

Connecting With God – Through Holy Communion

Reading: Luke 22:14-20

It is unlikely that we will ever find our participation in Holy Communion meaningful unless we prepare ourselves according to God's invitation and command.

I. Holy Communion is a spiritual feast of God's Kingdom.

(Jesus) *"I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on **until** that day when I drink it **anew** with you **in my Father's kingdom**"*
Matt. 26:29. NIV

Jesus gave the disciples;

1. A Promise - to return and eat with them.

2. A New Context - *"in my Father's kingdom"*.

(Easter Sunday) *"When he was at table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him."* Lk. 24: 30 - 31.

3. A Cause for Rejoicing – they (we) can now be citizens of God's Kingdom.

Further Study. What do the following verses tell you about the Kingdom of God?

Mark 1:15; 4:11 & 26 - 32; 9:47; 10:14 -15,23; 12:34; John 3:3; 18:36;
Acts 1:3; 14:22; Romans 14:17; 1Corinthians 6:9 -10; 15:24 & 50; 2
Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 12:28; James 2:5

II. The Invitation (from 1662 Anglican Prayer Book)

*'Ye who do truly and **earnestly repent** of your sins and are in **love and charity** with your neighbours and **intend to lead a new life**, following the commandments of God and walking from henceforth in his Holy way, draw near with faith and take this Holy Sacrament to your comfort and make your humble confession to Almighty God.'*

1. Repentance – Concerns our past.

Repentance is the key, which unlocks the door of God's Kingdom.

*"The time has come" he (Jesus) said, "The kingdom of God is near. **Repent** and believe the good news!"* Mark 1:15.

The Gospel is - *'God's expected revelation through Jesus Christ that he is the ruler of creation and that he wants to rule through us.'*

Q. Do you agree that - 'every sin in your life is the consequence of 'self-rule' i.e. taking charge rather than putting God in charge? Why is repentance more than just being sorry for our sin?

(David) *"For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight."*
Ps 51:3 - 4

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." Ps 51:10

2. Love and Charity - concerns our present.

The invitation asks us the question about our relationships; *'are we in love and charity with our neighbour'?*

Jesus defined our neighbour as anyone who needs our help or forgiveness. (Story of the Good Samaritan).

(Jesus) *"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you; leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."* Matt. 5:23 -25.

We demonstrate love through acts of charity.

3. Righteous Living – deals with the future.

Do you *"**intend** to lead a **new life** following the Commandments of God, walking henceforth in His holy ways?"*

Communion asks us to declare our **intention**. Do we *"**intend to lead a new life**, following the commandments of God and walking from henceforth in his Holy way"?*

God takes our right intentions and gives us what we need to follow them through. In the Old Testament God promises Israel a 'new Covenant' and a 'new heart' – fulfilled ultimately in Christ and the New Covenant.

(God) *"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a **new thing!** Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"* (Isaiah 43:18-19)

*"I will give you a **new heart** and put a new spirit within you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."* (Ezekiel 36:26)

Q. Are you intending to live a 'new life' as you come to Communion today?

What would a 'new God- empowered life' look and feel like for you? See Romans 7:18-25; 8:5-17

Jesus words *"I will not drink ... **until the day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom**"* were a very great comfort to the disciples throughout the hard days ahead of them and these words continue to have the same significance for Jesus' followers today.

The kingdom of God has come and is coming. Nothing will stop it and we are invited to live in it. The Spirit of Christ is here to eat and drink with us **anew**.

Hallelujah!

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for this wonderful invitation to eat and drink with you and all those who, down through the ages, have found the hope that never fades.

We come, not because we are strong but because we are weak; not because any goodness of our own gives us the right to come, but because we need your mercy and help.

We come because we love you a little and want to love you more.

With your help Lord we surrender to your rule and reign in our life. We commit ourselves to be loving and charitable in all our relationships and resolute in our desire to do what our Heavenly Father requires. In your strong redeeming name we pray. Amen.

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