

COMMUNION, CELEBRATION, AND INSTALLATION OF NEW CHURCH OFFICERS

Communion:

Today we gather around tables to celebrate communion and recognize those that God has raised up who will be consecrated as deacons and Elders today.

Communion is a celebration of what Jesus has done for us through his death and resurrection.

The Bible teaches us that the elements on the table are visible and tangible reminders of the Body and the Blood of Jesus. We remember this morning that Jesus gave up His body to be broken so we can be made whole. We remind ourselves that it is through the shedding of His blood, represented by the wine/juice, that our sins have been forgiven. Through the death of Jesus, a way was made so we could be reconciled to God.

Paul writes this in **II Corinthians 5:18-21**: *"¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."*

The outstretched arms of Jesus on the cross and still stretched open for you today. You are loved, you are cherished, your sins and the bad things you have done are not counted against you.

God could have pointed His finger to condemn you. Instead He stretched wide His arms to forgive you.

These elements remind us not only that we have been reconciled through the death and resurrection of Jesus but that we have been given the task and the great privilege of being His ambassadors. He has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation.

So, like Paul, I implore you on Christ's behalf, if you have not been reconciled to God- be reconciled. Come to Him. Receive Him today.

The Bible teaches, "To those who received Him (Jesus), to them He gave the right to become children of God, to all those who believe in His name." (John 1:12)

I want you to note, that receiving Jesus is qualified here by believing in Him. The way we receive Jesus and have the right to become children of God is by trusting in Jesus. We place our faith in Him. We believe that His death and resurrection are sufficient to make us right with God. We give up on trying to earn His love. We give up on hoping in our own goodness. Like drowning people, we quit thrashing and simply reach out our hand to let Jesus rescue us and redeem us.

These elements belong to those who belong to Jesus- who have believed in Him.

Communion is meant to be shared in Community- a community that no longer defines insiders and outsiders by political views, socio-economic status, the color of skin, or origin of birth. Communion is meant to be shared by those understand that the death and resurrection of Jesus accomplished more than restoring our vertical relationship with God. Jesus made it possible that humanity could be restored to one another. Again, listen to the words of Paul found in **Ephesians 2:13-19**.

¹³ **But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**

¹⁴ **For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the**

dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility... ¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household."

So, these elements are meant to remind us that we have been made right with God and we should live rightly with one-another. There is no one who should be defined by their past, or feel less important because of age, race, gender, or other identifiers that we put on people. All who believe are children of God. All children are part of the same family. And these elements are meant to remind us that community is important. That the Body of Christ is represented in this bread- but we are now the actual Body of Christ. And we should be concerned about one another.

Paul writes this in **I Corinthians 11**: ¹⁷ *In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good.* ¹⁸ *In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it.* ¹⁹ *No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval.* ²⁰ *So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat,* ²¹ *for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk."*

Note: If you take part in Communion and are indifferent to Community "it is not the Lord's Supper you eat."

Paul continues in this passage to say...

²⁷ **So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.** ²⁸ **Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.** ²⁹ **For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves."**

All of us take communion "unworthily"- none of us have earned the right to be here at the table. But we shouldn't do it an unworthy manner- we sin against the Body of Christ represented in this bread when we sin against each other in the Body of Christ and we don't care about making it right.

I Corinthians 11:23-26: ²³ *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,* ²⁴ *and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."* ²⁵ *In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."* ²⁶ *For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

Installation of Church officers:

- **Deacon:** Raymundo Montes
- **Deaconess** Raquel Primera-Adams
- **Elder** Miguel Torres
- **Pastor:** Brian Townsend