**Communion – Starting the Year, looking back**

**We went whitewater rafting through the Royal Gorge. (Pic) I remember the brochures, websites and talking to instructors and getting ready… but nothing compared to actually getting in that raging Arkansas Riv and hitting those wild waters. A couple of things we were told to not forget. Listen to his voice and do what he says, and we live… (Share the experience). It was scary, intense, life threatening, and awesome! We laughed and screamed a lot.**

**When someone is introduced to the greatest relationship in the Universe, Jesus, a new adventure begins. No website, book, or class compares to actually doing it. It can seem a little scary & intense! But we must listen and follow the Word of God.**

**Happy New Year – New year often begins with looking back at the year.**

**Important milestones: (pics) Wedding, day my girls were born, 1st B-days, Graduations (strange they are boring yet exciting)**

**Humans love to celebrate milestones, markers, and memorials.**

**Calvin and Olie (pic) don’t get upset when we forget a B-day, plants don’t hold a funeral when another one dies. Only Human. Anniv, Weddings, grads. These events matter to us.**

Our spirit was created to celebrate milestones and markers. This desire was placed there by the hand of God.

**As we start the New Year – we are going to look back too. Except we are going back 2000 yrs**

**Today we are going to look at an often-overlooked command and blessing – Communion.**

**COMMUNION – Starting the year by looking back.**

**God instructs us to remember and celebrate Him through Communion**

**Jesus Said “Do this in remembrance of Me” – And the bible warns not to do it flippantly or nonchalantly. This is serious and it’s packed with great spiritual meaning.**

**What does it mean and why is so important?**

**REMEMBER - It is a spiritual picture! It is not a ritual, it is a picture.**

**What do pictures do? They bring places, events, locations, to life… We can sometimes instantly see ourselves there. Pic of mom. Reminds me of her – it’s not her, but in a way brings her back.**

**Communion is a spiritual picture of the death of Jesus Christ…**

**Communion takes us there, reminds us to never forget what happened.**

**Knowing God is not simply praying, being good, or going to church… it about the events of the cross. Jesus was saying, “Don’t loose sight what I came for.” Remember the cross.**

# Use the Communion elements to explain.

* **Jesus gathered His disciples for a Passover meal.**

**A yearly remembrance of God deliverance from Egypt.**

* **During the meal, Jesus does something unique and strange**

**He redefines the Passover elements (explain Passover elements)**

**Luke 22:14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. 15 And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” (They did not realize in a few hours He would be arrested, tortured, and crucified on Calvary for our sins, die and 3 days later rise again.)**

**17 After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. 18 For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”**

**19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; (Ma 26:26 Take and eat; this is my body.) do this in remembrance of me.” 20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. (Ma 26:28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.)**

**John records - John 6:53-54 Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, 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 them up at the last day.**

**Jesus says to his disciples, this cup and this bread – is me.**

* **It is a picture of the body of Jesus**

**That Jesus was God in flesh God who embraced a body and was beaten, tortured, killed, and buried – for a hate filled humanity.**

* **It is a picture of the blood of Jesus**

**That was poured out of Christ as a satisfaction for sin’s debt. The precious blood that flowed from Emmanuel’s veins.**

**\*\*Luke 22:19 - “Do this in remembrance of Me.” - They must be thinking, “Why was Jesus worried? How could we ever forget Him?”**

**Jesus knew the disciples better than they knew themselves.**

**He knows us better than we know ourselves.**

## He knows we have a tendency to forget important events.

**Even Christ followers can get so involved in the things of life that we lose true worship and turn our faith into cosmetic Christians (try to look good) who compartmentalize our faith.**

**Jesus says, “Remember Me” and “Do it.”**

**He didn’t say every day - didn’t say every week - didn’t say every month. He just said to do it regularly. We have it available weekly and during service we take it together about 4-5X a years.**

Today we are going to take the Lord’s Supper – starting the year in remembrance.

I need a volunteer. (Hold weights outstretched arms)

3 Things take place as we take communion

1. **A time of Reflection:**

**A time of reflection as you look back at the cross**

**Illustrates the “incarnation” of Christ. That Christ did actually come in the flesh. It was not a dream, story, or myth.**

**Paul gives instructions (originally a meal shared among believers.)**

**1 Cor 11:23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: (Passed on from Jesus and the Apostles) The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 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.” 25 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.” 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.**

**Proclaims the purpose and work of his death**

**The bread = His body broken, beaten - it hurt. You matter to Him.**

**The bread = God became man. Jesus Christ among us.**

**He was tempted and tested yet without any sin.**

**He came for your salvation! You matter!**

**The juice = His blood. Poured out for our sins. It was not cheap.**

**The vine = like grapes pressed to give nourishment – Christ was pressed and crushed – poured out as payment.**

**At the doctor, they do blood work because there is life in the blood. There is also eternal life in the blood when we apply Christ’s blood from the cross to our lives. His blood works!**

1. **A time of Inventory (spiritual inventory)**

**- How are you growing? Is there any unconfessed sin?**

**- How are you doing in your relationship with God?**

**- Do you have a problem w/ a neighbor, spouse, co-worker, family, spouse, friend, or a peer - that needs to get right?**

**1 Corinthians 11:27 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. 28 Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 29 For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. (Died)**

Apostle Paul said some are sick and even dying because they were treating it as an appetizer, indulging, and disrespectful. Not truly understanding the purpose of communion.

While you take the Lord’s Supper, we are to make sure before you take it that you know Christ personally. Don’t come to it in a casual light.

**Examine yourself – are you a follower of Christ?**

**Is there sin in your life?**

**This means: Communion is for the family of God, believers, Christ followers only.**

#### Why is communion for Christians only?

#### Communion means = “Having in common”- “Fellowship”

**We are identifying with his death and identifying with each other that we are Christ followers – we are family in Christ.**

**This is something only family can understand and celebrate.**

1. **A time of celebration**

**Luke 22:19 - “Do this in remembrance of Me.”**

**We celebrate being able to know God thru Christ. Celebrate our freedom from sin, completely forgiven / forgotten.**

**Those weights are heavy! The things we regret - things we have done, and the things we have thought… the weight is lifted - Freedom!**

**So many come each week w/ weights (the weights). But we come to celebrate the joy, freedom and the lifted weights! Communion is a celebration of the event that brought freedom**

### You too can know the joy having the weight of sin released!

Communion is a:

**A time of reflection – Why God! – would you do this for me?**

**A time of inventory – Where God! – do you want to start?**

**A time of celebration – Wow God! I’m free!**

**Prayer:**

I want you to think about the greatest labor of love ever achieved - the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. That is what we think about – this is what we remember. That is what we celebrate.

# Worship – Communion

# Next week – we are back to the Book of Acts – Unstoppable.