

Is God Physically Present with Us? - Communion/Baptism – 9/8/2024

I remember a sermon I did some time ago, in the sermon the words of Jesus that, “**it is to your advantage that I go away,**” and how hard that is to sometimes believe.

John 16:7 - But I tell you I am going to do what is best for you. This is why I am going away. The Holy Spirit cannot come to help you until I leave. But after I am gone, I will send the Spirit to you.

Who wouldn't want a physical Jesus to be present at times to see, to hear, to touch, to be comforted by?

I have those moments...**wishing that God could give me a hug and interact** with my physical senses in some way.

Here a *fellowship of believers gathered around a dinner table together* to share a meal, but **God also brought the Lord's Supper to mind** as a way in which God engages our sense of taste.

As a Scriptural example of this, I came across **Luke 24:13-35**. Here we see that **Jesus reveals himself to these disciples through the breaking of bread** in a way that is *reminiscent of what just happened two chapters earlier* when **Jesus broke bread with his disciples and instituted the Lord's Supper**.

Just to set the stage a little bit, **this passage comes right after the resurrection of Christ. On the third day,** some of *his women followers found the tomb empty,* and **then the disciples went and verified it,** but *no one quite knew what to make of it.*

This passage in Luke is happening that very same day.

Luke 24:13-16 - 13 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were kept from recognizing him.

I'll just note here before continuing, **It was fairly common for Jesus to not be recognized** in his post resurrection appearances.

- **There are several instances** where he simply appears among the disciples, frightening them because they think he is a ghost.
- Jesus then must reassure them and give some kind of identifying marker to prove that it's him like the **nail marks** in his hands or the **spear hole** in his side. (Luke 24:36-43, John 20:19-29)
- With Mary in the garden, **she thought he was the gardener** until he said her name. (John 20:11-18)
- While several of the **disciples were out fishing**, they **didn't recognize him until he told them to cast their nets on the right side** of the boat only to catch a miraculous number of fish. (John 21:1-23)

Here in this passage, we'll see that, like these other appearances, **these disciples are kept from recognizing him until the pivotal moment when Jesus breaks the bread.**

Luke 24:17-18 - 17 He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. 18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

(Ironically, he was the only one that knew what had happened in these days. But he goes along with it...)

Luke 24:19-27 - 19 "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

25 He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Man, who would have liked to have been there for that explanation? I know that I would! **Emmaus was about 7 miles from Jerusalem**, so the journey would have lasted for at least a few hours if you were walking.

Luke 24:28-29 - 28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

Now, I can only imagine what is going through these disciples’ minds. We’ll see here in a few verses that while Jesus was explaining the Scriptures to them, ***they said that their hearts were burning within them.***

Have you ever had an experience where you see someone that you know you’ve seen somewhere before or have met, but you can’t for the life of you figure out where you know them from or why?

I imagine that’s a little of ***what these two disciples are going through right now.*** They’ve just had Jesus himself open the entire Old Testament to them in its testimony of him, and they’re probably thinking to themselves, ***“Man, this is so good! Yet this feels so familiar.” It must be driving them nuts.***

So, in common Ancient Near Eastern hospitality, they strongly urge him to spend the night with them.

- I know that I would want to pick his brain more if I were them.
- Continuing, he went into stay with them and...

Luke 24:30-31 - 30 When he was at the table with them, he **took** bread, **gave thanks, broke it** and began to **give it** to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.

The lights finally turn on for these disciples and they recognize Jesus, the catalyst being this instance of the breaking of bread.

For whatever reason, **God waited until this moment for their eyes to be opened to *his true identity*.**

I must think that there's some significance to God choosing to reveal himself at this particular moment.

- ***Why now* and not when he was opening the Scriptures to them?**
- ***From my human point of view*, that seemed to be the more natural time to have a mic drop type of moment...**
- **But instead, God waits until now.**
- **So, they recognize Jesus, he vanishes, and...**

Luke24:32-35 – 32 They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

- **The Lord's Supper is a physical reminder of the gospel message**
- **This is a good picture for what happens in the Lord's Supper.**

Similarly, as Jesus revealed himself to these disciples through the breaking of bread, **So does he reveal himself to us today through the elements in the Lord's Supper.** And he reveals himself in a way that is physically tangible, even to our taste buds.

This isn't a new thing. We see throughout the Old Testament How God used physical reminders of his law as a way **to ultimately put it on our heart'**

We see in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 - 4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

The Bread - Just a few chapters earlier in **Luke 22:19**, it is recorded:

Luke 22:19 - And he **took** bread, and when he had **given thanks**, he **broke** it and **gave** it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

You'll notice that the account of the bread is very similar to **Luke 24** with the ***taking, the blessing, the breaking, and the giving of the bread to the disciples.***

A similar pattern is also used in **Luke 9** during the feeding of the 5000.

Jesus took, blessed, broke, and gave the bread to the disciples, which was then given to the crowds.

The bread symbolized his body, broken for us, given for us.

- **The bread that was probably used *during the institution of the Lord's Supper*** was unleavened bread.
- **Leaven was a symbol of *decay and corruption*,**
- So, when God instituted the Passover, **God commanded that unleavened bread be eaten as a representation of ridding themselves of decay and corruption of sin.**

Similarly, Jesus probably would have been using this same bread since this was during a Passover meal. It is with this bread that he says, **"This is my body." Just as the bread was without leaven, Jesus was without sin.**

He was the perfect lamb of God without blemish who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

John 1:29 - John Testifies About Jesus - 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

And just as blood was used to cover the doorposts of the Israelites so that the angel of death would pass over them (Exo 12:13), so now Jesus' blood covers our sins and causes God's judgment to pass over us.

The Cup

But not only is the Lord's Supper about the bread, but it is also about the cup.

Luke 22:20 - 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.

Other passages of Scripture add to this account that **his blood "is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins..."** (Matt 26:28) and that Jesus says, **"...Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me" (1 Cor 11:25).**

Blood plays a huge role in the Old Testament law and we often see a strong connection between blood and life (**Lev 17:11**).

It was often said that the life was in the blood. Blood was used for just about anything involving the redemption and forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 9:11-15 - The Blood of Christ - 11 But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. 12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. 13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! 15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

The Lord's Supper serves as a tangible reminder of the gospel message.

******Communion******

The Lord's Supper celebrates deliverance from sin by Christ's death!!!!

The Lord's Supper Is A Time To Examine Our Lives!!!

The Apostle Paul writes:

"A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup." (1 Corinthians 11:28)

Before we take communion, we will spend some time in prayer.

Why do we do this?

Before Paul declared that a man ought to examine himself he said,

"Therefore, 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." (1 Corinthians 11:27)

We must understand that in reality NONE of us are truly worthy of participating in the Lord's Supper.

When Paul speaks of taking it in an unworthy manner –

He is talking about people who rush in and participate without thinking of the real meaning of what is happening.

This is why we are going to take some time to examine our motives before moving ahead.

- Paul basically is saying that if we eat the bread and drink from the cup
- Without taking time to reflect on the seriousness of the Cross
- we are entering into the guilt of those who crucified Him in the first place!

The Lord's Supper is a process of:

Looking Back - We look back to the cross and the sacrifice made by Jesus on our behalf.

Looking Within – We examine our life, actions, motives and spiritual condition and *seek God in repentance*.

Looking Outward - Participating in communion helps us to put into perspective our need for the body of Christ. No man is an island – **we need each other** – and we need to look out to a lost world *in need of the saving* blood and body of our Lord.

Looking Ahead - Participating in communion helps us to look ahead too *the return of Jesus Christ* when we will have true communion with the risen Christ.

1Corinthians 11:26 - For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Invitation for salvation: - Romans 10:9-10 - 9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Pray for God to forgive and make us worthy...

Servers – Come forward please...

Prayer for the Bread: 1 Corinthians 11:23-24

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."

Prayer for the Cup: 1 Corinthians 11:25

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."

*******Pastor returns - intro for Baptism**

Baptism In The Name Of Jesus

Acts 4:12 - CEV

¹² Only Jesus has the power to save! His name is the only one in all the world that can save anyone.

Matthew 1:21 – CEV - ²¹ Then after her baby is born, name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

*****All Folks being baptized come up!!!**

Question: "What is the proper mode of baptism?" -

Answer: The simplest answer to this question is found in the meaning of the word "baptize."

- It comes from a **Greek word** which means "**to submerge in water**."

Therefore, **baptism** by sprinkling or by pouring is an oxymoron, something that is **self-contradictory**.

- **Baptism**, by its inherent definition, must be **an act of immersion in water**.

Baptism illustrates a believer's identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

Romans 6:3-4 – CEV - ³ Don't you know that all who share in Christ Jesus by being baptized also share in his death? ⁴ When we were baptized, we died and were buried with Christ. **We were baptized, so that we would live a new life**, as Christ was raised to life by the glory of God the Father.

- The action of being immersed in the water pictures **dying and being buried with Christ**.
- The action of coming out of the water illustrates Christ's resurrection.

Baptism by immersion, while it is the most biblical mode of identifying with Christ, it **is not** a prerequisite **for salvation**.

It is rather **an act of obedience**, a **public proclamation** of faith in Christ and identification with Him.

Baptism is a picture of our **leaving our old life** and **becoming a new creation**.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - CEV

¹⁷ Anyone who belongs to Christ is a **new person**. The past is forgotten, and **everything is new**.

Baptism by immersion is the only mode that **fully illustrates this radical change**.