

# The Lord's Supper

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[ 0 : 00 ] Just bow our heads in prayer for a moment. Father, we like to have you do things in a way that suits us, that deals with our sort of unrecognized emotional neediness and our unrecognized self-centeredness.

And Father, we like it when you act in a way that fits with us and pleases us. But Father, you're God, not us. And so Father, you are a God who bestows grace, that gives grace to sinners and to unredeemed sinners and to redeem sinners.

And you continue to give us grace. And we are here today to be in your presence, to receive grace from your hands. And we ask, Lord, that you grant us open and hungry hearts to receive the grace from you this morning that we desperately need and to respond in a worthy manner.

And Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would help us to do that. And we ask and thank all these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. Hope you don't mind me insulting you that you all, you and I all have unrecognized self-centeredness and neediness.

But there, there you go. I've never been to a mosque. I mean, I've been outside of mosques, but I've never been to a mosque. Never gone inside it for, for one of their prayer services.

[ 1 : 32 ] I've been to a Buddhist wedding ceremony, but that Buddhist wedding ceremony was in a, was in a house, not a Buddhist temple.

I've been to an anthroposophical dedication service in an anthroposophical church. And none of you have heard of anthroposophical, I'm going to get mixed up.

Anyway, most of you have probably never heard of it. But the fact is, I haven't been to most of these places. I sort of know, or I think I know, what Muslims do in terms of the different prayers that they say.

And they might gather for prayers. I don't know if it's one of those things, if I talk to a very devout Muslim watching something on TV, they'd say, no, no, that's not right, or that's not right. Or, you know, they're doing the morning prayer in the afternoon or something like that.

I know that often television and movies get things about the Christian services not right. It's very common. And if anybody from Hollywood's listening, our congregation will release me to be a technical advisor periodically at good Hollywood rates, which will go to the church, Mission Fund, not to me, to help you get those things straight.

[ 2 : 43 ] Anyway, one of the things that if you're not that familiar with the Christian faith that you might know about Christians is that they do something, and some people call it the Mass, and some call it Holy Communion, and some call it the Eucharist, and some call it the Lord's Supper.

And if you're like a Muslim or just a secular Canadian tuning in, or a Buddhist, or somebody with a bespoke spirituality, you might know those things. And, of course, Christians know that, and we're familiar with it.

So this is actually a very different type of a sermon today, because what I read just a couple of minutes ago is where that comes from.

It's where it comes from and sort of why it is that Christians do this, this thing called the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. And so let's look at it. If you're just from an outsider trying to sort of figure out what we're all about, this is like a brilliant time.

One of the main things that Christians do, we get the origin story, so to speak. And for us who are Christians, we don't talk about this enough. I probably don't talk about it enough, about what is the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion, and why it's significant, and what happens, and how we should do it.

[ 3 : 55 ] And so let's look. And if you were to take my preaching class, I would tell you never have seven points. I have seven points. So I'm going to flunk myself.

But they're all very simple. And, in fact, actually, if you sort of want to hear them, here's the first thing. That what you're actually going to be surprised is that it's simple.

It is simple. It is very simple. So let's turn in our Bibles to Mark chapter 14, verses 22 to 31. There's sort of two stories there.

The part that we're interested initially with is 22 to 25. Mark chapter 14, verses 22 to 25. And what's just happened in the flow of this ancient eyewitness biography of Jesus is that just before this, we've had a bit of the fact that we've had Jesus and his disciples as observant Jews.

They have been celebrating the Passover Supper. And at a key point in the third part of the Passover Supper, Jesus says to Judas that one of you will, not to all of them, one of you will betray me.

[ 5 : 05 ] And he never outs Judas. But he does say, woe to that man who betrays me. It would be better if he was never born. It was a very, very sobering moment. And that's what happens just before this.

I talked about it last week if you're curious. It's a very sobering moment. And now this story happens. And here's how it goes. Verse 22. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and after blessing it, broke it and gave it to them and said, Take, this is my body.

And Jesus took a cup and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them and they all drank of it. And he said to them, This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. Now, some of you, maybe who are seekers, you go, Is that all?

Like, isn't there more? And some of you might actually think it seems a bit lame. And some of you might think it seems a bit gross.

[ 6 : 19 ] This is my blood that you have to drink. It sounds like a vampire. And I'm going to return to that. The outside, how some people from the outside, it sounds, well, way too simple.

It sounds a bit lame and it sounds a bit gross. But some of you who watch, and this might be for some of you, you heard me read this and you go, George, that's not what we say when we do a communion service.

We say something different. Like, why did Jesus say this one thing here, but why do we say something different when we do, like in a few, later on we're going to do a communion service.

Why is there this difference? And some of you who, you know, listen to some of the different YouTube things and TikTok things of ex-evangelicals and people who love the Christian faith and skeptics, they'll jump on this and go, aha, aha, you see that?

This is why you can't trust the Bible, because it says different things. Like, they don't get it right. And a lot of times we don't know how to handle that when people say it.

[ 7 : 28 ] And actually, there's going to be an announcement about that that will help you later on. But what I'd like to say right now is something, just, it's a very important bit of a sidebar to help you understand what's, why it's different here than the other places and why you don't have to worry about it, but in fact should rejoice in it.

There's a book that came out, I think within the last 12 months. I think at least two of you have read it, and it's about the founding of the denomination that we're in.

And it's early days and bringing us sort of up to about the year 2021 or 2022. And what you might not know is that I actually got asked to write one of the chapters in the book as a memoir.

And what I did is I covered the years 1994, a particular thing at the end of June 1994, to the end of August in 2004.

And the reason they asked me, the editors and the compilers asked me to write this, is because our denomination was founded out of an organization called Essentials.

[ 8 : 38 ] And I was the chair of that organization from 1999 to 2004, to 1994 to 2004, when in 2004 it was announced that we had started this entity called the Anglican Network in Canada.

I was the chair for that, for those 10 years. My wife, if you talk to her afterwards, she can say about all of the different scars I got from that process. But for that 11 years, I was at every single meeting, including the planning meetings.

I was at every event. I didn't miss anything. And I was the chair and the organizer of many of those events. So they asked me to write a memoir about it. Now, and I wrote it.

I did it because, and I didn't consult a whole pile of documents. It had been a very, very important time in my life. If I was writing, I guess, a very academic thing, I would have done a bit of research.

But I didn't have to do research. I was there. I lived it all. And if I had to do some more research, if they wanted something more academic, I'd get on the phone. I'd call up Klaus. I'd get on the phone and call up Roger.

[ 9 : 43 ] I'd get on the phone and call up Cheryl and David and a couple of the other people who were at a lot of those things, not all of the things, but a lot of them. And we would compare notes to make it even more accurate.

Now, I was just able to do this just out of my memory because I was actually there. Now, imagine, though, now somebody said, George, could you do a paper on those 10 years leading up to the start of the Anglican Church of Canada?

Well, the Anglican Church of Canada, the first general synod, took place in 1893. I couldn't do that. I mean, I could do it, but I'd have to do what most of you would do.

There's no obviously people left who were there. I'd have to look at written documents. And I'd have to try to compare the written documents. And when I wrote my piece, afterwards, people who were scholars of Canadian history, they might look and say, oh, George got this bit from here.

And, oh, he didn't give a footnote there like he should have. And I'd never heard of this. I think George just made that up. And other scholars also looking at the other documents, they would be able to critique it.

[ 10 : 51 ] Now, why am I saying all of this? Because it's very, very important. Up until the later part of the 1800s, if you went back in a time machine and you asked an early church father or you asked somebody in the year 1500 or 1800, all smart people, they would just tell you that the Gospels are what is claimed, if you read the original documents, that they were eyewitness documents.

And the eyewitnesses just report on what eyewitnesses had seen and talked about. In other words, they would have just said that when you were reading the Gospels, it's like reading my chapter in the book. You're hearing an eyewitness speak.

But in the late 1800s, under the influence of a guy by the name of Hegel, a group of German scholars believed that they understood how religious movements developed according to Hegelian principles and how it took all of this long time and all of these steps.

And they believed, because they were good Hegelians, that they understood how that worked. And, of course, if that model was going to work, then the New Testament couldn't be written by eyewitnesses.

It had to be written 150, 200 years later, so that their Hegelian theory could work. Now, nobody dates the book as late as those German scholars in the late 1800s.

[ 12 : 09 ] Like, it sort of sucks to say that John was written in the year 200, then you find a document, a piece, a manuscript that shows that was written at least 80 years earlier. Like, that's sort of a defeater for the theory.

But it's carried on and it's dragged on. And so often what happens is many scholars still basically think that what's happening is they're comparing documents.

And so if the documents don't say the exact same thing, they say, well, that's been invented or something like that. But let's just take it that there's actually no evidence that it was written so late.

And, in fact, I think there's very, very good evidence. And increasingly over time, they've been doing these remarkable studies about names and places and the frequency of names and how the customs are.

Like, when they have very, very common names, you add an extra bit to it. Judas was a very, very common name, so they add a bit to it. Like, and it's amazing.

[ 13 : 08 ] The more they know about the past, the more accurate the New Testament is and the more accurate the Gospels are, the more likely it is that it had to be written by eyewitnesses and checked by eyewitnesses very close to the time.

And that's just, like, as archaeologists and scholars learn more about the past, that just becomes increasingly the direction of modern knowledge.

And so what we're seeing here is eyewitnesses. Now, how does that affect it being worded differently? Well, some of you have taken classes from Steve Griffin.

And I bet you if you've taken some classes from Steve Griffin, he said some things the same in different lectures. Right? And if even in the same lecture, he probably just doesn't say it once, like he's a robot, but human beings often repeat things.

And in this sermon, for instance, you might hear me say, for instance, that it is simple, or you might later on hear me say it's surprisingly simple, or it's unexpectedly simple. Those aren't contradictions.

[ 14 : 18 ] If one of you later on was saying, George's first point was, it is simple. Another person wrote down, it is surprisingly simple. Another person writes down, it is unexpectedly simple. And then later on, somebody said, you're all contradicting.

No, you're not contradicting. George said all three of those things. So it's not as if it's just, you know, Jesus, like a robot, this is my body, and he's programmed to only say, this is my body.

No. If you've received communion from me over the years, I've said a variety of different things. And in a talk, I might express the same idea several different ways, and they write it down that.

That's all you're seeing. In fact, actually then, rather, it's actually a sign that it's more realistic about what actually human beings, what human beings actually do, and the differences are showing you a more realistic picture of how human beings actually function.

that rather than being a defeater about the text, it's a reason to be more confident in the text. And there is absolutely no reason to think that the text is written as late as some scholars want to put it.

[ 15 : 31 ] And so if you look at the four different original accounts, three of them in the eyewitness biographies, one in Matthew, one in Mark, one in Luke, and then one written in an early letter, you'll see slightly different wordings, and that's reflected in how we do our liturgy.

But what you can trust is that this goes right back to Jesus, and he institutes it. And it is surprisingly simple, but if you take in its very basic simplicity, it is profoundly beautiful.

And part of the beauty is this. You know, let's look at it again. Verse 22, And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, Take, this is my body.

In other places it says, Take and eat, this is my body. Or take and eat, this is my body given for you. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank it.

And he said to them, This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. You see, part of what's so beautiful about that is not only the words beautiful, which we're going to look at more in a moment.

[ 16 : 45 ] These very, very simple words can be said by Christian believers in Tehran or Shanghai, meeting in a room behind closed doors because of persecution.

If you go to visit the missionaries you support in Angola and go to one of their church plants, these very simple words can be said under a tree in a village that in many ways still uses the farming techniques of 150 years ago.

You can go to an ancient cathedral in Paris or England and you can hear these same words. Or you can be in the Ottawa Little Theatre on a Sunday morning and hear these same words.

They are beautiful and they are profound and they are something that Christians in all sorts and conditions of life can partake of the Lord's Supper, the Holy Communion.

Now, it's important to remember not just that it's simple but that it is in a story. These words of Jesus are in a story or an eyewitness biography. Listen to the words again.

[ 17 : 58 ] And as they were eating he took bread and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them and said, take, this is my body. And he took a cup and when he had given thanks he gave it to them and they all drank of it and he said to them, this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many.

Truly I say to you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. Now, I've talked to you you know, before I like watching movies by and large.

I mean, a lot of movies are not very good but if I find a good movie I really like it. And one of the things that characterizes bad movies is they just stick things in randomly to try to make the movie more exciting or more titillating or create tension and it has nothing to do with the story.

They just throw in a I don't know for some random reason the woman walking around in her underwear or they throw in an explosion or they throw in a hostile police examination but as the story goes on it has nothing to do with the story.

You know, it was just simply put that somebody in Hollywood said oh, I don't want the people to fall asleep let's have the woman take her top off. Okay, oh, let's just have the police have a hostile investigation which we never follow up on and it has nothing to do with the story.

[ 19 : 13 ] Those are just crappy, right? They're crappy movies crappy stories. That's what they are. But in a good one in a well done one the different parts of the story help make the whole story work.

And afterwards you know, you can ask when I mention a movie by the way I'm not recommending necessarily that you watch it but like if you watch the third season of Fargo and there's this random type of thing at the beginning that sets the whole thing off but if you look at it and you talk to other people who watch it they say, no, no that's really interesting because what they're doing is they're prefiguring this and prefiguring that and you go, oh yeah that's what they're doing.

You actually have a discussion around it and see how it all fits together. So one of the things we can say for a fact is that people wouldn't read these stories continue to be reading these stories if they didn't have if they weren't well put together.

If they were just crappy. And so we can ask not just you see and often when Christians disagree about communion what happens is they get caught up arguing about tradition or theology or philosophy and they forget that the words of institution that's what it's called are in a story and they don't go back to look at the story.

Like why is it in this story? Like what's it doing in this story? And that's what we need to do.

[ 20 : 49 ] So you say okay well George what's going on? Why is this story here? Well let's listen to it again and as they were eating and he took bread and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them and said take this is my body or take and eat this is my body and he took a cup and when he had given thanks he gave it to them and they all drank of it and he said to them this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many truly I say to you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

This is Jesus explaining and Mark recording it. Why does Mark record it? Because Mark understands afterwards that Jesus explains the story that you're reading and not only does he explain the story you're reading you see the story you're reading Mark explains the big story of the Bible and that's what Jesus is doing here.

This is part of those there's several key sayings of Jesus throughout the gospel that explains the story gives you the purpose and the meaning of the story and what you see here is Jesus explaining the story which explains the big story.

How does he do that? Well first of all as we went through it and I'm not going to reiterate it is the Jewish people they had a celebration called the Passover which celebrated how God had acted to deliver them from slavery and bondage in Egypt into freedom where he was to be their king the God and part of that is that the shedding of a blood of a lamb and if a Jewish family or any family was to shed the blood of a lamb an innocent lamb lay their hands on it the lamb is killed and the blood is taken and put in on the entrance of the house and if they stay inside then as God's judgment was going to pass over the nation of Egypt anybody who was in a sense covered by this the blood of the shed lamb and they were covered by that the judgment of God didn't fall on them it fell on the people committed to slavery and enslaving and believed it was their right and that was judged and they remembered that they still remember to this day our Jewish friends and so the first thing is that what's happening is that the Jewish people when they remembered it they had not just a not just a meal but they actually had to have certain types of food in the meal and the meal actually had four parts because part of it was retelling the story so that people would remember what God had done for them and part of it as well if you go back and look at the foundational text in Exodus and Leviticus and Deuteronomy they were also not just to retell the story of what God has done but to look forward to the day when the Messiah would come the final day and it's in that meal at the third part of the meal that Jesus interrupts the meal to do something and he takes the bread that they were using and they would have already eaten maybe it's towards the end of it and it would have been bread without leaven that's why we use wafers that have no leaven in them when we receive it and the cup would have been a cup of wine because that's what they would have drunk and so on one hand it's very significant that he's connecting me what's about to happen to this very ancient event and this ancient event that promises that sometime in the future the Messiah will come and the other thing that he's doing is as I tried to explain last week the Jewish people they begin their day at sundown we sort of begin our day technically at midnight or psychologically we think our day begins when we wake up in the morning but for the

Jewish people still to this day the day begins when the night when sundown happens and the day ends with sundown and so what we're seeing here is we're seeing this unbelievably chaotic and packed 24 hour period that's all the very first day of the Passover and the story of the exodus and the promise of the Messiah and the remembering of the lamb that's been slain and how they're covered that's fully in their mind and in that 24 hour period Jesus sacrifices a celebrates a Passover supper because he's an observant Jew he institutes the Lord's supper he's going to go to the garden of Gethsemane he's going to pray that God would take spare him from this hour but he's offering to drink the cup and we'll look at that next week we're going to see Judas betray him and he's going to be captured we're going to see him being taken to the different Jewish and all of the different authorities and how they ultimately just hand him over to death and we're going to see him stripped and we're going to see him whipped and humiliated and we're going to see him drag his cross through the streets we're going to see all of the apostles have fled and we're going to see him die on his arms and his feet nailed to a cross and we're going to see him die and we're going to see him say things from the cross before he dies and we're going to see that make sure that he's really dead we're going to see a spear piercing his side and blood and water flowing out and we're going to see before this 24 hour period is over some men take him and they embalm him and they put him in a tomb and that's all going to happen in 24 hours the first day of

[ 26 : 23 ] Passover and the people are running around and they're afraid and they're going to be hiding for a couple of days and then there's going to be this crazy crazy crazy thing where women good grief women in those days they say he's actually that the tomb is empty and that he's alive and he saw him and they're going to see that the tomb is empty and then later they're all going to see it but in that 24 hour period what is Jesus doing he's giving them a 5,000 feet in the air view of what's happening he's saying you see the Passover supper you see what's going to happen in the garden you see what's going to happen with the betrayal you see the trial you see my humiliation you see my being stripped naked you see the beatings you see my death you're going to be seeing all of these things and what's really happening what you need to understand is really happening is this I'm going to have my body broken for you

I'm going to have my blood shed for you what does that mean is I'm going to take into myself that punishment I'm going to stand in your place I'm going to stand in your place and the judgment of God that should fall on you will fall on me and it's not just that I am going to die in your place but you know how there was that whole thing about me taking God taking the people for himself this is a new covenant a brand new start for the human race and it's not going to be just for Jewish people it's going to be for people in Singapore and people in Uganda and people in Nigeria and people in Venezuela and it's going to be for people in Manhattan and people in Ottawa it's going to be for people in Israel and I'm creating a brand new covenant and a covenant is like a marriage is like a pale reflection of a covenant and marriage isn't as good an example nowadays because we

Canadians think of marriage as a contract which you enter into and then you break when the terms of the business arrangement no longer work for you but this is God pledging that he will be your God in an intimate connection of love and affection and protection and blessing and when he has entered into this new covenant with you he will never let you go and he will deal that's all that's wrong with you and this covenant will begin on this side of the grave and it will carry you through the grave through death and it will be for all eternity and it is a hope of glory and it is a covenant that will end up with you being able to stand naked and unashamed in the very presence of the triune God and the new heaven and the new earth and that's what I am that's what I am accomplishing on the cross and that's what I'm instituting and that's what's going on despite the appearances that's what's going on and unlike the kingdoms where the emperor sends out the troops to die on his behalf and under unlike all of the gods that you know that have you die for them this is the king who dies for his citizens this is the god who dies for his creatures out of love so when we read these words we're reading Jesus is 5,000 feet meters or feet up in the air explanation of what's going on now some of you might say it still seems gross and it still seems lame

I haven't lost you my Muslim friend or my secular friend or one of you who are here and wonders about it that leads to the next point let's read it again and as they were eating he took bread and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them and said take this take this is my body and he took a cup and when he had given thanks he gave it to them and they all drank of it and he said to them this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many truly I say to you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God you notice that prediction of the resurrection what we need to understand is it does sound lame and it does sound a bit gross but it is a means of grace from the triune God for ordinary people like you and me what Jesus is instituting is a very significant means of grace it comes right from the triune God right from the heart and the power and the mind of the triune



God as a means of grace for ordinary people like you and me well why it does seem weak but you know what it's this story is only remembered because the men who embalmed the people who saw Jesus people in those days knew that nobody survived crucifixion Romans were battling a thousand at killing people with crucifixion a thousand and in a sense their record still stands because they killed Jesus they battled a thousand they saw his blood loss they saw his dehydration they saw the blood come from his side they saw him carried down obviously dead collapsing on the ground any of you who've watched the 13 hours I have to confess it's one of my favorite movies there's a very very terrible scene towards the end where one of the people who died is thrown down they can't get him down from the building and they just drop him and his friend screams no and anybody who sees the body drop knows that the guy is not alive and they would have seen the Roman guys they're not going to take Jesus down very carefully and reverently no they just pull things out knock him down the thud he's embalmed and he's dead the only reason we know this story is because he rose from the dead and if he rose from the dead that's a game changer no offense my Muslim friends but it means that Islam is not true no offense my Buddhist friends or my secular friends but it means that

[ 33 : 18 ] Jesus is who he said he is and his teaching is trustworthy and it comes from a place of great power because he has defeated death and he has defeated that which causes death and he's done this in a public way and he's done it for you and me and that means that this is a mighty act of grace from the triune God for us and if he offers us a means of grace it might not look like what we expect power to do and it might look lame and it might look gross but it comes from the one who looked at you and loved you and died for you and has defeated death well we look at it and one of the significances of the symbolism you know they didn't really nobody sat there and thought oh I just drank

Jesus' blood that's pretty gross they would have found that gross they would have found it actually probably more gross than you do because the Jewish law forbids it and we have cultures where some of us will eat things which are made of blood but they would have been more gross for them but what this is symbolizing is that we remember what Jesus does for us on the cross we remember what our destiny is in Christ and what we know if we're at all honest I need the inside of me to change I need that place where my the choosing to do wrong is changed where my choosing to be proud is changed where my lack of generosity where my lack of forgiveness where my desire for revenge where these hard things from within me where they emerge that's where I need God's grace to come in and we're reminded of it when we feed on him it is this powerful way to say no no this isn't just sort of like putting something on your hair and doing like some lipstick to make the externals look this is something that's the grace is for all of you the redemption is for all of you and we need to be remembered that Jesus comes he lives within us we are now born again and we need to be reminded that we need to think of get who he is and what he's done for us and his words we need to get them inside of us because it's on the inside that he changes us and so he's given us this powerful means of grace that we remember this and we reenact it and we think it's lame because we say like I've heard people say you know

Ramadan is way better than anything Christians do because we have to fast for all this length of time even when it's really hot and you know we look at things like yoga and I'm not putting any things down but from our Canadian point of view these things they resonate with us they show willpower they show losing weight they show mind control they show how to get more flexible and how to get the body in shape and they all speak to us and they all look like they have power but the fact of the matter is is that you can lose all the weight you want to lose and you get to be the perfect weight and you can get unbelievable mind control and you can have unbelievable flexibility and strength you can have fantastic physical discipline but the fact of the matter is it's all doomed because you will die go to a graveyard and you'll see where you end up it doesn't matter how strong you are how fit you are how fantastic your willpower is it all dies this is a means of grace what does a means of grace mean my time's going but like a perfect way to understand a means of grace is this if you go back and

I should have looked it up I think it's 2nd Kings 18 but I might be wrong about it 1st Kings 18 I might be wrong about it there's this time when Elijah is going to have a contest with the prophets of Baal and they agree they're going to have a contest to see which god will send fire and there's like you know hundreds and hundreds of them and they set the altar up and they put the animal on it and they you know they use their willpower and they use their physical power and they use their magical incantations and they do they cut themselves and they sacrifice themselves and they do everything they possibly can do at the end of the day the fire doesn't come and then Elijah comes and he takes some stones and he kills an animal he puts some wood and he pours water on it he pours water on it pours water on it pours water on it and just so you know I'm not a camper I've said this before but I sort of do understand that if you want to start a fire you don't pour water on the wood first that's just not how you start fires that's not going to work ever and then and then he prays and God sends the fire so Elijah acts in obedience to do what God tells him to do even though it looks weak and even though it looks foolish and even though it looks like it will never accomplish what it's supposed to accomplish but because he does what God asks him to do God does what only he can do which is send the fire and that's at the heart of the means of grace and by the way if you're watching this we Christians often also think it's lame that's why we want to try to have something maybe with special music or some special lighting or smoke machines or lasers to try to create some more powerful emotion or why we want to have you know get me dressed up in lots of robes and parade around and have choirs and all of this stuff because we sort of worry that these mere words aren't going to be enough but the fact the matter is is that all those things just distract the means of grace aren't if you have lots of processions and lots of robes it's not if you have a way to emotionally manipulate people to feel particular emotions it's not connected to any of that it's the simple obedient act of repeating the words of Jesus and receiving the bread and the wine in obedience to him and God brings the fire and he's not interested per se in making you richer making you slimmer making you more muscular having you have better mind control he has a way better plan for you and that plan is to be in the new heaven and the new earth and to stand in his presence and only he knows how to get there and so we humbly receive it can be in a great cathedral nothing wrong with processions nothing more wrong with robes but you and I today or that church that earlier today met under a tree in a field still using farming techniques from hundreds of years ago you and I in obedience say the words receive the bread and the wine and God gives grace he fits you for heaven

I just because of the time I'm just going to say a couple of things I'm going to just very very briefly the story which comes right after this actually we'll read it I'll be very brief it's very important to understand communion this story that happens next and look at this verse 26 and when they had sung a hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives the Passover meal is over and Jesus said to them you will all fall away for it is written I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered but after I am raised I will go before you to Galilee Peter said to him even if even though they all fall away I will not it's a proud and arrogant statement he doesn't say oh Jesus I'm going to fall away have mercy on me but no no you're wrong

[ 41 : 34 ] Jesus and Jesus said to him truly I tell you this very night before the rooster crows twice you will deny me three times but Peter doubles down he says emphatically if I must die with you I will not deny you and they all said the same now here's the thing very briefly because of the time the Lord's Supper is not for the the elite it's not for the people who make believe they're worthy the Lord's Supper is for redeemed sinners the Lord's Supper is for a redeemed sinner like you and me that's who it's for you want to know something else which is really interesting you know on one hand Peter and all those disciples were right they they were wrong they would deny Jesus before the night was over but they said they'll die for him every single one of those disciples except John died a martyr's death everyone and John died in exile in a place that now we would think of as a holiday place but back then was an exile and they all died refusing to say anything other than that

Jesus had risen from the dead they died for a fact for the good news what's the difference you see the difference is that Peter says this and they said this out of their self will out of their mind control out of their control out of me control out of my agenda out of my power and part of the mystery I long for the day we can have a church building where we can kneel for communion if you want to receive communion by kneeling I long for that day to return it's part of the Anglican tradition to kneel to receive communion why what's the difference between now and what will happen to them later it's this profound truth of the Bible I am taller when I kneel before him I am taller when I kneel before Jesus and receive grace from him it is completely against what the world would say they'd say

George you're shorter when you kneel well generally you are and if I kneel to an idol I've only become smaller and if I kneel to fears and if I kneel to lies I've only become smaller but if I kneel to him I am taller and I can be by God's grace like I am not going to be I am not going to be I am not going to be burned at the cross burned at a stake he had earlier denied the faith and then he recanted he repented and he wanted he held his hand the story is he held his hands in the flame because he wanted that to die be burned first you are taller when you bow when you kneel final thing I have could you put up the two the first of the two sentences Claire this is a little bit of help just as we bring to a close about how to receive communion the first thing is actually I'm just going to say a challenge to those who are online I understand why there's lots of reasons why you're not receiving coming here to receive communion I just want to urge you you are passing up a means of grace I want to urge you I mean it might be that you can't come most of the time it I know there can be health and other types of reasons but I want to urge you that you are passing up a means of grace and for those of you are watching and maybe you're in a city far away maybe you're a university student who's can't get up early enough on a Sunday morning you're watching it later on from the University of

Ottawa I just like to urge you to consider that maybe God has brought you to watch these services because he wants you to begin that person who begins to pray that a church can be planted in your city I want to I want to challenge you that this might exactly be while you're watching this that you can be if you're a university student the means by which we can get back on the campus to share the gospel and I want to challenge you to bring it to God in prayer and if he's and to share it with us so that we can join with you in prayer that God will plant a church so that you can go on a Sunday morning and will miss having you watch but that you can receive the means of grace of the Lord's Supper on a Sunday morning I want to challenge you and these sentences are going to be very very helpful for us to understand how to receive communion and they come from the

Book of Common Prayer it comes from the English Reformation and part of them are yellowed on a purpose notice what we do the first thing is this is traditionally if you were to go to a if you had come to my eight o'clock service back in the day with an altar rail and I went along the things you would have heard me say this every Sunday as I was giving you communion and it explains what communion is and what you should be praying into and if you'd like to find these words later on we can send them to you it's in the the 1662 Book of Common Prayer but notice we don't hide the words we don't try to like we just say the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for you we're being invited to remember that his body was given for you and notice this preserve part of the means of grace is not that we become Christians through it but those of us who are Christians redeem sinners it's a means by which God preserves us body and soul unto everlasting life unto everlasting life and then I say take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you once again remembering that he had died for us and hear this feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving as you prepare to receive communion you can think of these words and you say Lord I'm a I'm I'm watching these other people receiving and I want you to help me feed on you in my heart and you might say I don't know what that's going to be like emotionally I don't know what's going to be like emotionally maybe it's going to be very moving maybe it'll be nothing but help me not only now but always to feed on you in my heart and feed on you in my heart with thanksgiving for who you are and what you've said and what you've accomplished for me and then after you have received the bread I would come along and I would say the blood of our Lord Jesus

[ 48 : 42 ] Christ once again we're just copying the words of Jesus which was shed for you once again notice this preserve your body and soul unto everlasting life drink this what in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you and be thankful and we can say Lord grip me with the gospel I'm not thankful help me to be thankful not necessarily the emotion of thankfulness but the life of thankfulness which is more important than the emotion of thankfulness you see when we have a life of thankfulness it is easier to do hard things it is easier to to be faithful it is easier to read the Bible it is easier to be generous it's easier to forgive and so we can ask God not just for the emotion of thankfulness but the reality the life of thankfulness invite you to stand let's bow our heads in prayer father thank you for the grace of our

Lord Jesus Christ for what he did for us on the cross for his life his death his resurrection we thank and praise you father that you have brought us to a faith in Christ for those of us who have come to a faith a personal faith and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord father if there are any here or any who are watching who have not yet come to a faith and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord we ask father that you help them to put their faith and trust in him we thank you father for Jesus and we thank you father that you have provided this very very simple but very beautiful and profound means of grace whereby you preserve us body and soul unto everlasting life that you fit us for an eternal life with you in the new heaven and the new earth and we ask father that you help us to be thankful for what Christ has accomplished for us not just as an emotion father although we love the emotion of thankfulness and I if you give us that as well that's great but more than the emotion we ask Lord that you grant us the habits and the and the mind and the tone of life and and and disciplines of life that emerge out of a deep thankfulness for what you have done for us in the person of your son and his death upon the cross on our behalf and we ask these things in the name of Jesus your son and our Savior amen your son and I don't say that in the scriptures for us in the given ■ which is striking to him

He was my son and I think of this AH University of of 2009 Oldbusy of ■■■■