

July 5, 2015 AM  
Pastor Ken Hepner

*"Communion: Participating in Jesus' Suffering for Us"*  
*John 6:51 – 59*

**Introduction:**

As we look at the Scriptures together this morning, we do so in celebration of the Christian Ordinance of Communion. The emblems of the communion table of Jesus are very simple. They are a piece of bread and cup of grape juice. But what they symbolize is tremendously meaningful when the worshiper stops to consider what it cost to **Take Away** and **Cleanse Us** of our **Sins**.

The Gospel of John carefully protects the truth for us that Jesus is the Son of God. He is the Word who became flesh and dwelt in our midst. In the Message Gene Peterson writes the following rendering of John 1:14: *"The Word became flesh and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one of a kind glory, like Father, like Son."*

The Lord Jesus came into the world to fulfill the will of the Father God that there would be a Redeemer who would act to save us from the power of sin to enslave us all. He entered the world through Mary's body, a virgin who experienced the miracle of God placing His own Son in her womb. He is the only person who had ever lived on earth as both fully God and fully human.

John writes some incredible words that describe to us what Jesus came into the world to do for us all. Let's read what John wrote in John 3:16, 17 *"For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."*

Jesus came to earth specifically to do completely the will of the Father God. This is one of the major themes in the Gospel of John. Jesus says on eleven different occasions words like: "I came into the world not to do my will but to do the will of Him who sent me." Jesus is make a statement that His life was about one mission, to make it possible for you and me to **Know God Personally** as He cleanses us of sin and takes up residence in our hearts, souls, minds!

It was the Father's will that there be a sin offering for you and me. That **Sin Sacrifice** had to be **Perfect!** The sacrifice had to be a human being who had done no wrong had to take our place so that our sins could be laid on Him and the punishment we deserved could be taken for us. That perfect someone was Jesus the Son of God the Father.

By **Believing** in what Jesus did, making it personal, we see our sins disappear in His body hanging on a Cross! By choosing to take by faith His sacrifice and **Receiving** into our hearts and souls that His Spirit coming to live in us, we are born from above. We are made alive to God in our spirit that was dead in sins, and we consider ourselves dead to sin and its power to enslave us any longer.

In the text in John 6 where we find ourselves today, Jesus is telling the people at the synagogue in Capernaum, that He came down from heaven to be God the Father's sacrifice for sins. He is telling His listeners that He is the only means whereby people may experience the presence of God in their spiritual being. His terminology is somewhat masked but the fact remains Jesus was predicting His suffering sacrifice for all of our sins. Remember how John the Baptist revealed Jesus to his followers, in John 1:29, "*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.*"

He taught His listeners about His role by saying that His flesh is real food and His blood is real drink. This grossed out and angered those who were listening to Him speak. Their problem was that they were looking at the **Human** and the **Natural** and Jesus was talking about the **Spiritual**. They completely ignored what Jesus told them earlier in this teaching session.

He was trying to help them to see that real life is not about what we can provide for ourselves or about human effort to please God. John 6:26, 27 "*I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.*"

Jesus is clearly telling His listeners that there were two completely different kinds of food. One kind kept their humanity alive. But the other kind of food endured within them and brought them into the gift of eternal life. In this context Jesus spoke the powerful words of John 6:63: "*The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.*"

In the message version of John 6, Jesus is quoted as saying that the real food in life is spiritual, and that only He can give it. He writes: John 6:55, 56 "*Only insofar as you eat and drink flesh and blood, the flesh and blood of the Son of Man, do you have life in you. The one who brings a hearty appetite to this eating and drinking has eternal life and will be fit and ready for the Final Day. My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. By eating my flesh and drinking my blood you enter into me and I into you.*"

Jesus is clearly pointing His listeners to the Cross on which He would give His life. His sacrifice would take away their sentence of death and His resurrection life would become the source of life to their spiritual person that was dead to God because of sin. Jesus told them that He was the spiritual food that would satisfy their heart and soul's deepest longings.

With that backdrop of information in our thought processes, now let's read what some people call a difficult teaching of Jesus. John 6:53 – 59:

*"Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, 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 real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the*

*bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate the manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever.’ He said this while teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.”*

## **I. Jesus’ Body Bore Our Sins When He Died for Us:**

Jesus was trying to enable the people who were listening to Him at the synagogue in Capernaum to open up their hearts and see that animal sacrifices for sin only cleansed them outwardly. In the book of Hebrews the author specifically states the following truths on this point as he writes in Hebrews 10:1 – 4.

*“The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming – not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleanse once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”*

These animal sacrifices repeated every year did nothing to remove that inner nagging sense of guilt in their consciences. A better sacrifice for sins was needed. We all needed God to intervene and do something for us and in us that would destroy sins and the power of sin to enslave us to doing things that we really don’t want to do.

Jesus the Son of God chose to be that **Better Sacrifice** for the remission of our sins. Jesus decided to be that divine intervention in the power of sin to enslave us to doing things that we don’t really want to do any more. Jesus came to address sin’s power over us that is **Rooted** in our **Self-Interest**.

When Jesus went to the Cross on our behalf it is clear that He had done no sin. Yet as He hung on the Cross He was dying the death of a convicted criminal. The truth is that He was guilty before God, but it wasn’t guilt for His own sins. The Father God laid my sins and your sins on Him and Jesus voluntarily took them into Himself for us. What Isaiah prophesied 712 years earlier was taking place in Jesus on the Cross!

When Jesus died for our sins He actually **Removed** them **From Us**. God the Father looked forward in time and saw us all, how hopelessly lost and how helpless we really were to defeat sin and it’s power in us. He took it all and He placed it in His Son Jesus who voluntarily went to the Cross bearing it all.

When you and I make the Cross of Jesus personal: My sins are in His body, my guilt and my shame are in my Savior Jesus that is when the body of Jesus becomes spiritual bread to my hungry heart! Jesus said His flesh dying for us to take our place is real spiritual food. It is what we have been looking for our whole life.

When we take this piece of bread and eat it this morning, we are commemorating what Jesus did for us anew today. “Jesus my Savior, my Lord and my God, you took my sins, guilt, and shame in your body, so that I may go free!”

## **II. Jesus' Blood was Shed to Cleanse us of Sin and Sin's Power to Enslave Us:**

Jesus told His listeners in the Synagogue that day another powerful thing, which they also completely missed. He pointed forward to the **Cross** and the incredible **Bloodshed** that awaited Him. He was telling them that the blood of bulls and goats did nothing to completely cleanse a heart of wrongdoing. It was only an outward and ceremonial cleansing that they experienced.

But when Jesus went to scourging post and then to the Cross the blood He shed for us all was perfect blood that was shed by the Son of God and the Son of Man. Dr Adam Clarke was a great Methodist thinker who wrote these words: "Jesus was man so that He might have blood to shed and He was God so that when it was shed it would have infinite value to cleanse the human heart."

The Law of God clearly stated that "*without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.*" That word remission means to **Remove** or **Take Away**. Jesus came into the world specifically to do this task. He came to be the perfect sin offering that Abba God would accept. Jesus came to complete the will of the Father that the Son of God would shed His perfect blood to cleanse your heart and mine of all that we had ever done wrong or the wrongs we ever will do.

This sin offering that Jesus made for us is awesome in scope. He became our sin substitute as He hung on the Cross. It was for each one of us; indeed for the sins of the world. Isaiah prophesied about this event 712 years before Jesus came to earth: "*Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed.*"

Your story of redeeming love, your Christian journey is wrapped up in this sacrificial offering that Jesus made for you. You and I are responsible to go the Cross of Jesus by faith, see Him hanging on the Cross bearing our sins, dying our death, shedding His perfect, precious blood to cleanse us. When we by faith make it personal that is when the blood of Jesus becomes life-giving in us!

## **III. Making the Emblems of the Communion Table Personal:**

In I Corinthians 11, Paul tells us that when Jesus instituted communion He took the bread and when He had given thanks, he broke the bread and handed it to His followers and said: "*This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me*"

As we come to the communion table this morning, and take the piece of bread, let's be sure to make it personal. Our ownership of what Jesus did is everything. Saying in our hearts and minds, "Jesus You bore my sins in His body on the Cross. Because You did so, I may go free from the sins I have done, sin's power to enslave me, the guilt and shame I feel for the wrongs that I have done."

As we hold that piece of bread in our hands and put it in our mouths let's be sure to mean it. "Jesus my Savior you took my sins into your body as you hung on the Cross! I welcome you to live in me today as I symbolically take this bread into my body."

That passage in I Corinthians goes on to say: *"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.'"*

So as we come to the communion table this morning and hold the cup, let's be sure to make it personal. The blood of Jesus was the one thing that has been known to humankind that has the power to cleanse sins: "Lord Jesus my Savior you shed your blood to cleanse me of sin. You live in my heart as I symbolically take this cup into my body."

July 5, 2015 AM

***“Communion: Partaking of Jesus’ Suffering for Us”***

***John 6:53 – 59***

**Introduction:**

Today we celebrate and commemorate in the ordinance of Communion.

The emblems are bread and a cup. What they represent is the price Jesus paid for us to **T**\_\_\_\_\_ **A**\_\_\_\_\_ and **C**\_\_\_\_\_ us of our **S**\_\_\_\_\_.

John protects the Truth that Jesus is the Son of God. John 1:14 MSG

John’s words about what Jesus came into this world to do for us all, John 3:16, 17.

He is declaring that His life is about one mission: To make it possible for all of us to **K**\_\_\_\_\_ God **P**\_\_\_\_\_.

It was Abba God’s will that there be a sin offering for you and me. That sin **S**\_\_\_\_\_ had to be **P**\_\_\_\_\_.

By **B**\_\_\_\_\_ in what Jesus did, making it personal, we see our sins disappear into His body on the Cross. By **R**\_\_\_\_\_ into our hearts His Spirit we are born from above!

John 6 is a text in which Jesus is teaching people at a Synagogue that He came to be the one sin offering God the Father will accept for us.

He taught His listeners about spiritual food and they were stuck in the **H**\_\_\_\_\_ and the **N**\_\_\_\_\_. He was speaking about the **S**\_\_\_\_\_.

He was telling them there are two completely different kinds of food. John 6:63

He was telling them that real food that lasts is spiritual. Only He can give us that kind of food. John 6:55, 56.

With these backdrop thoughts let’s study the text of the “difficult teaching.”

**I. Jesus’ Body Bore our Sins When He Died for Us:**

The fact is that animal sacrifices did not take sin away nor did it destroy sin’s power. Hebrews 10:1 – 4

A “better sacrifice” was needed, an intervention of the holy God for us.

Jesus the Son of God chose to be that **B**\_\_\_\_\_ **S**\_\_\_\_\_ for the remission of our sins. He addresses sin's power that is rooted in our **S**\_\_\_\_\_ **-I**\_\_\_\_\_.

When Jesus died for our sins He **R**\_\_\_\_\_ them **F**\_\_\_\_\_ **U**\_\_\_\_\_!

When we make the cross personal: My sins are in His body, my guilt, my shame are in Jesus as He dies, His sacrifice takes on deep meaning to me.

The death of the Son of God on the Cross bearing my sins, cleansing me, is real food to a heart that is desperately hungry for meaning and life!

## **II. Jesus' Blood was Shed to Cleanse us of Sin and Sin's Power to Enslave Us:**

Jesus told His listeners a truth about His body and blood shed, which they missed completely. He was pointing forward to the **C**\_\_\_\_\_ and His **B**\_\_\_\_\_ that awaited Him.

The law of God says without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. The word remission means to **R**\_\_\_\_\_ and **T**\_\_\_\_\_ **A**\_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus became our sin-bearer, dying in our place. It is the fulfillment of hundreds of years of prophecy.

Your story, your Christian journey is wrapped up in this sacrifice Jesus made for you!

## **III. Making the Emblems of the Communion Table Personal:**

I Corinthians 11 Paul writes about what Jesus did when He instituted the Communion Ritual as a **R**\_\_\_\_\_. Call to your mind what this means.

As we come to the communion table and take the bread owning that what Jesus did was for "me" is everything.

When we put the bread in our mouths, let's be aware of what we are saying in the act!

Jesus shared words about what the cup means. It symbolizes the precious blood of Jesus. When we drink it we are saying to God and one another we are engaged in the **C**\_\_\_\_\_ of **G**\_\_\_\_\_.

The cup symbolizes the one thing that has the power to **R**\_\_\_\_\_ sin, guilt, shame and free us to serve God from the heart! Let's be sure to make it personal!

## Discussion Starter Questions for Home Groups

1. Why do you think the Lord Jesus took the time just before He died to institute the Communion ritual?
2. When Jesus taught the people at the Synagogue at Capernaum about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, what do you think they heard? Why was it hard for them to understand him?
3. The Scriptures carefully protect the truth that Jesus had two distinct natures in his being. Why is this important?
4. As you think about the message of the entire Bible and human sin, why was it necessary for the sacrifice offered that could take away sins once-and-for-all, to be perfectly sinless?
5. The bread is symbolic of Jesus' body bearing away our sins. Why is it important to eat the bread in faith and submission?
6. The cup is symbolic of the blood of Jesus cleansing us of sin. Why is it so important to drink it in active faith?
7. Read together aloud Mathew 26:26 – 30 and Luke 22:17 – 23. Discuss insights you have regarding the first Lord's Supper.
8. Read together aloud I Corinthians 11:17 – 32 and discuss insights you have from Paul's word to the believers at Corinth regarding the Communion Table and meeting with Jesus.
9. What are some things you want to think through personally from the ritual of the Communion Table and making it personal each time you celebrate it?