Communion Service

Luke 22:14-22 (King James Version)
14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.
15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:
16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.
17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:
18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.
19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.
20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.
21 But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.
22 And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

1 Corinthians 11:23-30 (King James Version)
23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:
24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.
25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.
26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.
27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.
28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.
29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.
30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

• When we celebrate Easter, as we have done today,
  o It is a memorial to us of the resurrection.
• It is about setting aside a day to remember
  o that Jesus Christ died for our sins
  ▪ and that he rose again on the third day.
• Communion is a very special thing.
  o When Christians gather for a Communion Service,
    ▪ they are remembering,
      • in a special manner,
        o the atoning death of Christ
        ▪ that has made us free from sins.
• The key word is memorial.
  o “This do in remembrance of me,”
      • That remembrance is the heart of the matter.
• By definition,
communion is the distinctive rite of Christian worship
- that was instituted by the Lord Jesus
- on the eve of his atoning death.

• It consists of a Christian partaking
  - of bread and drink,
    - both of which are presented in memorial
      - of Christ’s inexhaustible sacrifice.
  - As such it becomes a vehicle of grace
    - that inspires us to increased faith
      - and faithfulness towards God.
• By remembering the sacrifice that was made
  - and applying that sacrifice to our lives,
    - through the ordinance of communion,
      - we are challenged to walk worthy
        - of such a great price that was paid.
• In order to understand communion, however,
  - one must first understand the Passover.
    - The communion service that was instituted by Christ,
      - finds its roots in the celebration of the Passover.
• For a few moments tonight
  - we need to revisit the events of the book of Exodus
    - in order to understand the significance of communion.

The Cliff Notes version goes like this:
• Israel had been in Egyptian bondage for 430 years.
  - God heard their cries for deliverance,
    - so He sent Moses to Egypt
      - and empowered him to lead
        - the Israelites out of slavery.
• God worked many notable miracles through Moses,
  - plaguing the Egyptians
    - and defeating the Egyptian gods.
• Egypt suffered the wrath of God in the first nine plagues.
  - However, the most significant of the plagues
    - was the final one,
      - where a death angel would go through Egypt
        - killing the firstborn of every family.
• As God prepared to unleash the last plague on Egypt,
  - He commanded the Israelites to apply the blood of a lamb
    - to the lintel and doorposts of their homes
      - to escape the plague.
• When the death angel saw the blood,
  - he would pass over that home.
• God instituted the first feast of Passover
  - in order to keep Israel safe from the plague
    - but he commanded the to continue
      - the annual practice of that feast
        - as a memorial of God’s deliverance.
• Let me share with you a few details from the original Passover celebration:
A lamb had to be selected
- to become the sacrifice whose blood would cover
  - the doorposts and protect the family.
That lamb had to be a male,
- in the first year
  - and had to be without spot or blemish.
After the lamb was slain
- and his blood was collected,
  - it was to be roasted whole.
It was important that it was kept whole,
- not a bone of it was allowed to be broken.
The household was required
- to eat the whole lamb,
  - none of it was to be wasted.
If a household was too small to eat an entire lamb,
- they were to invite their neighbors
  - to help them eat all the lamb.
They were to apply the blood from the lamb
- to the lintel (above the door)
  - and on the two side posts of the door.
The Israelites were to be dressed for travel
- when they ate the Passover lamb.
  - They were to eat it in haste
    - with their loins girded,
      - shoes on, and staff in hand.
They were to put out all leaven from their houses;
- they were to eat unleavened bread
  - for seven days after the Passover.

In the years that followed, even to this day,
- Israelites have celebrated the Passover
  - on an annual basis.
- Once a year they gather together
  - to partake of this feast
    - and remember how the Lord delivered them
      - from Egyptian bondage.
- It is a serious celebration to the Jews
  - and it is considered a sin
    - to fail to observe the Passover.
- These things are of great importance to us
  - because the original Passover was a type,
    - or a symbol, that was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
- Jesus Christ is the substance
  - of the symbolization of the Passover.
- He was heaven’s spotless lamb,
  - the only one who was ever without spot or blemish.
- He was slain at Calvary
  - and his blood became the vehicle of our deliverance.
- In keeping with the original instruction of God
  - and in fulfillment of prophecy,
• not a bone in his body was broken.
  • Although it was customary
    o to break the legs of a man who was crucified,
      ▪ with Jesus they instead pierced his side,
        ▪ yet another fulfillment of prophecy.
    • Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of the Passover.
  • And so it was that, on the eve of his crucifixion,
    o as he gathered with his disciples to partake
      ▪ of the ceremonial Passover feast,
    o that he put into place a new ordinance
      ▪ that was to become a part of the new covenant!

That new ordinance is the Communion
  ▪ or The Lord’s Supper and it is done,
    o in keeping with the original feast,
      ▪ in remembrance.
  ▪ Jesus, in the new memorial,
    o changed the object of the memorial.
  ▪ Instead of remembering deliverance from Egyptian bondage,
    o the Christian partakes of Communion
      ▪ in remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ
        ▪ and deliverance from the bondage of sin.

The Lord’s Supper is a sacred object lesson setting forth the two fundamentals of the gospel.
  • First, the bread, which represents the incarnation.
  • As we partake of the bread we are reminded of the words of John the apostle in John 1:14, “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”
  • The bread is a reminder of the body that was broken for our transgressions.
  • It was that body that was bruised for our iniquities, he bore, in his body, the punishment for our sins.
  • When you take the bread, you are to be reminded that deliverance from sin didn’t come cheaply.
  • A body was broken.
  • So, at his last supper, Jesus took the bread and broke it – just as his body was about to be broken.
  • It is notable that the bread that Jesus took from the Passover table was unleavened bread.
  • Leaven is yeast, it is what makes bread rise or to become puffed up.
  • During the Passover and for 7 days after the Israelites were to remove all leaven from their houses.
  • Leaven is a type of sin, false doctrine, or error, representing things that puff us up, exalt us, and bring pride to our flesh.
  • Leaven is mentioned several times in the New Testament by both Jesus and Paul and is likened to sin.
  • God knew, from the first Passover, that the body that would be broken to purchase freedom from sin would have to be without sin.
  • So it was instituted from the beginning that the feast of Passover was linked to unleavened bread.
  • When Jesus took that Bread from that table and broke it, he was representing the Bread of Life, the body of Christ that was without sin.
  • His sinlessness is our hope of salvation.
• Everything about redemption is based on his sinless sacrifice.
• This is the significance of that flat, hard, bland, tasteless little piece of unleavened bread.
• It represents the body that was broken.

Secondly, the communion sets forth the atonement.
• The grace and mercy that sets us free from sins grip is based in the death of Christ.
• The Juice that is taken in communion is taken in remembrance of the blood that was shed for our sins.
• In ancient times the most solemn form of agreement was the blood-covenant, which was sealed or signed with sacrificial blood.
• The covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai was a blood-covenant.
• After God laid down his conditions and the people accepted them, Moses took a basin filled with blood and sprinkled half of it upon the altar of sacrifice, he then sprinkled the rest of it upon the people.
• It was the blood that bound them to the contract.
• The New Testament is a new covenant that was instituted by Christ and it is a blood covenant.
• By that blood, God is bound to pardon and save all who come under the covenant of that blood.
• The blood of Jesus is the Divine guarantee that God will be merciful and gracious to those who truly repent.
• In communion we take that blood and symbolically apply it to our lives.
• We do so in awe and reverence of the price that was paid for sin and in recognition of the fact that, by that blood, we have entered into a covenant with God.
• It is notable here, as well, that we use juice as the element that represents the blood of Jesus.
• Like his body, his blood is also pure and undefiled, without the leaven of sin.
• Alcohol is fermented which means that yeast, or leaven, has been allowed to alter it.
• Juice is pure and undefiled, just like the blood that was shed for our sins.

I would be remiss, this evening, if I did not stress that communion is a serious matter.
• It is not something to be partaken of lightly.
• I Corinthians 11:27 warns us against taking the Lord’s Supper unworthily.
• We should note that it does not say “unworthy.”
• Unworthy is an adjective, meaning without merit or value, worthless, and not deserving.
• Unworthily is an adverb, meaning irreverently, unfit, or in an unworthy manner.
• Unworthy is a condition; unworthily is a manner, an attitude.
• They are two entirely different words.
• None of us is worthy to partake of His body and blood, but He has made us worthy through salvation.
• Unworthily has to do with the manner, spirit, conduct, and attitude in which we take communion.
• An unworthy person may take of communion worthily by examining their lives and placing themselves under the blood.
• However, to partake of it unworthily is to flippantly partake of it without recognizing the gravity and seriousness of it.
• To take the blood and body of Christ while harboring unrepented sin in your life is one way that you can take the communion unworthily.
But let a man examine himself, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:28.

- The Passover lamb was required to be separated for up four days to examine it for spots and blemishes, and during this time the individual made himself ready for the Passover by ridding his house of leaven.
- Similarly, self-examination is a must before we engage in communion.
- Our hearts should be free of condemnation, guilt, and sin when we take communion.
- Does this mean you have to be perfect? No, else none of us could partake.
- What it means though is that you spend time in prayer and repentance, insuring that the blood of Jesus has been applied to your life.
- What you don’t want to do is partake of the Communion Service with unrepented sin in your life.
- Understand this, as well, it doesn’t take God all night to forgive sin, it doesn’t take weeks of prayer and fasting to put things under the blood.
- Tonight, each of us needs to go before the throne of God and make sure that we have a fresh covering of the blood of Jesus.
- Repentance is a valuable thing and it is something that each of us should do tonight.
- For the next few moments I am asking each individual to find a place of prayer and simply to repent.
- Plead the blood of Jesus over your life.
- Rid your house of leaven, put away anything that might come between you and God.

(Prayer of Repentance)

(Come to Front)

Israel was to observe the Passover as a memorial throughout all generations and to keep it as an ordinance forever.

- Paul referred to ordinances and admonished the church to keep them in I Corinthians 11:2.
- I Corinthians 11 deals with two specific ordinances, namely, hair and the communion service.
- Through the ordinance of the Communion Service, God’s ordinance of the Passover continues in the New Testament era of grace.
- The church is to observe this service until the Lord returns.
- Tonight we gather in this place to remember the sacrifice that was made for our sins.
- By partaking of communion we take that sacrifice and symbolically make it a part of our lives.

The final element of communion is unity.

- Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”
- Together we have become the body of Christ in this world.
- And the Communion Supper is act of unity in which each of us acknowledges our place in that body as, collectively, we partake of the incredible sacrifice that was made for our sins.

(Usher’s Distribute Communion)
Bread and juice are a picture of death.

- They represent the separation of the body from life.
- As blood drains from the body, life ends.
- So, in communion we take the flesh in one hand and the blood in the other.
- The bread tells us that the Bread of Life must be broken in death in order to be given to those that are spiritually hungry.
- The poured juice tells us that His blood, which is His life, must be poured out in death in order for its cleansing, quickening power to be supplied to the needy soul.
- Both elements remind us that by faith we become partakers of Christ and have communion with him.
- As we partake of the bread and drink the juice, we are to be reminded and assured by faith that we may truly receive his sacrifice and his spirit into our lives.
- We partake of him and take him into us.
- This is more than an outward religion, it is an inward change.
- By eating the bread and drinking the juice we take the body and blood of Christ into our own lives – they become a part of us.

Bro Anderson -- Let us Pray

(Partake of Communion)

Footwashing

We ended our discourse on communion with a statement about unity.

- It has long been a practice among apostolics to follow communion with footwashing.
- This is a practice that has been abandoned or ignored by most of Christianity but was an important part of that special evening that Jesus spent with his disciples on the eve of his crucifixion.
- The unity that Communion demonstrates in the body of Christ can only be achieved through servanthood.
- It is because we serve each other that we have the unity that we demonstrate when we partake of the body and the blood together.
- That’s why footwashing is an important part of this ordinance.
- The significant thing about that practice is that, in ancient times the washing of feet was performed by a servant, since it was considered a menial task below the dignity of the householder.
- For Jesus, the Lord and Master who had come to establish a kingdom, to kneel and wash His disciple’s feet sent shock waves through them.
- He was the King but here he was acting as if he were no more than a lowly servant.
- He was their leader, he was their teacher, he was exalted above them all, but he humbled himself with a basin and a towel.
- This is the central figure of the ordinance of footwashing, its all about servanthood.

Read with me from John 13:4

4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.
5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.
6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?
7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.
8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

... 12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Peter was appalled.
• So much so that he resisted Jesus’ effort to wash his feet.
• But Jesus replied to his protest, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me” (John 13:8).
• Part comes from the Greek word meaning a share, or a portion.
• Immediately Peter realized the importance of missing out on a portion of fellowship and communion with Christ so he submitted to Jesus washing his feet.
• Having a part with Christ is a desirable thing and the truth that Jesus expressed to Peter was that there is a relationship and communion with Christ that can be achieved no other way than through the role of servanthood.
• When we wash someone’s feet, we establish a point of identity with Christ that does not take place any other way.

Jesus said, “Ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:14).
• The word ought implies something that is necessary for us to do.
• We can derive from that word the fact that, just as surely as Jesus intended for communion to be a lasting ordinance, he also intended that footwashing would be continued on throughout the history of the church.
• Jesus went on to say, For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.
• “Example” comes from a Greek word implying a pattern that should be imitated.
• Jesus declared that His washing the disciple’s feet was an example for us to follow.

Washing one another’s feet is about more than just cleansing dirt from the flesh, in fact it has little or nothing to do with dirty feet.
• It has more to do with washing our spirits and attitudes of pride.
• It is another means of removing the “puffed up” aspect of leaven.
• The act of washing the feet of a fellow believer encourages an attitude of repentance and humility that keeps us spiritually clean.
• The very fact that we shirk away from the idea of doing it demonstrates the need for it.
• You can’t wash someone’s feet without taking on the role of a servant.
• You can’t do the practice justice without genuinely caring for the person that you are doing the service for.
• There’s something about the process that tears down walls of resentment and pride, and that breaks down barriers and divisions.

The truth is that the benefit of the washing is mutual.
• Both the person whose feet are being washed and the servant doing the washing are receiving a spiritual cleansing.
• Nothing is more humbling than to kneel at another person’s feet and wash them, unless it is to have someone kneel at your feet and do the same.
• This is the heart of the matter.
• This is why so many have discarded the practice, while others have endeavored to make it more appealing to the flesh.
• Because it takes humility to roll up your sleeves and take someone else’s bare foot and wash it in real water.
• Nothing produces unity in the body of Christ like the spirit of a servant.
• This is why Jesus instituted the practice and this is why it is critical that we carry it on even today.

In just a moment we are going to dismiss this service.
• At that time those who want to participate in footwashing should follow these instructions.
• The Men will separate from the Ladies.
• Men should then wash men’s feet, with ladies washing ladies’ feet.
• The Men will go to the fellowship hall and the Ladies will go to the Sunday School Room.
• Footwashing should be observed by washing both feet of a person, simply by splashing water on the person’s feet and then drying them with a towel, normally this is done one foot at a time.
• While washing our brother’s or sister’s feet, we should be in a prayerful spirit, rejoicing that we are doing what Jesus did for His disciples and praying for the one whose feet we are washing.
• Likewise, while our feet are being washed, we should pray for the one washing our feet, asking God to bless and honor them for their humility.
• Each person should wash someone else’s feet and have their feet washed.

Remember this, Jesus no doubt washed Judas’s feet only hours before he betrayed Him into the hands of sinners.
• None of us is too good to wash the feet of any other among us.
• That’s the purpose of the institution.
• Footwashing should break down pride, barriers, feelings, and resentments that may exist in our hearts.
• At the same time it identifies us with Christ and looses for us the blessing of sharing a part with him.

(Pray) (Dismiss)