

Communion Meditation

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70C-014T

2017-09-24

Today is a communion Sunday and normally we celebrate communion at the end of the service after the sermon for the morning. But today, we're going to do things a little bit differently. We're going to celebrate communion now because it gives us an opportunity to contemplate in an unhurried manner the significance of what we are doing as we celebrate communion together today.

My friend, I guess I would open it this way. Have you lately recalled the significance of what the Bible says about you? Have you lately recalled what it says about Jesus Christ? Because what the Bible says about you does not paint the flattering picture that all of our world would have you to believe. Scripture says that you and I have sinned and we've fallen short of the glory of God. The Bible says that there is none righteous, not even one. There is none who does good. God's Word says that all of us, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way. Indeed, it goes so far as to say in Isaiah, Chapter 64:6 that "All of us have become like one who is unclean and all of our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment."

There's a sense in which as we contemplate our God, the holiness of God, we recognize that we have nothing to offer him. We are spiritually bankrupt. As Jesus put it in the Sermon on the Mount, we are poor in Spirit. There's nothing to offer to him whatsoever. Indeed, not only do we not have anything to offer to him to deserve a reward like Heaven, the truth of the matter is, is that there is guilt on our account that creates a real problem for us. The Bible says that the wages of your sin is death. God's Word says that "The soul who sins must die", Ezekiel 18:4.

And so, as we come together having sung about a redeemer, as we come to celebrate the table, we have to realize that this is a matter of great significance that is in front of us, set before us for our remembrance. Because when Scripture speaks about the penalty for sin as being death, it is talking about far more than the inevitability of the end of your physical life. Oh, that's true enough. The reason that death entered the world was because of sin but Scripture goes beyond that in talking about it.

You see, when sinners die, it's not that they go out of existence. It's not that God annihilates them so that they no longer exist and have any consciousness. No, the Bible says that God judges sinners with eternal condemnation. The Apostle Paul said in 2 Thessalonians, Chapter 1, that sinners will, "They will pay the penalty of eternal destruction away from the Lord and from the glory of his power." This is the condition that all men are in.

Now, you might ask the question, if you're new to Scripture, why all of this fuss in the Bible about guilt and judgment? It is so contrary to the supposedly tolerant spirit of our age. So, contrary to the Spirit that says all roads lead to God and that everybody is basically good or perhaps has a spark of divinity in them. Look, the spark of divinity, not that there ever was one but speaking metaphorically, the spark of divinity went out in Adam when he sinned and fell. And his sin was imputed to all of us as his progeny.

You see, God's Word emphasizes what the world conveniently forgets or perhaps more accurately stated God's Word emphasizes what the world consciously suppresses and holds down. God is Holy, which means that he is free from all moral impurity. He's free from all sin. He is morally perfect. And as a Holy God, his sanctity cannot be violated by sinners. Sinners cannot dwell with him.

When his law is violated, as all of us have done repeatedly throughout our lives, the penalty of the law must be paid. It cannot be ignored. Justice demands that there be a payment for your sin and for mine. There is universal judgment on universal guilt. We all stand condemned before a Holy God left to ourselves. It's the legacy that we received from Adam. It is the just portion that awaits those who have sinned in their thoughts, in their words, and in their deeds. It was only right for God to condemn those who consciously suppress the knowledge of him. It is only right for God to judge those creatures who reject their creator. It is only right for God to judge those who reject his son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is serious.

And in the ordinance of communion we have the blessed privilege of remembering that God did not abandon us to the judgment that we deserved. At the table, we remember the good news of Jesus Christ, the good news of the gospel. The gospel tells us what God has done for guilty sinners like you and me in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It tells us that Christ left the glory of Heaven, was born of a virgin, and lived a perfectly righteous life that finally – for once – there was a man who lived perfectly in obedience to the law of God.

But it goes on to tell us, the gospels, the Bible tells us that sinful men rejected him, crucified him, wanted to silence the voice of the incarnate God as much as they silence his silent testimony and creation around them. See, all of human history can be summarized as a history of man trying to suppress the voice of God within him and around him. And you and I all participated in the guilt of that. None of us are exempt.

The gospel tells you that in the love of God, Christ suffered on the cross, took the sin of man on his shoulders, bore the wrath of God in his body, and he died in the place of sinners just like you and me. 1 Peter 3:18 says it plainly. It says that "Christ died for sins, once for all, the just for the unjust so that he might bring us to God." And in the gospel we hear the good news that God raised Christ from the dead as proof that he had accepted the sacrifice of Christ on behalf of sinners. That Christ had made a perfect payment for sin that would satisfy the demands of a Holy God.

Now, Christ has ascended to Heaven where he sits at the right hand of God. He represents his people so that they may have free access to this Holy God from whom they were otherwise banished forever. And the Bible declares that everyone who repents of their sin in response to that message, that everyone who comes to Christ will be saved, will be delivered from judgment, that God's judgment will pass over them, that God will not hold them and send them to hell for their sins. Rather, in Christ, God will forgive all of their sins freely, gladly, declare them righteous, and give them eternal life so that they may live in Heaven forever. And friends, there's something very significant about that message, about what it tells you about the disposition of God towards sinners, that he didn't abandon us to our sins.

For those of you that are in Christ here this morning, let me remind you that God has accepted you in Christ. Scripture emphasizes the love of God, the love of God when it speaks of his salvation. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him would not perish but have eternal life." The Apostle Paul in Romans said, "God demonstrates his own love toward us in the while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

It wasn't after we had taken a few steps toward God and done a few good works of the right kind of rituals that then Christ for us in response to us. No, no, no, no, no, no. Banish the thought out on the suggestion. We were all ruined in guilt, in judgment, in bondage under the wrath of God, dead in sin with nothing to commend ourselves to God whatsoever. And it was when you were in that condition that Christ laid down his life as an offering to God to pay for your sins, which Scripture says he did voluntarily out of love for you, if you belong to him.

Paul also said in Galatians, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me." Friends, do you realize that when we come to this table so many times a year, that we are seeing a tangible symbol, a visible representation of the love of God for you, that Christ voluntarily gave himself up? He said, "No one takes my life away from me. I give it on my own accord." "I voluntarily laid down my life for sinners," he said. And why did he do that? Out of grace, out of undeserved favor, out of love and kindness. Ephesians says that, "While we were yet dead in our sins, God being rich in mercy, Christ saved us." Rich in mercy. Rich in kindness. Rich in love. Overflowing before you as a representation of the fact that God did not abandon you to your sin. And the reason that he didn't is because he has a disposition of love and grace toward you. That's wonderful news.

As one writer put it, communion is a reminder that our guilty hearts have a place of rest. Friends in Christ today, as we come to the table, remember the love of God. Remember the grace of God that he has shown on your life. He never accepted you because you were good enough. He accepted you because Christ is good enough and that never changes. We realize, of course, that our spiritual lives go up and down. Maybe you've had a really bad and sinful week. This table reminds you that Christ has paid it all and that in Christ you have rest.

Communion is a visual way to remember with symbols the past work of Christ. His literal body was literally nailed to a literal cross and his literal blood was literally spilled as he hung suspended between Earth and Heaven. And Scripture says that that sacrifice, which he offered to God out of love for us, is a perfect atoning sacrifice for your sin. 1 John 1:7 says, "The blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin." Isn't that good news? Isn't that the most wonderful news that there is?

And so, as we come to the table, we remember that God has pardoned us from all of our sins and that he accepts us as righteous for the sake of his Son, for the sake of his Son. Not because of anything that you have done, for the sake of this glorious Christ who laid his life down for you. And my friends, if you're here today and you haven't received Christ, you're still outside the blessing of that salvation. But in love, God brought you here today to hear the offer once again. Christ says, "The one who comes to me I will never cast out." Those of us that are in Christ, we rejoice, and we remember, and we sing hallelujah, praise to the Lamb because our sins have been taken away and we've been reconciled to a Holy God.

Those of you that have not yet come to Christ, maybe some of you young people in the audience, you've heard again, and again, and again. And time and again, you've just hardened your heart again, and again, and again. Christ comes to you once more through his Word and says, "Come to me and I will give you rest." That's what we recall as we come to the table today.

If you're a Christian this morning, whether you're a member of our church or not, we invite you to partake of the elements with us. This is the table of the Lord Jesus Christ. It doesn't belong to Truth Community Church. If you're not a Christian or if you're a Christian that's living in hardhearted sin that you refuse to repent of, we would ask you simply to let the elements pass and reflect on the glory of Christ as we've seen it revealed again in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Bow together with me as we pray and commit this time to our Lord.

Our Heavenly Father, we gladly address you as our Father, as the one who has received us and adopted us into your family through faith in Christ. Thank you for providing a redeemer who has taken away our sin. Thank you for this time of remembrance, of the body and the blood of Christ.

And Father, for those of us that are in Christ, we pray that you would use this time to help us develop an even greater sense of gratitude for the salvation that our Lord purchased for us. We love you only because you first loved us. And we thank you for that, Father. We thank you for your loving, gracious, merciful, kind intervention on our behalf. And as we remember that, Father, we give our praise all to you. So, we commit this time of remembrance to you and the time of praise that will follow it.

And we ask, Father, that you would comfort the hearts that belong to you. And for those that are outside of Christ, Father, that by the power of your Holy Spirit, by the infinite, omnipotent power of your Holy Spirit, you would show to each one not in Christ with clarity of mind, with clarity of understanding that they are outside of this great gift. And, Father, by that same powerful Spirit may you create in their hearts an urgency to come to Christ, that this might be the day of salvation for each sinner that is under the sound of my voice. We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen.