

CHAPTER 1

formless and void

I like Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of the second verse of Genesis in *The Message*:

“Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness.”

It was a vacant lot. Blank. Barren.

Nothing there. Zip. Nada. Bupkas.

Yet, in the beginning and in the infinity surrounding it, through the corridors of eternity, God's voice thundered: “This bread is my body which is broken for you! This wine is the new covenant established in my blood, which is poured out for you!”

What we call the Lord's Supper, Communion, or Eucharist was in our Father's mind, heart, and plan eons before his Son declared to a dozen hand-picked men:

“I have eagerly desired (NIV) ...

“with deep longing” (TLB) ...

“You've no idea how much I have looked forward” (Message) ...

“I have earnestly and intensely desired”
(AMPLIFIED) ...

“With an intense desire I desired” (WUEST) ...

... to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat of it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”¹

Feel his passion!

“I was pacing the heavens,” I AM declared, “staring at my perpetual calendar, listening impatiently to the ticking clock. There’s never been a Passover like this one nor ever will be again. It trumpets the arrival of a new covenant, releases a new revelation, and throws open the gates of heaven to a relationship between us that you never could have imagined.”

Bread and wine.

The elements of merciful God’s promise to the sinful race he had not yet created. They were before the beginning, and they will be forever—that unique blend of natural elements that he chose to express his only begotten Son.

¹ Luke 22:15-16

They pervade his Word, from the creation of time to the end of days, from Genesis to the Revelation of the Christ.

Bread and wine were Melchizadek's gift to Abraham and his army.² They were the symbols of God's presence in the desert tabernacle³ and the elements attending the sacrificed lamb at the Passover.⁴

The daily sacrifices of Israel. Grain offerings and drink offerings. "A tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a fourth of a hin of oil from pressed olives and a fourth of a hin of wine ... a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the Lord by fire."⁵

Gift after gift and sacrifice after sacrifice, the bread and wine carried their promise ever nearer to the Cross.

Paradoxically, a pleasing aroma to God, despite the outrageous horror of it.

But only our Papa comprehends the full significance of these amazing elements. Only our Father, whose constant delight is to look upon these precious earth-fruits ... and see his Son.

² Genesis 14:18

³ Exodus 25:29-30

⁴ Exodus 12

⁵ Exodus 29:40, 41

CHAPTER 2

remember me

“... Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, and said to them, “Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord.”⁶

Hebrew children, thousands of years ago, looked at a pile of stones, remembered God’s miracle, and were humbled and grateful.

We are a race that needs to be reminded, both of good things and of bad. So we, too, set up piles of memorial stones.

We celebrate birthdays and anniversaries and recall God’s blessings.

We walk through Yad Vashem’s Hall of Remembrance in Jerusalem, shudder at the names of Nazi extermination

⁶ Joshua 4:4-7

sites engraved in the floor, and listen to a seemingly endless litany of names in the Children's Memorial. And our hearts groan, "Never again."

Communion, however, is much more than a memorial stone, because Jesus is neither dead nor gone.

"Open your eyes wide," he tried to explain to his disciples. "Strain to hear. Remember the words of your prophets. I AM their fulfillment. I AM the Passover Lamb, the unleavened bread, and the cup of salvation. I AM the grain offering and the drink offering."

And he says again, "Do this in remembrance of me."

Traditionally, we've understood this to mean that we are to remember all the things Jesus did, and continues to do, for us.

And we should.

God rebuked the men of Ephraim who, "forgot what he had done, the wonders he had shown them."⁷

Nevertheless, he did not say, "Remember what I taught you" or "Remember the miracles I performed" or even "Remember the sacrifice I am about to make for you."

He said, "Remember *me*."

The bread and wine is about far more than the Cross. The Cross was the means, not the end.

⁷ Psalm 78:9-11

The Lord's Supper marked the beginning of a courtship and the pledge of an intimacy that had been available to no one since Eden.

Bread and wine has always been precious to our Father's heart, because he alone is able to see beyond the Cross into the bedchamber.

It is a symbol of his love. It is dear to him, because it is a picture of mankind being drawn back to union with him. It is about consummation. About intimacy. Oneness, absorption, bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh.

When we come to the communion table, we say, "Jesus, I want to go deeper than a surface relationship with you. I want to be as familiar with you as possible. I want to know you as you know me."

Intimate unity between God and his ultimate creation is the goal that enabled Jesus to endure the cross, scorning its shame.⁸

That divine desire for intimacy caused him to rebuke the religious people of his time.

"Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will

⁸ Hebrews 12:2

tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”⁹

The word translated knew is the same Greek word that is used in Matthew 1:25, which says that Joseph “*knew* her not until she had brought forth her firstborn son,” meaning that Joseph had no marital relations with Mary prior to Jesus’ birth.

Jesus warns that we can be the greatest healers, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, or evangelists and still miss the mark, because we were never his greatest and most intimate lovers.

⁹ Matthew 7:22-23

CHAPTER 3

tents

Moses could never seem to get enough of God.
And God could never seem to get enough of Moses.

“How precious it is, Lord, to realize that you are thinking about me constantly! I can’t even count how many times a day your thoughts turn toward me. And when I waken in the morning, you are still thinking of me!”¹⁰

“For the Lord takes delight in his people ...”¹¹

Ever since that unsettling meeting in the wilderness, when God introduced himself through a burning bush as I AM, Moses wanted more. And God was happy to oblige.

“He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel.”¹²

Why?

¹⁰ Psalm 139:17-18 LB

¹¹ Psalm 149:4

¹² Psalm 103:7

Because every day in the desert, Moses left the camp and sat in a tent, alone with God. In response, the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, “as a man speaks with his friend.”¹³

Unlike the Israelites who were content with God’s protection and provision, Moses burned like that amazing bush—ablaze but not consumed—and yearned for his presence.

One day, when God told Moses that he had found favor, Moses pressed his advantage.

“If you are pleased with me,” he said boldly, “teach me your ways so I may know you.”¹⁴

And God replied, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.”¹⁵

Because you have sacrificed so much of your precious time and attention to be with me, God said, I will reveal myself to you.

But that still wasn’t good enough for Moses. Next, he begged God to show him his glory.

And God did.

Today, the Godhead lives in us, not in a tent, tabernacle, or temple. Unlike Moses and the Hebrew priests, we have

¹³ Exodus 33:11

¹⁴ Exodus 33:13

¹⁵ Exodus 33:17

access to full, unrestrained, unrestricted relationship and intimacy with him. And every time we share communion with him, we come away knowing him a little more deeply and become a little more part of him.