

Until He comes

ICor 11:23-29

The creed of the early church was this

Jesus, the Christ, died for our sins, was buried, on the third day He rose from the grave, and was taken into heaven. From there He will return to judge the living and the dead

Now of course they didn't just make this up

It certainly is too good - too unbelievable to be fabricated

They then and we now have significant reason to believe

That this Jesus who overcame the grave is coming again

I believe that not all of us will taste death before
Jesus returns for His church

**Some of us here today are the terminal
generation**

We will be alive when Jesus returns

How can we be certain He is coming again

First Jesus promised He would return for us

**John 14 - I go to prepare a place for you. If I go
and prepare a place for you, I will come again
and receive you to Myself.**

Jesus promised His return and He has not - cannot lie

He will be back

Then Angels promised that Jesus would return just as He left

Acts 1: - As Jesus said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud

received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven”.

Angels forecast His return and told us how He will do it

Finally the apostles inspired by the Holy Spirit promised Christ’s return

1Thess 4 – For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Therefore comfort one another

The early church wondered about the return of Jesus

And Paul assured them - Jesus is coming back – this is how it will happen

And the assurance of Jesus return should impact how we live

We should live our lives in anticipation of His return

Our activities are to be directed towards His triumphal return

We should be working to hasten His return

One day the last person will bow repent of their sins

Receive Christ as Savior and Lord

And just like that - He will appear in the sky

Now this should not come as a surprise to us

Through holy living and serving God

We should be preparing for Christ’s return

When we see Him we will be like Him

But the goal is to be like Him now

We should be so familiar with Jesus presence now

That seeing Him face to face would be a natural progression

The next step in our transformation

Finally before He left Jesus gave us a commemorative celebration

We should anticipate Jesus return

By commemorating His death for us

You see there are three things in today's passage that are certain

Christians are to meet for communion until He comes

The message of the cross will endure forever

The power of the Gospel will bring life until Jesus returns

First Christians are to meet for communion until He comes

Communion is a remembrance service

Which reinforces the message of the cross

Communion is not a man made idea

Some men didn't just get together and decide on a way to remember Him

Jesus instituted communion to commemorate His death for us

During the Last Supper which was a Passover celebration

Jesus was God's Lamb and a few hours later

Jesus died so God's chosen could be delivered from the slavery of sin

So during that last meal

Jesus took bread and broke it - giving each a piece

He took wine - and gave each a drink

He identified the bread and the wine as being representative of His sacrifice

His body would be broken and His blood would be shed for them

As He did it He said – **as often as you do this do it in remembrance of Me**

And for 2000 years Christians have kept this appointment

Not always practiced the same way

Not always done with the same timing

But it is a link for people of faith all over the world

The only Biblical requirement for receiving communion

Is membership in the body of Christ and self-examination

That is why we practice open communion

You don't have to be a member here

You don't even have to regularly attend - just be part of the forever family

We participate in communion to remember Jesus sacrifice for us

By eating the bread and drinking the wine

We are acknowledging that His payment His sacrifice was sufficient

And we are those who partake of its benefit

We continue to practice communion to remember His death

Christ's death was a sacrifice made on our behalf

The Rich for the poor - the Righteous for the unrighteous

The Son of God sacrificed His life for the enemies of God

So that we could become the children of God

We continue to practice communion for it is a time of introspection

The Bible commands us to examine ourselves

So we examine the content of our lives

We reflect upon the conduct of our lives

We lay ourselves bare before our God

And rededicate our lives to the one who loved us enough to give His life for us

Then we are to unconditionally forgive each other

We are to hold no grudges - carry no thoughts of payback

For when we consider what God has forgiven us

What others have done to us is of no consequence

We are the happy recipients of unlimited grace
So we just naturally show grace to others

Then by practicing communion

We commit to obey God regardless of the conditions or the outcome

We can trust our Sovereign Lord
He will take care of us
During communion we recommit to live for Jesus
We renew our love for Him and we rededicate our lives to Him

Finally communion reminds us to look forward to the return of Jesus

The Pilgrims lived their lives in anticipation of Jesus imminent return
They would get up in the morning thinking - this could be the day
Every night they would say – Maybe tomorrow
It is now 300 years later
Nearly 2000 years after Jesus death resurrection and ascension
His arrival is closer today than at any time in history

Not one prophecy needs to be fulfilled

Before Jesus returns for His church

Wednesday's earthquake in Canada is a reminder
That the promised birth pangs are unfolding during our lives
Jesus could take us home during this service

Now listen - if you truly expect the imminent return of Jesus

If you really believe He could come at any time

You will live your life with kingdom values

The Talking Heads are wrong
It isn't all going on the same as it ever was – same as it ever was
On the day He returns the ones you love and haven't shared the Gospel with
Will most likely be locked into a destination from which there is no escape

We should have a sense of urgency

When it comes to our service obedience and witness

Now there is one thing of which you can be certain

Regardless of who tries to stamp it out or how unpopular it becomes

The message of the cross will endure forever

The times may change but the Gospel will remain unchanged

And so will the result

The times may change but not the message

It was radical in 30 AD and it is still more radical today

Men have tried to destroy the message or make it irrelevant

But sinners are still in need of salvation

And there is only one Name under heaven by which men can be saved

For salvation was purchased at the cross

And it is found nowhere else

There is a wonderful old hymn that says it all

At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light, and the burden of my sins rolled away. It was there by faith I received my sight, and now I'm so happy all the day

Christ's death will forever be the theme of heaven's song

Rev 5 – They sang a new song, saying: Worthy art Thou to take the Book, and break its seals; for Thou was slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood, men from every tribe and people and nation.

For all eternity we will continue to praise Jesus Christ

For nothing but the blood of Jesus can make you right with God

You can give to the church until you are poor

You can support missionaries

You can give to every worthy cause that comes your way

But money will not buy your salvation

You can log your life

And make sure that for every bad thought

You have three good ones

And for every bad deed you have 7 good ones

But your goodness will not bring you salvation

You can say all kinds of prayers to all kinds of saints

But prayers will not bring your salvation

You can observe all forms of religious rituals

But that will not bring you salvation

There is nothing you can do on this earth that will bring you salvation

Salvation comes only through faith in the shed blood of Jesus

That is why Satan has worked so hard to change the message

Or to make it irrelevant

But the cross outlives its critics

1Cor 1 – For the Word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to those who are being saved, it is the power of God

The cross of sacrifice stands in contrast to the wisdom of the world

The things of this world including worldly wisdom are passing away

But the Word of the Lord stands forever

The cross of the Lord stands tall

And the work of the Lord lasts forever

Finally the power of the Gospel will bring life until Jesus returns

Rom 1 - I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes

Christ the Son of God died for our sins

Jesus was crucified, died, was buried and rose again on the third day

Breaking the chains of death and the power of sin for all who believe

That is the Gospel – the Good News

1John 1– The blood of Jesus, God’s Son, cleanses us from all sins

It doesn’t cleanse you from a few sins or even most sins

The blood of Jesus cleanses you from every sin that you have ever committed and every sin that you will ever commit

No matter what you have done - no matter why you have done it

When you are in Jesus

You cannot be a greater sinner than God is a forgiver

We are the happy partakers of unlimited grace

Praise God for that

Communion is a time of sorrow and it is a time of joy

Joy that our sins are forgiven - our debt has been paid in full

It is thanksgiving that brings us to the table of the Lord

To quote William Shakespeare – We band of brothers – we happy few

But there is also sorrow

Sorrow that God's Son had to take our place

It was for our sins that He went to the cross

And it was our sins that held Him there

O sacred Head now wounded, with grief and shame weighed down. Now scornfully surrounded, with thorns Thy only crown. How art Thou pale with anguish, with sore abuse and scorn. How does that visage languish, that once was bright as morn. What Thou my Lord has suffered, was all for sinners gain. Mine, mine was the transgression, but Thine the deadly pain.

So it is our unworthiness

Which brings us to the table of the Lord

And we will continue to commemorate Jesus death until He returns

Communion will always be relevant

It keeps our mind fixed upon the ransom – the price paid for us

And the One who ransomed us – the One who paid that price

Communion reminds us of our great hope

We know where we are going – our eternal future is assured

We should always keep His imminent return in the front of our mind

Awaiting His return should give us incentive for holy living

And obedience to His commandments

Jesus died that we might overcome sin and live for God

Finally - Remembering His death is more than taking elements

Receiving communion is rejoicing in our salvation

It is looking our unworthiness right in the face

While rejoicing in our righteousness

Sin had left a crimson stain; He washed it white as snow

It is a reminder of His holiness

It is celebrating God's love for us

It is praising God for His great sacrifice

Communion is a prelude to the Wedding Feast of the Lamb

Which we will participate in, in heaven

Communion is for those who have been born again

God has told us that communion is a time for making things right

Between us and God and between us and others

It is a holy undertaking that we do by faith

In communion, we look back

We look back to the cross where Jesus shed His blood for us

In communion we look to the present and rejoice in our salvation

In communion we look forward to His return

When we will be with Him in glory and be like Him

Is that what communion means to you

Has it become just a thing that we do once a month

Or do you prepare spiritually for it

You may not take it seriously but God does

1Cor 11 – But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to Himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep