

Jesus Establishes the Sacred Ceremony of Communion

From the training novel *Come Quickly Dawn* by George Patterson, about 6 minutes

Participants (*No need to memorize lines; the aim is to relive sacred events, not to perform*)

Alex

Lucy

Tino (a child)

Prompter Shouts a brief phrase, and Echoes repeat it.

Echoes Adults and children, all who want to take part, repeat prompter's words.

Tino Papa, why do you and mama drink blood in our meetings?

Lucy Tino means Communion, Alex.

Prompter & Echoes The Lord's Supper.

Alex I will try to explain it, Tino. At Jesus' Last Supper, he broke bread and handed it to his disciples; he said, "Take, eat."

Prompter & echoes "This is my body."

Tino My friend Abdul says we are cannonballs, because we drink human people's blood.

Lucy Tino means cannibals, Alex. Help us both understand this.

Alex Before Jesus' time, Jews would tie a Lamb on the altar, lay their hands on its head, and confess their sins. A priest cut the lamb's throat and blood spurted all over the altar, like in a slaughterhouse. Imagine the smell!

Lucy Alex!

Prompter & echoes Cruel!

Alex It was ugly: the stench of blood, manure, and smoke.

Lucy Disgusting! That was worship? It was shocking!

Alex Yes, because our sins are disgusting and shocking to God; they must be covered by an innocent victim's blood, so God can forgive us. The victim was a lamb and the basic truth has not changed; our sins still require an innocent victim's blood.

Tino Really? I sinned yesterday, Papa. Really bad! I give Andy a nosebleed. So I need a lamb to kill. Uncle Harold raises sheeps. Shall I go get one?

Alex Jesus is God's lamb now. He bled on the cross to take away our sins; we relive his death when we take Communion. That is why he said. "This is my body" when he handed them the bread.

Lucy Harold told me that Jesus meant it literally: that the bread is actually Jesus' flesh.

Prompter & Echoes Literally!

- Alex If it were literal, then the apostles would have bitten Jesus' arm.
The Communion bread really is Jesus' body, but in a mystical way.
No one understands a mystery.
- Lucy Lifeless bread does not need transforming; we do.
The bread is just a symbol, is it not?
- Alex It is a symbol, Lucy, but do not say 'just' a symbol.
It is much more. Eating it is a participation in Jesus' body,
as 1 Corinthians 10:16 says. The symbol points us to the real thing
that we experience in Communion, Jesus' presence.
- Tino Why do you call it 'simple,' Papa? To me it is complicated.
- Alex Symbol, not simple. Like a road sign, it points to something important.
When we heed the symbol with heartfelt faith and trust God to do
what the symbol points to, it takes on the authority and value
of the real thing that it symbolizes.
- Tino That is hard for me to understand, papa. I'm just little.
- Alex Okay, son, here is an example.
If I sign an agreement and later break my word,
can I excuse myself by saying, "My signature was only a symbol"?
- Tino No, Papa! You'd make me stand in the corner if I did that!
- Alex A symbol used with faith takes on the power of what it symbolizes.
The symbol affirms its reality. The Communion bread and wine
make Jesus' sacrifice real to us, not only by focusing our attention on it;
it also enables us to experience his presence.
Do you understand now, Tino?
- Tino I'm not supposed to, papa.
You said nobody understands the mystery.
- Prompter & echoes Touché!
- Lucy Tino has more sense than some theologians. They think they know
every detail about Communion and everything else.
I know one thing for sure about it; it makes me aware of Jesus' presence,
except when someone turns Communion into another teaching session.
- Alex I feel his presence, too, Lucy. The original Passover was a moving event,
Communion today corresponds to the Jewish Passover.
Jesus' words about eating his flesh to have eternal life
were also very moving; we should feel awe during Communion,
and not just analyze it abstractly.
- Tino Papa, I will not be bored no more when they serve Communion.
Now I know it's important. I will not squirm,
like last time when you took me out and paddled me.
- Alex That was not for squirming; you sneered at your mom
when she corrected you.
- Prompter & Echoes Aha!

- Lucy Alex, you have associated Communion with the Old Testament Passover. Why?
- Alex Passover recalls how God's people daubed the Lamb's blood by their doors. If the Death Angel saw the blood when he flew over Egypt, then he would pass over the house and not slay the oldest son.
- Lucy Wasn't Jesus eating the Passover meal with his disciples when he established the ceremony of the Lord Supper?
- Alex Yes, and that was a fearful time, the last night before he'd be crucified. Judas sneaked off in the dark to betray Jesus to his enemies.
- Lucy Jesus washed his disciples' feet to set an example of humble service, before they ate the Passover.
- Prompter & echoes Jesus' last supper before he died!