

The Pelican and the Rat (or “Communion Joins Us”)

Delivered - December 1, 2024

Scriptures - [1 Corinthians 10:14-21](#)

Introduction

Lindsey went outside to greet Regina in the driveway and she heard a commotion on the roof. She turned to look what it was and saw a pelican standing on our roof eating a rat. It was so odd, so out of the ordinary, we thought there must be some spiritual significance here.

We looked to see what each animal would represent.

The pelican traditionally has represented the eucharist. According to the story, a mother pelican would pierce her breast with her beak and feed her young with her blood during times of famine. In another version of the story, the pelican would feed her dying young with her blood to revive them, but she would die in the process.

The pelican is often depicted in Christian art, including carvings, mosaics, and stained glass. Some tabernacles are even shaped like pelicans. Early Christians adopted the symbol of the pelican to represent *Christ* in a general sense, who gave His life for the salvation of humanity, and to represent *communion* specifically, where Christ continues to feed us with His body and blood.

The rat is symbolic of lack, sickness, and sin. The rat is cunning and sneaky. The rat nibbles and chews and devours. The rat is dirty.

So, what would the message of the pelican eating the rat on our roof be? Through the victorious sacrifice of Christ being pierced for us - lack, disease, sin, and carnality are devoured. That's the gospel...and the practical application that God is wanting us to get hold of through the prophetic witness of the pelican is a reminder to prioritize communion, to honor it, and keep it holy.

Communion celebrates the victory of Christ over lack and sickness and sin.
Communion declares that victory.
Communion applies that victory.

“I Want My Table Back”

Some have asked why I emphasize communion so much. One of the reasons is simply because God wants us to. How do I know that? Shortly after moving to California in 2022, the Lord woke me up with these words,

“I want My table back.”

I knew the Lord was talking about communion, the table of the Lord. This tells me that God has a desire in His heart that His people, in this generation, have the opportunity to fulfill.

A quick lesson in church history: After the ascension of Christ, one of the primary ways that the disciples victory was celebrated, declared, and applied the victory of Christ was at His table. The Lord’s supper was central to the church gathering. Luke mentions this many times in His gospel and in the book of Acts. For example, [Acts 2:42](#),

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

And again in [v46](#),

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

The early church was not a collection of individuals who gathered in a building once a week. They were a family that regularly gathered for special meals that celebrated the broken body and shed blood of the Lamb of God. And for 1,500 years, even after the church became institutionalized, the nucleus of God’s house was the Lord’s Table... communion was the apex of worship...*until* the reformers exchanged the table for a pulpit. Now, the focal point of church gatherings is no longer the broken body and the shed blood; it is the sermon. **Where there once was a table there now stands a pulpit.** And God is telling a generation, “I want My table back.”

The name of this fellowship is “The Table” for a reason. Giving God the table that He desires to have in His house is one of the mandates of this church family...I believe that is why there was a pelican eating a rat on the roof of the house where this church family gathers.

Communion Joins Us

I’ve spoken about this in the past, so I won’t go too deep here (you can listen to “Communion Joins Us...” from [Dec 24, 2023](#)), but I want to look at something Paul tells the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 10.

14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

15 I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (*koinonia* - *fellowship, participation with, sharing in*) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion (*koinonia*) of the body of Christ?

17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

18 Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?

20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship (*koinonia*) with demons.

21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons.

Paul understood that the altar was a place of covenant. Covenant joins things together. And the meal shared after the sacrifice by the worshippers was a celebration of *union* with the god of they just worshipped through sacrifice. There were believers that were participating in these meals and thinking nothing of it. Paul was rebuking them for being foolish. “The act of eating the sacrifice of *that* altar joins you to the god of that altar *and* the people who serve him.”

Symbolism

This was an opportunity here for Paul to say something like this,

“Guys, I know that it’s just a symbolic meal you are having with your pagan friends, but it sends the wrong message, so don’t do that.”

This would have been the perfect place for Scripture to say that the bread and the cup, just like meat sacrificed to demons, were symbolic representations. This was Paul's moment to clear up the misunderstanding of Jesus telling the crowds to eat His flesh and drink His blood, to soften the blow of Jesus' words in [John 6](#). But Paul doesn't do that. In fact, Paul doubles down on what Jesus telling the multitudes,

“...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" ([John 6.53](#)).

Are not those who eat of the sacrifice partakers of the altar?

Don’t you know that whoever eats of the sacrifice joins themselves to the altar?

[Matthew Henry](#), commenting on what Paul says here in [1 Corinthians 10](#), says this,

The Lord’s supper is a feast on the sacrificed body and blood of our Lord. And to eat of the feast is to partake of the sacrifice.

To put it plainly, I don’t believe that communion is merely symbolic. Symbols don’t have the power to harm you; yet Paul tells the Corinthians in [1 Corinthians 11:30](#) that some of them are sick and others have died because they were eating and drinking judgment upon themselves.

We have no problem believing that Paul’s handkerchief or Peter’s shadow could heal, but believing that the Lord’s table has intrinsic power makes many uncomfortable. While I disagree with the Catholic position of transubstantiation, I believe we as Protestants have swung too far to the opposite side of symbolism in an effort to counter that doctrine. There is truth in transubstantiation...something *does* change when we take communion, but it’s not the bread and the wine that change; it’s the faith-filled believer that changes.

If communion holds power for the believer, and I believe it does, than I don't want to be holding the short straw simply because I refused to contemplate its mysteries. If communion is more than a symbol, and I believe it is, than my prayer when I take communion is that the Holy Spirit would call me up into the mystery...that I would be seated at the table of the Lord;

where bread is flesh and wine is blood,
where kings serve and lay down there lives,
where the last is first and the least is greatest,
where the impossible becomes reality to anyone who would dare to believe that His world is nothing like our world.

We have been re-born into a kingdom that is breaking into this life. And to the degree that we yield to the mystery of *that* coming kingdom, we will hasten its arrival...and even before His return, we will bear the image of the King who declared that He is the living bread of God who stepped down from heaven to give life to the world.

The Eternal Plan of God

The eternal plan of God is to gather His family together and eat with them. Communion simultaneously prophecies (anticipates) that meal *and* makes that prophetic declaration visible. Communion is the gospel made visible.

Some Examples

Throughout Scripture, God is seen as the One providing a meal for us. For example,

Isaiah 25:6,

And in this mountain, the Lord of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice food, a feast of well-aged wine, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines.

Psalms 23:5,

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies

In **John 21** Jesus sits on the beach preparing breakfast for His disciples. It was a redemptive meal for Peter, where the three denials were redeemed with three declarations of love.

Jesus says in **Luke 12.37**,

Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching.
Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and
He will come and serve them.

In **Matthew 22**, Jesus tells a parable comparing the kingdom of heaven to a king who prepared a wedding feast for His Son. The feast is ready but those invited have busied themselves with other things. So the Master sends His servants out to the far reaches of the city to compel anyone they find to come and join Him for the feast.

God ate with Moses and the 70 elders on Mount Sinai.

It was in the breaking of bread that the disciples in Emaus had their eyes opened to realize Jesus was with them.

Jesus was ridiculed for who He ate with.

We could go on and on, but the point is clear: God has determined that He will meet with His people at a table of remembrance and celebration.

Have you ever prepared a meal for someone? It's a lot of work, and it costs something.
The price He paid was blood.

The work involved was not so much preparing the meal but in preparing the guests.

That's what communion does; it prepares us for that day when the Master will sit us at His table and serve us the ultimate communion meal. I believe God wanted to remind us of this.