



Voice Ministries

COMMEMORATION

Reading: 1 Corinthians 11: 23 – 34

As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26)

In obedience to our Lord's instruction we celebrate the Lord's Supper until He comes, just as the early Christians did when they met secretly in their homes to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Communion Service is the single most important event in our church calendar, and we should be humbled by the message that lies behind the service.

The frequency that Communion is celebrated has a direct affect on the manner of the celebration. Far too often it is looked upon as being commonplace. In the Anglican Church the Communion Service is celebrated every week, often twice a week, whilst in our own denomination it is a monthly celebration. Other denominations vary, some celebrating Communion only quarterly. In the early days of our denomination it was a Service that was held perhaps once a year.

No matter the intention of the individual celebrant, the more often that Communion is taken then the more the understanding of the meaning behind it can be diminished. After all, just imagine how tiresome it would be if we celebrated Christmas every month, or even every quarter!

The Communion Service is a time when we have an opportunity to worship our Lord by remembering all that He suffered at Calvary on our behalf. It's a time when we are reminded of the gospel message and a time to reflect on our own walk with Christ.

There are several Scripture verses in particular that remind us that the Lord's Supper is a time for us to call to mind the tremendous sacrifice and victorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus. When we gather around the Table, we are not offering a new sacrifice but remembering His sacrifice that was made as a 'once-for-all' offering. The idea of remembering is far more than simply recalling an event that happened a long time ago. It is to stir our minds into reliving with Jesus as much of His life, death and resurrection as is humanly possible. It's an opportunity to transport ourselves to that upper room in our minds.

It's a time to remind ourselves that:

He left heaven to be born in a human body (Phil. 2: 5-6)

He became poor that we might become rich (2 Cor. 8-9)

He bore our sins in His own body upon the cross (1 Peter 2:24)

He took our place willingly at Calvary (Isaiah 53: 4-6)

His blood was shed for our redemption (Rev. 1:5; 5:9 & 1 Peter 1:18-19)

He conquered death for us for ever (Matthew 28:1-6 & Rev. 1:18)

He ascended back to heaven to finish His redemptive work and to serve as our High



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Priest for ever (Hebrews 7:25)

Not only should we remember all that Jesus has done for us, but we need to contemplate on what His sacrifice means to us as individuals. His death was for the salvation of sinners, and as we are all in that category then it means that He died to save us all, you and me included.

Having accepted Him as our Saviour do we truly acknowledge Him as the Lord of our lives? What has His death and resurrection accomplished in our lives? It's a great time to contemplate and consider our personal walk with Christ. Is it all that it should be? Are we certain that our heart is right with Him?

Having claimed salvation through Him let us then be bold in our identification of ourselves as His followers and not be ashamed of Him in any way. Let us talk freely of Him in our conversation with friend and stranger alike, and let us ensure that He is always present in our homes as a welcome guest. Regardless of the attitude of the world around us, let us boldly proclaim our faith in Jesus Christ. Every time that we take part in the Lord's Supper then we are publicly identifying ourselves with Jesus; publicly acknowledging our belief that He will return on day for His own people; publicly declaring that we are awaiting the return of our Saviour who, though He died, still lives, through the resurrection. Though we do not know the day, nevertheless we are declaring publicly that we are ready for when He comes for us — ready to leave all and go with Him.

Finally, the Communion Service, whilst it is a time of reflection and worship, is also a time for self-examination. In the Bible we are warned against taking part in the Lord's Supper if we are unworthy to do so, and only we can truthfully know the answer to that. We need to come to the Table as a humble people professing Christ as Saviour, free from the burden of undisclosed sin. We need to come with repentant hearts, in the knowledge that we are open to God's judgement of our lives. We need to come to the Table knowing that there we are meeting with our Lord, and having cast aside any bitterness in our hearts towards others, for only the truly repentant are truly acceptable.

When we gather with right hearts and minds around the Lord's Table then it is a most wonderful place to be, and a wonderful experience to be part of. We may be weary when we approach the Table but we will be refreshed when we leave it — refreshed and renewed in body and in spirit. This is not any meal; it is the commemorative meal that we take in thanks and anticipation. Thanks for all that Christ has done for us and anticipation of His triumphant return. So much to consider as we prepare ourselves to take part, so much to be thankful for when we consider its purpose, so much to be joyful for as we anticipate His return.

Amen

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