

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with communion. As a bit of trivia, this was the first meal eaten on the moon. It was observed there by Buzz Aldrin on July 20, 1969. He keyed his mike and said: *"I would like a few moments of silence . . . and to invite each person listening in, wherever and whomever they may be, to pause for a moment and contemplate the events of the past few hours, and give thanks in his or her own way"*. Then, with his mike turned off, Aldrin read a passage from the Bible, partook of the bread and the wine, and then offered a private prayer. How simple! Buzz Aldrin simply did what Jesus commanded him to do. How profound! A human being "communed" with the Creator of the Universe.

I mention this to salute this famous astronaut for doing his part to give communion the prominence it deserves. Remember! The early church **"came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7)** It was apparently the primary reason they came together. It celebrated an event so unique, special, magnificent, and spectacular that it is almost beyond human comprehension. Neither men nor angels saw it coming. Peter explained that the prophets searched intently with the greatest care to understand this mystery, and even the angels longed to look into these things. The sheer magnitude of what God was planning, however, still remained a mystery (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

In 1927, an astronomer named Georges Lemaître came up with the Big Bang Theory to explain the origin of the universe. The "theory" is that around 13.8 billion years ago the universe began as a microscopic singularity. Then came the explosion known as the "Big Bang". Astronomers "believe" that in the first second after the universe began, the surrounding temperature was about 10 billion degrees Fahrenheit. Miraculously, this microscopic singularity expanded into millions and billions of stars, planets, and galaxies. Somehow life "miraculously" occurred in this expanding universe.

As Christians, we believe God created the heavens and earth. The focus of our faith, however, is not that a microscopic singularity expanded and became the universe. Rather, we believe that the God Who created the universe became a microscopic singularity in the womb of a virgin. The utter implausibility of the incarnation staggers the imagination. This is not a peripheral matter to be pushed aside as an option. The incarnation of Christ is foundational to our Christian faith. The "breaking of bread" symbolizes and reminds us of what God did! We believe that God so loved the world that He gave Himself to save it. We simply break bread because He commanded us to. While our finite minds cannot fully comprehend His infinite love, the more we commune with Christ the more we understand. Communion is therefore an integral part of Christian worship. The Jerusalem church continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42). They even broke bread in their homes (Acts 2:46). The "breaking of bread" in Christian worship is also known as "communion" and the "Lord's Supper".

Paul explained "communion" to the Corinthians like this: **"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 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.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."** Note that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper so that we would remember Him, His death, and His coming again. To forget what God has done is not only irrational, it is the supreme manifestation of ingratitude!

Paul continued: **“So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.”** Those who work around power learn to treat it with respect. A dear friend, Dennis Moss, made a mistake working with high voltage electricity and lost both arms up to his elbows. Nuclear power is even more deadly and requires additional respect and caution. The same respect needs to be exercised when approaching God. Remember! The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The bread and the wine represent the body and blood of Jesus and “many” in Corinth were weak and sick because of the careless way they took communion. Others had “fallen asleep” or “died” for the same reason.

Paul continued: **“Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world. So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together. Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment. And when I come I will give you further directions.” (1 Cor. 11:23-34).** Jesus instituted the communion supper during a Passover meal (Mk.14:22). While the disciples were focused on which one of them was the greatest (Lk. 22:24-30), Jesus was focused on service and therefore washed His disciple’s feet (Jn. 13:2-17). If they would only love one another, as Christ loved them, all men would know that they were His disciples (Jn. 13:34-35). So the early church gave love priority and ate together in “love feasts” (Jude 12). As a part of the love feast they took bread and wine and “communed” with Christ. Communing with Christ cannot be separated from our love for God, His love for us, and our love for one another!

There is obviously something supernatural taking place when we commune with Christ. Jesus promised to be present on such an occasion and “participate” with those who “commune” in a special way (Matt. 26:29). Paul wrote: **“I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf” (1 Cor. 10:15-17).**

The dictionary definition of “communion” is: *“the sharing or exchanging of intimate thoughts and feelings, especially when the exchange is on a mental or spiritual level.”*

PLEASE TAKE TIME TO COMMUNE WITH GOD! WHEN YOU DIE AND MEET HIM FACE TO FACE YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce