



Christmas Service - December 20, 2020

Part 1 - Christmas Story

Luke 2 - English Standard Version - The Birth of Jesus Christ

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when ^{lat} Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for

them in the inn. ⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” ¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Part 2 – Bridge to Communion

The Christmas Story has always brought such joy to me because it is His Story! The Greatest Story Ever Told! The Christmas Story is His Story and it is His Story that becomes our own when we receive this Gift from Heaven's Throne. Without His story, we would all be Lost and ultimately without Hope. Every Story has a beginning and every story has an ending. The Story of Christ begins in a manger but it ends at a borrowed tomb; so they thought. The word "end" in the previous sentence is really more of a relative term because you see Christ's story didn't end in the Grave but rather it was just getting started. My Bible tells me that after Jesus rose from the Grave, Ascended to the Right Hand of our Heavenly Father, and Ever Lives to make Intercession for you and I.

Jesus prepared a Table of Communion for us through the offering of His Body and His Blood upon the Altar of Mount Calvary. When Hell thought it had won, when demonic powers in the earth threw a party and even Satan himself thought that he had conquered this Son of Man; they failed to comprehend that this Son of Man was also the Son of God. And He arose on that Third Day with ALL Power, ALL Dominion, and ALL Authority in His Hand. And it was through His Death, Burial and Resurrection that we gain access to have sweet communion with our Heavenly Father.

And it is the Table of Communion that reminds us all today that there was a price to be paid for us to set at the Table and that the One with whom we sup with is the God Almighty; the God of All Creation. And on the night that Jesus was betrayed by Judas, the Gospel of Saint Luke chapter 22 records the Institution of the Lord's Supper. Notice with me this chapter beginning in verse 14...

Part 3 – Communion Text and Instruction

“¹⁴ And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you I will not eat it^{ld} until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.” ²¹ But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. ²² For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!” ²³ And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

On the night that Jesus was betrayed, He took Bread and the Fruit of the Vine and shared it with His Disciples with clear instructions on the necessity and benefit of Communion. Jesus, by instituting Communion during the Passover Feast with His Disciples, gave us all clarity and understanding with what He was seeking to reveal to us in the Gospel of Saint John 6:47-51; notice the text with me...

Gospel of Saint John 6:47-51 - ⁴⁷Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

And as Partakers of Jesus Christ through Communion and Faith in His finished work upon the Cross, we are called the children of God. As Jesus said, The Bread that comes down from Heaven gives us Life Eternal and Restoration of Fellowship with our Heavenly Father. For Jesus truly is the author and the finisher of our Faith!

So please prepare your hearts today to partake of the Bread and the Cup by taking a moment to reflect and search your heart to see if there be any bitterness or unforgiveness and choose to let go of those things in so that you may have a pure conscience before partaking in this Holy Sacrament.

For what you are about to partake of is not just bread and juice but rather it symbolizes the very body that was broken and very blood of Christ that was shed. So let us not take this moment lightly nor disregard the holiness of the practice of communion in this moment; let us all take a moment and search our hearts. (Take just a moment and pause)

Please take your communion cup and remove the Bread from the wrapping and allow me to pray before partaking...

Please take your communion cup and remove the wrapping to expose the juice and allow me to pray before partaking...