



The Bread of Life

August 2, 2020

Introduction

Invitation

Call to Worship:

L: Today we break bread together in the sacrament of Holy Communion.

P: We remember the gift of forgiveness and life in Christ when we share in the bread and the cup.

L: Let us remember our unity as the Body of Christ!

P: Let us worship our God!

Hymn: "Break Thou the Bread of Life"

Reading the Word: 1 Corinthians 10:15-17

Message: "One Body in Christ"

Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson

Prayer:

O God, we gather at the table to receive the bread and cup. We come humbly asking forgiveness for our sins and to remember your great love for us in Jesus Christ. We are grateful for the knowledge that, when we ask, our sins are forgiven. Keep us on the path of faithful discipleship, seeking your presence and recognizing that we are the body of Christ in this world, called and empowered to follow him in mission and ministry. Amen.

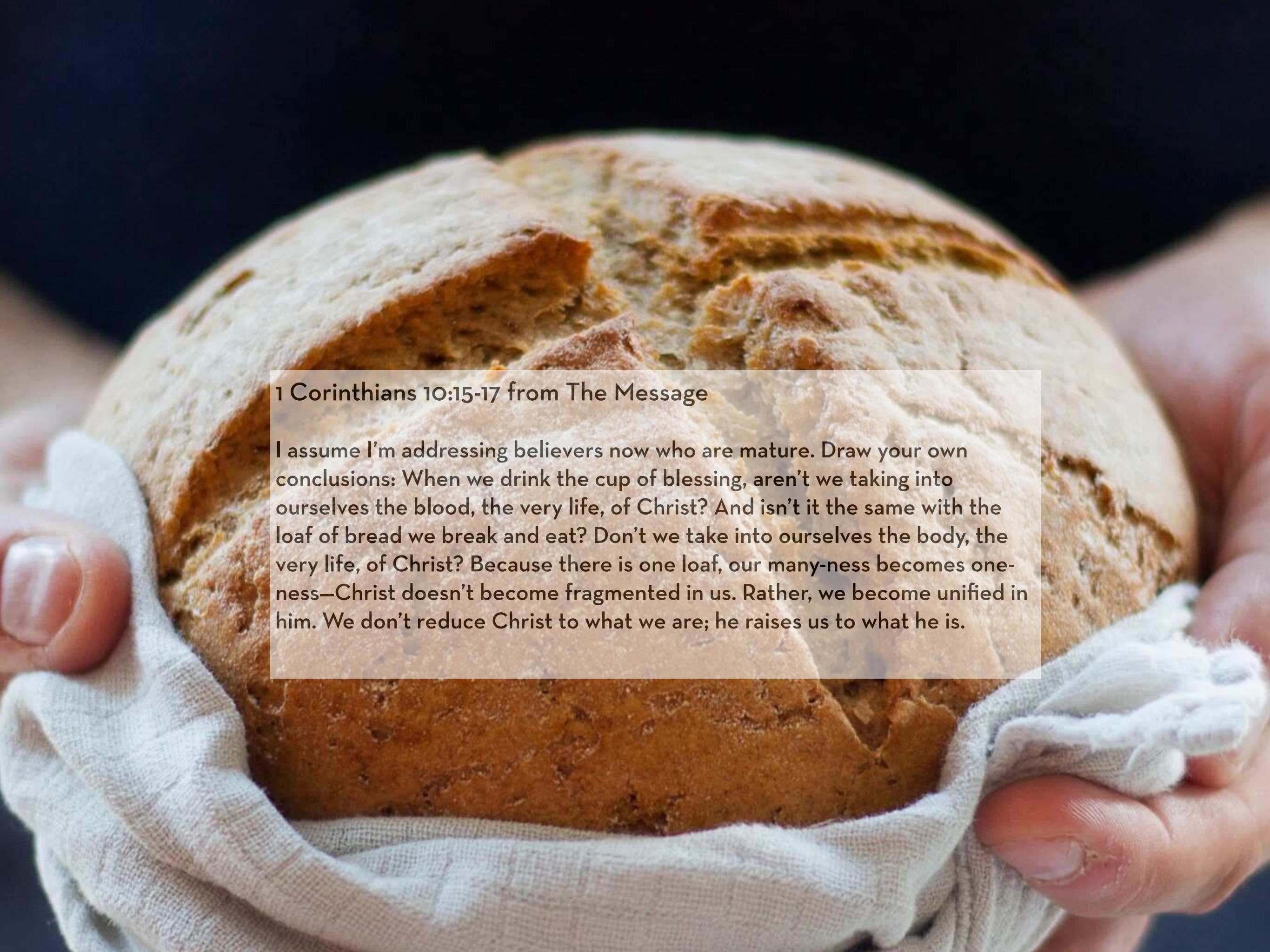
The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Holy Communion

Hymn: "Let Us Be Bread"

Blessing



1 Corinthians 10:15-17 from The Message

I assume I'm addressing believers now who are mature. Draw your own conclusions: When we drink the cup of blessing, aren't we taking into ourselves the blood, the very life, of Christ? And isn't it the same with the loaf of bread we break and eat? Don't we take into ourselves the body, the very life, of Christ? Because there is one loaf, our many-ness becomes oneness—Christ doesn't become fragmented in us. Rather, we become unified in him. We don't reduce Christ to what we are; he raises us to what he is.



SERMON TRANSCRIPT GIVEN BY
Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson

Message “One Body in Christ”

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“I assume I’m addressing believers now who are mature. Draw your own conclusions: When we drink the cup of blessing, aren’t we taking into ourselves the blood, the very life, of Christ? And isn’t it the same with the loaf of bread we break and eat? Don’t we take into ourselves the body, the very life, of Christ? Because there is one loaf, our many-ness becomes one-ness—Christ doesn’t become fragmented in us. Rather, we become unified in him. We don’t reduce Christ to what we are; he raises us to what he is.” 1 Corinthians 10:15-17 (The Message)

Today we celebrate Holy Communion, so I invite you to find some bread and juice or water to have in front of you as we join together in the liturgy. For the first few months of the pandemic, our Bishop was very much against having communion virtually because we aren’t together at the table; however, after many conversations and much prayer, he has decided with other bishops in the United Methodist Church that we can celebrate the same way through our videos or ZOOM or whatever each church is doing.

I think it is helpful once in a while to think about the meaning of communion and what it means to have as a sacrament. Holy Communion was instituted by Jesus at the last supper, and we can read the gospel accounts to remember how he changed and updated the Passover Seder meal words so that we would remember how he gave his life for us. This is how we have the words that we use today in our communion liturgies. The sharing of Communion, or Eucharist, was followed, as Jesus had instructed, by Paul and the apostles as they ministered in churches that they started. This is a tradition that has been handed down throughout the generations.

In many Protestant churches, there are two sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion. Jesus was baptized at the beginning of his ministry, and then at the Last Supper, he celebrated the first communion service. So, you can see that our theology revolves around Jesus and his life. The sacraments are signs of God’s grace in our lives; they are God’s way of reminding us of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, of giving his life for us.

In Communion, God gives us the gift of grace, forgiveness, acceptance, and love. We then respond by living our lives in God's grace and sharing that grace and love with others as we reach out in mission and ministry. Communion is Jesus' invitation to us to join him in a holy meal, a sacred moment, and we do this as an act of community coming together as the Body of Christ.

The elements of communion are the earthy, common, everyday gifts that we have been given in the bread and the juice, and we can receive them with thanksgiving because of God's grace. Through Communion, we share the presence of God and connect with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The founder of Methodism, John Wesley, taught that taking communion had a 2-fold result: our sins are forgiven, and we are strengthened to live the Christian life. There is a longer explanation at the United Methodist Discipleship Ministries website if anyone is interested in reading more

In the United Methodist Church, everyone is welcome to come to the table, knowing that it is a means of God's grace, forgiveness, and love. None of us is worthy, but we are welcomed and renewed, forgiven, and blessed as God's children and as the Body of Christ. We are blessed to be a blessing.

So, whenever we take communion, I hope we will remember God's grace, and love in Christ, renew our minds to live in that grace and reach out to others to make a difference through acts of love and kindness, compassion, and mercy. Communion is all about the love of God for us in Christ Jesus. Thanks be to God! Amen.