

SERMON - MESSAGE – MAY 01, 2022

Title: “Easter and Communion Continues! Why?”

Selected Scriptures From 1 Corinthians and John

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Throughout this message I will ask the question “why” as a means for you to grasp the importance following the question. Why Easter? Why Communion? We all know there are many significant spiritual events in a Christian’s life that we continually need to remember. Most significantly are: the human birth of Jesus Christ and his human death which includes his resurrection to life. I keep reminding you that most importantly…without these two events, we would not be worshiping together here today and not be guaranteed sin forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus Christ lived and died and returned to life again for these two reasons. I want you to

pause for a moment and allow your mind to grasp the significance of what Almighty God has done for you personally through Jesus Christ. Why? Because there is no greater a gift than what these two spiritual events has done for you, for me and for everyone who will come to this understanding through faith…and believe it to be true.

Every Christian has just celebrated these significant spiritual events: the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. These events have been observed throughout the Christian world with various traditions but we all recognize these two actions: Christ's death and his return to life.

We also have the carnal or human world celebrating Easter candy of all creations, Easter egg hunts, new clothing outfits to wear to. Also, we cannot forget the lilies and other flowers that help us enjoy the Easter and spring season. For our Jewish friends, this is also the time of Passover celebrating their liberation from Egyptian slavery in the 13th century BC. But I caution you that all of these great celebratory events MUST NOT overshadow or replace the spiritual religious

significance of the Easter season. Why? Because Almighty God brings all his people together unto him in various ways and everyone needs to celebrate the magnificence of his power and celebrate him.

Another very good reason to recognize God's power and love is through the sacrament of Holy Communion/Eucharist. Why? Because this is a vital way to continually remember and never forget the sacrifice Jesus made for all humanity that took place during the Easter season. You all know the Christian Easter story, but let's briefly recall what took place:

- The Easter liturgical season begins with Christ's triumphal entrance into the city of Jerusalem to celebrate Passover with his disciples called Palm Sunday.
- On the Thursday of that week (called Maundy Thursday), Jesus gathered the disciples for their last Passover meal together (Last Supper). This is also when Christ humbled himself by washing the disciples feet. Also, during this time with his disciples, Jesus gave his disciples and the world the Great Commandment *("Thou shalt love the*

Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind").

- Good Friday, is a Christian holiday commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus and his death on top of the mountain called Calvary (also known as Golgotha). This has been called Good Friday because it led to the Resurrection of Jesus and his victory over death and sin. Good Friday is the very pinnacle of all Easter celebrations. Good Friday is observed during Holy Week as part of the Paschal Triduum (three days). It is also has been known as Holy Friday, Great Friday, and by some churches as Black Friday. The Good Friday name is not as important as the reason that took place on that day.
- Now there are the 3 days between Christ's crucifixion and his resurrection known as the Passion of Christ… which comes from the Latin word for suffering. Religious scholars have done a great deal of ecclesiastical research as to what Christ did during the 3 days between his crucifixion on the cross and his resurrection from the tomb. Without going into great detail, I'll simply tell you that these historical scholars report, which includes

scriptural support have two basic beliefs: One – Christ descended into hell for the purpose of redeeming the souls of the unfaithful. The second belief is that Christ went into heaven and sat at the right hand of Almighty God to receive the heavenly power to overcome death for Christs followers. I personally subscribe to both these beliefs because Almighty God, one with Christ, had a mission to save souls then and now as well as to demonstrate his great power over death.

- ✔ Why? For the Christian, these 3 days of Christ's passion becomes a time to reflect upon the meaning and purpose of Christ's life, his death and for personal prayer and introspection during this time of Easter.

- Now, of course, we all know that Easter day is a day of celebration recognizing Jesus' resurrection from the grave to prove to the world his sovereign oneness with Almighty God.

Why do you think I just gave you this brief snapshot of Holy Week? Because I also want us to concentrate on Holy Communion/Eucharist, which is a continued ritual to

celebrate and remember Christ's sacrifice made for each of us. On the night of the Passover, known as the "Last Supper", Jesus told His disciples that He wanted them to remember the occasion of His pending departure. At that time the disciples did not know that Jesus was heading for His crucifixion, but Christ knew what was to take place. Why?

- Because communion is a time to look back on Christ's life and death and to look forward to His second coming (which he promised and is recorded in all four Gospels-Matthew, Mark, Luke and John).
- Because communion is our own personal opportunity to examine our own relationship with Christ and to be restored to a better connection that we can and will have with Him through His broken body and His shed blood.

Could there possibly be a better time to take communion than today as we remember Christ's death at Calvary and celebrate His resurrection? As 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 states: *"the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body*

which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant of My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." The sacrificial and transformed bread, which are about to take, represents Christ's body and the cup represents His blood.

Christ continued saying: *"Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly."* (1 Corinthians 11:27-29) To remember Christ's sacrifice on the cross and the new covenant in Christ's blood should make a deep impact on each of us who take communion seriously. Christ said: *"we must examine ourself"*, meaning to look deeply into our soul and admit our sinfulness, as we take the bread and cup and seek forgiveness.

In the Gospel of John, chapter 6, verses 47-58, we hear these words: *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me…He who eats this bread will live forever."*

Friends, as we prepare ourselves to commune with God this first Sunday after Christ sacrificed his life for our benefit, let’s pray together for the consecration of these elements: ***Father, we are thankful for the bread and cup. We***

pray that these elements will provide more than physical nourishment. Grant us the peace, unity, and spiritual nourishment this bread symbolizes. May this cup speak again of the blood Christ shed for the forgiveness of sin. Cleanse us and consecrate us as we partake of this token meal together. We eagerly await the day we shall eat it with you in the Kingdom of Heaven. In Christ's name, Amen.

The Communion table is now prepared and is offered to everyone who seeks forgiveness of their sins.