

Communion Meditation: Because He Is Kind

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Communion Meditation

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Bible Verse: Titus 3:4-7
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Well, it's always a wonderful time to celebrate the Lord's Table together to remember the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, to remember that God in love sent Christ to be the Savior of the world; for those of us that know him to realize that in a particular way he extended that love to us, he drew us by the power of his Spirit to faith in Christ. And at our church, for those of you that are visiting us maybe for the first time or haven't been with us for very long, we like to kind of set Communion apart, we like to prepare our hearts before we take Communion with a little bit of a meditation, not to tack it on at the end of a service and kind of rush through it as though we just needed to get this out of the way. Communion is a very important time in the life of a church, an important time to remember our Lord; it's appointed by the Lord that we would do this in remembrance of him and Communion is a matter that Scripture says that we are to approach in an earnest way, to approach in a manner that is worthy of Christ in the sense that we don't do it haphazardly, we don't do it hurriedly but we remember, we stop, we think about what we're doing and we think about what we are remembering. As we do, we come with a sense that we come in a spirit of confession, a spirit of repentance, setting aside sin, not taking Communion casually, not taking it while holding the cup in one hand while we're holding sin in the other, but rather contemplating what we're doing in coming with a spirit that is letting go of sin and remembering Christ fully and that's what we want to do here this morning.

I'd invite you to take your Bible and turn to the book of Titus back in the New Testament, shortly before the book of Hebrews, if that helps you find it, and just a very brief meditation of Communion preparation here this morning. In Titus 3, there is such a very important text on the nature of salvation and let me just say by way of reminder as you finish turning there, Communion is for true believers in Jesus Christ. This is the Lord's Table. It's for those who belong to the Lord, who have given themselves to Christ. It's not for the world. It's not for just anybody to come, it's for those who have truly received Christ and as we come in that spirit, as we speak now as believers and to believers, I want to remind you of the nature of life before Christ for you just ever so briefly.

Look at Titus 3:3 as we remember what we once were, as we remember the way we were. Titus 3:3 says,

3 ... we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

It's a portrait in dark strokes, isn't it? It's a portrait of a heart that was bound to sin; that loved sin; that was enslaved to lust; that was enslaved to hatred. Well, how is it, then, when that's what we were all like, how is it, then, that anybody came to Christ? It's obvious that if you were in chains to sin, that you were not free simply to walk over to Christ and to come to him. How is it that we came to Christ?

Well, you know, as you look at that verse, let's look at it again there and just let it sink in a bit that we were foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. Beloved, do you see something really crucial, really basic there? If you are in Christ, if God saved you, it is not because you deserved that. You did not deserve salvation. God did not save you because you were worthy of it. God did not save you in response to infant baptism. He doesn't save anybody that way. He didn't save you in response to a religious ceremony; to walking an aisle; to simply praying a prayer. He did not save you in response to good works. He did not save you because you avoided certain sins, even. This text of verse 3 lays a blanket condemnation on us all in the manner of life that we formerly lived.

So we were dead in trespasses and sins, as Ephesians 2 says. We were separated from God, as Isaiah 59:2 says. We were separate, we were helpless, we were lifeless, we were dead and we wanted it that way. So how is it, then, that we find ourselves here today in Christ? How is it that we find ourselves forgiven? How is it that we received new life, that we received eternal life? What is it, then, that we remember as we come to Communion this morning? Why is it that salvation came to us? It was not because of us, it's because our Christ is kind. He is good. He is loving.

Look at verse 4. In contrast to that former life of disobedience, verse 4 says, "But." Do you see the contrast? Forget about your former life doing anything that contributed to your salvation, to the contrary, in contrast to that, verse 4,

4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

You see, there's two kinds of categories, you could say, placed before us: our prior life in Christ which was dark and black and dead in sin which could not possibly have been the soil from which salvation came. Do you see that, my friends? Do you see that, beloved? Your prior life did nothing, there was nothing in the soil of your prior life that gave root to salvation. Nothing. There was nothing there. You can't find that anywhere in verse 3. So we cancel that, we set that aside, we recognize that there was nothing about me that brought me to salvation. This was an act outside of me. This was an act of God upon me. This was driven by something outside of me and what we remember as we come to

Communion is, is that salvation came to us because God is kind; because Christ is gracious; because Christ is loving. And because of God's kindness, we find ourselves in Christ today, not because we were good but because salvation came to us through the undeserved mercy of God.

That has a dual effect, I like to think of it as we come to Communion. First of all, it humbles us. We come as those who had nothing in our hands to bring, simply to the cross of Christ we cling. So we come on that basis and it humbles us to realize that we contributed nothing to this gracious state that we now find ourselves in, and while it's humbling and it drives pride out of our hearts, it gives room and it gives soil to something else, it gives rise to great gratitude, it gives rise to a profound thankfulness. "God, I was in that state dead in sin and doomed. I deserved eternal judgment. I deserved to go to hell and yet, God, here I am in Christ. How grateful I am to you, O God, how grateful I am to you, O Christ, that you saved me as an act of sheer kindness and mercy and grace to me and that it was nothing of my own." We remember that. We're grateful for that. We come to Communion with joyful spirits in that sense, then, but joyful in Christ, not in ourselves. Beloved, as we do that, as we rejoice in that, let us never forget that that salvation that we enjoy now came at a price, a price not of our blood but of the blood of Christ.

Look at verse 6 with me. After he said in verse 5 that he saved us by a work of the Holy Spirit on his heart, verse 6,

6 whom [meaning the Spirit] He poured [the Spirit] out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Beloved, let me remind you if you're new to the things of God, if you're here and these things are all new on your ears, let me say this to you as a privileged opportunity for me to share this with you, what we remember in Communion in the bread and the cup is that Jesus Christ paid our debt of sin. Sin created a debt that had to be paid. It created a curse that had to be taken away. There were sins on our account that had to be removed and what we remember in Christ our Savior, what we remember in Communion, is that it was the broken body of Christ, it was the pierced body of Christ, it was the shed blood of Christ alone that is the basis upon which we can approach God. Apart from the cross of Christ, there is no salvation. There is salvation in no one else, Acts 4:12 says, for there is no other name given under heaven by which men can be saved. Salvation is received by faith alone, in Christ alone, and if you are here in Christ, this Table reminds us of the great price that was paid for your salvation. The Son of God left heaven on a mission of love, on a mission of mercy, a mission of great personal sacrifice to him where he went to the cross, bore the wrath of God, the earth went dark for hours as he bore the weight of our sin, buried in the tomb, alive on the third day. There and there alone is our salvation found. There and there alone was the price paid.

Beloved, it is by grace alone that you have been saved; through faith alone, not of your works; in Christ alone, not of yourselves; to the glory of God alone. That's what we

remember as we come to this Table. Christ appointed a Table like this for his people to remember him; for his people to recall, to bring it to mind again afresh with tangible memory aids in our hands to help us remember that we come to this Table in humble gratitude to remember what our Lord did to deliver us from that awful state of sin that we had found ourselves in.

Allow me to say just a word to those of you that have not been born again, that do not know Christ, perhaps that are resisting him, you're caught in a tussle between the world and what you know to be true. This Table reminds us of the mercy of God. It reminds us that God in love comes to sinners just like you and offers free, full, complete, immediate forgiveness of all of your sins if you would simply come to Christ, confess your sin and receive him. You've heard the Gospel and now God calls you, nay, God commands you to repent of sin and to come to Christ in faith that you might be forgiven. It's a command of love, as we've said in the past. It's an invitation but it is a command, "Come to this Christ that you might be saved."

If you have received Christ, you're not consciously clinging to sin, we invite you to take of these elements as they'll be shared in just a moment, but if you haven't received Christ or if you're a professing Christian living in sin that you refuse to repent of, we would ask you to honor Christ enough to let the elements pass. You shouldn't take the elements when you're consciously holding onto sin, pretending with one hand to believe and to trust this Christ while in the other you reject him. But for those of you that not living perfect lives but earnestly seeking Christ, earnestly trusting in these things that we remember today, this Table is for you and this Table is for you to remember your Christ with joy and with gratitude and with a sense of thanksgiving to have been delivered from such a life as that to such a life as this.

Let's bow together as we pray.

Father, we do pray that you would help us as we take of these elements, to do so with joy; to do so in remembering Christ; to in gratitude thanking you for what you have done on our behalf in our Lord Jesus. So we remember you, our Lord, as you've commanded us to do. We remember your body. We remember your blood, the price of our salvation offered up to the Father as an atoning sacrifice for sinners just like us. We thank you for the work of the Spirit that opened our eyes to sin and then led us to Christ that we might be saved. We thank you for the fact that salvation is not for this life only, it is an eternal life, one day to be in heaven with you for all of eternity. What a great, marvelous, magnificent salvation you have purchased for us, Lord Jesus, and that's what we remember today. In humility and yet with great gratitude, we thank you for your grace to us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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