

Dinner With Jesus
A Meal to Remember
April 10, 2022

Good morning everyone!

This is week six of our series *Dinner With Jesus* – just one more week to go after this today.

And the reason we're doing this series is because one of the most unexpected and unusual "features" of Jesus' ministry during the three-and-a-half years he and his disciples traveled throughout the land of Palestine ...

... was, quite literally, *dinner* ...

... or I should say *din-ners* with, quite literally, anyone who would invite Jesus to come and eat!

And the reason why this is so noteworthy is because people of Jesus' day – particularly the

religious leaders ...

People of Jesus' day expected the "Son of Man" (or the Messiah – the one who would rescue Israel from captivity and bring in the Kingdom of God on Earth) ...

People of Jesus' day expected the Son of Man to come with fire and brimstone and judgment upon those who wouldn't get with the program ...

... which would have included "tax collectors, prostitutes and other notorious sinners."

But Jesus *did not* bring fire, brimstone, and judgment.

Instead, he ate and drank with those "tax collectors, prostitutes and other notorious sinners."

And so much so that he earned the dubious

title of ...

A glutton and a drunkard – a friend of “tax collectors and sinners.” Luke 7:34 (NIV)

And for the past month or so we’ve been looking closely at the eyewitness accounts of some of these “dinners with sinners” as well as dinners with the religious leaders.

And through these experiences – what was said and done around the table – we’ve been able to learn a lot about who Jesus is and what he does and doesn’t value, which is why this is such a great approach.

So, if you’ve missed any of the messages in this series, I encourage you to go to the media section of our app and website where you can watch, listen to, and even read the message transcript.

Now, today we're going to look at yet another dinner with Jesus, but this one is not a "dinner with sinners" nor is it a dinner with the leadership crowd.

Instead, this is a dinner just between Jesus and his inner circle – the 12 men who he had specifically chosen to follow him.

And what's significant about this dinner is that what happened between Jesus and those men around that table has had a *direct* and *major* impact on most everyone in this room and watching online.

But not just *us*.

What happened at this particular dinner has had a direct and major impact on all forms of Christianity.

I'm talking everything from ...

- Roman Catholicism
- To Greek Orthodoxy
- To the Lutheran Church
- To the Presbyterian Church
- To the Methodists and the Baptists, and the Pentecostals
- And everything in between
- Even the more cultic forms of Christianity.

What happened at this particular dinner has directly impacted Christians of all stripes all over the world for over 2,000 years.

Unfortunately, it's also *confused* Christians of all stripes all over the world over 2,000 years –

maybe even some of us.

And if that's true for you, hopefully, what we discover today will clear up at least some of that confusion.

So, let's get into it.

Supper Time

Jesus and his entourage are on their way towards Jerusalem because the annual celebration of Passover is only days away.

Passover, for those who may not be aware, is the remembrance of how God miraculously delivered the people of Israel from centuries of slavery in Egypt under the leadership of Moses.

On the night of their escape, each family had killed a lamb and sprinkled its blood on their doorposts so that the angel of death would "pass

over” their house and spare the firstborn son.

That’s why it was called Passover.

Anyway ... Jesus has told His disciples that they are going to Jerusalem for the occasion but, for them, it will *not* be a time of celebration.

Instead, He tells them, the Jewish and Roman authorities will conspire together ... and He will be crucified.

And even though it’s the third time He’s said this, the disciples just don’t get it – so much so that Peter insists that he and the others will never allow such a thing to happen.

After all (in their thinking) how can the Son of Man – the Messiah of Israel – be killed?

So, as Jesus comes over the hill into Jerusalem, riding on the back of a colt (which is an image straight out of the Messianic prophecy of

Zechariah) ...

... and as He is greeted by a multitude shouting “Hosanna, to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” (which is also a prophetic allusion to the advent of the Messiah) ...

... the disciples breathe a collective sigh of relief.

“Maybe Jesus was just having a bad day back there,” they think, “because, with all this support, it sure doesn’t *seem* like anything bad is going to happen.”

For the next five days, Jesus and his disciples are in and around Jerusalem, in and out of the Temple.

Sharp words are exchanged with the religious leaders and tension is clearly rising but Jesus appears to be winning because each day large crowds gather and express their delight as He

publicly calls out their hypocrisy.

So, as the sun sets on the first night of Passover and Jesus and His disciples gather in a special room that has been reserved for the meal, the disciples are confident.

“Everything is going according to plan,” they tell themselves. “Very soon Jesus (and, by association, they, too) will assume power.”

Luke writes that ...

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table.

And, by the way, this is the eighth time in Luke’s gospel where Jesus is reclining at a table (which, remember, is how they would do meals back then).

He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you,

I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

Luke 22:14-16 (NIV)

... a statement which, again, would have bewildered the disciples because, remember, in their minds Jesus was going to *win not suffer and die*.

So, the meal begins.

And, at first, it goes along just like any other Passover meal.

After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you.”

... which is what the host would typically do.

But then Jesus says something strange.

“For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine

until the kingdom of God comes.”
Luke 22:17-18 (NIV)

So, he himself is not going to drink from the cup.
Only they are.

That's weird.

But it gets even weirder.

He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

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.”
Luke 22:19-20 (NIV)

Now, if you've been in church for any length of time, or at least aware of what goes on in churches, those two statements of Jesus are not

strange to you.

You're familiar with them. You're used to hearing them said whenever communion is observed.

But to the 12 gathered around that table that evening, those statements would have been as shocking and confusing as Jesus' prediction of his death ...

... because what Jesus is doing in that moment is redefining the meaning of the Passover.

For them (and for those who follow in their footsteps) no longer will it be a remembrance of Moses and what God did through him centuries before.

Instead, it will be about Jesus because *He* himself is about to become the ultimate Passover lamb.

His body, not the body of an animal, would be broken so they could be freed not from the evil of *Rome* but from the evil of *sin* which had ruined not just their nation but the entire cosmos.

And the old way of relating to God – the old covenant – was about to be replaced by a new way – a new covenant – made possible by the blood he was about to shed on a Roman cross.

And this covenant would not be solely between God and a particular nation, as was the case with Israel. This was the big one. The final one. The everlasting one foretold by the prophets.

This would be a covenant between God and the whole human race.ⁱ

And under this new covenant ...

- There would be no requirement to live a perfect life in order to get into God's good

graces. Jesus had already done that.

- And there would be no requirement to make atonement for our sins – to somehow work off our debt to God for our disobedience and failure. Jesus was about to do that on the cross.

The only requirement would be to believe in Him and what He did.

As the Apostle Paul would later put it:

If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10: 9 (NIV)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith. And this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2: 8-9 (NIV)

The Confusion

Now, there's more to the story of what happens at this dinner, and we'll get to it in just a bit.

But I want to push pause and talk for a while about the confusion which has arisen from what seems to be a relatively simple request from Jesus:

“Do this – eat the bread and drink the cup – in remembrance of me. Just get together every so often, share this meal and remember what I've done for you.”

So how did *that* – meaning what Christians call “communion” or “the Lord's Supper” ...

How did *that* become something so complex, so ceremonial and, to some of us, even a little *scary*?

How did *that* become something that those who were there that evening would hardly even recognize?

I mean, as you can see, we're going to "do communion" today as part of this service. But if you look at the setup we have, it's nothing like what they experienced.

Furthermore – and maybe more importantly ...

For many of us, what's in our heads about what we're going to do at that part of the service bears little resemblance to what Jesus was talking about on that night with his disciples!

How did that happen? How did things get so confused?

Well, as happens with most movements that grow and develop (like Christianity did), over time, things become institutionalized.

And policies and procedures are developed to make sure that things are done as they should be done by people who are qualified to do them.

And that's what happened to Jesus' simple request.

And, as a result ...

What was meant to be “a meal to remember” slowly migrated from a table to an altar ... from a simple dinner to a sacrament that eventually became known as *The Eucharist* – a “priestly offering” of Jesus' body and blood.

And over time, the idea that ordinary people should be able to take part in it became less important than whether or not it was implemented correctly by the priest. ⁱⁱ

Now, when the reformers like Luther and Calvin came along in the 15th century, they said, “we've got to fix this.”

Unfortunately, in spite of their efforts, their differences in understanding and implementation produced *even more* confusion ...

... to the point where today, if you're a Christian and you go to a service at another church and they are having communion, you probably wonder, "should I or shouldn't I?"

And if you're *not* a Christian and you've been to different churches and observed the differences in how communion is handled, you probably think "these people *really are* confused about this."

So, what I want to do for the next few minutes is to address the three biggest questions about communion.

1. What is actually happening in communion?
2. Who can receive communion? Who's

eligible?

3. What about taking communion in “an unworthy manner” (which is a warning that some churches will give before inviting people to the table)?

So, let's get into it.

What & Who

And let's begin with the first question. *What actually happens during communion?*

It depends on who you ask!

At one end of the spectrum is the Catholic Church's doctrine of *transubstantiation* ...

... the idea that during the Mass, the elements of the Eucharist (bread and wine) are literally transformed into the actual body and blood of Jesus.

It might *look like* bread and wine, but they are no longer those things in their “real substance.”

In reality, they are now Jesus’ body and blood and when you eat and drink them, you are eating and drinking grace into your soul.

That’s why this is called “the sacramental view” of communion. It’s a means of grace.

At the other end of the spectrum are those who would say that nothing mystical or supernatural happens with the elements of communion and receiving those elements doesn’t impart grace to you.

Instead, communion is *memorialization* ...

... an important act of obedience in response to what Jesus told his disciples to do: *remember Me when you do this.*

As Paul put it to a group of first-century Christians in the city of Corinth ...

Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

*1 Corinthians 11:23-26
(NIV)*

That's what's happening. It's a testimony and remembrance.

As to who can receive communion, there are actually only two basic positions but with dozens of nuances within those two positions so that, again, there is a wide variety of practices among churches and Christians.

The two positions can be described as *closed* communion or *open* communion.

Closed communion limits who can participate in communion based on various types of qualifications that that particular church or denomination has set up.

- It might be that you have to be a formal member of the church.
- You might have had to sign a statement saying you agree with the doctrine and teaching of that church.
- You might have to have been baptized in a similar type of church or maybe even in *that* church before you can receive communion.
- It might even require meeting with an elder of the church beforehand to prove that you are living a life worthy of receiving communion.ⁱⁱⁱ

Open communion, according to some, means that there are no qualifications on who may participate as long as the one receiving the communion is a believer.

However, since *that* – being a believer – is in

itself a qualification ...

True open communion also allows even those who have not yet received Christ to participate.

Now, before I get to the third question of what it means to receive communion in an “unworthy manner,” I want to give you my own opinion on these first two issues.

But before I give you my opinion on these issues, I want to give you my opinion *about my opinion* ... which is by far more important than my opinion on the issues.

I think you get what I mean.

My opinion about my opinion is that it is foolish for me to be dogmatic about my opinion on these issues.

As Paul once put it to a young pastor ...

Don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. 2 Timothy 2:23-24 (NLT)

I know what I believe and why, but honestly, there's just not a whole lot to go on in the New Testament concerning communion. That's why there are so many diverse opinions!

1. There's the account of the Last Supper in the Gospels in which Jesus tells his disciples to remember Him through the bread and wine.
2. And there's Paul's commentary on communion to the first-century church at Corinth.
3. And then there's this odd statement in the

Gospel of John where Jesus, after his miraculous feeding of 5,000 men plus women and children says ...

“Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” John 6:53 (NIV)

Some people, theologians through the centuries, are convinced that it is meant to be taken literally and others think it is meant to be taken symbolically.

Unfortunately, for us, Jesus didn't make it clear how *he* meant for it to be taken.

And then, as I said earlier, there's the fact that in the first few centuries of Christianity, communion was not anything like the brief ceremony we experience in almost every Christian church all over the world these days.

In those days, communion was part of an entire meal where the whole church came together for fellowship and prayer and testimonies.

Unfortunately, many congregations did not do well with this practice and, eventually (by the middle of the fourth century), the leadership of the church at large decided to give it up altogether and opted for the ceremonial approach that we use today.

Point being ... that what churches do today (and have been doing for the last 400 years) is nothing like what they did in the early church ...

... so, for anyone, including me, to be dogmatic that “we’re doing it the right way, the biblical way” ...

... well, that’s skating on thin ice and it’s foolish.

Now, as to *what I personally believe* about these

issues (and because I'm not going to be dogmatic, you can feel free to disagree with me on this) ...

When it comes to what actually happens in communion:

1. I don't believe that the bread and juice we will offer at the end of this service will turn into Jesus' literal body and blood.

I think when Jesus was talking about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, it had nothing whatsoever to do with communion because it hadn't even been instituted at that point.

Instead, I think Jesus was talking about finding life in him – which is literally what he says right beforehand.

But that's a discussion for another day.

2. I also don't believe that communion infuses our souls with grace.

The Apostles are clear that grace comes to us when we put your faith in Jesus – not when we receive communion or get baptized or do some kind of “sacramental activity.”

All of that said, I do believe that Jesus meets us in a special way in communion.

I think something happens spiritually where His Spirit encourages the new spiritual nature that we receive when we become believers.

As to open vs. closed communion, I’ll just throw this out here, and I know some people are not comfortable with this ...

3. I believe wholeheartedly in the broadest, most liberal definition of open communion (that “whosoever will may come” as the Bible puts it).

And I believe that for several reasons:

1. Paul in his instructions to the Corinthians about how they're doing communion does not explicitly limit who can participate in communion.

And yet, it's clear from his letter that he's aware that people who are not Christians are present in their meetings.

2. On the night Jesus instituted what we call communion, who was with him? His disciples – believers.

But who else was with him? *Judas*, who obviously did not believe.

And yet, Jesus made a strong point of offering him the meal, as well.

3. Finally, what was one of the main criticisms of Jesus from the religious establishment? It's been talked about in every message of this series.

It was “this guy *says* he’s a prophet from God and yet he eats with tax collectors and prostitutes and other notorious sinners.”

So, it’s hard for me to imagine Jesus excluding those same folks from a meal that symbolized what he was doing for them on the cross, even if they didn’t fully understand it or believe it.

Now, again, even though this is what I believe – I believe in the widest version of open communion ...

... and I have been given freedom by our pastors and Advisory Council to lead our “communions” in line with that belief ...

- I understand why many people see this differently.

- And I respect that.
- And I don't feel the need to be dogmatic with anyone about it.

However, where I *will* become dogmatic (if necessary) is on the question of what it means to take communion in an unworthy manner.

That's because ...

4. I believe that the understanding that most Christians have concerning the issue of “worthiness” is *completely and utterly wrong* ...

... because it is totally out of sync with the message of grace.

And that misunderstanding causes communion to have the exact opposite effect that it's designed to have.

- Instead of drawing us to God, it pushes us

away from God.

- It makes us fearful that we're going to get in trouble, or some bad thing is going to happen to us or those we love.

Worthy vs. Unworthy

So, where does this misunderstanding come from?

It comes from something Paul wrote to that group of first-century Christians in Corinth where he actually *does* give a very strong warning against taking communion “in an unworthy manner.”

If you've been in church for any length of time, I'm sure you've read or heard this at some point.

Paul writes:

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.

[Therefore] everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 1 Corinthians 11:27-28 (NIV)

For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.

That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 1 Corinthians 11:29-30 (NIV)

Apparently, according to Paul, God was judging this church severely because of how they were doing communion. People in this congregation were actually getting sick and dying!

... which, of course, if you're a serious Christian makes you think, "oh my gosh, before I take communion in my church, I'd better do what Paul says in verse 28. I'd better examine how I'm living!"

"I'd better think of all the ways in which I am sinning before I take communion. And I'd better not leave anything out because if I get this wrong, God is going to do something bad in my life."

And so, what happens for a lot of people is they sit there at the time of communion, and they make a mental list of all their sins.

And then they evaluate.

- They think "OK, good, the list isn't too long or too bad, so I am worthy this time" and they decide to participate in communion.

- Or, they think, “there’s *no way* I am going anywhere near that table because my list and my life is pretty messed up. *I’m not worthy right now* so, I think I’ll take a pass today.”

And, as I said before, that kind of thinking is completely and utterly wrong for two reasons.

- One, as I said, it’s completely out of sync with what grace is all about.
- Two, it’s not what Paul was intending to communicate at all in this letter.

If you read what Paul writes here, in this warning, *in context* – looking at what comes before he made that statement and what comes after it ...

It’s clear that making a list of sins to be evaluated and/or confessed before taking

communion isn't what he's talking about.

Not that it's a bad thing to do.

If thinking about your sins helps you to remember what Jesus has done for you and to appreciate what he has done, that's fine.

But it's not a prerequisite for receiving communion.

The issue for Paul – the issue that was bringing God's judgment – was the hypocritical way people in that church were acting ... but not in the way you might think.

They weren't hypocritical because they were still sinning in some way. That's just part of life as follower of Jesus.

Until the day we die, or the day Jesus comes back, we're going to fall short of God's glory. We're going to sin.

Instead, they were hypocrites because of how they were treating one another.

Right before Paul pens this scary statement, he basically blasts the congregation specifically for that reason.

Check out what he wrote.

In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good.

*In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. 1 Corinthians
11:17-18 (NIV)*

Whatever the unworthy manner is, it has something to do with divisions and with their meetings.

Apparently, there were some pretty well-off

people in that church who were going around saying “God’s blessing me more than you because he is more pleased with my life than He is with yours.”

Now, keep that idea of divisions and that attitude of “I’m better than you” in mind ...

... as Paul continues:

When you come together, it is not the Lord’s Supper you eat.

No, what you’re doing has nothing to do with Him.

For when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers.

As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk.

1 Corinthians 11:20-21 (NIV)

Now, to understand what Paul is upset about, you have to know that communion in those days was still be observed as part of a full meal together.

In other words, there was a potluck dinner for the whole church and then they did communion.

But the well-off people weren't sharing their meals.

Instead, they were gorging themselves – even getting drunk – while other Christians in the same building, at the same meeting at the same table were going hungry!

And Paul lays it on them:

Don't you have homes to eat and drink in?

You want to pig out and ignore the needs of others? Stay home! Don't bring that into the

church!

*Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those among you who have nothing?
1 Corinthians 11:22 (NIV)*

And that underlined phrase – despising the church of God – that’s the issue. That’s what Paul is warning about. That’s what it means to “do communion” in an unworthy manner.

They were engaging in a holy moment and acting like “this is so wonderful” ...

- At the same time as they were divided from others in the church
- At the same time as they arrogantly thought more highly of themselves than others
- At the same time as they neglected the less fortunate brother or sister right next to

them.

So, Paul warned them: “you’d better think about all of that before you come to the table ...”

For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. 1 Corinthians 11:29 (NIV)

In other words, “those who don’t understand the connection between the Lord’s Body *at the communion table* and the Lord’s Body *sitting around us*” ...

Remember, the church – specifically, the people of the church – is also the Body of Christ!

“Those who don’t understand the connection between the Lord’s Body at the communion table and the Lord’s Body sitting around us,

standing in front of us, living with us, doing ministry with us ...”

“Those who don’t understand that connection and think that it’s ok to honor one but not the other,” Paul is saying, “those are the ones who have something to fear when it comes to communion.”

“God does not take lightly the mistreatment and dishonoring of our brothers and sisters in Jesus.”

And that’s a radically different understanding than most Christians have about communion.

Most of us have been taught to think of it as being a “holy moment between me and Jesus.”

And it is. I don’t want to minimize that.

But it’s more than that, much more than that.

Communion is a holy moment between us and all the other believers around us – the church, the body of Christ.

We are communing with them and in communion with them as much as we are with Jesus.

The Rest of The Story

... which is actually the point of the rest of that dinner with Jesus on the night He was betrayed.

Remember, he gets them all together and then throws a huge spiritual curveball – redefining and redirecting the focus of the Passover onto himself.

And he announces that the long-promised new covenant of grace that includes even those outside of Israel is about to begin through his impending death.

I mean, it's a take-your-breath-away kind of moment if there ever was one ... which makes what comes next almost comical if it wasn't so sad and messed-up.

Luke writes that ...

A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Luke 22:24 (NIV)

Now, think about that.

Jesus has just told them He is going to die for their sins and the sins of the whole world, and they're arguing about ...

- Who is going to be chief of staff ...
- Who is going to be in charge
- Who is going to get to call the shots.

... after He is gone!

Can you imagine that?

It's as tacky as tackiness can be. It's as insensitive as insensitivity can be.

By the way, this is one of the reasons we can trust what we're reading in the Gospel writings.

There's no sugarcoating of the guys who turn out to be the leaders. If these guys had made up the whole thing, they would have never invented a story like this!

Anyway ... instead of re-explaining the new meaning of the Passover, Jesus jumps into their discussion because He knows that after He is gone, they *will be* in charge of carrying out the mission of His movement.

So, He says to them ...

“The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors.”

And in that world, a “benefactor” was someone who did something good or gave money because it meant that everyone now owes them, which is what gave them authority.

“But,” Jesus says ...

*“You are not to be like that.”
Luke 22:25 (NIV)*

“Having authority and being in the position of benefactor doesn’t give you the right to lord it over people.”

“Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest ...

Like a child – who, in that world, had no rights or privileges.

*... and the one who rules like the
one who serves.”* Luke
22:26 (NIV)

And then Jesus does something crazy to illustrate his point.

He stands up from the table, goes and gets a basin of water and towel.

And then he gets down on his knees and moves from one man to the next and washes their feet
...

... which was the job of the lowest of the lowest of servants in a household of that day and time.

And then He says to them ...

*“Now that I, your Lord and
Teacher, have washed your feet
...*

“Now that I, your Leader, have shown you the full extent of my love for you by taking on the very nature of a servant ...”^{iv}

“You also should wash one another’s feet.”

“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”

John 13:14-15 (NIV)

You are to serve one another in love. You are to put one another first.

Invitation to Communion

And communion or the Lord’s Supper is the symbolic representation of that.

It’s a holy moment between us and Jesus, for sure.

But it’s also between us and all the other

believers around us who are the church, the body of Christ.

We are communing with them and *in* communion with them as much as we are with Jesus.

And that means we are to serve them and love them as much as we are to serve and love Jesus.

So, this morning, as we take communion together, let's remember Jesus and honor his body that is represented both ...

- By what's on the table – the bread and the juice
- And by those who are gathered around us – those who are part of this church

And as you come to the table, rejoice in the worthiness of Jesus instead of worrying about

your own, because Jesus lived the perfect life you should have lived, and Jesus died the death you should have died.

That's what grace means.

And then ...

- If there is someone here you need to forgive, do it, and you may even say it to them.
- If there is someone here you've hurt or offended, make it right.

And if it is too much to do in the short time we have, make a commitment to God and yourself that you will do it before we gather again as a church.

Maybe even say to the person, "hey we need to talk when this is over."

- If there is someone you're looking down on, repent of that.
- If you are doing something to cause division in this church, make a commitment to stop.

Honor the Body of Christ that that is gathered around you as much as you honor the Lord who gave his body and blood for you. That's the point.

Now, as you can see, our band is in place.

And as they do this next song, take a minute to reflect on what you've heard and then, talk with someone if you need to, make whatever commitments you need to so that you are not "despising the church of God" ...

And then come rejoicing in the graciousness of

God and receive communion.

When we're done with that, we'll stand and sing together.

And I'll come back for a few final comments and then our service will be done.

Lord, we give you this time to do in us individually and collectively what you will.

Amen.

Endnotes

ⁱ Stanley, Andy. *Irresistible: Reclaiming the New that Jesus Unleashed for the World* (p. 85). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

ⁱⁱ Great observation from Milford Presbyterian (Milford, CT) message on this passage.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://historylinksdornoch.wordpress.com/2019/10/16/communion-tokens-what-are-they-and-how-were-they-used/>

^{iv} Phil 2:7