

The Lord's Supper

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald emphasizes the privilege and preparation required for the Lord's Supper, highlighting the importance of reverence in worship.

Duration: 25:01

Scripture: Exodus 19:12-13, Hebrews 12:18, Hebrews 12:22-25

Topics: "Lord's Supper"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being prepared and reverent when gathering together as the people of God. He reminds the audience that they stand in the presence of God during worship and should approach it with a consciousness of His holiness and sovereignty. The speaker encourages the audience to remember the sacrifice of Jesus and to worship Him with a heart full of praise and adoration. He references two hymns that beautifully express the truth of collective worship and the significance of the cross in our worship.

Transcript

We turn in our Bibles to Hebrews chapter 12, the twelfth chapter of the Epistles of the Hebrews, beginning with verse 18. Hebrews 12 at 18. I'd say it's a real joy to be back at Yosemite.

Never any hardship to come back to this beautiful spot in God's creation, and especially in the context of Christian fellowship. We trust that it'll be a time of blessing to all of our hearts. Hebrews chapter 12, verse 18.

For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard entreated, that the word should not be spoken to them any more. For they could not endure that which was commanded. And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart.

And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake. But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, who are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that

speaketh.

For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven. I was thinking of this passage of Scripture in connection with our meeting tomorrow morning when we gather together to remember the Lord. This passage tells us that in Christianity we do not come to a scene of judgment and darkness and tumult, but we come to a place of extraordinary privilege and majesty and dignity.

And I think there's a danger of us losing sight today of what a privilege it is for us to draw near to God in worship as a company of his people. As I understand collective worship, our bodies will, true enough, be down in the auditorium tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock. But that is not really the place where we worship.

We pass by faith from Yosemite National Park into the throne room of the universe. By faith we stand in the presence of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. By faith we have audience with the King.

And it's no mean privilege for a mortal being this side of eternity to meet in such august company. This passage of Scripture tells us that as we pass into the heavenly sanctuary, we're surrounded by innumerable hosts of angels. Hosts of angels whose tongues have never been unloosed to sing redemption's story like ours have been.

Angels who look on, who see the church, and learn great lessons of God's wisdom, love, and grace from his dealings with us. The angelic host in heaven views a company of people, saved by grace, coming into the presence of the Lord. And then, of course, there are some of the saints of this church dispensation who've already passed into the presence of the Lord.

And they're there at this present time. Their spirits, the personalities are there, though their bodies are still in the grave. They've passed into that scene of endless bliss where the song of the Lamb has begun.

And it's our portion to meet with them there and to present the sacrifice of our praise to God tomorrow morning. And then it says that God himself is there. God, the Judge of all.

Dear friends, I wonder if during the week that we have been conscious of the fact that each Lord's Day we stand in the presence of God. Infinite in holiness and purity, the sovereign of all the universe, we stand in his very presence. What must such a scene be? I wonder how you picture it in your mind.

The importance of it is that we don't come into such a place without preparation. We don't come into such a place with sin and defilement. We come into such a place and such a privilege as judged believers.

Some time ago an operation was going on in the hospital. The doctor was there working with nimble fingers. The nurses were passing the instruments to him as he called for them.

And as one of the nurses was passing an instrument to the doctor, it accidentally touched the light fixture. And the doctor hurled it aside. Why was that? Dear friends, contamination.

That's why. Contamination. When I think of the care that's used in an operating room today, when I think of a believer standing before God by faith in his very presence, it makes me realize how we must be careful not to come before him contaminated by the filth and defilement of the way, but come as purged worshipers into his presence, having judged that which is sinful and displeasing to him.

Then it says that as we gather in the heavenly sanctuary, the Old Testament saints are there too. The spirits of just men made perfect. The men of this world have never stood in such a place of privilege.

To think that we pass by faith into the presence of God, of the angelic host, of those who've gone before the church dispensation, and now of the worthy saints of the Old Testament dispensation. They're there as well. Those who look forward to Calvary by faith, we who look back to Calvary by faith, we meet with one common song on our lips.

Then, dear friends, Jesus is there. Jesus is there. Is Jesus the mediator of a new covenant? I can imagine the ripple of excitement that would go through the conference if word got out that you were going to have audience in the White House this coming week.

If word got out that you had received an invitation to appear before Queen Elizabeth in another month, I can imagine that that would be a choice morsel of conversation during the conference days. Dear friends, there's something better than that. There's something better than that.

To be able to stand by faith in the presence of the Lord Jesus and cry out, Worthy, O Lamb of God, art thou, that every knee to thee should bow. It's awfully easy for us to get a wrong sense of values, to put importance on things that don't count and to forget the things that really do count. Are we aware tonight that on the morrow we'll be standing in the heavenly sanctuary, in the presence of the crucified, risen, ascended, glorified Lord Jesus Christ? What are you going to say to Him? Oh, you say, I'm a sister, I won't be able to say anything.

Well, I'm sure the sisters are able to say things too to Him. I'm sure He's waiting for that kiss, that kiss of love, waiting for that tribute from your heart. And then it says, And we come to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Now, I don't think it's at all necessary for us to think tonight in terms of literal blood in the heavenly sanctuary. No necessity of it at all. It simply means that the value of Christ's blood is there.

The efficacy of His blood is there, and it's blood that calls out not for vengeance, as in the case of Abel, but calls out for grace. Now, we mentioned before that such an audience certainly requires preparation, requires preparation of heart. I remember when Queen Elizabeth was flying to this country, there was a long article in the newspaper about the airline stewardesses who were selected to serve on the flight.

They weren't just taken off a regular run and put on the Queen's run. These girls were taken aside. They were groomed.

They were trained. They were told how they would behave in the presence of the Queen. Everything about them was subject to instruction, to the closest scrutiny.

Dear friends, if it is true that we come to meet with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Christ Himself, when we gather to remember Him, this requires the greatest preparation. It requires preparation of soul. Sometimes I think that we have the naive idea that when we gather together to remember the Lord, our spiritual temperature automatically jumps several degrees.

And such an idea is absurd. My spiritual temperature tomorrow, when I meet to remember the Lord, will be what it has been during the week. And if I've been feeding on the leeks and onions and garlic of the world during the week, I cannot expect that I'll be in the Spirit on the Lord's day.

Then I think that sometimes, because we do allow for the liberty of the Holy Spirit of God in our meetings, that we have the idea that we can come together and that the Spirit of God will automatically give us something on Lord's Day morning and more or less push us to our feet and give us the word to say. But you know, it isn't true. It just isn't true.

If I haven't been feeding on the word of God during the week, I have no reason to expect that the Spirit of God will give me some word on Lord's Day morning. But I certainly believe that the brethren should be very much exercised during the week over some precious thoughts of Christ for the Lord's Day. It may be when you gather with the other Christians to remember Him that that might not be the strain of the meeting at all.

And in such a case, of course, one would remain silent. But it may very well be that the portion that the Spirit of God gave you during the week would be the very theme of the meeting on Lord's Day morning. And in that case, it certainly would be of the Spirit to share it with those who are there.

And then, you know, I think that if we're really conscious of the privilege that is ours as we gather to remember the Lord, it will affect other areas of our life, not only our spiritual preparation, but even such things as the way we dress and our reverence in the presence of the Lord. Last night, I was taken to a restaurant in San Francisco. And the people in front of me were turned away from that restaurant.

They weren't allowed to enter because of their attire. And you know, I've seen people gather to remember the Lord with that attire, but people were turned away from an ungodly restaurant. I'm sure if we were invited down to the White House, we'd be careful how we went.

Aren't you? Shall we do for man what we would not do for Jesus Christ? Dear friends, I think if I were a sister, when I gather together with the Christians to remember the Lord, that I would be careful to veil my glory. I think I would be careful that no other glory would be seen on that occasion but the glory of my blessed Savior. And I think I would be careful to be there on time.

I do indeed. I do indeed. The Lord Jesus is supremely worthy of our very best.

Dear friends, it's real. It's not something to be cast aside lightly. It's real.

And I think if I'm in the consciousness of the privilege that is mine, I'll be there on time. I'll be there on time because He is there. Because He is there.

You know, sometimes we can fall into very slipshod habits about the things of the Lord, how it must grieve His heart. People remain away from meetings because of the least inconvenience. And other Christians thank God go when it's the hardest to go.

I like what David said, when Arunah offered him the threshing floor. He said, You take it free, King David. David said, I will not offer unto the Lord that which cost me nothing.

He said, Well, I'll go to the meeting if it isn't raining. I'll go to the meeting if I don't have a headache or something like that. I will not offer unto the Lord that which cost me nothing.

He knows. He knows when there's a special sacrifice connected with gathering to meet Him. Dear friends, I think that perhaps a word is in order on the whole subject of reverence in the presence of the Lord.

In London, England, there's a wax museum. And as you enter into the grand salon of this wax museum, the great of the world are around you in wax. Almost any great dignitary that you could mention, you'd see him there.

Almost as lifelike. You almost expect him to breathe. But you know, there's a very interesting phenomenon in connection with that wax museum.

No one, whoever enters that grand salon, speaks above a whisper. It's a strange thing, isn't it? It's a strange thing. Do you know, I noticed that this past week called for the very sad funeral of a beloved brother.

Do you know, I noticed when people entered into that room, the body lying there in the casket, nobody spoke above a whisper. Nobody did. Dear friends, must I say tonight that sometimes we show reverence for a wax dummy or for a dead corpse that we do not show for the Savior.

If the Bible means anything at all, it means that when we do gather together as the people of God, we gather in His very presence by faith. Not to a scene of judgment true, but to a scene of grace, a scene of privilege, but a scene of responsibility as well. And I trust that as we do gather together tomorrow, to remember the Lord that we might do so with a real consciousness of His presence.

Not as if He were there, but because He is there. Two of our hymns express very well, it seems to be, the great truth of collective worship. And I think it would be nice to leave our meeting tonight with the words of these hymns in our ears and in our hearts.

I'm sure you know both of them. One of them is this, The veil is rent, Our souls draw near Unto a throne of grace, The merits of the Lord appear, They fill the holy place. His precious blood has spoken there Before and on the throne, And His own wounds in heaven declare The atoning work is done.

It is finished, here our souls have rest, His work can never fail, By Him our sacrifice and priest We pass within the veil. Within the holiest of all, Cleansed by His precious blood, Before the throne we prostrate fall And worship Thee, O God. And the other hymn that often comes to me as a wonderful description of true worship in the Spirit is that lovely hymn, Gazing on the Lord in glory, While our hearts in worship bow, There we read the wondrous story Of the cross, its shame and woe.

Every mark of dark dishonor Heaped upon the thorn-crowned brow, All the depths of thy heart's sorrow Told in answering, Glory now! On the cross alone forsaken, Where no pitying eye was found, Now to God's right hand exalted, With thy praise the heavens resound. Rise, our hearts, and bless the Father, Feastless singing here begun, Endless praise and adoration To the Father and the Son. And as we do gather together to remember the Lord, May we do so in spirit and in truth, Punctually, reverently, And with hearts overflowing With praise and worship to Him For His name's sake.

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