

Rappahannock Christian Church – 6/12/11
Dr. Kenneth Wilbur

Communion Meditation

We commonly refer to this as the *Communion* Table. We have just sung a *Communion* Hymn.

Communion. This is a word we rarely hear outside of church. Perhaps we should stop and ask what we mean by it. Communion comes from the root word, “commune.” It is used in the word “communicate.” Its general meaning is to share something. When we communicate, we share speech, thoughts or ideas. It can even mean to share possessions. To “commune” implies the development of a relationship or fellowship.

We once had an Elder who used to say that this Table is sort of like the cross of Christ. The cross has a vertical beam. Here our thoughts are directed *up* to God and to the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf. The cross also has a horizontal beam; and as we come together here we are energized to *reach out* in fellowship with each other. In all of these ways we come to this Table as a loving Body in Christ.

Let us keep these things in mind as we *commune* here today. Let me read to you from the words that the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 – The Lord Jesus, on the night 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, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

The Promise Is For You

This morning’s Scripture reading comes from Acts 2. It is the description of the events on the Day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:22-39 – “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. David said about him:

“I saw the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.
Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest in hope,
because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
you will not let your holy one see decay.

You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.’

“Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“‘The Lord said to my Lord:
“Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.’”

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Pentecost was a festival, a feast of the Israelites, in Old Testament times. It was a harvest festival, also known as the Feast of Ingathering. It is scheduled to occur at the time of the harvest of the winter wheat in the land of Palestine.

Looking at the word for a moment; the root, “pente,” stands for 5 or - in this case - 50 days. The feast of Pentecost occurs 50 days after the Passover. This is the day on the Christian calendar when the Holy Spirit came down from heaven like tongues of fire and rested on the disciples of Jesus. From that day they were empowered to know and given the courage to do what was necessary for spreading the Gospel.

Peter preached the sermon we have just read. The people who listened were cut to the heart and the Scripture tells us that 3000 souls were saved that day.

This is reminiscent of what Jesus had said earlier as He walked with His disciples through fields of grain at this very same time of year. “The harvest is plentiful,” He said, “but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into

his harvest field.” (Matt. 9:37-38) This is what Peter has done, and a great harvest has been granted.

So this is what happened on this day. On this day, the Holy Spirit impelled the apostles to preach the Living Lord, and when they spoke a miracle happened. In that moment each person was able to hear them in their own tongue. Peter takes advantage of the commotion to preach and teach the people. He says that Jesus was raised up among you, but you crucified Him and put Him in the tomb. But He is raised, and God has made this Jesus both Messiah and Lord.

Convicted, and perhaps horrified and frightened, the people beg to know what they can do. “Repent and be baptized,” Peter says. And then he ends by saying, “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

What happier words were ever spoken!?! There are generations who watched and waited for this day, but now, today, the promise is fulfilled. We have the promise! This is why Jesus came. God saw the plight of humankind that man has sinned. He knew that we are too weak to obey the law or to ever be righteous or without blame. Without God’s grace, without His taking steps on our behalf, we are forever utterly lost and without hope. But God is graceful. He has taken the Step of sending Jesus Christ and now we are called to repentance and to accept His offer of forgiveness.

God has given us the choice to accept or to reject His forgiveness. Brother, Sister, the offer is extended to you. Will you receive it? Don’t put it off. Let today be the day that you receive life through Jesus Christ.

Following the service the Church Family retired to the river to witness and celebrate the baptism of Flannery Pope.