

The Importance of Communion

Goldstone Church – 22-May-16 10:30am

Luke 22:14-30

Introduction

What is so important about Communion, that people risk their lives to celebrate this simple meal together? We find the answer in the Bible: Luke 22:14-30

1. Communion is Important because it is **LITURGICAL** (v.19-20)

“[Jesus] took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after the supper [Jesus] took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.’”
(Luke 22:19-20)

These verses record the exact words of Jesus. The Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 12) records Jesus using the same words, *“This is my body given for you”*, and, *“This cup is the new covenant in my blood poured out for you”*. These are key words; they are Jesus’ specific words indicating who He is, and what He has done for each one of us.

Words are important. At the Communion table we hear and we remember Jesus’ exact words:

“This is my body given for you”

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood poured out for you”

Communion is important because, through the liturgy, we hear Jesus’ own words to each one of us.

2. Communion is Important because it is **LEVELLING** (v.26b)

“The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.” (Luke 22:26b)

Jesus is teaching that, at the Communion table, everyone is treated equally. No one has a preferential status. We are all in equal need of the gift of eternal life that Jesus provides.

At the Communion table, we are all on a level playing field. We are all sinners - saved by the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Communion is important because we are all brought down to the same level – our need of Jesus.

3. Communion is Important because it is **LOVING** (v.22a)

“The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed.” (Luke 22:22a)

It is important to remember that, what Jesus did on the cross, was all part of God's eternal plan. Even before the world was created, Jesus knew the path that lay before Him.

Apostle Peter speaks about this in his Pentecost sermon; in Acts 2:23 Peter tells the crowd, "*This man [Jesus] was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge.*"

At the Communion table, we celebrate and remember the ultimate act of love. In John 15:13-14a, Jesus says, "*Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends*".

Communion is important because, as we reflect on the body and blood of Jesus, we see again the ultimate expression of Jesus' love for each one of us.

4. Communion is Important because it is **LIBERATING** (v.20a)

"In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'" (Luke 22:20a)

If this is "the new covenant", what was the old covenant?

A Covenant is another word for an Agreement, e.g. a marriage agreement between a husband and wife, an alliance between 2 nations, or, as in this case, an agreement between God and humanity. In this Agreement, God sets the terms, He makes the offer, and we respond – either accepting or rejecting the deal.

When Jesus declares this *new* covenant in his own blood, he is announcing something dramatically new. Never before had God made a covenant using human blood. The previous covenants in the Old Testament, had used animal blood. This new covenant has different blood – the blood of God's own Son, Jesus.

Through this new covenant, through the blood of Jesus, we can have a relationship with God. The penalty of our sin has been taken away. As Romans 6:18 says, "*You have been set free from sin*".

At the Communion table we commemorate the announcement of this new covenant. We celebrate the fact that our sins have been forgiven. We are free.

Communion is important because we remember our liberation. Through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we have been set free from sin.

5. Communion is Important because it is **LONGING** (v.30a)

"so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones." (Luke 22:30a)

At the Communion table we:

- Remember the Past
- Celebrate the Present
- Anticipate the Future

As Christians, we are longing for Jesus' return. At the Communion table we look forward to going home. Our time here on earth is great and a wonderful gift from God, but as Christians, we have a longing and a yearning for Jesus' return.

Communion is important because it reminds us that, what we have now, is only the "opening crumbs" of an eternal banquet with Jesus.

CONCLUSION

The Dictionary defines Communion as: "*the service of Christian worship at which bread and wine are consecrated and shared.*" At a forensic or analytical level, this is a correct definition, but, as Christians, it is so much more – we are in the presence of Jesus Christ.

Communion is important because it is:

- **Liturgical.** We hear Jesus' own words.
- **Levelling.** We are equal before Jesus.
- **Loving.** We remember Jesus' ultimate act of love.
- **Liberating.** We celebrate Jesus freeing us from sin.
- **Longing.** We yearn for Jesus' return.

Let's celebrate together. Jesus is here.

Amen