

Sermon #18

**Holy Communion:
Leaving and Cleaving**

The Lord God is a mighty God;
 He is great and powerful and good.
 He is majestic and awesome.
With a single Word He can make things happen.
Authorities wilt in His presence, for He is Ruler of all.
Yet He humbles Himself to serve us:
 to clean us and bathe us,
 to feed us and help us,
 to bless us and keep us.
He is the most tender and loving of fathers,
 doing just what is best and giving just what we need.
He is wonderful! I love Him!
Communion with God is a joy, a thrill—
 when I submit myself to His care.
God is very good!

Today we will be participating in the ritual we call
 “Holy Communion.”

“Holy” means devoted to God.
“Communion” means union with God.
Holy communion is devoting yourself to God so completely
 that you are One with Him.

God is perfect and good, powerful and true,
 infinitely loving and giving.
Aren't we all seeking to unite to someone like this?

True Holy Communion is not a religious ritual; it is a relationship.
 It involves both leaving and cleaving.

Leaving

In the story of creation, we hear:

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. ²⁵And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” Genesis 2:24-25

The marriage relationship between a man and woman is prophetic and symbolic of the union between man and God.

Man—both male and female—

is called to leave all others and unite to Christ.

We see this later in Genesis when God says to Abram:

“Get out of your country,

From your family and from your father’s house,

To a land that I will show you.

²I will make you a great nation;

I will bless you and make your name great;

And you shall be a blessing.”

Genesis 12:1-2

It is obvious even to a child that one can’t go forward without leaving.

By definition, going forward always involves leaving.

Those who are unwilling to leave cannot go forward.

Those who cling tightly to what they have
cannot receive something better.

When you choose communion with Christ,

you will have to leave something or someone behind.

Maybe many things, and maybe many ones.

Maybe everything, and maybe everyone.

Those who refuse to leave their own little world cannot cleave to Christ and commune with Him.

As a young man leaves the security and comfort of his parents in order to cleave to his wife, so I also must leave the security and comfort of my present experience in order to cleave to the abundant life that God has for me: the life that completes and fulfills me.

Coming to a church service and to the communion table is symbolic of leaving everyone and everything else, coming out of our own little worlds and families and into the presence of God.

One warning, though:

Leaving is not the same thing as rejecting or divorcing.

Christ calls us to love people, not to divorce or reject them.

Leaving helps to break a person's influence over us, and God is very interested in doing just that. His will is that we are influenced by Him and become like Him, so that we can love others like He loves us.

But He will always call us to love those who are left behind, and to do good to them as He leads.

As we cleave to Christ and follow Him,
He will teach us and show us how to love.

If and when He leads us to return to certain people and situations,
we will be able to bring His love, light, truth and mercy to them.

Cleaving

Moses said, "Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him."
Deuteronomy 13:4

You are called to cleave and unite to God so tightly that no man can separate you from Him.

Your forgiven soul is the Bride,
and the Lamb of God—Christ—is the Bridegroom.

God has prepared a table for you—a magnificent wedding banquet.
You can come and eat whenever you want.

You feast and dance together in joy when you turn your thoughts to God and give yourself wholly to Him. This is the highest and best form of communion.

God's life will increase in you as you cleave to Him more and more in your daily life.

You will conceive and bear His offspring: the fruit of the Spirit.

Love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control.

Jesus' prayer for us just prior to his crucifixion shows how much He desires that we cleave to God and become One with Him:

²⁰“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²²And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. ²⁴Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. ²⁶And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

John 17:20-26

The communion ritual

True communion can be experienced during the religious ritual; but true communion is only fulfilled when you relate personally to God in your daily life.

If you stop at the religious ritual and go no further,
the kingdom of God will not increase in you.

The ritual of communion is not a requirement of God;
it is a gift from God to whoever finds it useful.

But one must take care to remember God and think of God
throughout the ritual, for it has no value outside of Him.

Symbolically, the blood is the spiritual life of Christ, which purifies
your heart and soul. In drinking His blood, He transfers His life
and power to you in the most intimate way.

Symbolically, the bread is the physical life of Christ, which is His
obedience to God. When you eat His body, He transfers His
righteousness to you.

God feeds His life, power and righteousness to you during holy
communion with Him.

If the only time you spend communing with Him is during the brief
ritual of communion in a church service, you are only receiving
crumbs.

Do you want to live on crumbs?

Today, as you participate in the ritual of communion,
turn your heart and mind to Christ.

Make haste to leave whatever He says to leave,
cleave to Him as your Bridegroom,
and receive the life that He gives you.

True communion is union and oneness with God.

Let the ritual lead you to Him, then unite with Him forever.

“I, the Lord, speak what is right, and My way is best.

Come and follow Me if you want to be free.

Leave what you have and are behind;

go forward in your life in Me.

I will restore or replace all that is good.
Do not strive to keep what I want you to leave behind.
 This is all for your good.
Leave as I lead; do not strike out on your own.
 Leave as I lead, and you will have peace.
Follow Me, not man.
 My way is true and clear, pure and right.
O My people, do not hide your hearts from Me!
I AM your Father, Creator, Lover and Friend.
I come to you in peace and goodness, purity and truth,
 to protect and deliver you from all harm.
Spend time with Me!
 Listen to Me!
 My words are life and truth.
My Word is the wine that gladdens your heart
 and empowers you to follow Me.
My life is the bread that strengthens your heart
 and empowers you to follow Me.
I give you both in Holy Communion.
Come to Me whenever you want, wherever you want,
 and I will commune with you.
Don't settle for crumbs at church on Sunday;
 come and feast with Me!"