

An example of a communion season

[A communion season is a most precious time in the church of Jesus Christ. This account of Sydney's communion in September 2014 was written by the congregation's minister, Rev George B Macdonald.]

It is a special time when the death of Christ is remembered in a congregation. By His death upon the Cross, the Saviour paid the penalty due to Divine justice for all of the sins of all His people. Truly, this solemn event is worthy of remembrance, and in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper we have a scriptural way in which the Church of Christ is to maintain a witness to the Saviour and His atoning death on the Cross.

On Thursday morning, we were directed to consider a solemn and searching subject – the threefold denial of Peter. It is humbling to think that a man who swore he would never deny Christ, swore he never knew Christ. The portion looked at in Matthew 26:69-70 is a sober account of this awful event. Due to the intercession of Christ, Peter was brought to repentance and we read that “he went out, and wept bitterly.” This was but the beginning of his penitence and was, we believe, followed by a sincere repentance of his sin in denying the Saviour in such aggravated circumstances.

On Thursday evening, the congregation were again directed to the Gospel according to Matthew, this time in chapter 5:21-22. The sin of unrighteous anger was particularly identified. Sinful anger, such as a bitter and malicious spirit, is evil in the sight of the Lord. Except the Lord restrain us, anger may break out into murder, as in the case of Cain. How far from such an evil spirit the Saviour Himself was, who, “when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously” (1 Peter 2:23).

On Friday evening, the minister drew attention to the Apostle Paul's letter to Philemon. Many interesting details were identified in this very personal and loving letter in support of Onesimus. The grace of Christian love is much in evidence from the pen of the Apostle and one that should be found much in evidence in the life of the believer.

On Saturday, a day of preparation, the stirring response of Peter to a searching question from the Lord Jesus was noted. Other professed disciples of Jesus had already gone away when the Saviour asked, “Will ye also go away?” Peter was given grace to respond on behalf of himself and others, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” In this the true disciples of Jesus are agreed.

The Communion Sabbath morning is an especially high and solemn service. Isaiah 53:10 was the text and the minister noted three heads in his sermon. The Reality of Christ's Sufferings; The Reason for Christ's Sufferings and the Result of Christ's Sufferings. In the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the sufferings of Christ were remembered and a witness raised to the importance of His death once more in our Riverstone congregation.

On the evening of the Lord's day, the significant event of the resurrection of Christ was highlighted from Matthew 28:9-15. This great event is of course remembered every Sabbath, the first day of the week. In spite of a wicked false report (one of many false ideas to explain away the resurrection) the fact remains that "the Lord is risen indeed." This being so, how we should all be found submitting to Christ and believing in Him alone for salvation. He is the Risen Lord, as said Thomas, "my Lord, and my God".

A Communion Season concludes with service of thanksgiving on Monday. On this occasion, we were directed to consider the encouraging words of 1 John 3:1-3. Such words set before us the believer's present privilege and his/her hope for the future. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."