

## INTRODUCTION 引言

We remember the things we see as important. It can be passwords, good friends' birthdays or where we park at Walmart. Besides, we do special things on memorable dates. Your family may have some unique traditions. Perhaps it is the Thanksgiving dinner, and everyone helps put up Christmas decorations afterward. Each country also celebrates significant days of the year. This past Monday was called the Memorial Day. It was first observed in 1868 to honor the soldiers died in the American Civil War. Its original name was Decoration Day, because people decorated gravestones with flowers. In 1971, the Congress renamed the holiday as the Memorial Day. Since then it is observed on the last Monday in May. It became a day for remembering military personnel who perished in any battle. We enjoy freedom and security in this country because of the contributions those brave people. Besides showing respect to people in the armed forces, Christians should forever be grateful to Jesus Christ for His sacrifice. He died on the cross for our sins. The Lord set up the communion and He asked all believers to use it to remember His death. Other than the communion, baptism is the only other ceremony that Jesus asked churches to perform. We show obedience to Jesus as we observe these two ordinances. Our church administers the communion on the first Sunday of every even month. Let us revisit the meaning behind the ceremony before we observe it. The communion reminds us Jesus' work and our identity as a result.

## EXPLANATION 解釋

### 1. Look Backward 回顧

First of all, this ritual helps us look backward. It reminds us the sacrificial love of Jesus. Paul says in verses 23-24: **23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."** During the Last Supper, the Lord used a bread to represent His body. The breaking of the bread pointed to the suffering He was about to endure. He was arrested the same night and was nailed to the cross the next day. He was beaten, a crown of thorns was placed on His head and nails poked through His hands and feet. Jesus experienced extreme pain and shame. Besides the bread, there was also a cup. Look at verse 25: **In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."** The cup symbolizes Jesus' blood. Very likely, it was a diluted wine that Jesus shared with the disciples. Today, some churches use alcohol when they observe the communion. Other churches like ours use grape juice. The cup stands for a new covenant Jesus made with

us. The old covenant was established and maintained by animal sacrifice and by obeying the Old Testament Law. A priest served as the middle-person for the Israelites when he presented sacrifices to God. The Law summarizes God's requirements for His people. Jesus paved the way for us to the Father through His blood. All those who receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord can approach God in-person. Also, Jesus gives us a new life when He saves us. This new nature enables us to live in submission to Him. Those who love Jesus will listen to His commands. When talking about the bread and the cup, Paul repeats Jesus' words: "Do this in remembrance of me." This ceremony helps us remember Jesus' salvation work. Also, notice that Jesus only broke one bread and He passed around the same cup. It highlights our union with fellow believers through Christ. "Communion" is derived from the Latin word "*communio*," which means a community. When we break down the word "communion," we get the prefix "comm," which means together, and "union" which refers to a connection. We live in an individualistic world. People just mind their own business. Unfortunately, the same mentality seeps into the church. Some people attend a church service like going to a movie theatre. They arrive alone, greet no one and sneak out quietly at the end. Church life should be about building relationship. You sit at the table with family members when you eat dinner. Your parents will be upset if you just grab your food and go back to your bedroom or sit in front of the TV. A family meal is not just about eating. It is about improving relationship. Likewise, going to church is not only about listening to a sermon. As such, an online church is not a Biblical idea. No church will encourage its members to order take-out communion and enjoy it at home either! Coming to church is about mutual edification. You need others' encouragement and care as much as they need the same from you! Many of you come early, sip tea or coffee and chat with fellow members. Those interactions help strengthen our bonds. We are a family in Christ when we get together.

## 2. Look Inward 内省

Communion is a time for us to look backward to what Jesus did for us. It is also an opportunity for us to look inward at our spiritual condition. Paul warns us in verse 27: **Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.** What is considered an "unworthy manner"? At that time, Christians gathered for a love feast before the communion. It is similar to our church potluck where everyone brings something to share with others. However, the Corinthian church members turned the event into a wild party. Paul convicts them in verses 20-21: **20 When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. 21 For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk.** Some people started eating before others arrived. They did not spare food for the poorer folks. Some members even got drunk. They changed the church into a bar! They defiled the communion. Hence, they insulted the Lord. It is like someone vandalizes tombstones by spraying paint all over them. It disrespects the deceased people whose names are on the tablets. Partaking the communion in an unworthy manner may lead to some serious outcomes. Paul continues in verses 28-30: **28**

Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. Those who show contempt to the communion may trigger God's judgment. Some may get sick, others even die. An incident in Acts 5 is a good example. A couple Ananias and Sapphira sold their properties and they told the leaders that they had donated everything to the church. They lied. Apostle Peter confronted the husband, then later the wife. Both of them dropped dead. They had no obligation to give all they had to the church. They were judged by God because they were dishonest. To say that God may discipline us with a disease does not mean that every sickness is a result of sins. But it is surely a good habit to look inward as we come to the communion. Spend some time and quiet yourself before the Lord. Ask Him to reveal any sin, then pray to Him for forgiveness. Paul says no one should receive the bread and cup in an unworthy manner. The fact is that nobody is worthy to approach God if not because of His grace. That should humble us. We often stumble in sin. But God always welcomes us back when we confess our sins. Therefore, there must be joy and thanks whenever we observe the communion. God's love is greater than what we can imagine. When we consume the bread and cup, both items enter into our body. It reminds us that Jesus is always with us. Since the communion is a reminder of our relationship with Jesus, it is reserved only for believers. Just like many churches, we also make baptism a requirement for partaking the communion. Baptism does not save a person. It is a testimony that professes one's faith. Communion is like a family meal that is only for God's children.

### 3. Look Forward 前瞻

The communion helps us look backward on the salvation work of Jesus. Participants should also look inward before joining the ceremony. Moreover, it motivates us to look forward to Jesus' return. Paul says in verse 26: **For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.** First up, the Bible does not designate how frequent we should observe the communion. Some churches do so monthly, others weekly. Our church administers the elements every even month. Secondly, communion has an evangelistic effect. Paul says we use this ritual to proclaim the Lord's death. The central doctrine of the Christian faith is the cross of Jesus Christ. We cannot talk about God's love by skipping Jesus' death. It is unpleasant when people think of torture, blood and death. However, we must realize the ugliness and seriousness of sin before we begin to comprehend the great love of God. Jesus did not die for good people, for there is none based on God's standard. Jesus only died for sinful people. If you do not admit how bad you are in God's eye, then you will not understand that you need the Savior. Thirdly, we look forward Jesus' return as we observe the communion. On that day, He will bring all the believers into heaven. The Lord foretold this to the disciples at the Last Supper in Mark 14:25 – **“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.”** Jesus ascended back to heaven 40 days after He rose from the dead. The Bible has no record

that He administered the communion to believers during that period of time. Churches follow Jesus' instructions and observe the ritual ever since. It is like a rehearsal each time we partake the bread and cup. We keep practicing until Jesus returns. I have officiated quite a few weddings. There will usually be a rehearsal before the wedding day. We go over the procedure a few times. Everyone is filled with excitement. It is common for people to make mistakes in the rehearsal. They may forget what to say or who should go after whom. I will encourage everyone to relax. Everything will be fine on the big day. Similarly, the communion is a rehearsal to get ready for Jesus' glorious return. We eat a tiny cracker and drink a few cc of juice. But we will enjoy a wedding feast in heaven. We now feel the presence of the Lord in our spirits. But we will see Him face to face in glory. There is a dismissal after every church service. But we will worship the Lord unceasingly in His Kingdom. With all that in mind, what are some proper responses when we observe the communion? First, there should be faith. When Jesus said He will come back then it will surely happen. He is the Lord of truth, and He never lies. Everything in the Bible about Him will come true if it has not happened already. Then there is also hope. This world is only our temporary home. The communion reminds us that we belong to God's family. God has prepared an eternal dwelling place for His children.

## CONCLUSION 結論

The communion reminds us Jesus' work and our identity as a result. Jesus loves us by dying for us. Those who claim Jesus as their Lord are united with Him. It is all because of the power in His blood. Let me conclude with a sad but powerful true story. On a certain morning, Jim and Vera got a phone call no parent likes to receive. Their son John was involved in a serious car accident. As the couple rushed to the scene, they saw a pool of blood on the road. Vera faced the reality as she said: "John went home – home to be with his Heavenly Father!" How she wished she could collect the blood and put it back into her son. Vera later recalled: "That blood, for me, at that moment, became the most precious thing in the world because it was life. It was life-giving blood and it belonged in my son." Jim noticed that cars were driving past the intersection and right through the blood on the ground. His heart ached. He wanted to cover the blood with his coat and cry out: "You will not drive over the blood of my son!" All of a sudden, Vera understood for the first time why the Bible keeps emphasizing the blood of Jesus. It is the strongest word we can relate to life. Jesus shed His blood. It was the highest price the Heavenly Father could pay. It is the most precious gift He could give us. May we never trample over Jesus' blood in our mind and on our lips. We are saved not because of any good work we do, but through the great work Jesus did for us. He died for us so that we can live for Him.

## INTRODUCTION 引言

我們會記住我們認為重要的事情，可能是密碼、好朋友的生日或我們在 Walmart 停車的位置。此外，我們會在重要的日子做一些特別的事情。你的家庭可能有一些獨特的傳統。也許是一家人相聚吃感恩節大餐，然後一起佈置聖誕裝飾。每個國家也會慶祝一年中的重要日子。剛過去的星期一被稱為陣亡將士紀念日。第一次記念那個節日是在 1868 年，對象是美國內戰中陣亡的士兵。它的原名是「裝飾日」，因為人們用鮮花裝飾墓碑。在 1971 年，國會將這個節日改名為陣亡將士紀念日。從那時起，人們在五月的最後一個星期一慶祝這個節日。這一天從此成為記念在任何戰爭中犧牲的軍人的日子。由於這些勇敢的將士的貢獻，我們在這個國家享有自由和安全。除了尊敬軍人以外，基督徒也應該永遠感謝耶穌基督的犧牲。祂為我們的罪死在十字架上。主設立聖餐，並要求所有的信徒以此來記念祂的死。除了聖餐之外，浸禮是耶穌要求教會遵守的另一個儀式。當我們舉行這兩項禮儀時，我們就表明了對耶穌的順服。我們的教會在每雙數月的第一個主日舉行聖餐。讓我們在舉行儀式之前重溫儀式背後的意義。聖餐提醒我們耶穌的工作並我們因此得到的身份。

## EXPLANATION 解釋

### 1. Look Backward 回顧

首先，這個儀式幫助我們回顧過去。它提醒我們耶穌犧牲的愛。保羅在 23-24 節說：23 我當日傳給你們的，原是從主領受的，就是主耶穌被賣的那一夜，拿起餅來，24 祝謝了，就擘開，說：「這是我的身體，為你們捨的，你們應當如此行，為的是記念我。」在最後的晚餐中，主用一個餅來代表祂的身體。擘餅表示祂將要忍受的苦難。祂當晚被捕，隔天就被釘在十字架上。祂被毆打，頭上戴著荊棘冠冕，手腳被釘子刺穿。耶穌經歷了極大的痛苦和羞恥。除了餅之外，還有一個杯子。請看第 25 節：飯後，也照樣拿起杯來，說：「這杯是用我的血所立的新約，你們每逢喝的時候，要如此行，為的是記念我。」那個杯像徵耶穌的寶血。很可能，耶穌與門徒分享的是淡的酒。如今，有些教會在舉行聖餐時會用酒。其他像我們的教會則使用葡萄汁。這個杯代表耶穌與我們所立的新約。舊約是透過動物獻祭和遵守舊約律法而建立和維持的。當以色列人向神獻祭時，祭司充當中間人。律法包括了神對祂子民的要求。耶穌用祂的血為我們鋪平了通往天父的道路。凡接受耶穌為救主和生命的主宰的人都可以親自來到神面前。此外，當耶穌拯救我們時，祂也給了我們新的生命。這個新的性情使我們能夠過順服祂的生活。愛耶穌的人會聽從祂的命令。當談到餅和杯時，保羅重複了耶穌的話：「你們應當如此行，為的是記念我。」這個儀式使我們想到耶穌的救贖工作。另外，請注意耶穌只擘開一個餅，並傳遞同一個杯子。它強調我們透過基督與信徒彼此聯合。聖餐的英文「Communion」這個字來自拉丁文「communio」，意思是群體。當我們拆開「communion」這個字時，我們得到字首「comm」，意思是在一起，而「union」指的是連接。我們生活在一個個人主義的世界。人們只管自己的事。很可惜，同樣的心態也滲透到教會中。有些人參加教會禮拜就像去電影院一樣。他們單獨的來，不與任何人打招呼，然後悄悄溜走。教會生活應該是為了建立

關係。你在家吃晚餐時應該是和家人坐在桌邊。如果你拿了食物便回到房間或是坐在電視機前，你的父母肯定會不高興。家庭聚餐不只是吃飯，乃是為了增進關係。同樣，來教會不只是為了聽講道。因此，網路教會並不符合聖經的教導。沒有教會會鼓勵成員訂購外帶聖餐並在家中享用！來到教會是為了互相造就。你需要別人的鼓勵和關心，同樣別人也需要你的鼓勵和關心！我們中的有些人提早來，一邊喝著茶或咖啡，一邊與其他會友聊天。這些互動能加強我們的連繫。當我們聚在一起時，我們就是在基督裡的一家人。

## 2. Look Inward 內省

聖餐是我們回顧耶穌為我們所做的一切的時刻。這也是我們內省自己屬靈光景的一個機會。保羅在 27 節警告我們：**所以，無論何人，不按理吃主的餅，喝主的杯，就是乾犯主的身、主的血了。**什麼情形是「不按理」？那時，基督徒在聖餐前聚集在一起吃愛宴。這類似於我們教會的聚餐，每個人都帶一些食物與其他人分享。然而，哥林多教會的成員卻把這個活動變成了一場瘋狂的派對。保羅在 20-21 節責備他們：**20 你們聚會的時候，算不得吃主的晚餐；21 因為吃的時候，各人先吃自己的飯，甚至這個飢餓，那個酒醉。**有些人在其他人到達之前就開始吃飯。他們沒有為一些窮人留下食物。有的成員甚至喝醉了。他們把教會變成了酒吧！他們玷污了聖餐。因此，他們羞辱了主。這就像有人在墓碑上噴漆來作破壞。這是不尊重名字刻在石板上的死者。不按理參與聖餐可能會導致一些嚴重的後果。保羅在 28-30 節繼續說：**28 人應當自己省察，然後吃這餅、喝這杯。29 因為人吃喝，若不分辨是主的身體，就是吃喝自己的罪了。30 因此，在你們中間有好些軟弱的與患病的，死的也不少。**那些藐視聖餐的人可能會觸發神的審判。有些人會生病，有些人甚至會死亡。使徒行傳第五章的一件事就是一個很好的例子。亞拿尼亞和撒非喇夫婦賣掉了他們的財產，並告訴領袖們他們把所有的錢都捐給教會了。他們撒謊了。使徒彼得質問丈夫，後來又質問妻子。兩人都倒地身亡。他們沒有義務將一切所有的奉獻給教會。他們因為不誠實而受到神的審判。說神可以用疾病來管教我們，並不代表每一次生病都是罪的結果。但當我們來到聖餐桌前時，向內省察無疑是一個好習慣。花點時間安靜在主面前，請求祂顯明任何罪，然後祈求祂的饒恕。保羅說，任何人都不應以不配的方式領用餅和杯。事實上，如果不是因為神的恩典，沒有人有資格接近神。這應該使我們謙卑。我們常常在罪中跌倒。但當我們認罪時，神總是歡迎我們回頭。因此，每當我們守聖餐時，心中應該充滿喜樂和感恩。神的愛遠超過我們的想像。當我們吃餅、喝杯的時候，兩樣東西就進入我們的身體。這提醒我們，耶穌永遠與我們同在。由於聖餐是為了提醒我們與耶穌的關係，因此它只為信徒而設。就像許多教會一樣，我們將浸禮當作領用聖餐的要求。浸禮不能拯救一個人。那個儀式是見證一個人的信仰。聖餐就像家人聚餐，只留給神的兒女。

## 3. Look Forward 前瞻

聖餐幫助我們回顧耶穌的救贖工作。參與者在儀式之前應該向內省察。此外，它激勵我們前瞻耶穌的再來。保羅在第 26 節說：**你們每逢吃這餅，喝這杯，是表明主的死，直等到他來。**首先，聖經並沒有指定我們應該多久守一次聖餐。有些教會是每月一次，有些則每週都有。我們的教會每個雙數月都會設立聖餐。其次，聖餐有傳福音的功用。保羅說我們

用這個儀式來宣告主的死。基督信仰的核心教義是耶穌基督的十字架。我們不能忽略耶穌的死而只談論神的愛。當人們想到酷刑、流血和死亡時，就會感到不舒服。然而，在我們仍未了解神的大愛之前，我們必須先認識到罪的醜陋和嚴重性。耶穌不是為好人而死，因為根據神的標準世上沒有好人。耶穌只為罪人而死。如果你不承認自己在神眼中有多糟糕，那麼你就不會明白你需要救主。第三，當我們守聖餐時，我們期待耶穌的再來。到那一天，祂會把所有信徒帶進天堂。主在馬可福音 14:25 最後的晚餐中向門徒預告：「我實在告訴你們，我不再喝這葡萄汁，直到我在神的國裡喝新的那日子。」耶穌從死裡復活 40 天後升天。聖經沒有記載祂在那段時間與信徒守聖餐。從那時起，教會就按照耶穌的吩咐來遵守這個禮儀。每次我們分享餅和杯時，就像一次排練。我們重複練習直到耶穌再來。我主持過不少婚禮。典禮之前通常會進行彩排。我們將整個過程重複了幾次。每個人的心情都很興奮。在排練中出錯是很常見的。人們可能會忘記該說什麼或誰應該跟在誰的後面。我會鼓勵大家放鬆。到了結婚當天一切都會沒問題的。同樣，聖餐是預演，準備耶穌榮耀的歸來。我們只吃一塊小餅乾，喝幾毫升果汁。但我們會在天堂享受婚宴。我們目前在靈裡感受到主的同在。但我們會在榮耀中面對面見到祂。每次主日崇拜都有散會的時候。但我們會在主的國度裡不停止地敬拜祂。考慮到這些因素，當我們守聖餐時該有什麼正確的態度？首先，我們要有信心。當耶穌說祂會再來時，事情就一定會發生。祂是真理的主，祂從不說謊。聖經中關於祂的一切，如果還沒發生的話，就一定會應驗。另外還有盼望。這個世界只是我們暫時的家。聖餐提醒我們，我們屬於神的家庭。神為祂的兒女預備了永遠的居所。

## CONCLUSION 結論

聖餐提醒我們耶穌的工作並我們因此得到的身份。耶穌愛我們，為我們而死。那些宣稱耶穌為主的人與祂連結。這一切都是因為祂寶血中的力量。讓我以一個悲慘但有力的真實故事作為結束。有一天早上，吉姆和維拉收到了沒有家長願意接聽的電話。他們的兒子約翰遭遇了一場嚴重的車禍。當倆夫婦趕到現場時，看到路上有一灘血跡。維拉面對現實說：「約翰回家了 – 回家和他的天父在一起！」她多麼希望能夠收集血液並放回兒子的體內。維拉後來回憶道：「那一刻，對我來說，那些血成了世界上最珍貴的東西，因為它就是生命。那是賦予生命的血液，它是屬於我兒子的。吉姆注意到汽車駛過十字路口，直接壓過地上的血跡。他的心隱隱作痛。他想用外套蓋住血跡，並大聲喊道：「你不准開車踩我兒子的血！」突然間，維拉第一次明白了為什麼聖經一直強調耶穌的血。那是我們能聯想到生命的最強烈字眼。耶穌流下祂的血。那是天父所能付出的最高代價。那是祂能給我們最珍貴的禮物。願我們永遠不會在心裡和言語上踐踏耶穌的寶血。我們得救不是因為我們做了任何善事，而是因為耶穌為我們所做的偉大工作。祂為我們死，好讓我們為祂而活。