



**UNDERSTANDING
THE LORD'S SUPPER**

The Art Collector & his son

Years ago, there was a very wealthy man who, who had a devoted young son, & they shared a passion for art collecting. Together they traveled around the world, adding only the finest art treasures to their collection. Priceless works by Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet and many others adorned the walls of the family estate.

When war engulfed the nation the young son left to serve his country. After only a few short weeks, his father received a telegram. His beloved son was missing in action. The art collector anxiously awaited more news, fearing he would never see his son again. Within days, his fears were confirmed. The young man had died while rushing a fellow soldier to a medic.

One day there was a knock at his door. The father was greeted by a soldier with a large package in his hand. He introduced himself to the man by saying, "I was a friend of your son. I was the one he was rescuing when he died. May I come in for a few moments? I have something to show you." As the two began to talk, the soldier told of how the man's son had told everyone of his, not to mention his father's, love of fine art. "I'm an artist," said the soldier, "and I want to give you this." As the old man unwrapped the package, the paper gave way to reveal a portrait of the son.

Though the world would never consider it the work of a genius, the painting featured the young man's face in striking detail. Overcome with emotion, the man thanked the soldier, promising to hang the picture over the fireplace. The following spring, the old man passed away. The art world was in anticipation because the paintings would now be sold at an auction. The day soon arrived and art collectors from around the world gathered to bid on some of the world's most spectacular paintings. The auction began with a painting that was not on any museum's list. It was the painting of the man's son. The auctioneer asked for an opening bid. The room was silent.

"Who will open the bidding with \$100?" he asked. Minutes passed. No one spoke. From the back of the room came, "Who cares about that painting? It's just a picture of his son. Let's forget it and go on to the good stuff." More voices echoed in agreement. "No, we have to sell this one first," replied the auctioneer. "Now, who will take the son?" Finally, a friend of the old man spoke, "Will you take ten dollars for the painting? That's all I have. I knew the boy, so I'd like to have it." "I have ten dollars. Will anyone go higher?" called the auctioneer. After more silence, the auctioneer said, "Going once, going twice. Gone." The gavel fell, cheers filled the room and someone exclaimed, "Now we can get on with it and we can bid on these treasures!" The auctioneer looked at the audience and announced the auction was over. Stunned disbelief quieted the room. Someone spoke up and asked, "What do you mean it's over? What about all of these paintings? There are millions of dollars of art here! I demand that you explain what's going on here!" The auctioneer replied, "It's very simple. According to the will of the father, 'the one who takes the son...gets it all.'"

World Communion Sunday

I heard that story for the first time when I was in college and I was a new Christian.

I will never forget my heart comprehending the gospel through that story.

I will never forget the season of life when I understood for the first time how sacred the Son of God is to God the father. I will never forget how overwhelmed I felt by how much we receive when we experience the grace of God through receiving what his son has done for us.

I will never forget my vow, "I will take the son." And I will never forget how it felt to experience the pleasure of God the father for the way I was beginning to treasure his son.

It's world communion Sunday.

We are going to take a break from our John series today to take a close look at why the entire Christian world will be taking communion today.

Before we experience the Lord's table today, let's be reminded of why we take communion.

I want to give you an acronym to help you prepare yourself both for today and for the future of the days when we will experience the Lord's supper together.

Before we begin I just want to say that it's possible to approach this table with a wrong posture. It's possible to miss the reason why we've gathered. It's possible to miss the beauty of what we've gathered for and it's even possible to bring judgment on ourselves if we just rush to this table without being careful to properly prepare ourselves for the experience.

***1 Corinthians 11:29* "For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."**

I don't know about you but I want no part of judgment. But it's possible to come to this table the wrong way.

But it's also possible to approach this table the right way and experience grace, peace, nourishment and the presence of the God who has promised to give an unbelievable inheritance to those who will esteem and exalt his son Jesus above all else.

Helpful Communion Acronyms



1 - FERN

1 - NERF

I have two props to help you remember how to approach this table every time we gather for communion.

1 - NERF football for those of you who resonate with sports.

1 - FERN plant for those of you who resonate more with plants.

May these acronyms help us always in understanding the proper way to experience the Lord's Supper.

1 – One body

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

The first thing that we are to remember whenever we approach this table is that we all share in 1 loaf.

The first part of our acronym is actually a number 1. This is because there is only 1 communion loaf of bread that the entire body of Christ eats from.

I love going to the Beehive Café here in Albany. I love their bread. It's communal bread. They put down 1 loaf. Everyone at the table shares it. Everyone puts their hands on it to saw off their little piece.



MMPC is a family. There is no room in our fellowship for grudges, anger, hostility, unresolved conflict. We are all a part of one body. This table represents the fact that we are a family. It grieves the heart of God when we come to this table holding grudges against other Christians.

Today we have family all over the world that will eat from 1 loaf and drink from 1 cup. We all share in one loaf.

I love my two brothers. One of them is here. They are sacred to me. One of the saddest moments of my life was the only time my older brother hit me in the face. He swung and hit me in the jaw in our varsity football locker room and it hurt, both physically and emotionally.

When my kids fight at home, sad and irritated emotion races through me. I'm grieved because I want them to share and love each other. God is no different. He sees us as family and wants us to resolve our conflicts and realize that we all eat from one loaf. He doesn't assume we will never have conflict. He does assume we will come to this table and remember apologies that need to be made within the body of Christ.

After my brother hit me he within minutes he found me in the hallway of my school. And he was weeping. He hugged me and told me he loved me. And it was over. We were reconciled and restored. We started eating from the same loaf again.

Part of the communion experience is to always remember that there is only one loaf and we all eat from it.

N – Nourishment

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”

John 6:53-58

The N in NERF or FERN stands for NOURISHMENT

The two best meals I have ever had involved pizza. I once ate the best pizza Rome had to offer and it was amazing. I had to wait two hours to get it but to me it was worth the wait. To Jennifer it was not worth the wait. She ordered the four cheese pizza which meant she got pungent cheese but I ordered a standard Diavolo. Pepperoni. It was incredible. I tried to share it with Jenn but she didn't want any so I reluctantly ate the entire thing.



I also love George Harvick's tenderloin. It's pretty incredible too.

Food nourishes us. It makes us satisfied for a half to a third of a day. It calms us. It makes us smile. It brings temporary joy.

Jesus once said, “my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.” Jesus is essentially saying, “I am to be your nourishment. Me. I am the meal. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”

If you're like me, whenever you leave church you are prone to feast on things. You chase money, cars, things for your house, toys, vacations, a bigger house, a promotion and like those art collectors in my opening story you and I are prone to make our lives about the expensive art. The communion table reminds us that all we need is Jesus and what he did on the cross. Jesus is the meal. He does for our soul what food does for our stomachs. The communion table is a chance to tell Jesus, “you are my nourishment & I'm sorry I have feasted on other things.”

E – Examination

“Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.”

1 Corinthians 11:28-29

The E in our 1-NERF or 1-FERN acronym stands for Examination.

Corrie, my two year old loves to give me check ups. She loves to play doctor. She puts on her white Doc McStuffins coat and gets out her doctor toys and gives me an examination. I don't like going to see actual doctors because it usually means something is wrong. I love it though when Corrie gives me an examination.



I know some of you don't like going to doctors. You like to tough it out. You don't think you need to go get annual checkup or go to the doctor when you are sick.

But Paul says here in Corinthians, “there's no such thing as a Christian who doesn't think they are in need of a routine and regular examination.”

You don't come to the communion table assuming you aren't sick. We all come to this table beggars. We come and let the gaze of our great doctor, the Lord Jesus, look right inside our hearts. We are to let him take our blood pressure. We are to let him use his stethoscope. We are to let him check our ears. We are to open up and say, “ahhh.”

The communion table is a chance for Jesus to put on his doctor coat and it's a chance for you to say to him, “Lord, please tell me where I'm wrong. Examine me. Show me what I need to repent of.”

Paul says you don't come to this table without examining yourself.

If you will do this, you will find that Jesus is a good doctor and that he's ready to show you grace for the ways that you have fallen short.

R – Remember

“on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 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.”** In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, **“This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

A little boy once had a homework assignment. His assignment was to interview someone who had fought in a war. He chose his grandfather. His grandfather fought in World War 2 and he never talked about the war but he agreed to do so because he loved his grandson. They set up a video camera and prepared for the interview. They turned on the camera and the little boy asked his granddad, “grandfather, tell me what it was like.” And there was silence. The grand father couldn’t open his mouth. Tears welled up in his eyes. More silence. And finally the little boy said, “grandfather, can’t you remember what the war was like?” And the grandfather replied, “do I remember? Yes, I remember. You never forget watching your friends die.”



The communion table is a place where we remember Jesus. It’s a place where we remember the nails he took and that they spit on our Jesus. It’s a place where we remember that he was mocked, flogged, insulted, slapped, and stripped naked and hoisted up on a cross for all to see, including his mother. It’s a table that is to remind us of a crown of thorns. Today I brought one of my favorite props, a crown of thorns from Israel. I smuggled these home so I could always remember my trip to Israel and so that I would be reminded more frequently of what he did for you and me on the night he was betrayed.

Communion is like Memorial Day. Americans do a decent job of never forgetting the soldiers that laid down their life for our freedom in the wars of our history. Communion is a day to remember God’s fallen soldier. The ultimate soldier. Who laid down his life for the glory of his father and for you and me and those that he loved.

Has anyone here ever renewed their wedding vows? Slip up your hand. When a couple renews their wedding vows they are basically saying, “I haven’t forgotten my vow. I still love you. I’m glad I married you. That was a wise decision. And I’m just as committed to you today as I was in the beginning.” Communion is a chance to tell Jesus, “I remember my vow. I remember that I trusted you for my salvation. I remember what you did to make our union possible. I will never forget who you are, what you’ve done and that I belong to you and have pledged my life to following you.”

Jesus was a human being as well as God. I'm touched that he asked us to remember what he was about to go through. To me it's a humble request. "Don't forget. I'm going to go through with this & I know you guys aren't ready to stand with me but can I ask you to at least remember it forever once I finish.

I have a friend that when he was little loved nickels. And his older brothers would take advantage of him on occasion. They would say, "Chris, how about I give you three nickels for your quarter? You love nickels right? And how about you give us your dollar and we will give you 5 nickels." And he would agree.

Jesus is basically going to make that kind of arrangement with you. "How about I forget about your sin whenever you ask me and I won't remember it but can I ask you to remember what I've done in return?

That's quite an uneven arrangement.

Never forget that Jesus hasn't asked us to be perfect but he has asked us to perpetually remember and never forget what he went through to save us and perpetually forgive and forget our sin.

F - Future

And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

Luke 22:15-18

My older brother was a soldier. And he did a couple of tours in Iraq. I will never



forget when he left for the desert when the fighting was testy. We all gathered around Keith to pray for him at Fort hood. My dad grabbed him and exhorted him to make sure his heart was right with Christ. And then he said, “We aren’t going to eat at Enchiladas Y Mas until you come home and we can all go together.” That was our favorite restaurant. And it was a small but

special family sacrifice. If Keith couldn’t eat it, then none of us would eat it.

A good captain eats after all his troops have eaten. I love it when important people eat last. When everyone else has been served their plate. Jesus is that kind of a general. I think Jesus is marinating a meal as we speak. And preparing a table. I think special engraved placemats are being made. I think special tables are being crafted by the worlds greatest carpenter. I think epic water is being made into wine that is going to taste really, really old. I think new recipes are being used. I think special music is being rehearsed. I think outfits are being tailored. I think awards are being designed. I think the guest list is ever expanding. And I think Jesus is waiting for his father to say, “go get them son.”

The best wedding story I have ever heard was told by a pastor named Mark Brewer. He was doing a wedding for a soldier who was late for his wedding. So late that almost cancelled the wedding. The soldier hadn’t seen his wife to be in 9 months. And when the doors flung open, this soldier lost it. And he turned to the minister, saluted him, and said, “sir, I’m requesting permission to go and get my wife.” And the minister said, “how could I say no?” So I said, “go get her!” And so the soldier ran to her, picked her up and carried her to the altar and they were married.

Friends that is a picture of the communion table. I think Jesus is the player on the football team that stands right by the coach and is ready to race into the game whenever his name is called. The Bible says no one knows the day or the hour that the son will come except the father. But let’s make no mistake about it, Jesus will one day race to get us.

The communion table gives us hope. It reminds us that our future is secure. It reminds us that of what our retirement plans really are. It reminds us that the high king of heaven is waiting to eat. Waiting until all of his sit at his table before he can truly celebrate the fruit of what he has done.

1 NERF & 1 FERN

1 - The communion table reminds us that we are all a family and eat from 1 loaf.

Nourishment – The communion table reminds us that Jesus is the only meal that truly nourishes us.

Examination – The communion table is a place where we experience an examination.

Remember – The communion table is a place where we remember what Jesus has done for us. It's a place where we renew the covenant vow we made with him.

Future – The communion table reminds us that have an epic future to look forward to and that our general is waiting for us to get there before the heavenly feast can begin.

The entire body of Christ is taking communion today. Let's join our brothers and sisters around the world now and remember the body of Christ, broken for us, and the blood of Christ shed for us.