

5 Days at the Table

Mini Devotions on Communion



Day 1

As you turn your attention to the Lord's table today, allow me to pose one simple question: "What does communion look like?" Take a moment of pause and imagine "communion." What does it look like?

As you imagine communion maybe it conjures up an image of the da Vinci mural portraying Jesus and the disciples at the Last Supper? Perhaps it looks like a table with a cross and some silver trays sitting on it. For some it may look like tiny stale crackers and little cups of grape juice being passed around a sanctuary. For me, it is often the image of a table inscribed with these words, "Do this in remembrance of Me." While all these images are reasonable images for any person in the church, they sadly miss the point. These images are merely convenient distractions that we indulge to avoid the presence of the living God.



Fortunately for us, we have a cloud of witnesses that truly show us what communion should look like. In fact, those who entered into communion first, didn't have any knowledge of the last supper. They were simply men and women of faith who knew the living God was their only salvation and, in their thirst for Him, they threw themselves on the altar of God's mercy. If you find yourself growing weary of the flight from God's presence, but you're so distracted by your preconceived images of communion that you have lost any notion of what it looks like and feels like, turn to the Psalms for illumination. It is in the Psalms that we read these familiar words of David as he entered the presence of the living God:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters.

He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and loving kindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Psalm 23)

Benediction: May Jesus Christ, whose body was broken and whose blood was shed for you, restore your soul, comfort your heart, anoint you and fill your cup to overflowing. Amen.

After each line, pray over the Truth it reveals:

The LORD is my shepherd: I shall not want.
The LORD is my shepherd: He makes me lie down.
The LORD is my shepherd: He leads me.
The LORD is my shepherd: He restores my soul.
The LORD is my shepherd: He guides me.
The LORD is my shepherd: I fear no evil.

The LORD is my shepherd: He is with me.
The LORD is my shepherd: He comforts me.
The LORD is my shepherd: He's prepared for me.
The LORD is my shepherd: He anoints me.
The LORD is my shepherd: My cup overflows.
The LORD is my shepherd: I dwell in His house forever.

Are you still wearing sandals?

This may seem an odd question to ask you as you enter your time of communion, but it is quite relevant nonetheless.

As Moses approached the burning bush, God commanded him, "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." (Ex. 3:5) Moses obediently removed his sandals and, by doing so, he confessed to his own personal defilement and unworthiness to be in the presence of God.

Much like His Father called Moses, Jesus calls out to us from the table to enter His presence. Many of us have a hard time answering that call as we continue to wear our spiritual sandals in one form or another... perhaps holding on to some anger for a wrong done to us, or because we can't let go of our sinful past, fearing that there is no forgiveness for us.

We make a mistake in believing that the sandals Moses wore could in any way defile the dirt God made holy. The sandals weren't a defilement; they were a barrier. When Moses removed the sandals, his feet came into direct contact with the holiness of God. God wasn't concerned about the dirt; He was concerned about the obstacle Moses had in place which kept him from experiencing the presence of God. God's holiness was great enough to overcome Moses' personal defilement. And when the sandals were removed, God's holiness made Moses complete.

Likewise, it is the poured out blood of Jesus that is powerful enough to cleanse us of our sin and our unworthiness. It is His blood that completes us and makes us whole in His presence. Through the apostle Paul, Jesus revealed, "My grace is sufficient for you." (2 Cor 12:9)

As you enter communion, God is calling out to you, "Remove your sandals."

Benediction: May the grace of Jesus Christ and the blood He shed, cleanse you and complete you. Amen.



Read Ex 2:11 - 3:6 and then pray and meditate over each of the following lines:

Pray that God will reveal the sandals you are wearing today. Pray that He will create a desire for Him so great that you will want nothing less.

**Confess.
Rejoice!**

Day 3

Yesterday, your communion time focused on sandals.

Today, communion time will focus on the feet, because John tells us that after the last supper Jesus turned His attention to the feet of His disciples.

Foot washing is a fascinating study. Reading through various explanations regarding foot washing, you'll come to understand that this ritual was typically the act of a servant or slave. However, reading through scripture, not every instance features unnamed servants doing the foot washing. We can find Abraham, Lot, and Laban washing the feet of visitors.

As a person reads through the various instances of foot washing in the Bible it is clear that the numerous accounts of foot washing reveal it to serve multiple purposes. Many times it was an act of service or hospitality toward an honored guest. The woman washing Jesus' feet with her tears could be called an act of service to the honored guest, but it can also be seen as an act of gratitude. Solomon washed his own feet as an act of preparation to be with his bride. Aaron and his sons were required to wash their hands and feet in preparation of going before God.

Most teachings on Jesus washing the feet of the disciples focus on the servant aspect in the symbolism, as Jesus put aside His rightful place as the honored guest, and instead became the humble servant. It is reasonable to teach thus as Jesus followed this act by teaching His disciples about service. This said, today, let's focus on the example He set regarding the preparation aspect. So answer these two questions:

How are your feet?

How are they being prepared?

In John, chapter 13, Jesus explains to Peter, who protested at the thought of Jesus washing his feet, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Afterward, Peter responds, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but

also my hands and my head." Jesus ends the discussion as He replies, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." This bath, of which Jesus speaks, is symbolic of our profession of Jesus as our Lord and Savior and our subsequent baptism. It is, once and for all. But if we're clean all over, why the foot washing?

In His humanity, Jesus personally got His feet dirty. It is a natural consequence of being in contact with this earth. Because of this contact, we have a need for daily cleansing, and for daily washing of the water with the Word. Just as Jesus got His feet dirty, He expects that we too will be getting our feet dirty. But, Jesus showed the disciples in His daily walk, how He managed to keep His feet clean. As His servants, it is our responsibility to follow the example of our Master, who routinely spent time in prayer, entering into communion with our Heavenly Father. He habitually washed His feet by allowing the Word of the Father to anoint Him, instruct Him, guide Him, renew Him, and prepare Him. So, how are your feet? Are they walking as Jesus walked?



Benediction: May the grace of Jesus Christ and the blood He shed, cleanse you and complete you. Amen.

Read a Psalm of your choice, John 13:1-17, and then pray and meditate over the following lines:

Word of God: Anoint me.

Word of God: Instruct me.

Word of God: Guide me.

Word of God: Renew me.

Word of God: Cleanse me.

Word of God: Prepare me.

Day 4

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” (1 Cor 11:25)

I don't believe I'm alone in this, but for several years I entered the time of communion focused on these final words,

“In remembrance of Me.”

It makes sense when you think about it; those are the words we put on communion tables, “Do this in remembrance of me.” However, when I step back from it, I realize the words that the disciples were focused on were actually two other words. Their focus was the phrase, “new covenant.”

Language defines culture, and a word that has been lost in our culture is “covenant.” You see, we view covenant as a contract, but that sells covenant well short of its true meaning. Covenant is about relationship and identity. In covenant, we tell the one with whom we enter into covenant, “Everything I have and everything I am, is yours.”

We see this in the marriage ceremony. The husband and wife will be forever identified with one another. They are in covenant with one another. In passing the cup, Jesus was asking his disciples to fully respond to His earthly, incarnate mission... His mission to restore God's image in humanity and secure our salvation. His passing of the cup can be equated with the minister asking a man, “Do you take this woman to be your wife.” In drinking the cup, the disciples were affirming their acceptance of Jesus' identity. The marriage equivalent of saying, “I do.”

No wonder, in Luke's presentation of the last supper, we find that Jesus spoke the following words at the table, “I have earnestly desired to share this Passover with you before I suffer.” (Luke 22:15) So often, we enter communion as a time of solemn remembrance, but Jesus entered communion with earnest desire, an eagerness, a passionate longing for His people. When you do this in remembrance of Him, do so in covenant relationship, embracing Him as your Holy Lord and as the One who makes you holy.

Benediction: May the power of the Holy Spirit strengthen you and may His Word transform you all of your days in the beautiful relationship of covenant. Amen.



Read Luke 22:14-20 and then pray and meditate over the following lines:

Lord Jesus, create an earnest desire in me for You.
Lord Jesus, everything I have and everything I am,
is Yours.
Lord Jesus, restore your image in my life.
Lord Jesus, be my Lord.
Lord Jesus, be my holiness..

Day 5

Perhaps one of the most comforting, and often convicting, verses of the Bible is Matthew 6:25. It says, "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

This verse is often convicting because there is a command in this verse...Do not worry... and how very often we find ourselves in violation of this command. But it is also comforting, because these words which reveal God as a provider and protector, point us to the table of covenant. You see, these words don't simply reveal that God is good and that God is generous, they point to the relationship through which He reveals that He is good and that He is generous. They point to covenant.

In covenant, God invites us into His presence. He assumes the role of provider and protector through an agreement that extends beyond our earthly existence. He fills our cups to overflowing and just like Ruth feasted at the table of Boaz and Jonathan's crippled son ate at the table of David, Christ calls us to feast at the table of our King Eternal, where He gives us our covenant identity:

Forgiven... Chosen... His...

The extent to which we receive this identity will directly affect the extent to which we will carry out His command: Do not worry.



Benediction:

May the love and the peace of Christ, which surpasses all understanding, draw you near to the table. And may you feast with your King Eternal all of your days. Amen.

Read Matt. 6:19-33 and then pray and meditate over the following lines:

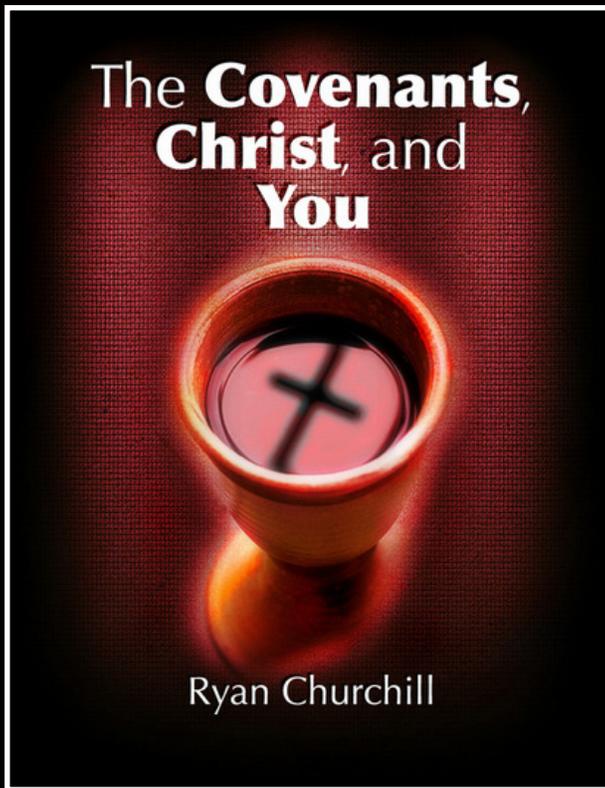
Thank you Father: You are provider.
Thank you Father: You are protector.
Thank you Father: I will not worry.
Thank you Father: I am Forgiven.
Thank you Father: I am Chosen.
Thank you Father: I am Yours.



Ryan Churchill, author of **The Covenants, Christ and You**, is first and foremost a lover of God's Word. While working on his master's degree, he co-led a small group Bible study where he often found himself tweaking lesson plans and writing supplemental lessons to "fill in the gaps" on pre-packaged Bible studies. Curious by nature and a teacher at heart, Ryan set out on a path to quench his desire for deeper understanding about the Bible and a way to share his findings with others. What he found was a deeper personal relationship with the Living God and a true identity in Jesus Christ.

In everything Ryan writes his aim and passion is to encourage others to read God's Word as a pathway to worship and intimacy with their Creator. His methodology is designed to open your heart and mind to the invitation of the Holy Spirit to lead you, guide you, and commune with you through this study. Ryan's heart is to teach others to engage Scripture with a new lens so they can see themselves through their Father's eyes, through the eyes of covenant.

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In The Covenants, Christ, and You, teaching veteran, Ryan Churchill leads you on a sometimes humorous, often challenging, and always engaging journey through the Old and New Testament covenants. You will be guided down a path of discovery where you will encounter the pre-incarnate Jesus as God reveals Himself, His Christ, and His intentions for relationship with you. You will be encouraged to connect the dots between God's covenant commands, the life of Jesus, and your 21st Century identity.

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