

## Putting Jesus First

### John Chapter 15

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Here at this table, stands Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of our Creator and the One who made you and made me and the One by whom all things were made and without whom was not anything made that was made -- and this bread stands for His body and this wine stands for His blood and you, by your attitude this morning, are able to meet Him and you're able to come into a relationship with Him of love and of total dependence and that's what you need.

The satisfaction you get out of seeing a beautiful sunset is nothing compared with the satisfaction you get from knowing and loving the sunset maker. The excitement and exhilaration you get from skiing down a slope is nothing compared with the excitement and exhilaration you get from loving the One who made the slope and made the skies, and the peace you get from having a fat bank account and investments and a good job is nothing compared with the peace you get from living dependent on the One who made the bank and made the money and made the job. And He is able to make available to you any of those that you need at any time.

What you have to decide this morning is not, am I a member of this church? Because we don't really have any paper membership here at Campus Church, and it's not for you to decide this morning, are you good enough to take communion, or have you been to confession or have you a letter from your own church? The question this morning is not even, are you a Christian? The only question you have got to decide this morning is "Am I willing to change the whole orientation of my life from trying to get from the world the love that I should be getting from my God and from His son?" That's the only decision. You may say, "I would like to do that, but I have been so long dependent on my friends' opinions that I cannot change the orientation of my life just in one moment like that. I have been so long used to worrying about my bank balance that I cannot suddenly change and get my peace and security from this dear person that you're talking about."

Loved ones, ordinarily you couldn't. Ordinarily you couldn't change in a moment what it has taken you years to pervert and twist and develop except that this bread and wine stands for His death and when He died, all of us died with Him. That's what our maker says, "I took all of you with all your twisted minds and your imbalanced emotions, and your weak bodies, and I put them into My son in eternity which is above time and beyond space and I destroyed you all there and I've made new in you." So this morning you are able to change in a moment, you are -- and that's the only condition that you have to fulfill to take communion this morning.

Are you willing to live the rest of your life off the love of Jesus? To put His love first in all your thinking? You ask me what that means tomorrow morning? Tomorrow morning a thought will come into your mind, "I didn't have enough money in the bank to cover that thing that I am going to have to pay for next week," and your mind is immediately used to going out after that thought and getting worried and anxious and trying immediately to work out all kinds of ways to solve the problem. At that moment, depending on Jesus' love means turning to Him and saying, "Lord, I can't see my way through that, but I believe that if I do my work honestly and if I obey you, then by this time next week, I will be able to face that bill or You will show me a way. You will show some saving that I can make, something that I can do without, in order to meet it." That's what it means.

It means that tomorrow at lunchtime, when they all go to the cafeteria and they ignore you and leave you behind and a thought comes to you, "I am not popular and they don't really like me and they're talking about me behind my back." Your mind and emotions are used to going out after that thought and you then think "I am no use, I am worthless, I am not popular, nobody likes me here." So at that moment, depending on Jesus' love means you stop all those thoughts, you will yourself to stop them because you have been changed in His death. Then you say, "Lord, I thank you that you love me and I thank you that you care for me, and that at the end of the day you're the only one who will be alive to care for me when I die and I thank you Lord Jesus that that's all that matters tonight. Thank you for your love and I am going to go down to that cafeteria and be honest and balanced in you to those friends of mine." That's what it means.

So, really the decision you have to make this morning in taking the bread and the wine is, are you willing to live off Jesus? Loved ones, that's why we were put here, to live off Jesus. He is a real person. He is richer than the sunset, He is more beautiful than the trees and the lakes. The Creator of all these gifts that we see around is greater than the gifts themselves and you can begin to know Him this morning as a person if you will set your whole life upon Him. If you will put His love and what He thinks of you first before everything and everybody else -- and that's what communion's about.

If you will, and you will receive the bread and the wine with that attitude, then his spirit will begin to make Him real to you and you'll begin to know Him as a person and you'll begin to find a flood of satisfaction and of love, and of security and of peace and of guidance from within you, that you've never had in your life before. So I don't know how many of you have felt that, but I think that I have felt at times, you know, kind of empty -- when you really were dying for some television program to come on that would give you some interest or you were dying for somebody to come and call by and ask you to go out that would give you something to do -- that emptiness. The emptiness is there because there is only one person that can fill it, and that's this Jesus, who is here this morning at this table and will give to you not only his bread but will give to you his body and his own blood and his own spirit.

So, will you decide what you want to do this morning? I know that all of us will stand because we don't want to be foolish and make each other feel uncomfortable but I do ask you, even if you stand, to decide in your own heart, am I ready to receive his bread and wine? Because loved ones, if you are not willing to fulfill the condition of putting Jesus first, then you will eat and drink damnation onto your own soul.

So it's very important even if you stand with everybody today, that you don't take bread and wine unless you really mean it. Unless you really mean it, don't. It's not worth the eternal damnation that comes upon you, if you just pretend. Nobody will see whether you take it or not, so you don't have to worry about preparation, but really decide if you are ready to do this, and if you are, then take the bread and wine and most of all meet the Person that you were created to meet and allow Him to be your dearest and really at the end of the day your only friend, because He alone is able to fill the gap that friendship has for each one of us.

Now, if you're ready loved ones, will you stand to receive the invitation?

You that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins and are in love and charity with your neighbors and intend to lead a new life following the commandments of God and walking from henceforth in his

holy ways, draw near with faith and take this sacrament to your comfort and make your humble confession unto Almighty God.

Let us be seated as we pray.

We do not presume to come to this, the table, most merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so by faith to receive thy Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, that the bread which we break may be unto us the communion of His body and the cup of blessing which we bless may be the communion of His blood and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us.

The Lord Jesus on the night in which He was betrayed, took bread and broke it and said, "This is My body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of Me. In like manner He took the cup after supper saying, "This is the cup of the new covenant in My blood. This do as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He come. Amen.