

## **5-31-20 Pentecost Sunday Communion NOTE: PUT THE COMMUNION TABLE SQUARE IN FRONT OF THE PODIUM**

Sermon- And One More Thing...

Scripture- 2 Peter 2:1-22, CTW Psalm 104:24-35

Hymns- 306, 291

Theme- Scripture tells us that it is the purpose of the Holy Spirit to lead God's people into all things true. In these days and times, the truth seems blurry and muddy, often being made so by the very people who profess to be expounding upon God's holy Word.

**ANNOUNCEMENT:** At the end of this service, as is our tradition, we will participate in a service of Holy Communion together. In order to do this in our current scattered condition, I invite you now to go to your kitchen and grab some bread or crackers or anything of that nature, and any kind of juice or water and come back into the room where you are viewing this so we can partake in spirit, even if we are not physically together.

### **I. Introduction: A Warning From Peter**

Here in his second letter, Peter takes the time to specifically warn us of danger for Christians trying to live their lives in the pattern of Christ.

**A. In the midst of our current trials we have seen the need to heed Peter's warnings. How have you kept yourself safe from the prowling wolves?**

"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep" (**2 Pet. 2:1-3**).

On October 28, 2012 a sermon was delivered that since then has become the most viewed religious talk in the history of YouTube. Oprah testified that this sermon changed how she viewed her life. Last I checked, as of September of last year, it had been viewed over 3 million times. The title of the sermon is "The Power of I Am."

Now, folks, as good evangelical Christians, as people of the Book and students of the Word and disciples of Christ, I would hope that if you and I heard the phrase "**I Am**," we would immediately think of either Moses barefoot before a burning bush from which the voice of God proclaimed "I AM WHO I AM," OR we would think of **John Chapter 8**, where Jesus definitively states that "Before Abraham was born, **I AM**."

But not once during this 'most viewed' Christian sermon was God ever referenced as the "**I AM**," or was Jesus linked to the "**I AM**" statement.

I believe this is indicative of the rut some Christians have fallen into, the rut of wrong focus and poor Bible study habits!

## **II. Beware of Getting in a Rut**

**A. Remember Pauls' words in his 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to Timothy, Chapter four, and if you don't remember, I encourage you to visit there:**

"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: <sup>2</sup> preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. <sup>3</sup> For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, <sup>4</sup> and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."

Peter would tell us the same thing about that popular "I AM" sermon...it falsely soothes the itching ears of many who are in the process of going astray.

For twenty-seven minutes which is the length of the sermon, the "**I AM**" proclamation was applied solely to what you and I say

about ourselves: I am healthy, I am prosperous, I am happy, I am smart, I am attractive, I am powerful!

Here Peter is not saying those things can't be true or that they're not true, but before you and I can get **OUR 'I Am'** straight, we have to get the truth of **THE great "I AM"** straight!

The gospel is first and foremost about Jesus Christ and before we can become what we were created to be or become what we have the potential to be, we need to accept the truth that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting our trespasses against us (**2 Cor. 5:19**).

**III. The only reason we can be something other than what we are is because Jesus emptied Himself of His "I AM-ness" for us.** If we don't get that, then we don't understand the Christian faith. Yes, He did what He did for you and me, but without Him – 'I Am' lost!

Today we commemorate the day of Pentecost... where we are to take time to come to the table set by God in the full glory of **His** Trinitarian fullness...not ours!

**A. The danger that you and I must be aware of is how easy it is to be misdirected by a subjective sleight-of-hand into believing what we want...what we really, really want!** Our identity, in and out of Christ, is based on what **He** says about us. **Out of Christ**, 'I Am' a sinner; **in Christ**, 'I Am' a saint!

But we know **that** only through the Holy Spirit inspired Word recorded by the apostles and prophets.

That's why we need to know and understand that we are currently in a worldly spiritual battle for the **truth**. The **truth** of who we are with or without Jesus.

A **truth** that is too important to leave to preachers and teachers who are not committed to correctly **preaching** and **teaching** the Word of God.

And that's why in **1 John 4:1**, we are told to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God because many false prophets have gone out into the world". Jesus told His disciples in

**Matthew 7:15** to “beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves”.

The New Testament writer, Jude, warned God’s people about certain persons who would creep in unnoticed and “turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (**Jude 4**).

The Apostle Peter said it like this: “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves” (**2 Pet. 2:1**).

What’s note-worthy is that both Jude and Peter referenced the denying of Jesus.

Jude says the false teacher denies Jesus by turning His grace into a license for immoral living: “Let us sin that grace may abound.” That is a complete and total denial of His nature, character and personality!

Peter says the false teacher denies Jesus by rejecting His prophecy/word that a day of judgment is coming:

“Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking following after their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation” (**2 Pet. 3:3-4**).

The fact that He hadn’t returned in their lifetime emboldened them to suggest that it would never happen. And without the promise of His coming, they figured they could live anyway they wanted.

**IV. We are currently experiencing a religious trend toward eradicating any mention of the return of Jesus in judgment in the Christian message.** Why? Because it doesn’t get the views on You Tube; it doesn’t sell books; it’s not what people want to hear.

Last April, the movie “Come Sunday” was released on Netflix. It was based on the true-life story of Carlton Pearson, the former

preacher for the Higher Dimensions Evangelistic Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma; a church of over 6,000.

According to a news release written by Lyle Weir of ABC News, Pearson came to the belief that the Bible was not written "as the literal word of God, but a book by men about God – primitive men prone to mistranslations, political agendas and human emotions." His conclusion was that "nobody goes to Hell." He now preaches for the All Souls Unitarian Church.

Recently, Michael Walrond, Jr. who leads the First Corinthian Baptist Church in Harlem, New York told his congregation that it's "insanity" to believe that men will go to Hell for rejecting Christ, and claimed that it is "not even what Jesus believes." (Christiannews.net)

Now, let's test that against the word of God. In **John 5:29**, Jesus Himself said that: "...An hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment".

In **John 8:24**, Jesus said that "unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins."

The Apostle Paul said in **2 Corinthians 5:10** that all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body.

In **Acts 17:31**, he told the gentiles that God "has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man who He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead".

The Hebrew writer wrote that "it is appointed for men to die once and then come the judgment." **Heb. 9:27**.

Once again, it comes down to who you want to believe? And so when Peter writes that "prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" **2 Pet. 1:21**, **you have to decide whether or not to accept it as God's word.**

Rob Bell, the founder of Mars Hill Bible Church, once one of the fastest growing churches in America, was put on the list of the 100 most influential people in the world by Time Magazine in 2011.

Here's the conclusion he arrived at in his best-selling book "Love Wins": "It's been clearly communicated to many that this belief in hell as eternal conscious torment is a central truth of the Christian faith and to reject it is, in essence, to reject Jesus. This is misguided and toxic and ultimately subverts the contagious spread of Jesus' message of love, peace, forgiveness and joy that our world desperately needs to hear."

Wow! That's a sweet deal! **But it's not God's word.**

Here's God's word through the Apostle Peter: "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world...when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly... then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment" **2 Pet. 2:4-9.**

#### **V. CONCLUSION: Don't be led astray!**

Be like the Berean believers who examined Scripture daily to see if what people told them squared with the word of God (**Acts. 17:11**).

Test the spirits to see whether they are from God (**1 Jn. 4:1**).

Be a student of the word who has trained their senses to discern good and evil (**Heb. 5:14**).

Be a disciple of Jesus Christ!

As His disciples, let us come to His table, prepared for us!

#### **Communion Service:**

LET US APPROACH THE TABLE OF GOD

**Let Us Pray!**

## **PRAYER OF CONSECRATION AND OF CONFESSION:**

God of mercy, whose Son, Jesus Christ,  
longs to gather us in the wide embrace of his love,  
we confess that we have been wayward children.

We have disobeyed your commands; our ears have been deaf  
to your call; our hearts have been cold to your love.

In thought, in word, and in deed,  
we have hurt others and dishonored your name.

in your great mercy receive us again as your well-beloved  
children,

not because we are worthy but for the sake of him  
who loved us and gave himself for us.

Father, there is a virus in the world that prohibits us from being  
together with each other, on this the most sacred of days.

But in truth the fact of the situation will never prohibit us from  
being together by virtue of your Holy Spirit dwelling in our  
hearts.

We pray that you will consecrate all of the elements which we  
have gathered, for the purpose of refreshing our spirit as only  
you can, In the name of your Son Jesus, who came so that we  
might have life in abundance, **Amen.**

### **Demonstration of the Elements:**

In the partaking of the elements, remember those words of our  
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which explained the reason he gave  
us the gift of Holy Communion:

**Scripture: Matthew 26:26-29** <sup>26</sup> While the disciples were  
eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it  
to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body broken  
for you." <sup>27</sup> Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to

them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. <sup>28</sup> This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup> I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

## **DEMONSTRATE THE ELEMENTS HERE**

**I invite you now to take and drink and eat all of it in remembrance of Him!**

**Closing Prayer-** Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart;

**through Christ our Lord**, who taught us to pray by saying, Our Father, Who art in Heaven...hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever, Amen!