

Instructions on Communion

by Paris Reidhead

Paris Reidhead's sermon emphasizes the importance of communion as a means of recognizing Christ's presence and the necessity of worship for spiritual revelation and growth.

Duration: 23:51

Scripture: Matthew 18:20, Luke 24:13-16, Luke 24:27-34, Luke 24:45, John 4:23-24

Topics: "Communion"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by emphasizing the importance of recognizing our need before God can meet it. He shares a story about Aunt Harriet, who asked him to remind people of the two words they must always remember: meditation and growth. The speaker then references the story of Jesus appearing to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, where he expounded on the scriptures and revealed himself to them. The disciples' hearts burned within them as they listened to Jesus, and they later returned to Jerusalem to share the news of his resurrection with the other disciples.

Transcript

do today. But the promise was this, that wherever two or three of you are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them. And this is the first opportunity after the resurrection of Christ for the Lord Jesus to fulfill that promise.

Beginning with verse 13, And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about six and a half miles. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.

But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, what manner of communication are these that ye have one to another as you walk and are sad? And the one of them whose name was Cleophas answering said unto him, art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem or art thou the only person in Jerusalem who has not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, what things? And they said, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet, mighty indeed in word before God and all the people. And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death and to crucify him.

But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel. And beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher.

And when they found not his body, they came saying that they also had seen a vision of angels which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher and found it even so as the women had said. But him they saw not.

Then he said unto them, O fools and slow heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them and all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And when they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went, he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.

And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and break it, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him.

And he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they arose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

Father, bless this word as we prepare our hearts for thy table of remembrance. And grant that these simple but wonderful lessons from the portion we've read will be riveted to our minds and become part of our thinking. Minister to us now we ask in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Amen. The most significant thing about this is that these disciples were in great distress, great burden, great perplexity, great uncertainty. Isn't it marvelous that the Lord often has to wait until we have real need before he can meet our need? Until we recognize it.

Oh, we may have need long before we're willing to admit it, or we recognize it. But he's patient. He waits.

Now there were a great many people to whom the Lord might have come. These two, and we have them identified only by Cleopas, who's not otherwise known, started off to walk to Emmaus. Apparently they had just felt that everything was over.

And they were walking. Sad is the word. Why are you talking so sad? Why are you so sad as you talk? And they stopped and said, are you the only person that's been in Jerusalem and hasn't known what's been going on? Don't you know what's been happening? Where have you been? Have you been hiding? How could it possibly be that you're not aware what's taken place? Our world has been shattered.

Why shouldn't we be sad? We had hoped that he would deliver Israel and he died. And now all of our hopes were misplaced. He promised he'd be with us and we can't find him.

We went to the tomb and he wasn't there. And so we have a right to be sad. Well, we found out in the past that no believer ever has the right to be disappointed.

Sometimes we are. And sometimes in that disappointment, we give God the opportunity to minister to us. And I believe that what we see here is the tender concern of the Lord Jesus Christ for us, his people, his disciples, when things don't go right, when we are sad.

Now, if you think for a moment that your life is going to be of such that you never are sad and never are disappointed, never have problems, I have news for you. I have news for you. It won't work out quite that way.

Because perhaps if he permitted it to be as smooth as we'd all like to have it, we would be so comforted and so confident and so self-assured that we wouldn't have to seek his face. He permits problems to come because only in our recognition of our inability to help the problem are we willing to come to him and learn what he will do. So let's see in this that the Lord meets our need when we have recognized our need.

And then the second thing that we need to see from this is that the Lord only teaches us when our minds are open. As long as I know all the answers, I'm unteachable. I guess that it has been said, and I don't know whether it's true, but the most astonishing thing happens in the life of parents and children.

Someone has said, I was absolutely amazed how much my mother and father learned between the time I was a freshman and a senior in college. It was just astonishing how much they had learned. Or as much how he recognized how much there was for the young to learn that the old may have had a little bit of experience in learning.

You see, until we're open, until our minds are open, until our hearts are open, until we're prepared to say, Lord, teach me, we're unteachable. And so it could be that he would open the scripture and he would unfold to them the things of Moses. I have the feeling that these two had been with him.

Yes, I have the feeling that they had traveled with him. They aren't identifying. I think they'd heard him teach in all the villages of Galilee and of Judea.

Yes, I think that he was well known to them. But you know, it's one thing to listen. It's another thing to hear.

As a pastor, I've been astonished in years past. I would lay truth out to the people, give it to them, set it out just as plainly as I could. And they listened and they accepted it.

Then I would bring someone in by whom I chose to come, knowing that he believed as I did and would reinforce it. But the truth now would be coming through his mind and his personality. And they'd hear it again from him.

And I've had them come to me and say, oh, wasn't that marvelous? Did you hear what he said? Why it's changed my life. Pastor, why haven't you been giving us something like that? Been the very thing I've been giving them. But they heard it from a different person.

They were open and ready to learn. Well, in fact, I went into the community church in South Jacksonville, Florida. Spent two weeks in the revival teaching, much as I've taught you in these weeks past.

And dear brother Nesmith, N-E-S-M-I-T-H, Nesmith, I guess you'd call it, was the pastor. He'd been in the post office and then he'd left the post office, became a lay pastor. And God had given him quite a work there.

They took on support of the missionary. Was a happy time. We were moving from Florida to Greenville, South Carolina.

And so I called and asked if they would let us, if we could stay and visit with them. I'd been there a year or so before. And I came in and with the two children now and the girls, young girls in the home took the children and Marjorie went with Mrs. Nesmith.

And he said, come on into the study. Said, I've been studying the word and God has been showing me some things and it's absolutely thrilling what I've seen. And I just could hardly wait till you come when I had your letters.

You were coming this way. I wanted to share them with you. And I sat there and I listened to this man give me back what I had spent two weeks giving him a year before.

And he was giving it to me as though it were a fresh revelation to me and something I'd never heard about and would be thrilled to hear. And at first I was a trifle offended. I must say, what do you think he's doing? Some kind of a game.

Things going through my mind. And then I realized what had happened. I gave him the words as best I could, but God gave him the insight.

All I could give him was words. I was in a meeting in Atlanta, Georgia in the Alliance Church. And one day in the morning service, a young woman came in and with her was an elderly woman, beautiful person.

She looked like porcelain. Jerezden China teacup. Just that elegance, that beauty of personality and character.

And at the door, she introduced herself. She said, they call me Aunt Harriet. I'm Aunt Harriet Williams.

And I learned from the pastor that she and her husband had started St. Paul Bible College and Simpson Bible College and ministered for the Lord and the Alliance for years. And she said, you said something today that gripped my heart. Will you please come out and have tea with me today? Well, I went out to East Lake Alliance Church where there was a log cabin on the back that had been fitted up for Aunt Harriet.

And she had Mrs. Dan James. Now then was Ann and I do not recall her first name, but she was the nurse caring for Aunt Harriet. And we had tea.

And she said, now Brother Edith, wherever you go with our Alliance people, please bring a message for me. Will you? I said, Aunt Harriet, I'll bring anything you ask me to bring. Tell me what it is.

She said, please tell them that there are two words that they must always remember. They must always remember. The first word is meditation.

Our people hear, they write it in their notebooks, they underline the scripture, and they go home and they forget what it was they heard. Please tell them that the function, the reason for truth is not to just hear it, but to meditate upon it and think about it. Oh, she said, unless they meditate, there is no growth.

The people don't grow by hearing. And then tell them the second word is revelation. Meditation and revelation.

Meditation is what we do and revelation is what God does when God makes the truth real to our hearts. I believe that these two had been with the Lord Jesus and he taught them and they had the words. But now in the dilemma, in the problem, in the heartache, in the disappointment, in the tragedy, he can open the scripture from Moses and teach them concerning Christ and there will be revelation of the truth.

But there's something else. That this little scripture tells us in preparation for the Lord's table. And that is that he reveals himself to us in worship.

Revelation occurs in worship, not in study as much as in worship. Now, one of the problems that we have, you see, in a service together such as this, this is not to constitute our week's worship. That you must understand.

This is not to be the week's worship. This is to prepare us to worship and teach us to worship. But that there must be time that we take alone every day to worship.

Someone, F.B. Meyer was actually an Anglican preacher in London who was greatly used in England and in this country, went, was at Keswick, the great Keswick Conference in the north of England, in the Lake Country. And the venerable, highly loved, greatly loved George Mueller of Bristol was in his latter years. And F.B. Meyer was talking to him alone in one of those moments when the younger man tried to gather the jewels from the elder and said, Father, tell me, why is it that sometimes when I preach, there seems to be such a sense of the presence of God, such blessing, what I witness seems to be so effective.

And then there are other times when it seems so, well, so, I'm so alone. It's so empty. It's just me.

Why? The old man said, my son, it's because you've breathed out twice when you've only breathed in once. Hard to do, you know. You empty your lungs once and then you try to empty them again without breathing in, you're not going to have very much.

You can't blow the candle out on the second breath. A.B. Simpson put it another way. We go into the presence of God in worship and we in-breathe of his life and we go out into the presence of the people and we out-breathe in witness.

But if you try to out-breathe when you have neglected in-breathing, you bring no blessing to any. And that's what we find here, that it was in their worship. What did they do? First, they'd shown hospitality.

They wanted time with the Lord. He would have made as though he would have gone and they said, oh no, Lord, carry with us or stay with us, stranger not recognizing him. Then, and then they shared what they had.

They didn't have much, but what they had they shared with him. It was little, but they brought back to him what had come to them and then they obeyed what they had been taught. I could hear them when that meal was concluded and they said, you know, that last night that he was with us, he took bread at the close of the meal and he blessed it and he passed it all out among us and said, take need of it, break it, need it.

This is my body given for you. And then Cleopas said, yes. And then he took the cup and when he had blessed it, he said, drink ye all of it.

This is my blood of the new covenant. That's what he told us. That's what he said.

And it was that, though the scripture doesn't say that was their response, but it does say he took the bread and he blessed it and he break it and he gave it to them. And it was in the breaking of the bread that they had the revelation of Christ. It's in worship that we see him revealed and it's in worship as you worship him and love him and adore him and serve him that he reveals himself to you and it is out of that worship that the proof of the resurrection becomes a reality to those in your family, your friends and your neighbors, those with whom you work and walk.

It's only as they had been with Jesus and he had been revealed to them that they could turn around even at night in the dark, in the danger, walk back to Jerusalem, find the believers, the brethren in the upper room and say to them, Peter is right. He is alive. He has been raised from the dead.

And it is as you in your own private worship and we, as we corporately worship him, as we see him in the midst, as he's revealed to us that we give proof of the resurrection to those of our generation. It's not the words written. It's the word incarnate.

You can talk about the resurrection day and night, but unless those who walk with us note that we have had Christ revealed to us, they're empty words. As we come to the table, let's remember this first communion service after the resurrection, when he was revealed in the breaking of the bread, father of heaven, father, father of Jesus. We lift our hearts to thee now to thank thee and praise they that doubted love us when doubted snow, the very worst about us.

In fact, father, there's nothing we'll ever find out about ourselves and we'll surprise thee or that will make the change thy mind about loving us. We were, and we were dead and trespasses and sins who walked according to the course of this world, the prints and the power of the air, that same spirit that now works in the children of disobedience among whom we all had our manner of life in times past, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature, the children of wrath, even as others. But now our God who are rich in mercy for thy great love or without its love us, even when we were dead in sin has quickened us together with Christ and raised us up together and made us sit together.

In the heavenly places in Christ, as we come now to this table of remembrance, grant our father that in the bread, we see his broken body given for us in the cup. We see his blood shed for the remission of our sin in his worthy, fearless, matchless name. We ask.

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