Communion is for Remembering How we are United With Christ and Each Other

Luke 22:1-23

Picture yourself at a dinner party or maybe a Friendsgiving.

It is being hosted by your best friend and their spouse.

They are a lovely couple. The house is spotless and beautiful, the food is excellent, the atmosphere is perfect. All the ingredients are in play for wonderful night of communing together.

But now picture the same situation with one added detail. The detail is that your friend has been secretly funneling money to a personal bank account so that when the time is right they can leave their spouse.

Kinda messes up the evening doesn’t it. The knowledge of your friend’s betrayal would make it impossible for you to engage and interact with your friend’s spouse. In fact, it would probably make it hard to even be there. Oh, you might be able to fake your way through the night, but what a terribly uncomfortable night it would be.

I use this example to talk about the Christian ordinance of Communion that we practice here on the 1st Sunday of every month.

As we examine ourselves and consider what Jesus has done for us through His life, death, and resurrection it is important to remember that without confessing our rebelliousness to God our intimacy with God and with other Christians will be affected greatly. If we are living in betrayal to God it is going to feel awkward to try and eat and drink from His table, with His people. In order to further illustrate the point I would like to read from Luke 22.

22 The Festival of Unleavened Bread, which is also called Passover, was approaching. 2 The leading priests and teachers of religious law were plotting how to kill Jesus, but they were afraid of the people’s reaction.

3 Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve disciples, 4 and he went to the leading priests and captains of the Temple guard to discuss the best way to betray Jesus to them. 5 They were delighted, and they promised to give him money. 6 So he agreed and began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus so they could arrest him when the crowds weren’t around.

The Last Supper

7 Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread arrived, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed. 8 Jesus sent Peter and John ahead and said, “Go and prepare the Passover meal, so we can eat it together.”

9 “Where do you want us to prepare it?” they asked him.

10 He replied, “As soon as you enter Jerusalem, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. At the house he enters, 11 say to the owner, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?’ 12 He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal.” 13 They went off to the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there.

14 When the time came, Jesus and the apostles sat down together at the table. 15 Jesus said, “I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. 16 For I tell you now that I won’t eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.”

17 Then he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. Then he said, “Take this and share it among yourselves. 18 For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come.”

19 He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

20 After supper he took another cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.

21 “But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray me. 22 For it has been determined that the Son of Man must die. But what sorrow awaits the one who betrays him.” 23 The disciples began to ask each other which of them would ever do such a thing.

Luke 22:1-23 NLT

Let me read those last few verses again…

21 “But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray me. 22 For it has been determined that the Son of Man must die. But what sorrow awaits the one who betrays him.” 23 The disciples began to ask each other which of them would ever do such a thing.

Notice here that even though Jesus knew of Judas’s betrayal He still ate and drank with him and didn’t make him leave the table (or the room). But it wasn’t the sweet fellowship it was meant to be. Instead it must have been more like the awkward scenario I described at the beginning of today’s sermon.

It wasn’t just Judas who had an awkward moment. Peter was also a little uncomfortable at the Last Supper. Jesus said to him.

31 “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. 32 But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.”

33 Peter said, “Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you, and even to die with you.”

34 But Jesus said, “Peter, let me tell you something. Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.”

Luke 22:31-34 NLT

So here we are at the Last Supper. The moment that has been painted on canvas as a beautiful serene moment for Jesus and His disciples. Instead, upon actually reading the account we see Jesus’ closest followers are thinking about their own positions in His kingdom, being warned of an upcoming denial and being found out as a traitor. The first Passover meal doesn’t sound all that different from the church in Corinth. Remember Paul wrote to them.

I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church, and to some extent I believe it. 19 But, of course, there must be divisions among you so that you who have God’s approval will be recognized!

20 When you meet together, you are not really interested in the Lord’s Supper. 21 For some of you hurry to eat your own meal without sharing with others. As a result, some go hungry while others get drunk. 22 What? Don’t you have your own homes for eating and drinking? Or do you really want to disgrace God’s church and shame the poor? What am I supposed to say? Do you want me to praise you? Well, I certainly will not praise you for this!

23 For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread 24 and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it.” 26 For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.

27 So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. 29 For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God’s judgment upon yourself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died.

1 Corinthians 11:18-30 NLT

Today as you prepare yourself to partake in Communion, I want to remind of two things.

1. That as believers we are united in Jesus.
2. When Jesus said “Do this in remembrance of me.” It was to remind us of our need for His sacrificial death. Without His sacrifice, we would all be guilty, before God, of posturing, denying, or betraying Jesus.

So today as you come to the table examine yourself. And if you recognize your need and your trust for Jesus then confess that to Him.

As Christians there is at least one thing that we must find total unity on…Our belief in Jesus’ sacrificial death, every single one of us is dependent on it.

Please come to the Table…

Galatians 3:28

28 There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Romans 14:9

19 So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.

Colossians 3:13-14

13 Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. 14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

Psalm 133:1

1 How wonderful and pleasant it is

 when brothers live together in harmony!

Ephesians 4:2-6

2 Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. 3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. 4 For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.5 There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,6 one God and Father of all,

who is over all, in all, and living through all.