

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA, PCA

So Send I You

Villa Rica 04/06/03

Communion Service

Just before his betrayal and arrest in the garden of Gethsemane and his subsequent illegal trials and sentence by Pontius Pilate to a crucifixion death Jesus had his last Passover with his apostles in Jerusalem. It was at that time that he instituted the observance of the Lord's Supper. He took a piece of unleavened bread, broke it and gave it to them telling them that this was his body that was given for them which they were to do in remembrance of him. Then, after they had eaten, he took the cup of Passover wine and said, this cup, which is poured out for you, is the new covenant in My blood.

So again today we are going to remember the great sacrifice he made for us by observing this sacrament. But this sacrament is not the end all of our remembrance of him. After he rose again from the dead he appeared on a number of occasions and gave purpose and meaning to his sacrifice. He gave instructions on how his body the Church was to go forward with the mission he accomplished. There is a follow up mission for you and me. At an appearance to the apostles and disciples we read in Luke's gospel this account of an appearance.

Luke 24:36-49 ³⁶While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst. ³⁷But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. ³⁸And He said to them, **“Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹“See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”** ⁴⁰And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. ⁴¹While they still could not believe *it* because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, **“Have you anything here to eat?”** ⁴²They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; ⁴³and He took it and ate *it* before them. ⁴⁴Now He said to them, **“These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”** ⁴⁵Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶and He said to them, **“Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸“You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹“And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”**

He first evidenced the reality of his resurrection. He told them to touch him in order to be convinced that he was not an apparition or spirit. Then he even ate a piece of broiled

fish to show that he was a functioning person in a human body raised from the dead who was appearing and speaking with them.

He then reviewed the scriptures in the law, the prophets and the psalms that foretold that he must suffer and rise again from the dead on the third day, as he had now done. He then told them that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations. He issued that decree to all there, both apostles and disciples. We are all given a commission to take this word of God's mercy and forgiveness to all people. He did not exclude any person or nation. All men need his salvation and our task is to proclaim the message of his salvation by all possible means to all people. He declared just after the institution of the Lord's Supper, **As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.** John 17:18.

As we have been studying the book of Acts we learn that the disciples did exactly that. They began in Jerusalem and then the gospel spread to Samaria, Judea and to all parts of the Roman Empire. This has been going on for twenty centuries. He means for it to still go on today. We are the first generation of the 21st century. We have a job to do. We have our orders from our Commander in Chief to take this word of mercy and forgiveness to our family, our friends, our neighbors and to those afar off, as many as we can reach by all means possible.

As we come to the Table today to remember his self sacrifice of himself, let us leave the Table in obedience to his command. We have a mission. Let us do it!

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