

Personal Previval
August 6, 2017
Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 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." 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." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26 NIV)

Throughout the ages, the celebration of Holy Communion has served as one of the grand means for Jesus' followers to receive God's grace and thus experience personal "previval" (which we are defining as a taste of God's coming kingdom). In particular, the Lord's Supper brings renewal to our lives in three specific ways. They are all communicated through the "mystery of faith" that we oftentimes recite during the Communion ritual: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!

Digging Deeper

Holy Communion brings renewal to our lives as...

We remember what has happened in the PAST.

Christ has died.

- Communion brings to us a new lease on life as we are released from our past. We realize that the old has truly passed away and God has made all things new. And it's all because Christ has died, so that we may truly live. Are you hanging on to the pain of a past transgression that is preventing you from truly living today? True forgiveness isn't usually accomplished on the first attempt, even if we are talking to ourselves. Thankfully, Jesus' sacrifice can provide absolution to even the most desperate of believing souls.
- When the Lord's Supper is served, we remember the grace purchased at Christ's death is the same grace we need to approach the communion table. We don't want to say what's done is done and ignore our sinful behaviors, but in this case, what has been done on our behalf *is* done, and is more than enough to cover all of our sins. When you approach the communion table do you consider it to be a cleansing act? Do you stop and pray for forgiveness each time you receive communion?

We acknowledge what is happening in the PRESENT.

Christ is risen.

- The One who gave life for us has been raised from the dead and is alive forevermore! We receive communion and recall that He is risen. He is here with us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Have you experienced a feeling of personal refreshment in your faith through receiving communion? Did it affect you in any significant way beyond Sunday morning worship? If you are longing for such an experience, the next time you receive communion, remember that Christ is risen and let the power of that message move your heart and put your feet in motion.

We anticipate what will happen in the FUTURE.

Christ will come again.

- Our faith is wrapped up and sealed in this promise. In the same way that the Terminator assured us of his return, Jesus will be back! When that glorious day is upon us, we can look forward to finally experiencing a life beyond anything we could ever imagine with no more death, mourning, crying, or pain. Doesn't that news revive your soul and restore your joy? But our anticipation of what will happen in the future when Jesus comes again also keeps us on our toes. After all, the Bible tells us he will come when we least expect it. Are you ready for Jesus to walk in on you right now? What are some areas of your life that might need "cleaning up" so you are primed and ready for the day of His return?
- Just for fun, share what you might tell your children, (or possibly a mentee or young person over whom you have an influential role) about what you think the world will look like when Jesus comes back and the veil is finally removed.

Conclusion

Each time we celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, come and be "pre-lived".

Remember what has happened in the past – Christ has died (for us)!

Acknowledge what is happening in the present – Christ is risen (and is here with us)!

Anticipate what will happen in the future – Christ will come again (and we'll be with Him forever)!