

CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Gospel Shaped Eyes - The Lord's Supper

"If we are not looking at life, at people, with gospel-shaped eyes, we will miss what the gospel wants us to see."

TIM GOMBIS, THE DRAMA OF EPHESIANS

Read Luke 22:14-20

Setting the Scene

Spend a few minutes in silence immersing yourselves in this scene. Imagine you are a disciple at the table with Jesus, hear his words and his sentiment towards you.

Understanding Passover

In order to understand the Lord's Supper we need first to understand what the Passover Meal was all about. In Exodus we read the account of the Israelites release from Egypt – they were liberated and freed from slavery. The Passover Meal was the annual celebration and remembrance of their release. Fast forward to Jesus and the disciples reclining at the table, just days before his crucifixion, amidst a flurry of Passover activity and it is clear that it's no coincidence that events were unfolding at this particular point in time. Israel's liberation from slavery was about to be trumped by liberation from slavery for all humanity.

The disciples and followers of Jesus longed to be liberated from Rome, just as their ancestors longed to be liberated from Egypt and just as we long to be liberated from the powers and principalities which rage around us.

Read Ephesians 6:12

Consider

Where is our society/culture enslaved?

How does the church counteract this enslavement?

Where am I enslaved?

What behaviour do I need to 'turn' from in order to embrace the 'new' life Jesus made way for?

Spiritual Warfare

The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians that God's intention is that through the church his manifold wisdom should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms (Eph 3:10). This manifold wisdom of God confuses the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms because they can't figure out how the power of God can rise and thrive in the hostile environment they spend themselves on orchestrating.

Read Ephesians 4:11-16

How does the church attain the whole measure of the fullness of Christ?
What does it look like for the church to be a cross shaped community?

It was the Apostle Paul who also said, 'for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.' God thwarts the enemy's plans by revealing himself in our weakness; the cross is evidence of this.

Consider

Think of some other biblical examples where this is demonstrated.

Share some personal testimonies from your own lives where God has revealed himself in your weakness.

The forces of evil/cosmic powers which rage in the heavenly realm are hell bent on creating chaos and division. God's remedy to this cosmic chaos is the unified church. Unity is our spiritual warfare.

We can sing as loud as we like, we can gather around this table week after week, we can study the bible but unless we become a community shaped like the cross, abounding in love for one another, the church will lack the power it requires to fight the cosmic powers. However when we become a community committed to and known for reconciliation and restoration, God's manifest presence is made known to the world.

Knowing that unity is absolutely vital to our survival, Jesus urges us to gather around the table in remembrance of him. In doing so we 'remember him' as we practice openness to outsiders, inclusion, servant hood, hospitality, generosity... (and the list goes on).

At Cornerstone we take communion together just about every single week. It is an important part of our practice, a sacred act of remembering Jesus' death and resurrection.

Examine

However take some time to consider whether we have reduced in anyway what Jesus intended when he said 'do this in remembrance of me?' (This question in no way minimizes the preciousness of what we do when we take communion together on a Sunday.)

Final Thoughts

Theologian Joel Green proposes, "Will those who follow Jesus learn to embody the message of his scandalous table practices?"

As disciples of Jesus we should be known for radical openness and inclusion, ask yourself how can I open my life and my table to others?