

TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Daniel Balch/Opening Prayer by: Ken Coleman
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Bobby Rader

#679 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus
#538 My Hope is Built on Nothing Less

Scripture Reading by: Rock Cary
#361 Nailed to the Cross
Communion Devotional by: Zach Arthur
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#470 Victory in Jesus
Sermon: I Am With You
Acts 18:1-17

#948 I Am Resolved
#742 When Upon Life's Billows
Closing Prayer by: David Warren

Tonight is our
4th Sunday Evening
Fellowship Potluck Meal

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

Sept. 25, 2022

“Stand Firm in...Liberty”

Galatians 5:1

Supper Time

Thomas Campbell was a Presbyterian minister, born in Ireland and educated in Scotland at the University of Glasgow. When our story begins, he was serving a church in Ireland. But over time, he became dissatisfied with the divisiveness of his denomination: he was an Old Light, Anti-Burgher, Seceder Presbyterian. Each one of those terms reflected a doctrinal split. A reform movement of Independent churches emerging first in Scotland was now sweeping into Ireland. These influenced Thomas to the point he became unwelcome.

So at 45 years old, Thomas left his family behind and arrived in Philadelphia in May, 1807. It just so happened that the Seceder synod was meeting there at that very time. He presented his credentials and was assigned to southwest Pennsylvania, where he was a respected minister. Yet, within 6 months, charges were brought against him, resulting in a series of trials and ultimately his renouncement of his church. How did that happen?

One of Thomas's duties was to administer the Lord's Supper to scattered Seceder Presbyterians in his area. But when he arrived, he was distressed to find other Presbyterians who had not partaken in *years*. The Seceders were so narrow, they prohibited Communion with any digressive Presbyterians. But he was overwhelmed with compassion on these people. Ultimately, he decided to offer it freely. He preached a sermon lamenting the divisions in Christendom and suggesting that anyone who considered themselves a Christian should participate in the Lord's Supper. And for that, he was declared a heretic.

At about that same time, Thomas's family was trying to make their way to America to join him. A first attempt ended in shipwreck off the coast of Scotland, and it was too late in the year to try again to cross. So Thomas's 20 year old son, Alexander, took the opportunity to enroll in the University of Glasgow, where he determined to devote his life to ministry. This time was formative for him, because it brought him into direct contact with those same reform movements that advocated a return to primitive Christianity.

Like his father, he too began to examine for himself the claims of the Seceder church. The turning point came at a communion service. The Seceders practiced closed communion—only those worthy could participate. The custom was to give a metal token out to those who passed muster and shut out the rest. Alexander came from Ireland without any sort of letter of recommendation, so he had to take an examination to determine his worthiness. He passed. But the more he reflected upon it, the more his conscience bothered him. When the plate was passed round and the tokens placed in, Alexander threw his aside. He refused to partake of the bread and cup. And then he rose and left the building.

It is remarkable to me that both of these men, independently, reached the moment of crisis and turned toward restoration of the early church because of how seriously they took the Lord's Supper. That is entirely fitting, because it seems the Supper was the defining feature of the early church's worship. And yet, it might be the aspect of our assembly to which we give the least amount of attention, something that has only been exacerbated in the days of prepackaged, individual communion. So as we gather this morning, let's remember the significant purpose of this act. We can see it even in the terminology used.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Logan Holston had shoulder surgery on Friday.

Continued Prayers

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Tina Garcia, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Susan McCain, Gary Nielsen, Howard Duhon, Bubba Pearson

Shut Ins

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique, Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meeting, Monday, Sept. 26th at 5:30 p.m. this week.

We will have a Potluck meal tonight at 5:00 p.m. in the family life center.

Primetimers will be going to Saltgrass Steakhouse on Tuesday, Sept. 27th at 6:00 p.m. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

We will have a meal on Wednesday, Sept. 28th at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Oct. 4th at 8:00 a.m.

Door Knocking

We will be going Door Knocking on Saturday, Oct. 8th. If you are interested in helping with this please see one the Elders or Bryant Perkins.

Fall Festival

Fall Festival, Saturday, Oct. 29th from 4-6 p.m. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board in the foyer. See Lauren Tristan for more information

Eucharist (Thanksgiving)

This is not a term we are that familiar with, though we might have seen that name employed in other religious traditions. The noun is not used for the Supper in the NT, but it comes from the Greek verb *eucharisteo*, “to give thanks.” That is found in all 4 of the institution narratives (the synoptic gospels as well as **1 Cor 11**).

This became the most common term in the early church for the act in the assembly. It’s an example of a part coming to stand for the whole—but notice what part it is: thanksgiving. The prayer for the bread and cup was the moment the church gave thanks for the salvation in Jesus’ death and resurrection that creates the church. What could we ever be more thankful for than that?

Lord’s Supper

This is the term we most commonly use, and we find it in **1 Cor 11:20**. A meal—the Last Supper—was the setting for the institution of the act. But the term “Lord’s Supper” reminds us that the activity is peculiarly the Lord’s. Thus, Paul corrected the abuses in Corinth: it is His supper, not our ours (**1 Cor 11:20-21**). It is his table, not ours (**1 Cor 10:21**). He sets a table for us, invites us, and presides over the gathering. We are his guests. When we eat and drink at the table, we do it in his honor.

Communion

This is another common term, translating the Greek word *koinonia* (which is also rendered sometimes as fellowship, sharing, joint participation, etc.). We find it used in **1 Cor 10:16-17**. Sacrifices in both pagan worship and Judaism were often followed by sharing a meal from the sacrifice. In the same way, in the bread and the cup, Christians share in Christ’s sacrifice and benefits. We are communing with him.

Luke’s favorite term in **Acts**, *breaking bread*, calls attention to the fellowship aspect too. Table fellowship in the NT world was a sign of closeness and sharing in a way we do not fully appreciate today. Similarly, sharing this meal together proclaims we are a community, a family.

Memorial

The communion that exists between us and Christ is rooted in a past event. Inscribed on the front of our table is the command of Jesus: *Do this in remembrance of me*. An equally valid alternative translation is *Do this memorial of me*. We get some more perspective on this by linking it to Jewish practices. When celebrating the Passover memorial, there was more than recalling the past. Rather, the Mishnah enjoined, “In every generation a man must so regard himself as if he came forth himself out of Egypt.” Instead of just calling the past to mind, the past was brought into the present. This language of memorial, then, calls attention to what Jesus has done: we eat and remember that died for ME.

As we eat the bread and drink the cup together not only today, but week by week, let us all endeavor to keep in mind just how much importance, grace, and wonder is summed up in this simple little act.

Bryant Perkins

“Stand Firm in...Liberty”

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