

Overcoming Denominational Barriers Part 7

Holy Communion Part 2

Overview: Communion is remembering, re-enacting, establishing and releasing the power of the Last Supper in our lives.

A. Communion is Receiving the Body and the Blood.

Joh 6:47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

Joh 6:48 I am that bread of life.

Joh 6:49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

Joh 6:50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

Joh 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Joh 6:52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us [his] flesh to eat?

Joh 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Joh 6:54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

Joh 6:56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

Joh 6:57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

Joh 6:58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

Joh 6:59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

Joh 6:60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard [this], said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

Joh 6:61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

Joh 6:62 [What] and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

Joh 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life.

Joh 6:64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Joh 6:66 From that [time] many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Joh 6:67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

Joh 6:68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

Joh 6:69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

B. History of Communion.

As we saw in Holy Communion Part 1, the last supper is described in detail in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and 1 Corinthians. In referring to the bread and wine, all used the expressions, “This is my Body” and “This is my Blood.”

From the early days of the church in the Book of Acts, all believers understood that the bread and wine were the actual Body and Blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, slain for the remission of your sins and for your healing and for all the other benefits in your Salvation Package.

However, in the fifteenth century, Ulrich Zwingli (1484 -1531), a contemporary of Martin Luther, made his case that the Communion elements were only symbols. He maintained that Communion was still very important because it was instituted by Christ, our High Priest; and was a witness to the sacrifice which had already been accomplished (1). Like Martin Luther, he accepted the supreme authority of the Scriptures, but he applied them more rigorously and comprehensively to all doctrines and practices (2).

In 1518, Martin Luther (1483 -1546) had published his 95 theses, birthing the reformation in Germany. A year later, Zwingli founded the Swiss Reformed Church, initiating the Swiss reformation based on sermons which paralleled those of Luther. By applying the Scriptures to the Catholic Church, Zwingli, a former priest, discarded the rituals and practices of the (Catholic) Mass and replaced them with a simple Communion service which was based on the belief that the Communion elements were merely symbolic.

When Martin Luther was told by his disciples what Zwingli had said about Communion, he replied by quoting the Scriptures. His reply was particularly meaningful and exciting to me because over thirty years prior to learning of this incident, I had made the exact same reply to a pastor in the church in which I had been currently attending. Luther’s actual response was. “Zwingli can say whatever he wants but the Scriptures state in four books that Communion is the Body and Blood of Jesus.”

References:

- (1) Gospelcoalition.org
- (2) Britannica.com
- (3) Wikipedia.org