Institute of Youth Ministry

May, 2015

Foot-washing and Communion

FOOT-WASHING

For foot-washing, walk bare-footed over familiar pathways of where we have been this week. Pause at the sand pit volleyball court and let our feet get sandy. Pair up with a partner and return to wash each other’s feet. Spontaneous singing while washing each others’ feet and praying together.

COMMUNION

As pastors, all of us have led out in the Communion Service. We typical choose from one of the following Biblical presentation of the Lord’s Supper:

* Matthew 26
* Mark 14
* Luke 22
* 1 Corinthians 11

Rarely do we go back to the Jewish seder service and consider how they practiced the Passover ritual for more than 1,000 years. We won’t do a full Passover meal (we’ll be eating lunch in less than an hour). But we will give special focus to “the cup.” In the seder service, there were four times in which people took of “the cup.” This can be noticed in the Luke 22 account which records Jesus first drinking from the cup, and then taking the bread, and then taking the cup again!

Jews today have various memories of what each of the four “cups” represented, such as

* The cup of slavery
* The cup of persecution and suffering (babies thrown into the Nile)
* The cup of deliverance (from Egypt)
* The cup of entry into the Promised Land

There are several different interpretations among Jews as to what each of the four cups symbolized. For our purposes, we will take the symbol of “the cup” and identify four elements for reflection on our communion service today.

We have served each other in the foot-washing. For the “4 cups” I invite you to go and take a cup (full glass of grape juice) and return to your seat. Once all of us are ready, we will have four drinks from the cup to symbolize four different key things for us.

The 1st Cup—The Call to Ministry

Recall what you have sensed, possibly reported for a theology class assignment, or shared with others about your call to ministry. Reflect on the reality of that call, your response, and how current both are today.

The 2nd Cup—The Cup of Suffering

James and John (with their mum) came to Jesus and asked for the top two seats in the new kingdom. Jesus responded, “Are you able to drink the cup I am to drink, and to be baptized with the baptism I will be baptized with (Matt. 20:22)? They answered, “We are.” Were they able to do so? Not immediately, but later they did. How about you?

Jesus suffered and told his followers that they would suffer, too. Sometimes our suffering comes from the consequences of our own choices. At other times, suffering comes directly as a result of following Jesus. And there are probably times when we suffer and we don’t know the cause or the reason for our suffering, but we suffer. As you drink of this cup, recall the suffering you have experienced, and renew your commitment to follow Christ, regardless of any suffering that may accompany it for you are participating in your Savior’s suffering.

THE BREAD

Jesus took one of the most common elements of food and used it to symbolize our need for him and his availability to us. In our ministry and through our suffering, we are able to receive input from Jesus, the Bread of Life, every day. If you want to “take in Jesus,” I invite you to go to the table and take a piece of the bread and return to your seats.

We often use the King James Version translation when we quote, “Eat ye all of it” or “Drink ye all of it.” The better translation from the Greek is “All of you eat it” or “All of you drink it.” Jesus was inclusive of ALL who were present at that time—which includes Judas, Peter, Thomas, John, James, Nathanael, etc. The invitation remains the same today: All of you eat it.

The 3rd Cup—The Cup of Forgiveness (Christ’s shed blood)

This is perhaps the most common reference we make when doing the communion service. Indeed, the cup signifies Christ’s blood that was shed for us, for the forgiveness of our sins. He died for us and took our place, so that we might live for him by taking his place. I invited you to drink of this third cup and to drink in Christ’s forgiveness of your sins.

Special Item—men’s singing group: *The Blood*. The rest of us join in the second verse and sing along with them.

The 4th Cup—The Cup of a Promised Future

Just as the Jews at the first Passover, drank the cup to symbolize their deliverance that would take them to the Promised Land, Jesus made a fresh application of this at the Lord’s Supper we he stated, “I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until I do so with you in my Father’s kingdom (Matt. 26:29).” So when we drink of the cup, we are anticipating Christ’s Second Coming.

We must never forget to look back at the cross and the reality of that atonement made possible there. But we must never forget to also look forward to the consummation when Christ returns. And so we drink this cup because we live in anticipation of Christ’s Second Advent.

Sing together: *We Have This Hope*