

# Let's Feast

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Series: Spirit & Sacrament | Week 2

## Introduction Ideas:


I find it interesting how often Jesus speaks of a party or a feast or shows up to a party or even tells us that at the end of all things, we have ... a PARTY. The Wedding Feast also called the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.

I love a good meal!



## 1. The practice of Communion reminds us of our need.

Last week, Pastor Jordan taught us that the Sacraments are not replaced by God's Spirit but rather the Spirit of God brings the Sacraments to life!

- Sacraments should not replace the organic, genuine relationship with God. They simply remind us of core truths. In fact, the Spirit of God can flow powerfully through them! They should not be abandoned as so many churches are doing. They should be embraced. If Jesus said to take communion and ... "Do this in remembrance of Me" and Paul reiterated "Do this often" then we should obey the Word of God. At Rock of Grace, we are grounded in Scripture.
-  **Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine at a party!**  
So what happened? In John chapter 2, we read that Jesus arrives with His disciples to a wedding in a small town called Cana. Now you have to realize that in that time period, life was rough. I mean really rough. Forget the AC and comfy seats you likely have at your job. It was hot, difficult work for most people so a wedding was a reprieve - a great way to celebrate, kick back and relax and in that culture at the center of these parties was the wine. It was an incredible embarrassment for the groom to run out of wine. In their culture, the groom was promised to his fiancé but then took time to build a home or an addition on his father's house to prepare a place for them to live. He was also responsible for the wedding preparations, including the wine. So on this day, in this moment, this groom was stressed out! He and his family were about to be highly embarrassed and not just in front of strangers but in front of their friends. This was a small town; everyone knows each other. These were people they saw often. This would be a story that would stick with them for years to come.

We can assume Mary, Jesus' mom was part of the festivity planning somehow or at least knew the groom's family because she was informed early about this dilemma. What comes to mind "Well, my son is the son of God and it's time He do something with that power!" You gotta wonder about Jesus' response though, right? He says "Woman (not "mom") What does this have to do with me?" WOW! Cold right? Not really. He is separating Himself from his earthly family and making it clear who He really is. We know this because just days later He responds "Who is my father and who is my mother? He who does the will of God." He wasn't being rude to His mom. He was simply focused on His mission to give His life on the cross and He knew that doing a miracle like this would push the first domino over. If He were to do this, people would start talking and the road to the cross would begin. His mother's response is priceless "Do whatever He says." She's like "Look, you're still my son and you've always obeyed and you're not about to ignore your mother."

Jesus takes the 6 jars of water and turns them into wine. Why 6? Dr and Pastor Chuck Missler says that it was 6 representing the number of man - the end of man's ability! When we are at the end of our ability, only God can help and do a miracle!

Our failures to live up to God's standards is why we desperately needed atonement! We needed a miracle - to be saved - to be made new because in OUR strength we could not fulfill the law of God. Back to our story ...

The servants pass it out in total shock and to top it off, the guests comment "you've saved the best wine for last!" Usually the best wine is served first because as people get drunk, they care less about the quality of the wine. So back to our question... Why did Jesus turn water into wine? I'll tell you why.

 **Jesus cares deeply about you.**

He cares about what stresses you out and robs you of your peace. Communion reminds us of the mission Jesus was on to save us. Communion reminds us how

much Jesus loves us and how deeply He cares for us. He also knew that this groom was about to be embarrassed and Jesus cared enough to give him a financial miracle and make this moment a story to be told for the ages in the best kind of way. Now this bride and groom would have a miracle story - a joyful testimony to tell for years to come instead of a shameful memory. They would have felt a degree of shame for years to come. Imagine the rumors as they passed through the market right? "That's the guy who ran out of wine at his daughter's wedding! That's the guy who didn't even plan well for his child's wedding!"

Jesus cared enough to save them embarrassment. At the table of the Lord, all are welcomed and loved equally and embarrassment is removed!

Again, Jesus cares deeply about you. He is the visible image of the invisible God. He carries the heart of Father God and displays the characteristics of Father God everywhere He goes. He showed great compassion to this couple and He wants to show great compassion to you. No matter what you're facing, no matter what the "water" is, Jesus can turn it into wine!

**■ Communion reveals to us our need! Jesus and only Jesus can transform you - taking you from a person filled with guilt, fear, shame, sin or anxiety and turn you into a person full of love and peace, generosity and liberty! Only Jesus can turn water into wine and transform our lives! Communion reminds us of that truth.**

- **Symbolism** Catholics believe that "The Holy Eucharist is the most important of the seven sacraments because, in this and in no other sacrament, we receive the very body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ." However as Spirit-filled Christians we don't believe the juice and bread physically become the body of Christ. **■ We believe them to be a symbol of Jesus' body and blood - reminding us of what Jesus did on the cross, dying in our place, suffering so we don't have to suffer, being punished so we don't have to be punished.**
- **■ The Spirit brings LIFE to the liturgy.** Again this sermon series is called Spirit & Sacrament very intentionally. I believe modern day Christians need to value both the Spirit of God AND the Sacraments instead of throwing one out


or focusing on one at the expense of the other. For too long, Christians in the Church of God, Assemblies of God, Pentecostal faiths, have disregarded the sacraments. Some have even mocked the repetition. But if God's Word teaches it then we embrace it! At Rock of Grace we are grounded in Scripture and the Scriptures teach us the importance of taking communion, being water baptized and so forth.

-  **HOW we take communion - our mindset matters**


The mindset we have when we take communion matters - it's about the heart - it's about having the right posture of our hearts. Notice how Paul what Paul says in his letter to the church at Corinth when many of them were not taking communion seriously. Many were using it as their meal and others were taking it in a "private" sense but not considering the whole church and others were in definite sin yet still taking communion just because it was a sacrament - something everyone was doing.

### 1 Co 11:27-34

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup> Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup> That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.

 <sup>31</sup> But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup> But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. <sup>33</sup> So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another— <sup>34</sup> if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

The point is this - Don't just come take communion because you're hungry or because it's just habit and what everyone else is doing. That's what Paul was addressing in this letter to these new Christians who were at the Church of Corinth. Instead, evaluate your heart and take it seriously.

 **Communion is a moment when time stops as we *together*, remember the price Jesus paid for us. In short, take communion consistently and take communion seriously and take communion together.**

This leads me to point 2 ...

## 2. The practice of Communion unites us as brothers and sisters in God's family.

The Apostle Paul says this in 1 Corinthians 11 where he wrote the church at Corinth about their practice of taking the Lord's Supper. The individualistic culture around them had so infected the hearts and minds of the Corinthians that they began to use the Lord's Supper as their own personal feast. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 11:20-21 that when they came together "it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat," but rather each one "goes ahead with his own meal."

The TOGETHER part matters. They were failing to partake in the Lord's Supper together, and thus failing to partake in the Lord's Supper at all. Not unlike the modern examples above, these Christians were ignoring the horizontal realities of the Lord's Supper. Or, as Paul puts it, they were failing to "discern the body."

The phrase "discerning the body" is interesting isn't it? It jumps off the page to us as unique.

Paul wants to make sure that the Corinthians understand the danger of taking the Lord's Supper in an "unworthy manner," thus incurring guilt before God Himself (v. 27). Paul tells the Corinthians to have Communion be a time of sober reflection and self-examination. What specifically are they to examine themselves for? The Lord's Supper should be a time of examining our spiritual state before the Lord in general. But specifically, Paul wants to make sure they aren't eating and drinking "without discerning the body" (v. 29). Taking it "in an unworthy manner" in this text means to not "discern the body" in other words - not value everyone around you - the body of Christ.

The elements of this sacrament are of no benefit to someone who is not united by faith to Jesus. The Lord's Supper is for born-again believers to remember the death of Christ on their behalf and to anticipate His return. Upon this reading, the problem Paul is addressing is that people are taking the Lord's Supper flippantly without realizing its spiritual nature. Many were taking it that were not saved.

Remember what he said in verses 20-21. He is going after the Corinthians because they are not celebrating the Lord's Supper *together*. Richer Christians are partaking at their leisure, not waiting for poorer members to arrive. Again, they are failing to recognize the horizontal purposes of Communion.

 **The cross and communion unites us as brothers and sisters in Christ**


**NO MATTER WHAT our financial status is in the world.** That's beautiful !

They may have well understood the vertical aspects of the sacrament. But in failing to understand that this is a new covenant meal (v. 25), given to the new covenant community (Matt. 18:18-20), they are failing to take the Lord's Supper. In this way they are failing to "discern the body," the body being the church, the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-31).

 **The Lord's Supper identifies the whole membership of the church with Jesus. It is a family meal.**

Campus Pastor - consider a funny story or favorite thing about a family meal growing up as a kid OR a family meal tradition you have now as a parent

In communion we see that the bread and juice are memorials pointing to the gospel. The bread symbolizing Jesus body broken for us and the juice giving us a picture of His blood shed for us.

 **The horizontal part of Communion is intentional. It's essential to a biblical practice of this sacrament. Jesus purchased the church by His blood and established local church to be expression of His Kingdom on earth. Jesus Himself He instituted the Lord's Supper to display the local church's unity in Christ.**

The taking of the one bread, Paul says, effectively unites the church as one body (1 Cor. 10:17). The Lord Supper, like a bright yellow line, marks out who belongs to God's family as the church's members renew their commitment to one another and to the Lord.

 **"The church is never more the church than when it takes the Lord's Supper." - Theologian Oliver O'Donovan**

Consider how you might begin to think congregationally about the Lord's Supper. Here's one practical bit of advice. Next time you take the Lord's Supper, take a moment and look around. See who it is that Jesus has died for; see who, before the Lord, it is that you are responsible for and who is responsible for you. Examine yourself, but do so in the company of the redeemed. We are following Jesus TOGETHER. You and others are saying "take and eat, this is His body and blood given *for you*." This meal binds us together as God's holy people, setting us apart from the world to serve JESUS!

### 3. The practice of Communion is a great way to keep abiding with Jesus

Because Jesus is alive and well and wants to be apart of our very lives, speaking to us, engaging with us in conversation, we experience Him in a beautiful way through sacraments and traditions like communion.

 John 15 Abiding in Jesus ...

We have a busy, attention-stealing society!  
Campus Pastor ... Name the attention stealing things ...

- Our work duties
- Our phones - elaborate ...
- Our screens
- Our family life - kids things - all good stuff BUT communion brings us BACK to eternal matters and matters of the heart.

### 4. The practice of Communion points us to the Wedding Feast of the Lamb

#### Revelation 19:5-9

Then a voice came from the throne, saying:

“Praise our God,  
all you his servants,  
you who fear him,  
both great and small!”

**6** Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

“Hallelujah!  
For our Lord God Almighty reigns.

7


Let us rejoice and be glad  
and give him glory!  
For the wedding of the Lamb has come,  
and his bride has made herself ready.

8

Fine linen, bright and clean,  
was given her to wear.”  
(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.)

**9** Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!”

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

 **MT 26: 27-29** Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. **28** This is my blood of the<sup>[b]</sup> covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. **29** I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on **until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.**"