

Why You Should Praise God During Even Your Darkest Hour

We learn from Jesus that Communion is taken within community. It isn't meant to be a solo act in which an individual goes off by himself to take it alone.

Jesus broke the bread with His disciples as a group. Communion involves presence and participation. We take it together rather than by ourselves.

Over the centuries there has been much discussion as to the meaning of Communion. For example, when we take the bread or the fruit of the vine, do they literally change substance so that we ingest the actual body and blood of Jesus?

Certainly, that view can't be derived from Matthew 26:26. When Jesus took the bread and said, "This is My body," His body and the bread were two separate substances. In that moment of time, His body hadn't morphed into bread.

Jesus simply gave us an object lesson. Even as the bread was broken and distributed, so His body is broken and the nourishment from His life gives life to us. Through Jesus' choice of bread as a symbol of His body, we picture Jesus as the Bread of Life. Without bread—the common staple of food—we cannot live.

Next, Jesus took the cup. He didn't have to take it. Several hours after this moment, Jesus declared that He could call the Father and twelve legions of angels would be put at His disposal (Matt. 26:53). When you consider that it was only one legion of human soldiers—the Tenth Legion and some auxiliary troops—that destroyed Jerusalem and Masada 40 years later, you get an idea of the "firepower" Jesus had at His command.

So many of us have circumstances from which we wish we could

escape. It's easy to fantasize what life would be like if we just exited from the difficulty we are in. Are you willing also to drink a cup of trial, suffering, adversity and endurance in order to follow His will for your life?

Jesus gave thanks as He faced the immediate hours before Him that involved betrayal, Gethsemane, disciples forsaking Him, trials, scourging and crucifixion. It's a lesson for us, that we may also give thanks in all things. We don't give thanks for the things themselves, but for what God is working through all things.

Jesus faced the cross with an attitude of gratitude. He was grateful that He had done—to this point—all that the Father had asked of Him. He gave thanks for the past. But He also gave a present thanks as He took the bread with the men into whom He had poured His life. He knew their weaknesses and failures; but He also anticipated what they would do in subsequent years. He had faith in them, and He was grateful for them.

There are so many things that happen to us that could make us bitter. But Jesus sets the example. Facing a horrible death that He did not deserve, He nevertheless gave thanks. How could we do less in our hour of trial? Giving thanks in all things isn't easy. It's hard; at times, seemingly impossible. But gratitude must grow in our hearts or bitterness will take root and destroy us.

A Prayer: *Lord Jesus, may I never have a bitter or ungrateful heart. I want to always live with an attitude of gratitude.*

*Excerpted from Dr. Wood's book, Fearless: How Jesus Changes Everything, available from Vital Resources. **George O. Wood** is the general superintendent of the Assemblies of God. For the original article, visit .*