

Partially adapted from a blog post by Jon Bloom on Desiring God.

Jonathan's sermon today is titled "No Matter the Circumstances". How is it possible to "give thanks in all circumstances," especially if those circumstances are horrible? What allows thanksgiving when life seems to be one discouragement, disappointment, or disaster after another?

Jesus models this in what we celebrate today; communion. In the Upper Room, Jesus [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." (Luke 22:19)

The Greek word for "thanks" in this verse is "eucharisteo." Here is what Ann Voskamp says:

The root word of eucharisteo is charis, meaning "grace." Jesus took the bread and saw it as grace and gave thanks. He took the bread and knew it to be gift and gave thanks. Eucharisteo, thanksgiving, envelopes the Greek word for grace, charis. But it also holds its derivative, the Greek word chara, meaning "joy." (Eucharisteo Conversation)

This is what Jesus' giving thanks meant. Thank you, Father, that my body, symbolized by this bread, is about to be brutally broken and I am about to be (momentarily) damned by your wrath (Is. 53:10) so that you will receive supreme glory in being able to forgive undeserving sinners (Ph. 2:11) and I will share eternally full joy (John 15:11, Ps. 16:11) with hundreds of millions of forgiven sinners made righteous through my sacrifice (Is. 53:11).

Jesus' thanks was not based on his present circumstances. He was about to endure the worst possible horror. He felt thankful to the Father for the grace and glory that was coming because of the cross and this gave him joy. It is the promise of future joy that fuels thankfulness. This is what the author of Hebrews meant when he wrote that, "Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2) Jesus' eyes were on future joy. This is where God wants your eyes: on the future joy he has promised you. Jesus endured all of this for us! Let's live in light of this truth.

At Cornerstone we practice what is called open communion. This means the only fence we put around the table is the one Scripture itself puts in place.

Communion here is open to all those who profess Jesus as their Lord and Savior. You do not need to be a member here, at Immanuel, or a certain denomination.

1 John 1:9 tells us that “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” And so, in that confidence, we enter into communion.

1 Corinthians 11:23b-24 “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.””

Pass the Bread: Eat in remembrance of Jesus.

1 Corinthians 11:25 “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.””

Pass the Juice: Drink in remembrance of Jesus.

1 Corinthians 11:26 “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

Closing Prayer