thing keeping him from seeing Jesus for who He really is.

What's got your attention today? What is on your mind? What is your focus on? Is it preventing you from worship?

Paul said "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you"

Paul learned this lesson personally from the Lord. He received it and now he gives it to you.

When God does something in your life, it's not just for you. It's part of communion. It's to share. This is the beauty of the body of Christ. We share with one another, help, strengthen, share burdens...

"that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

On the same night He was betrayed...Jesus is heading to the cross...He knows what is coming His way. The time is near...what's the last thing He is going to sit the squad down for? Communion.

I want to share with you, I want you to participate in this with Me! I want to exchange some intimate thoughts with you.

So they gather in the room, If you recall, Jesus told them that there was a guy who had a room the could use for this meal and to go ask him to get it ready. So I guess the exchange went like this:

Yeah, Jesus would like to have a meal with the guys here. Could we do that? Do you have a space to set up tables and chairs for like 26 guys?

The man probably responded, "aren't there only 13 of you?"

And they said "yeah, but we're all going to sit on the same side!"

You know, it definitely made it easier to paint them at this last supper, right?

But Jesus as He sits there with the guys to teach them about communion, gives thanks.

Thanksgiving is such a critical part of our worship. It's how we show our love and adoration is when we give thanks.

What did Jesus have to give thanks for? He's about to get beaten and nailed to a cross and die for something He didn't do!

You know, when we read the bible there are very important details to some verses. Things I think God really wants us to know. Things He wants to show us. He wants to reveal them to us.

Then there are other things where we don't see much detail. I believe this is because God wants us to seek them out and then show Him. Thanksgiving is on of these things.

Jesus gives thanks....thanks for what? Food? Friends? Life? God's plan? This teaching opportunity?

I'm sure you have your thoughts, your assumptions. But the truth is, we don't fully know. But He gives thanks...He worships the Father.

“and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

He presents the bread as His body. Jesus says to them “this bread, it represents My body”

His body was given for you. It's a reminder that Jesus physically gave His life for yours. This is the time where we consider that the pain and suffering He took upon His physical body was for you and me.

Just as we use physical elements to remember what Jesus has done, we have to remember that Jesus physically suffered for us. This is not some fairy tale. It hurt. Real pain. Real suffering. For you.

Jesus says it's important that we do this in remembrance of Him. Can I tell you that that means our focus is on Him during this time. See it's by His stripes we were healed. You don't focus on the need but on the healer.

Remember Him. Remember what He has done because what He has done is greater than what you need. What He has been through overshadows your need. And if you look to Jesus, if we worship Him because He gave His life for ours...we receive what He has done for us.

“In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

In addition to remembering my body that was given for you...take this cup, this juice or wine...this represents the new covenant in My blood.

Church, here is a reason to worship, a reason for thanks, a reason to rejoice...before the cross in the old covenant, repeated animal sacrifices were required to be offered to God for the forgiveness of sin.

But Jesus, Lamb of God, sinless, perfect, holy...when He gave His life on the cross it was offered once to bear the sins of many. It was accepted as payment in full and no longer does a sacrifice need to be made...only remembered!

Hebrews 9:22 (NIV)

In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Romans 6:23 (NKJV)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 2:13 (NKJV)

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Jesus' blood cleanses us from our sins. It reconciles us to the Father.

We have to remember that in the old covenant, sin was covered. We see the symbolism of this after Adam and Eve sinned and God covered them in animal skins. (sacrifice) This was great but it was just a covering. It was temporary.

But In Christ we have cleansing. That means it is removed from us. Not covered up!

Jesus came to set the captives free. He came to destroy the works of the devil. He came to free us from our sin!

Think about a baby wearing a diaper. Sometimes it's full of poop. It's covered up, you may not even know for some time. But eventually....you can smell it. You know it's there...

That's when you ask someone else to hold them (right?!).

You know, covering it up is great...it's better than poop everywhere. But how much better when the diaper is changed, wipes are applied, or even a bath is given.

No covering ever compares to cleansing.

Church by the blood of Jesus we are more than covered, we're cleansed from all unrighteousness! Praise Jesus!

“This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

God is all about reminders. He knows we forget. Not as in, we don't know it happened, but we don't observe it in a time of remembrance. He has always encouraged remembrance of what he has done.

- The rainbow is one such reminder, a reminder of the promise that God will never again send a flood to destroy all life.
- Many times in the OT when a significant event would happen, the leaders of God's people would build an altar in honor of God and as a reminder of what He did
- One instance was when the people of Israel crossed the Jordan River they set 12 stones by the river bank to serve as a memorial to that event. Whenever their children walked by and saw the stones the parents could tell them about God's miraculous entrance for them into the Promise Land.
- Another significant memorial for the Israelites was Passover. Passover was a meal celebrated to remember their escape from Egypt.

This is what they were remembering at this “last supper” when Jesus teaches them of a new remembrance....communion.

Communion is brings us all to common ground. No one person is greater than another and no one person is worse than another.....the blood of the Lamb erases all of that.

Today as we receive communion together, remember it represents LOVE....the love that the Father has for you, that He would send His Son, to die in your place. But not only to die, but to give you LIFE!

This is a time of worship. We honor Jesus by remembering what He has done. By believing in what He will do. We love Him, we adore Him. Fix your heart on Him now!

- We remember Jesus' work on the cross and we remember it's a finished work, accept Him as Lord and Savior and let the Holy Spirit lead and guide you.

- We rejoice because He did something that only He could do giving us life now but also that He is coming back for us!

- We repent, changing our mind, correcting our course or path to the narrow path, the path of righteousness!

- We reconcile with one another and with God. You are part of His body, whom He loves. Let that love overflow toward others.