

EXPERIENCING CHRIST IN COMMUNION

Outline adapted from p. 183 of Michael Lodahl's book The Story of God

Text: Luke 22:15-20

Here we sense the deep comradery between Jesus and His disciples, and the profound meaningfulness of this moment for Jesus. As He anticipates the departure He is about to accomplish with His death and resurrection, He looks even beyond these things to the glorious fulfillment of God's intention for creation.

It is a poignant moment, in which Jesus vows never again to celebrate the Passover until the fulfillment of God's kingdom brings to fruition the salvation tasted in the Exodus. To sit at Christ's table in communion today is to anticipate longingly the Messianic banquet, "a lavish banquet for all peoples" in which God "will swallow up death for all time" and "will wipe tears away from all faces" (Isa. 25:6,8) (Lodahl, p.183)

In partaking of the Lord's Supper or Communion we are reminded of the following truths.

I. WE REMEMBER CHRIST'S BROKEN BODY AND SHED BLOOD.

A. The blood that He shed sealed the new covenant.

Luke 22:19-20 says, "And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." NIV

B. His death is central to God’s salvation story.

In 1 Corinthians 11:25-26 Paul writes, “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.” NIV

We eat and drink in remembrance of Him and all that He has done.

II. WE EXPERIENCE CHRIST’S PRESENCE AMONG HUMANITY.

When we encounter Christ at His communion table in we are also sitting down with the multitude of his disciples down through the centuries.

A. Then, as a servant among servants He served the disciples.

Jesus said in Luke 22:27, “For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.” NIV

B. Even today Christ remains servant among servants.

“Jesus is no less a servant in His resurrected glory than He was at His last supper; hence, to come to Christ’s table today is to come to be served by Him, and to participate willingly in His life of servanthood.” (p. 182)

C. As we experience Christ in communion we are reminded of how we should live our lives.

Philippians 2:5-8 tells us, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!”

III. WE LOOK FORWARD TO CHRIST’S SOON RETURN.

A. His return is the great fulfillment of God’s purpose.

Isaiah 25:6-9 tells us, “On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. In that day they will say, “Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.”
NIV

He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. *Revelation 22:20*

B. All of creation awaits His return.

Paul says in Romans 8:19 & 22-23, “The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. Vv. 22-23, “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”
NIV

CONCLUSION

The gospel is always paradoxical. It turns things upside down and inside out. Blood stains but the gospel teaches that it cleanses. Death is the opposite of life, but the gospel teaches that it is the door to life. A cross is an ugly thing, but the gospel teaches us that it is a beautiful thing. (In communion) We hold in our hands a crumb of bread and call it a feast. But our experiences in worship confirm what we have been taught. All these paradoxes and more are true. They are the very content of our faith. So we do not blush to lift up a bit of wine and bread and say, "All things are ready, come to the feast!"

-- Robert C. Shannon, 1000 Windows, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).