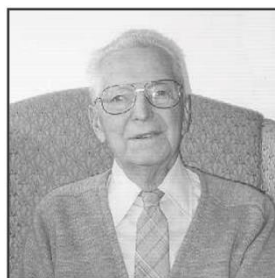


Communion Table Addresses

J. Harvey Bishop *

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Address One

Today we perform a solemn act. Those who come to the table for the first time are professing before men and angels that they choose Christ as their Saviour and Lord, as their Righteousness and Peace, as their Portion, and are professing it is their desire to follow the Lord.

Those who have come often to sit at the Lord's table are renewing their engagement to be the Lord's.

Those who may be coming for the last time, may your portion be that of Mary who sat at Jesus' feet, and of whom Jesus said, "Mary has chosen (that good) the better part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42).

There is the first time for all of us to be seated at the Lord's table – and there is the last time.

For those who have not yet come to the Lord's table; this may be the last opportunity afforded you to so remember the Lord's death until He comes.

This is a solemn occasion –

There is always the last time – the last time to be in church; the last time to serve God; the last time to do a good deed; the last time to speak a good word; the last time to attend Communion; the last time to read the Bible; the last time to pray; the last opportunity in life

Our text: **“. . . whosoever he be who forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple”** (Luke 14:33).

- 1) Have we forsaken all our own (so called) righteousness, trusting in our doings?
- 2) Have we forsaken self, pride of self, selfish ways?
- 3) Have we forsaken envy, jealousy, ill-will, dislike, hate, strife, dissension, division, murmuring, complaining, faultfinding, backbiting, trouble-making, nosiness, untruthfulness, curiosity, talking about others (*maliciously*)?
- 4) Have we forsaken all for Christ, so that Christ is all that we desire – as Paul writes, “I wish (*determined not*) to know (*anything*) nothing among you, save Jesus Christ; and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2).
- 5) Have we forsaken the esteem of the world – desiring worldly notice, worldly applause, to be seen of men and desiring to be somebodies?
- 6) Have we forsaken our own self-importance, as though the world cannot get along without us. Let us remember no-one is indispensable.
- 7) Have we forsaken all our sins? Our idols? Our fleshly pleasures?

Is there anything we are holding on to?

He that forsaketh not all that he hath been holding onto, keeping, hiding in his heart, cannot be one of mine.

Amen.

Address Two

1 Corinthians 11:24

The ritual of the Lord’s Supper is given by Paul. He had received it from the Lord, and so delivered it to the Church in Corinth. From the upper room to a Grecian city is a long way, but there was continuity and oneness of spirit.

What is the significance of the Lord’s Supper? What meaning has it? Has it much meaning to many people?

- 1) **Historical** – received of the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:23). Jesus sought to be remembered by this action. The Lord Himself originated this ordinance. The occasion was the night of His betrayal. Another feast was being celebrated, and whilst celebrating (the Passover) Jesus foresaw His sufferings and the cross and instituted this ordinance – with only the disciples present – “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19; Mark 14: 22-24). Bread and wine were used – unleavened bread and Passover wine. These were symbols of His body and blood – broken and shed. He is present by these symbols and those who partake in faith, by faith feed on Him, His death and sacrifice for sin.
- 2) **Memorial** – “This do in remembrance of me.” Remember, do not forget. Jesus said, “Henceforth I call you not servants, but...friends” (John 15:15). It is the privilege of a friend to remember, to keep alive the memory of a loved-one. The Passover looked back to Exodus remembering; the Lord’s Supper looks back to Calvary remembering.

This is a memorial, not a Mass! This is a supper, not a sacrifice! Here, no minister or priest, stands between God and man. Altogether, around the table with Christ at *the centre*. All share the same elements, eat and drink.

The evangelical view is – the Lord’s Supper is not the repetition of a sacrifice – the elements are not changed – the memorial centre is the living Christ (being remembered in His death), and partakers are blessed, not by the mere partaking by the mouth, but by partaking in faith.

3) **Prophetical** – “till he come” (1 Corinthians 11:26)

The fact of His second coming is mentioned in the NT and He spoke of it Himself. Here, in the final act of remembrance, He includes the hope of His return.

The cross is linked with the Communion and the Communion is connected with the second coming – bearing witness not only to the first Advent, but also to the hope of the second Advent.

At the table we look back, in faith, to the sacrifice of the cross for redemption; we look forward to His coming again. Between the cross and the Second Coming is the Communion service.

4) **Evangelical** – “ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:26). At the Lord’s Supper we are proclaiming the very heart of the Gospel. Here we confess “I believe...”, God-ward, we confess faith before God; man-ward, we confess Christ as Saviour and King.

To share in this feast, one with the other, “let a man examine himself” (1 Cor. 11:28). Examine himself and not another.

Address Three

Communion (1 Corinthians 11:23)

This ordinance is one of the means of grace. It leads us to Christ;

- (a) by the ear – the word;
- (b) by the eye – seeing the symbols;
- (c) by the taste – partaking, taste and see, by faith;
- (d) by the affections – response inwardly.

This doctrine must be most effectual which stirs up most of our outward senses – hearing, seeing, tasting and feeling (affections). These all move the heart and are most effectual as a means of grace. The ordinance stirs up the outward senses to arouse the inward affections.

- 1) This ordinance is referred to as the **Sacrament**. The word *Sacrament* is not in Scripture – but it means anything that binds or brings under obligation (the use of the word also gives the idea of mystery. In Greek – mystery – which is unknown until revealed; in Latin – sacrament,

mystery, a symbol or rite with a spiritual meaning).

The Sacrament consists of two elements, outward, visible signs and an inward, spiritual grace thereby signified. The sign in the Sacrament is united to what is signified – they cannot be separated. Bread is common bread, but when joined with the evidence of the Word – this Word-and-element – is a Sacrament, a sign and seal; sign, signifying, seal, a sealing ordinance.

Sign – bread and wine distributed in a ceremony, signifying– yet, Christ is so present in the ceremony, that if by faith the bread and wine are partaken, Christ is actually partaken of (not by the mouth but by faith) and is received. The mouth to our spiritual life to eat is faith.

If our digestive system is not in order, if our stomach is upset, food cannot be taken properly. It is offensive or perhaps will cause further sickness. So spiritually, if our spiritual digestive system is out, we cannot receive Him as we ought. Cause of spiritual digestive upset is worldliness, etc. We get no good from the ordinance, unless we eat and digest by faith – unless we have a good spiritual appetite. And partaking with a good spiritual appetite, by faith, we bring ourselves under obligation, as a vow, to be true and loyal to our Lord. “I’ll pay my vows to the Lord” (Psalm 116).

- 2) **Supper of the Lord** – a meal, different from a common meal. It is a supper to increase holiness (1 Corinthians 11:20).
- 3) **Table of the Lord** – 1 Corinthians 10:21, not an altar, but a table. To sit at – to commune with each other, fellowship.
- 4) **Communion** – with Him and with each other.

Advice. “Let a man examine himself” (1 Corinthians 11:28). Conscience – self-judgement, heart knowledge.

Conscience – is appointed to be a keeper, a careful attender, bears testimony, observes, records; placed or given as an accuser; a true witness against one, to judge and condemn or otherwise. Conscience – the worm that dieth not. Christ is the Lord of the conscience.

Examine – have we grace, a work of grace in our life. Is there a living faith in our heart? Has the Holy Spirit begun to work in us? Are we children of light?

Sacraments are like rainbows – a rainbow is a sign that no flood will destroy. Sacraments, a sign God will not destroy us by an overflowing flood of His wrath.

Amen

