

Editorial: The most important thanksgiving meal

November 21, 2023

I joined Church Under the Bridge in Waco for worship Sunday morning, Nov. 19. Everyone needs to worship with Church Under the Bridge at least once in their life.

For those who don't know, Church Under the Bridge has met under the bridge between 4th and 5th Streets at I-35 in Waco for decades—except for [the 44 months they met at The Silos](#) at the invitation of Chip and Joanna Gaines while the bridge was under construction.

Many of Church Under the Bridge's people are unhoused, low income, addicted or recovering addicts, formerly incarcerated, or otherwise "down and out." At Church Under the Bridge, they and anyone else are welcome, accepted, loved and disciplined.

The morning I was there, the worship service ended with the Lord's Supper. It was one of the most meaningful Lord's Suppers I've ever taken. And I'm profoundly grateful.

Lord's Supper at CUB

We were instructed to go to the center aisle and walk to the back of the seating area, around the outside of the chairs to the front, and up to the table front and center where we would be given bread and a cup of grape juice.

If you've ever taken the Lord's Supper this way in a church, more than likely the atmosphere was quiet, calm, contemplative, orderly and solemn.

Not at Church Under the Bridge. It was joyful. Not raucous or disorderly; joyful. There's a difference, and it makes all the difference.

The recorded music playing over the speakers was joyful. The people lined up were joyful—rejoining their conversations, smiling, laughing, hugging. They were so glad to see each other and to be together. It made me glad to be included.

There were only two loaves of bread and a couple of small Styrofoam coolers with juice. I've taken the Lord's Supper many times and, considering the normal portion sizes of a pill-sized wafer and thimble-sized cup, I figured those supplies were ample.

When I approached the person distributing the bread, she tore off a hunk and handed it to me, just as was done for every person there. And there were a lot of people there. The cup wasn't your standard Baptist shot glass. It was one of those plastic sauce containers with a to-go lid, and it was half full.

The Lord's Supper I was given wasn't stingy. It was abundant. The hunk of bread required two large bites to consume. The juice was enough to wash down a handful of morning meds.

The most important thanksgiving meal

You may have noticed “thanksgiving” isn't capitalized in the title. That's because “the most important thanksgiving meal” doesn't refer to what we eat on the holiday by that name. It refers to the bread and the cup for which we should give our greatest thanks.

The Lord's Supper remembers [Jesus giving himself for us](#)—his body broken and his blood spilled—and not just a little, but the whole.

When Jesus instituted this remembrance, he took the bread and blessed

it—or gave thanks, as Paul puts it (Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Stop for a moment and consider what it means that Jesus blessed the breaking of his body.

Did you stop to consider? Here's another chance.

Paul warned against taking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, and we've been scared of blood guilt ever since (1 Corinthians 11:27-34).

Could it be that a stingy and joyless taking of the Lord's Supper is one way of taking the bread and cup in an unworthy manner?

The times Jesus blessed and broke bread, there was more than enough—way more. Nov. 19, there was plenty of bread and juice left over after everyone had some. And remember, we started with only two loaves and each were given two-bite hunks.

Church Under the Bridge's joyful and abundant Lord's Supper elicited in me a thankfulness for [who Jesus is and what he did](#) for me and for you I never had experienced before. So much so I needed a long time afterward to process it and let it all soak in.

This week, we will give thanks for many things. We probably will do that just before tucking into the largest meal we eat all year. But it's not the most important thanksgiving meal.

The most important thanksgiving meal is when we remember [who Jesus is and what he did for us](#). He gave nothing less than himself for us—his body broken and his blood spilled—and not just a little, but the whole.

DISCLOSURE: Church Under the Bridge supports the Baptist Standard

financially and has challenged other churches to do the same. I attended their worship service to express my thanks to them, only for them to give another financial gift to the Standard and a profound spiritual gift to me.

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