

“Back to the Basics Part 1: The Journey”

World Communion Sunday is a celebration observed by several Christian denominations, taking place on the first Sunday of every October, that promotes Christian unity and ecumenical cooperation. It focuses on an observance of the Eucharistic meal. Holy Communion is one of the two sacraments observed in the United Methodist Church. As we continue to go “Back to the Basics” of what it means to be a Christian marked by God’s grace we will continue to reflect on the importance of this holy meal instituted by Jesus Christ.

Pastor Rebecca Goltry Mohr

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon:

Prayer for the Week

Gracious God, it is with praise and thanksgiving that we go about our daily lives. We yearn to taste the goodness of the grace you feed us and thirst for the goodness of your ever-present love. As we search scripture and discover new things about you, we continue to pray that we might be in communion with the global church through the ministry of your son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This week’s sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

Study Guide

Monday, October 2 Luke 22:14-19

This meal that Jesus is eating with his disciples is a Passover meal, and this particular Passover meal is a covenant-making event. Jesus outlines the future of the kingdom of God in terms of service and servanthood. The Lord's Supper depicted in the gospel of Luke is discipleship-centered. When we participate in Eucharist on Sunday mornings we are remembering what it means to be bearers of Jesus' ministry, death and resurrection while we inhabit this earthly life. How does this scripture give hope for the kingdom come? In what ways do we actively participate in the kingdom of God as we anticipate what is next?

Tuesday, October 3 1 Corinthians 11:17-22

Paul is disgusted with the way the church at Corinth comes together to celebrate the Lord's Supper. The church at Corinth is in the midst of Roman rule and there are severe divisions of wealth and education. Paul highlights the injustice of people not eating together, the greediness of some while others starve. The early house churches were comprised of early worshipers of Jesus Christ who participated in Holy Eucharist. This meal was the most vivid way of worshiping Christ back then and they had deluded it into becoming a cliquish and exclusive group of people. What would Paul have to say about the way we do communion in church today? How can we as a community come to church yearning the abundance of participation in Christ's love through holy feasting, while at the same time practicing discernment to allow space for those who face scarcity?

Wednesday, October 4 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

These are the words of institution that are used in our United Methodist communion liturgy. This liturgy compiled by Paul includes similar phrasing to Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:15-20. One thing is clear in all of these instances, when he says, "Do this in remembrance of me," Christ is commanding all to participate in the Lord's Supper. Jesus is not casually requesting for people to eat the bread and drink from the cup. He is commanding people do eat the bread and drink from the cup while they anticipate the kingdom's fullness. When you participate in communion how to do you encounter Christ?

Thursday, October 5 1 Corinthians 11:27-33

If John Wesley and the apostle Paul could have a conversation about communion, it would be quite a lively conversation about the importance of self-examination before partaking of the elements. Wesley urged persons to partake in communion as often as they could, it did not matter if they had time to self-reflect because the act of tasting and drinking the elements invoked by the Spirit allows space for a changed heart. "The grace of God given herein confirms to us the pardon of our sins by enabling us to leave them. As our bodies are strengthened by bread and wine, so are our souls by these tokens of the body and blood of Christ. This is the food of our souls: this gives strength to perform our duty, and leads us on to perfection." (John Wesley, *The Duty of Constant Communion*) In what ways does Holy Communion strengthen your heart and soul? How does an emphasis on grace change how we come to the table?

Friday, October 6 Exodus 17:1-7

This Hebrew text comes right after God gives the Israelites manna (bread) from heaven, which is just the right amount to sustain the Israelites. The Israelites were fed but are now thirsty, Moses' leadership was tested and people were wrestling with God who promised to deliver them. A lot of times in our Christian journey we complain that God has forgotten us, but then magnificent mysteries remind us of the promises of God. The way we participate in communion in our church is Spirit filled, and calls on the Holy Spirit to be active as we encounter the living Christ. In what ways have you been reminded of the promises of God through the Eucharistic meal? What is it that you thirst for now?