Communion: A Gospel Reminder

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Preacher: Sam Bunnell

[0:00] Wasn't that awesome? Yeah. Man, that was moving. I appreciate that. Well, we are taking a break this Sunday from our series in Jonah. We've covered Jonah chapter 1 and chapter 2. Next week we'll be in chapter 3, but today we are observing the Lord's Supper. We do this four times a year, and so we're taking a break today to kind of focus on that and redirect our minds back to the sacrifice that Jesus made for us so many years ago that is just as relevant today as at any point in history. So we're talking about communion, the Lord's Supper, and we're recognizing that this is a gospel reminder. This is a reminder of the gospel.

Now, if you were a student attending VBS a couple weeks ago and you came through missions class, then on one of those days we asked every student who came through here, what is the gospel?
We got all kinds of answers. Said the Bible. And it said, certainly the gospel is found in the Bible, right? Some of them said Jesus. And said, well, the gospel is about Jesus, but what is the actual gospel? And we find that in the scriptures. It is that Paul said, I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, that Christ Jesus died for our sins according to the scriptures. He was buried and he rose again according to the scriptures. That is the gospel.
It is the message that gives us hope. It's the message that saves us from our sins. It's the way that we can wake up each day and know that we are still God's sons and daughters saved by his blood. Washed, sealed forever by the Holy Spirit. And so that is the gospel that saves us and the gospel that keeps us. And communion or the Lord's Supper is a reminder of that gospel. Let's go to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. 1 Corinthians chapter 11.
[2:07] If you're able to join us in standing, when you found your place, would you mind joining us in standing? And let's read together 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 23.

3. I'm reading out of the Christian Standard Bible. For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread. When he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way also he took the cup after supper and said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. God, I pray that you would use our observance of your command in scripture to remember you through these symbols of your broken body and your spilled blood.
We'll partake them together, all of your children present here in this place toward the end of our time together. But until that, remind us from your scriptures what it means to remember you, remember what you've done and how that allows us to begin again fresh with you every day.
It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. You may be seated. Thank you for standing. The Lord's Supper represents our communion with Christ and one another. Now you might have heard it called the Lord's Supper.
You might have heard it called the Lord's Table. You might have heard it called Communion. Even some churches out there will term this as the Eucharist. But really, the Lord's Supper is our communion with Christ and each other. It represents that. It's a symbol of what we understand from the scriptures that we have in Christ. So the Lord's Supper, Communion, neither is really a wrong name, but it's representing the same thing saying, I recognize that by the grace of God, because of his sacrifice on the cross for me, I have the opportunity to be in communion with God and in communion with God's people. And so when we take the Lord's Supper or the Lord's Table, then we recognize that and we celebrate that. Now what's it talking about when we say the Lord's Supper? When Paul referenced in 1 Corinthians 11 on that night when Jesus took bread and took the cup, what was he talking about? He was talking about back in Luke chapter 22. We read about

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the final Passover. All right. But what are we talking about? We say the Passover. This goes back to Exodus chapter 12. Exodus chapter 12. The Israelite people, for sake of time, we're not going to dive deeply into that story, but I encourage you, if you're not familiar with it, go back, grab a Bible, go back to Exodus chapter 12, read through that whole story. It's fascinating. When God's people were in bondage in Egypt and God's judgment was passing upon the Egyptian people because they would not allow the freedom of God's people and they were persecuting them. And so God judged the Egyptian people who would not worship the one true God. And not only that, but persecuted God's people. And so he judged them by taking the life of all the firstborn sons in that country. The angel of death would pass over all the homes in that place. And God allowed a way of escape for his people from that terrible judgment. They would have to sacrifice an innocent lamb, free of spot, free of blemish, and they would have to take the blood from that sacrifice and paint it on the doorposts of their home.
[6:26] And when the death angel would pass over that city on that fateful night, he would not judge the firstborn in the homes that had the blood painted on the door. He would pass over them and go on to the homes that did not have the blood. There's so many analogies that we can take from that. That was a type of the one sacrifice that many years later would take place when Jesus called the Lamb of God, the Lamb of God, the spotless, sinless Lamb of God, would himself be sacrificed on the cross. And his blood would be spilled. And the Bible says that it is the blood of Christ, Jesus himself, by which we have remission or cleansing of sins. So you and I can only be passed over from the judgment for our sin if Jesus' blood has washed us clean. So there's so much deep theology and understanding about what God offers to us in salvation, the background of it, the history of it in the Bible, and that is an incredible story that I encourage you to do. Begin in Exodus 12 with that Passover. But that is then what the

Jewish people would celebrate every year following that occasion, is the Passover. And they would have a feast, and they would have a time of remembrance of God's deliverance from persecution in Egypt and from that terrible taking of the firstborn with the blood on the doorway. So the Passover was an annual Jewish feast, and the Passover was an annual Jewish feast. And Jesus and his disciples were celebrating the Passover in Luke chapter 22. So keep a finger in 1 Corinthians 11, and then let's go over to Luke chapter 22 and read down from verse 7 through verse 20. Luke 22, verse 7. The day of unleavened bread came when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.
Speaking of this feast that the Jewish people were celebrating. Jesus then sent Peter and John saying, go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.
So Jesus and his disciples are getting ready to celebrate this Jewish tradition of the Passover meal. Where do you want us to prepare it? The disciples asked him. Listen, he said to them, when you've entered the city, a man carrying a water jug will meet you. Follow him into the house he enters. Tell the owner of the house, the teacher asks you, where is the guest room? I can eat the Passover with my disciples.
Then he will show you a large furnished room upstairs. Make the preparations there. Man, if only God made it that easy for us when he gives us instructions, right? Just spelled it out for him, had it all lined up.
Nowadays, usually we have to walk by faith. He doesn't always give us the spelled out instructions, but we can know that just like he went before those disciples preparing everything ahead of them, he is also going before us. He is preparing everything in advance. Even if he doesn't clue us in on it beforehand, we know that God is out there making our way straight if we will follow as he tells us to do. So they went, verse 13, and found it just as he had told them, surprise, surprise, and they prepared the Passover. Verse 14, when the hour came, he reclined at the table, at the apostles with him. Then he said to them, I have fervently desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. Jesus had made allusions to his coming suffering, his death on the cross before now, and he's talking about it again. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. The fulfillment of this Passover. Why? Because of what we just talked about. Because that was all pointing forward, all those sacrificial lambs that had been killed by the
[10:41] Jewish people, it was all pointing forward to the one sinless lamb of God, Jesus himself, who would be sacrificed. So since that time, though many Jewish people who refused to believe that Jesus was the Messiah that they had been looking for, continue to sacrifice the lamb, continue to celebrate the Passover, Jesus was actually the fulfillment of that. It was all pointing forward to him. So he says, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Verse 17, then he

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took a cup.

And after giving thanks, he said, take this and share it among yourselves. For I tell you, from now on, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. And he took bread. He gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them and said, this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me? We read about Paul's account of that in 1 Corinthians. And then in verse 20, the same way, he also took the cup after supper and said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

You see, the old covenant was no longer needed because God then made a new covenant. When he was the final sacrifice himself, then he made a new covenant that says anyone who places their faith in me for the forgiveness of their sins can now be free. They can now be forgiven. They can now be my child. This is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. But look, the hand of one betraying me is at the table with me. Somebody always had to ruin it, didn't they? It was Judas. For the son of man will go away as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed. So they began to argue among themselves, which of them could it be who was going to do it? So this incredible moment in history when Jesus is introducing himself as the final Passover lamb, this amazing moment, and then sin had to get in there and mess it up. And the disciples had to argue about, is it going to be you?

Is it going to be me? But the point stands that despite our shortcomings, despite our frailties, despite our undeserving nature, Jesus was willing to lay it all down. He sacrificed himself. He didn't have to. He was God. He is God. Fully God, fully man. All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth.

He didn't have to do any of it, but he was obedient to the father's plan. He was obedient to before the foundation of the world, the plan that had been set in place for you and for me, for our creation, for our salvation. So this final Passover that Jesus celebrated with his disciples was actually the first communion, the first Lord's Supper.

[13:56] communion. So what are we talking about by when we say communion? What can we learn from this? Communion connects us to the harmony of the gospel.

Communion, the Lord's Supper, connects us to the harmony of the gospel. Would you go back to 1 Corinthians, where we were before and go back one page in your Bible, chapter 10 and verse 16, chapter 10 and verse 16 of 1 Corinthians? The cup of blessing, which we bless, talking about this cup that we take at the Lord's Supper, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?

The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? So you understand it's presenting this picture. It's painting this beautiful piece of art showing that all believers, all true Jesus followers for all time are part of this greater body of Christ. All those who have gone before us and have passed away and are now in the presence of Jesus in heaven. All those who will come before and all of us gathered in different bodies of believers around this globe right now, we are all part of the greater body of Christ. Now, that doesn't mean that that's one big universal church and you don't need to find a church in your local community. That's not at all how God established that. He said, yes, you are all part of this great church, this great body of believers, but within that body, he established local gatherings of believers in which Henrietta, we have a few. And so we have opportunities then to gather with one another for fellowship, for edification, to get the gospel message out to those who have not heard it. So God knew what he was doing when he organized the local church, even though we are all part of one greater body of Christ. And that's the communion we have with one another. It represents the harmony that we find in the gospel. Where else could you find this diverse group of people hanging out together, right? Now, some of us have opportunities to get together outside of church and we'll hang out together and we'll break bread and we'll fellowship with one another. But oftentimes you find such an eclectic group of people within a church doors that would never otherwise find each other in community. But God brings us together through the power of the harmony of the gospel. Even though we are different notes on a sheet of music, we work in harmony together. You understand that? We're not all the same. We're not all singing the melody line of the song, so to speak. But even though we're hitting different notes, we're all following the same God we're all trusting the same Savior, putting our faith in the same one, and that is how we can have harmony together in the gospel. Now, I'd love to say that every church in America and every church around this world is in harmony with the gospel, but they're not. Not every church is. And that's why it's important for our church to say we are going to follow this book. We're going to trust the gospel message that we find in this book. That's what

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we're going to preach. That's what we're going to focus on. We're going to uncover the other doctrines found in this word that support and lead us back to the truth of the gospel and how it changes our lives. And even though we might disagree on some lesser areas with one another, we're going to stick with these foundational gospel truths. We are sinners.
Jesus died for our sins. He rose from the dead. And now he offers one way to him, which is faith in Christ. So that's the harmony that we can have in the gospel. I hear people say sometimes, well, we're all God's children. No, we're not all God's children, but we can be. We all have the same opportunity to be.
[18:22] Those of us who repent of our sin, turn from our sin and place our faith in Jesus, then we can live in the harmony of the gospel. And that's what we celebrate when we take communion.

That's why in a few minutes when we have that opportunity and we distribute the juice and the bread, by the way, the juice and the bread, they're all in one little cup together. So if you see the cup, there is a little piece of bread on top of that. I think some of the men told me before the church, before church started today, said, uh, when we go and pick up the cups that are left, sometimes we'll find the little bread still stuck in there and people didn't realize it was all in one. So I think COVID started that maybe where the, they come packaged together, but, uh, but there you go. So just so you know, it's all together. You're not, you're not being shorted. Um, so when we take that, we're going to make it very clear that anyone who takes that should have given their life to Jesus.
They should have put their faith in Jesus. If you haven't yet done that, maybe because you're a child who hasn't yet reached that full understanding of what it means to become a follower of Jesus, or maybe you've just not done that yourself, then don't pretend like you have and don't take part in that communion because you're not yet part of that fellowship. And we want you to be, we want you to be, you're going to have an opportunity right now at the end of this service to make that decision and put your faith in Jesus. And then we invite you into the harmony of the communion of the gospel. So communion connects us to the harmony of the gospel. It also connects us to the heart of the gospel. Communion connects us to the heart of the gospel back in first Corinthians 10 and verse 17 for we, though many are one bread and one body for we all partake of that one bread. The heart of the gospel is Jesus. Jesus is the bread. Jesus was the one whose body was broken. Jesus was the one whose bread was spilled. Jesus is the one way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus. Y'all, that's an unpopular message in our world today, isn't it?
[20:43] Man, we should all just get along. Everybody's preaching the same thing. All roads lead to the same place. No, they don't. There is one way. There is one straight and narrow way that leads to God, and that is faith in Christ. That's it. That's the heart of the gospel. A great pastor and writer, John Piper, said the purpose of our Lord's Supper is to receive from Christ the nourishment and strength and hope and joy that comes from feasting our souls on all that he purchased for us on the cross, especially his own fellowship. Did you catch that? That's kind of a big quote there. The purpose of the Lord's Supper that we're about to take is to receive from Christ the nourishment and strength and joy and hope that comes from feasting our souls on all that Jesus purchased for us on the cross, especially, first and foremost, fellowship with God. You and I would not have fellowship with God if it wasn't for what Jesus did on the cross for us. That is the heart of the gospel. Man being reconciled to God. There's only one way to that. There's only one way. Saying, man, I prayed for years and it just seemed like God didn't hear me. Well, maybe it's because you weren't his child.

He hears the prayers of his children. He answers the prayers of his children. He wants all to turn from their sin and turn to him. But Jesus offers fellowship with him. He offers communion with him and then communion with one another. And that is what the Lord's Supper reminds us of. It connects us back to the heart of the gospel. And then finally, communion connects us to the hope of the gospel.
It connects us to the hope of the gospel. Back in 1 Corinthians 11, which we read just a moment ago at the very beginning, the verse 26, the last verse we read, for as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. You know what that word proclaim is? It's the same word that we get preach from. Preach and proclaim.
So you preach the Lord's death when you take the gospel, the Lord's Supper, I'm sorry. When you take the Lord's Supper and you partake in communion and you remember and observe, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again. And that's what we have been mandated to do.

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That's what we've been commanded to do. That's what we've been commissioned to do. Matthew 28, we call it the great commission.
Go into all the world and preach the gospel. We proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again. One way we do that is in communion with one another. We remember it. We publicly observe it. [23:42] We turn our minds back toward it. And we proclaim to all presence. We believe Jesus died for our sins. We believe he was buried. We believe he rose again. We believe he's alive today. He hears us when we pray.

And we have placed our faith in him for the forgiveness of our sins to become his children. Charles Deems, another great pastor, said, the Lord's Supper has been greatly instrumental in keeping the cause of Christ alive. It's the voice of all believers preaching the Lord's death until he comes. He who believes that the Lord did come and die for us and will come again and take us to himself. That person will not hesitate to regard this last request of our Lord and Savior.
Jesus asked us to do this. He asked us to remember him in this way. So now we don't have to celebrate the Passover anymore. The final Passover lamb came and was sacrificed. Now we can celebrate the communion that we have with one another and the communion that we have with God himself because of the gospel. Communion reconnects us to the hope found in the gospel. Just a moment. We're going to observe this. But I want to remind you of a day 23 years ago, September 11, 2001.
This quote stood out to me. It is not just the tragedy of September 11, 2001 that we must remember, but the feeling of unity that we felt on September 12, 2001. The next day. How many of you all remember where you were the day the terrorist planes flew into the Twin Towers in New York City? They fell.
Thousands died. Many more gave of themselves. Some even gave their lives. Rescue workers trying to find people amidst the rubble. I'd never seen the country come together like it did in the days following September 11. I remember that. Turn on the political talk radio shows and all that and all they were talking about was how we needed to come together as a country and we did. [26:13] It's incredible to watch. The war on terror began. Over time, the country became just as fractured or more as it ever has been. Look around today, you see that. But for a moment there, we were united.

George Bush was president at the time and he said this, one of the worst days in America's history saw some of the bravest acts in Americans history.
We'll always honor the heroes of 9-11 and here at this hallowed place, we pledge that we will never forget their sacrifice. Might be wondering why I brought up 9-11 today. It's not September 11th. It's July. It's July. But I brought it up because if social media hashtags were as big a deal back then as they are nowadays, the hashtag would have been everywhere. Never forget. We remember. That is what Jesus commanded us to do. Just as we stand in awe of the sacrifice that those rescue workers gave. Sacrifice that those people went into work that day not expecting that that day would be their last. And they gave their lives. We never forget that loss. We never forget all those who stood up.
[27:46] We never forget those soldiers who in the months and years to follow went over and tried to wipe out the terror cells that had instigated that attack, etc. So many gave their lives as a result of that tragedy and we don't forget their sacrifice. But how often do we live as though we don't remember what Jesus did in his sacrifice for us? All of us were in the same boat. We were all sinners.

Some of us might talk a little nicer. Might dress a little nicer. Might try to act a little nicer on the outside. But the truth is all of us are just as rotten inside as anybody else. And we're all just as in need of a savior as anybody else. And Jesus stepped forward. And according to God's plan, he said, I am the sacrifice. I am the one who will pay the price. I am the one who will give up my life. And he did it.
And that is the hope that we have. That is what we must never forget. That is why we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Why we take communion together. To remember. To do it in remembrance of him. To never forget the sacrifice that was made. So I'm going to call you into prayer. And at this moment, would you bow your heads?
Would you enter into this time of saying, God, I recognize that in this time of communion with you, of communion with my fellow believers in Christ, I'm going to remember what you did. Say, man, I've never forgotten that Jesus died for me. Sure you do. Sometimes all we can think about is

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ourselves.
All we can think about is the present day. All we can think about is our needs, our wants, right now, our problems. And we forget the sacrifice that was made. It puts everything else into perspective. [29:48] That's why Jesus said, do this in remembrance of me. It will draw you back to your hope. It will draw you back to the heart of the gospel. It'll draw you back to the fact that we all can live in harmony because of the gospel. So let's remember. Let's remember now.

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