

## **Communion: What does it mean to you?**

Message for Sunday, July 9, 2017  
by Bruce Fraser

**Scripture:** Luke 22:19-20

I asked our Worship Life Committee if we could have communion while we're in the Lower Hall for the summer. I like being in small groups around the tables; it gives a feeling of being closer together.

Today we are going to honour Jesus as we share in the Lord's Supper. Here is what he said, that started this practice.

**Luke 22:19-20, New International Version:**

**And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."**

**In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."**

"This is my body... This is my blood." I wonder if he knew what a controversy he started with those simple words! Over the centuries, church leaders have come up with various theories about what Jesus meant by those words, and what it means today when a minister or a priest repeats those words.

The truth is, nobody knows exactly what Jesus meant, except for Jesus himself. So this is one of those things that I don't get all worked up about.

I suggest what is more important is what communion means to you and to me, personally. What do we experience when we eat the bread and drink the juice?

Let me share my own experience of this. In 1979, I took time off school, in order to see how the rest of the world lives. For about half a year, I lived in Bolivia, a county in South America. While I was there I became quite good conversing in Spanish. But during that first week I could barely say enough to get food to eat!

On Sunday morning of that first week, feeling lonely and lost, I went to mass at the church down the street. I didn't understand the hymns or the Scripture reading. The sermon, of course, meant

nothing to me. It was really pointless for me to even be there. I planned to quietly walk out at the end of the next hymn. So just as that song was ending, I put my hymn book back in its rack and started to let myself out to the aisle.

But just then the priest raised a loaf of bread and a goblet of wine in the air. Even though I couldn't understand his mumbling in Spanish, I knew exactly what he was saying, "This is my body, given for you. This is my blood, shed for you. Do this in remembrance of me." I felt I was at home there, right where I belonged.

Last month on June 4, we had communion. During that service, I told about what happened to me during a communion service in the church I served in Goose Bay, Labrador. Just to refresh your memory, or in case you weren't there, I'll repeat that story:

**In my head, I know what the bread and juice represent. But that day, as I broke the loaf of bread, it was like my eyes were opened, and I felt the enormity of what Jesus had done, when he was nailed to the cross, and when the soldier's spear ripped his side open. So when I ripped open the bread, that thought overwhelmed me. My mouth dropped open, and I started crying. I was like that for a couple of minutes. One of the elders came and stood beside me, put his arm around me, and just held me until I was ready to go on.**

There are a couple of instances when communion had special meaning to me. What about you?

What I'd like to do right now, is for us in our small groups around the tables, to share our stories with one another. Here are two ideas for you to share:

- What does communion mean to you?
- Tell about a time that was especially meaningful for you.

Make sure that everyone at your table has a chance to tell their story. (That's a polite way of saying don't let one person do all the talking!) If you don't wish to speak, that's perfectly fine, too.