

Communion

Something quite special happened almost 51 years ago. Buzz Aldrin, a committed Christian, became the first person to celebrate communion outside Earth.

The first thing he did when they landed on the moon, was give thanks to God, and thought to himself “I wondered if it might be possible to take communion on the moon...symbolizing the thought that God was revealing Himself there, too, as man reached out into the universe. On July 20, 1969, after the Eagle lunar lander touched down on the surface of the moon, Aldrin pulled out the wafer that was in a plastic packet and the wine, along with a small silver cup provided by his church. He poured the wine into the cup, and in the one-sixth gravity of the moon, the wine curled slowly and gracefully up the side of the cup, and he read silently from John 15:5, which he penned on a small notecard: “As Jesus said: I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, and I in Him, will bear much fruit; *for you can do nothing without me.*” He knew this was the right thing to do, because it was only possible, because of God. So to pause and acknowledge, thank and remember God was the right thing to do.¹

Now that was a never-to-be repeated occasion in history; I didn't share that story for nostalgic reasons, it was, because of all he needed to be concerned about, the Lord's supper was uppermost on his heart. As we resume services today, given all that has occurred, my hope is the Lord, and remembering him, is uppermost on our hearts.

As we meet today we know many other churches have begun to meet also, and we bear in mind the prevalence of an epidemic still profoundly affecting many other nations, we bear in mind matters of injustice, and, we're aware of Christians persecuted, killed and missionaries doing it tough. We are not ignorant of such things in our world, neither is this table for our opinions on such things but over all this and for all that *we have experienced* during this 'season', good and not so, tough or easy, it is to say Christ you are Lord in the earth and we remember, you.

This morning the Lord invites us, if Jesus is your Lord and Saviour I invite you to join with us. This is a table of grace, it represents grace. What makes this table, the bread and the cup, so essential as part of our worship, is that it reminds us that Christ has always been with us, he has never left our side (“I will never...ever present...”), without him we can do nothing. There's never being a moment where he has not been in control, he is sovereign, and for these reasons it is a table *where we offer thanks to the Lord.*

...so I'd like us to pause and reflect and consider 'how' we come to this table today, what's in my heart? This is not picking up where we left off, it is saying to Christ this is a new day, a new season. I want us to recapture the power and significance of what this is, so it's not lost. Not routine, or going thru the motions, this, is worship of Christ. It's not *just* bread, not *just* a cup but emblems that represent and remind of a Saviour, who died for you...individually, but also through whom we are united, as a body. United through him, united for him. And we know what Ps. 133 says, “how good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity...there the Lord commands the blessing”.

¹ <https://www.foxnews.com/science/moon-landing-bible-apollo-11-buzz-aldrin-communion>

With that, unity, in mind I want to say – perhaps more relevantly – here “there is no Jew or gentile, slave nor free...one, in Christ” We are different colours, ethnicities, backgrounds, but here, “we are one in Christ” (Toby Mac, “we all bleed the same”). *‘How’ do we come to this table today, what’s in my heart?*

(1 Cor. 11:23-29) 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.** So then, 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. Everyone ought to **examine themselves** before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.

We’ve already established this is a great time to *give thanks to the Lord* for being with us, we are *united together* as we come to the Lords table. But there’s two other things Paul would ask the church. He gives us an invitation to *look at ourselves* (“examine ourselves”) and to *look to him* (*remember Christ*).

He gives us and invitation to Look at ourselves

When Paul wrote about not taking the Lords supper in an *unworthy manner* and the need for *self-examination*, you’ll see from v.17-22 he was referring to a group in the church whose priorities were divisive, irreverent and sinful.

You’d have families coming to a meal - then before church, we’re doing it the other way around – and they’d bring their nice curries, naans, roast chickens and eye fillet steak and KFC, while others sat off-to-the-side and ate scraps of bread. And, they’d be drunk from the wine, yes the same wine they used for communion.

Pauls say, “what! What’s in your hearts?” How is that caring for each other, and is that the way we should remember Christ? If all you’re doing is wanting to have a feed, do that at home, but when we come together, others are the priority, unity is the priority, Christ and remembering him is our priority.

I think we can take Pauls call to examine ourselves as being more broad than what he was dealing with at Corinth. Because the Lords supper by virtue of what it is...is to remember Christ as an act of worship. And we don’t want to come to this table flippantly, or irreverently, in an unworthy manner, knowingly carrying sin?

So why is it today, this service, after so many weeks of not meeting that makes “*examining ourselves*” essential? Because this, unusual and unprecedented season will have meant and being different things for each of us. Something has happened in each of us and through us, spiritually speaking. I know some of our stories are hard and painful, you’ve really struggled. Therefore, I did not want this opportunity to rush by without providing space for all of us to...confess sin...re-affirm Christ as Lord of our lives.

Have you strengthened spiritually? Have we used the opportunity to drive us to our knees, to strengthen our walk with Christ, to feed on his word, and deal with sinful tendencies? For some dedication to faith and prayer and the word has cooled.... perhaps there's someone here and you've been caught in habitual sin...a new day...

Not elevating any one person over the other here, *we all need to examine ourselves*, none of us are exempt from sin, none are exempt from needing the forgiveness of the Lord. All of us need to be right with God. This table, requires us to *look ourselves*.

He gives us an invitation to Look to Christ

"Remember me..."

This is a recollection of Christ and all he has done for us. The bread we take in remembrance of Christ's body, the cup we drink in remembrance of his blood shed, *what else do we remember, there's so much...*

Remember the Lord himself

Remember all he taught, all he commanded, all his ministry

Remember that unless he went the Holy Spirit would not come (John 16:7)

Remember he took all of our sin on himself. (1 Peter 2:24) "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness...

Remember in him there is complete forgiveness of sin

Remember he is coming again

There's the invitation to *Look at ourselves*, and the invitation to *Look to Christ*

Nansen, the Norwegian explorer, tried to measure an extremely deep part of the Arctic Ocean. The first day he used his longest measuring line but couldn't reach the bottom. He wrote in his log book, "The ocean is deeper than that." Next day he added more line, but still couldn't measure the depth, and so again in his record book he wrote, "Deeper than that!" After several days of adding more and more pieces of rope and cord to his line, he had to leave that part of the ocean without ever learning its actual depth. All he knew was that it was beyond his ability to measure.

Our human minds will never figure out the depths of God's love and grace and the enormity of Christ sacrifice us, I think all we can do is *remember him* and say *thank you...*

