

CLAUDE KING
with Meditations by ANDREW MURRAY

Come to the Lord's Table



A 28-DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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Preface

In 1989 Richard Owen Roberts of Wheaton, Illinois, introduced me and other leaders in my denomination to the biblical pattern for corporate repentance—the solemn assembly (sacred assembly, NIV).¹ We began to study sacred assemblies in Scripture to understand their connections to revival. Sacred assemblies were occasions for God’s people collectively to worship Him, to repent of personal and corporate sin, to remember His special blessings on them, and to anticipate future blessings. The prescribed sacred assemblies (or holy convocations) for Israel included the Sabbath (see Lev. 23:3) and seven other days of sacred assembly: the first (Passover) and seventh days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (see Lev. 23:4-8), the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost, see Lev. 23:15-21), the Feast of Trumpets (see Lev. 23:23-25), the Day of Atonement (see Lev. 23:26-32), and the first and eighth days of the Feast of Tabernacles (see Lev. 23:33-36).

Sacred assemblies were times for God’s people to confess and repent of their sins. They were times to renew the covenant relationship with the Lord and return to Him in faithful love and obedience. They were times for worship and sacrifice, feasting and fasting. Even with these regular opportunities to renew fellowship with God, His people tended to depart from Him and from obedience to His commands. Spiritual leaders knew the sacred assembly was a time for corporate repentance in the face of God’s righteous judgments (see Joel 1–2). A number of national revivals in the Old Testament occurred in response to sacred assemblies.

The term *sacred assembly* is not used in the New Testament. However, Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Last Supper on one of God’s prescribed sacred assemblies—the Feast of Passover. The first disciples were celebrating a sacred assembly when the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost. The church of our day also needs regular opportunities for individuals and the church to renew their relationships with the Lord—to remember and renew the new-covenant relationship they have with Him. I believe the Lord’s Supper (or Communion or Eucharist) is probably our best and most natural opportunity to celebrate a sacred assembly of God’s people. Properly observed, it can be a time of genuine revival among God’s people. It can be a time to turn the hearts of God’s people back to our Lord who died for us—the One who is to be our first love.

Many people are deeply concerned over the casual way modern Christians participate in the Lord’s table. The Apostle Paul sent a warning to the Corinthian church. It should cause us to be concerned: “Whoever eats

the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy way will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord. So a man should examine himself; in this way he should eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. This is why many are sick and ill among you, and many have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 11:27-30).

Have you ever gone to the Lord’s table to partake of the bread and juice (or wine) and left the service unmoved and unchanged? I have. When I partake of the supper in a casual way, I unintentionally say, “Lord, Your death on the cross wasn’t that important.” How grieved God must be when I care so little for the great sacrifice He made for my salvation.

Churches in the past took the Lord’s Supper very seriously. Many churches would take a day, a weekend, or even a week or more for special services to help God’s people prepare themselves to partake of the Lord’s table in a worthy manner. These days were sometimes called pre-Communion days. Some groups would even fence the Lord’s table to prevent unworthy participants from defiling the event. Only those who had adequately prepared themselves were permitted to partake.

I was explaining this to a missionary from west Africa when he exclaimed, “That’s what happened to me in Africa!” He went on to explain that he went to pastor a church during his first term as a missionary. One Sunday he realized that the congregation had not celebrated the Lord’s Supper since his arrival. He announced in the morning service that they would celebrate the supper that evening.

An elder on the front row began to weep and said, “Pastor, you must not ask us to do this. We always spend at least a day preparing ourselves for the Lord’s Supper. We haven’t had time to prepare. It would be offensive to God for us to come unprepared.” The missionary realized they treated the Lord’s Supper with much greater respect than he was accustomed to. Believers need to return to celebrating the Lord’s Supper in a worthy manner.

In 1897 the famed author and pastor Andrew Murray of South Africa wrote a book for his congregation to help them observe the holy supper in a worthy manner. Members spent a week prior to the supper in personal preparation, using Murray’s book *The Lord’s Table* as their devotional guide. The book also provided prayers and meditations for the day of the celebration. Then members spent the week following the celebration reflecting on changes that should take place in their lives because of Christ’s sacrifice for them.

When I first read *The Lord’s Table*, I realized we needed a similar work for churches today. From time to time I’ll include meditations from Murray’s book to stir your love and response to the Lord. In his preface Murray wrote,

One chief cause why some do not grow more in grace is that they do not take time to converse with the Lord in secret. Spiritual, divine truth does not become my possession all at once. Although I understand what I read, although I consent heartily to it, although I receive it, it may speedily fade away and be forgotten. I must give it time to become fixed and rooted in me, to become united and identified with me by private meditation. Christians ... give your Lord time to transfer His heavenly thoughts to your inner life. When you have read a portion, set yourselves in silence before God. Take time to remain before Him until He has made His word living and powerful in your souls. Then it will become the life and the power of your life (LT, pp. 7–8).

This book is designed to help you do just what Murray suggested. I've prepared this book to help us celebrate the Lord's table in a way that will honor the Lord. I never again want to go to the Lord's table without sensing a nearness and communion with my Savior. I want to participate in a worthy manner that will draw me near to Him and bring Him pleasure in my worship.

My prayer is that the Lord will use this simple tool to renew your church as you give special attention to remembering the Lord's death until He comes again. Take time each day to use this guide to help you prepare your mind, heart, and life for your meeting at the Lord's table. If we properly examine ourselves and participate in a worthy manner, the Lord's table can be a time to renew the new covenant with our Lord. It will be a time to return to our first love. It will be a time to repent of sin that has crept into our lives and relationships. Every observance will be another invitation to reconcile any broken relationships in the body of Christ. The result will be a clean and pure church that loves and faithfully obeys her Lord until the day we sit down as a pure bride at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Such a clean church will be far more fruitful in obeying the Lord's final command to expand His kingdom by making disciples of the nations.

Use this book as your guide for personal preparation. Use it as a guide for personal cleansing. Focus your attention on the wounded Savior and the high price He paid for your forgiveness. Rekindle your memories of His blessed life and return to your first love for Him. May you present your life as a worthy and living sacrifice to Him. May He fill you with a new sense of wonder at His love for you. I pray that this book will help your church join in sacred assembly and prepare the bride of Christ for her marriage to the Lamb.

1. A pamphlet titled *The Solemn Assembly* by Richard Owen Roberts is available from International Awakening Ministries; P.O. Box 232; Wheaton, IL 60189; www.intl-awaken.com. Two books by Roberts that may be of special help and interest to pastors are: *Revival!* and *Sanctify the Congregation: A Call to the Solemn Assembly and to Corporate Repentance*. The latter volume includes the text of the pamphlet *The Solemn Assembly*.



Day 1 ~ God So Loved He Gave His Son



*"God loved the world in this way:
He gave His One and Only Son,
so that everyone who believes in Him
will not perish but have eternal life."*

John 3:16

What good news that is for you and me! God loved us so much that He gave the life of His Son, Jesus Christ, so that we could know life at its best for all eternity. Of all people on earth, Christians are most blessed. I don't know about you, but I'm overwhelmed to think the Creator of the universe has such an interest in me.

Unfortunately, life's activities and concerns can cause us to grow casual and indifferent toward our blessed relationship with Jesus Christ. God knew our human nature would tend to draw us away from our first love for Jesus (see Rev. 2:4). It happens so gradually that we fail to realize what's happening until our love has grown cold.

- ❁ 1. HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE WARMTH OF YOUR LOVE RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST TODAY? CHECK ONE.
- a. Hot. I am deeply in love with my Savior.
 - b. Warm. I feel close to Jesus, but I've been closer.
 - c. Lukewarm. I go through the motions of faithfulness, but I can't say that I have much passion for Jesus.
 - d. Cold. I am pretty distant from and indifferent to Christ.

Wherever you find yourself in your love relationship with Jesus Christ, God is reaching out to you. He is inviting you to a deeper experience of the love relationship for which Jesus Christ gave His life. Most of us would have to confess that we need to return to a deeper love for Christ. Fortunately, God loves us too much to let us drift away from Him without attempting to draw us back. That's why He gave us instructions for experiences that can help us remember His blessings. Through these events He guides us to renew a close fellowship with Him and return to our first love.

Of all the ways we can be restored to fellowship with Christ, no experience holds more meaning or emotion for that purpose than the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Different groups call it by different names, like Communion or Holy Eucharist. God isn't as concerned about what we call the celebration as He is that we use the experience to renew our new-covenant relationship with Jesus Christ, our Savior. Probably, the reason you are studying this book is that your church family has chosen to use it to help you prepare for an observance of the Lord's table. Welcome!

 2. WHAT NAME DOES YOUR CHURCH USE FOR THE HOLY SUPPER

| JESUS INSTITUTED ON THE NIGHT BEFORE THE CROSS?

- a. The Lord's Supper b. Communion c. Eucharist
 d. Other: _____

Different churches and Christian traditions use different names for this holy meal. I'll use *Lord's table* to refer to the Lord's Supper, Communion, Eucharist, or another title your church may use.

This devotional guide has been prepared to help you and your church get ready to partake of the Lord's table in a worthy manner. Please participate in the preparations. Each week you will be encouraged to meet with a small group of fellow believers to share, pray, and prepare together. Days 7, 14, 21, and 28 have special activities to guide your small-group session. Make every effort to join your church family during these days of preparation for this very special occasion. I recommend that you cancel or change any conflicts that would prevent your participation.

For the Old Testament sacred assemblies, participants were commanded "not to do any regular work" (Lev. 23:7, NIV; also see vv. 8,21,25, 31,35-36). I recommend that you take the day off from work on the day scheduled for the Lord's table. Give the entire day to the Lord as a sacrifice

and thank offering. Another characteristic of the sacred assemblies in the Bible was that all of the people who could understand were expected to attend. Plan now to join your church in this special sacred assembly.

- ✦ 3. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WILL YOU AGREE TO DO FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S TABLE? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.
- a. I plan to attend the Lord's table service.
 - b. I will need to take a day off from work to attend.
 - c. I will take time daily to complete these devotional messages in preparation for the Lord's table.
 - d. I will attend the small-group sessions in preparation for the Lord's table.

Throughout this study you may realize that you must do something in response to an activity. For instance, you may realize that you need to rearrange your work schedule to be free for the Lord's table celebration. You may need to make a visit or a phone call. You may need to perform an act of service. I've prepared a space for you to keep a to-do list.

- ✦ 4. IF YOU NEED TO DO SOMETHING TO ARRANGE YOUR SCHEDULE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LORD'S TABLE, WRITE THE ACTION ON "MY PREPARATIONS" LIST ON PAGE 127.

Each day I will ask you to pray. This is not just a religious activity. It's your invitation to interact with your Lord. Please take advantage of these invitations to talk to Him. Your personal prayer times may prove to be the most significant and meaningful parts of this study. The prayer times will be set off from regular text like the one below.




AS YOU BEGIN YOUR PREPARATIONS FOR THE LORD'S TABLE, PRAY AND ASK THE LORD TO FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION ON THE CROSS AND THE SACRIFICE OF HIS SON, JESUS, FOR YOUR SINS. ASK HIM TO GUIDE YOU IN YOUR PREPARATIONS SO THAT YOU WILL BE A WORTHY GUEST AT THE SUPPER. TAKE TIME TO PRAY NOW.






Day 2 ~ The Wounded Savior



*“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
to receive power, and riches, and wisdom,
and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!”*



Revelation 5:12, KJV


Before we begin our focus on the meaning of the Lord’s table, I want to share with you a testimony of what God can do with a people who celebrate it in a worthy manner. Let this story build your faith and increase your prayers for your own church.

In *The Key to the Missionary Problem* Andrew Murray described a moving encounter with Christ that Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf had in a Dusseldorf museum. A painter had painted a picture of the suffering Christ. The painter himself had been so affected by Christ’s love for him that he wanted to do something for Christ. He wanted to paint a picture of Jesus that would convey his love for his Savior. Below the picture he wrote the words:

*All this I did for thee,
What hast thou done for Me?*

When Zinzendorf saw the painting and read the words, “his heart was touched. He felt as if he could not answer the question. He turned away more determined than ever to spend his life in the service of his Lord. The

vision of that face never left him. Christ's love became the constraining power of his life. 'I have,' he exclaimed, 'but one passion—'tis He, and He only.' It was His dying love that fitted Christ for the work God had given Him as the Saviour of men. It was the dying love of Christ mastering his life that fitted Zinzendorf for the work he had to do."¹


 HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED GOD'S LOVE SO FULLY THAT LOVE
 FOR JESUS WAS YOUR ONE PASSION? PRAY AND ASK THE LORD
 TO STIR YOUR PASSION FOR THE SAVIOR WHO SUFFERED FOR YOU.

Zinzendorf returned home to provide spiritual leadership for a group of about three hundred people who had moved to his estate to escape religious persecution. Most were Moravians, a religious group related to the martyr John Hus, but the refugees included Lutherans, followers of Calvin and Zwingli, Anabaptists, and others. In the spring of 1727 internal conflict was about to destroy the religious community. Zinzendorf and three other elders drew up a covenant of brotherly union that described the way these Christians would live together. It recognized their differences but insisted on brotherly love and unity in the body of Christ.

On May 12, 1727, the entire community repented of their divisions, were reconciled with their brethren, and entered a covenant to live in harmony to honor their Lord. Murray quoted from their diary account of that day: "The Brethren all promised, one by one, that they would be the Saviour's true followers. Self-will, self-love, disobedience—they bade these farewell. They would seek to be poor in spirit; no one was to seek his own profit before that of others; everyone would give himself to be taught by the Holy Spirit."²

God began to bind this body of believers together in love and unity. On August 13, 1727, they had a significant encounter with their Savior at a Lord's Supper observance.

On Sunday, 10th, Pastor Rothe was leading the afternoon meeting at Herrnhut, when he was overpowered and fell on his face before God. The whole congregation bowed under the sense of God's presence, and continued in prayer till midnight. He invited the congregation to the Holy Supper on the next Wednesday, the 13th.

As it was the first communion since the new fellowship, it was resolved to be specially strict with it, and to make use of it “to lead the souls deeper into the death of Christ, into which they had been baptized.” The leaders visited every member, seeking in great love to lead them to true heart-searching. In the evening of Tuesday, at the preparation service, several passed from death to life, and the whole community was deeply touched.

On the Wednesday morning all went to Berthelsdorf. On the way thither, any who had felt estranged from each other afresh bound themselves together. During the singing of the first hymn a wicked man was powerfully convicted. The presentation of the new communicants touched every heart, and when the hymn was sung it could hardly be recognized whether there was more singing or weeping. Several brethren prayed, specially pleading that, as exiles out of the house of bondage, they knew not what to do, that they desired to be kept free from separation and sectarianism, and besought the Lord to reveal to them the true nature of His Church, so that they might walk unspotted before Him, might not abide alone but be made fruitful. We asked that we might do nothing contrary to the oath of loyalty we had taken to Him, nor in the very least sin against His law of love. We asked that He would keep us in the saving power of His grace, and not allow a single soul to be drawn away to itself and its own merits from that Blood-and-Cross Theology, on which our salvation depends. We celebrated the Lord's Supper with hearts at once bowed down and lifted up. We went home, each of us in great measure lifted up beyond himself, spending this and the following days in great quiet and peace, and learning to love.

Among those present in the church when the communion was held were a number of children. One writes: “I cannot attribute the great revival among the children to anything else but that wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the communion assembly. The Spirit breathed in power on old and young. Everywhere they

were heard, sometimes at night in the field, beseeching the Saviour to pardon their sins and make them His own. The Spirit of grace had indeed been poured out.”³

Following that encounter with Christ, the Moravian Brethren were possessed by a zeal for missions. They began a 24-hour prayer watch for the causes of the kingdom, which continued for more than 100 years. During the following 25 years they sent out more than one hundred missionaries.

Some of those missionaries met John Wesley on a boat bound for America in 1735. In them Wesley saw a personal faith in Christ, a love for Christ, and a calm assurance that were different from his own. When he returned to London, Wesley came to personal faith in Christ in a Moravian chapel at Aldersgate. He went from there a different man and led the Evangelical Revival (the First Great Awakening) in England. Even William Carey, known as the father of modern missions, was greatly influenced toward missions by the testimonies of these Moravian missionaries.


In *The Key to the Missionary Problem* Murray quoted Reverend P. de Schweinitz, who summed up the work of the Moravian Brethren.

- ✿ 1. AS YOU READ THE FOLLOWING DESCRIPTION OF MORAVIAN MISSIONS, LOOK FOR THE THING THAT MOTIVATED AND INSPIRED THE MORAVIANS’ WORK. UNDERLINE THEIR BATTLE CRY.

Even today [1901] the Moravians have for every fifty-eight communicants in the home churches a missionary in the foreign field, and for every member in the home churches they have more than two members in the congregation gathered from among the heathen. ... Now, what was the incentive for foreign missionary work which has produced such results? While acknowledging, the supreme authority of the great commission, the Moravian Brethren have ever emphasized as their chief incentive the inspiring truth drawn from Isaiah 53:10-12: making our Lord’s suffering the spur to all their activity. From that prophecy they drew their missionary battle-cry: ‘To win for the Lamb that was slain, the reward of His sufferings.’ We feel that we must compensate Him in some way for the awful sufferings which He endured in working out our salvation. The only way we can reward Him is by bringing souls to Him. When we bring Him

souls, that is compensation for the travail of His soul. In no other way can we so effectively bring the suffering Saviour the reward of His passion as by missionary labour, whether we go ourselves or enable others to go. Get this burning thought of 'personal love for the Saviour who redeemed me' into the hearts of all Christians, and you have the most powerful incentive that can be had for missionary effort. Oh, if we could make this missionary problem a personal one! if we could fill the hearts of the people with a personal love for this Saviour who died for them, the indifference of Christendom would disappear, and the kingdom of Christ would appear.⁴

 2. COPY THE BATTLE CRY OF THE MORAVIANS BELOW.

-  3. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES THE THOUGHT THAT MOTIVATED AND INSPIRED THE MORAVIANS TO SERVE CHRIST?
- a. They read Christ's commands and served from a sense of duty to the commands.
 - b. Their spiritual leaders, like Zinzendorf, made them feel guilty and ashamed if they did not serve.
 - c. Their love for the wounded Savior, who died to redeem them, gave them a zeal to serve Him.

If only all believers would see Christ as our wounded Savior in the same way! These men and women were prepared to give their all, even their lives, because of their love for Christ. Paul described this motivation this way: "Christ's love compels us, since we have reached this conclusion: One died for all, then all died. And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised" (2 Cor. 5:14-15). At a picture gallery in Germany, God instilled in Count Zinzendorf a personal love for the wounded and suffering Savior. His life and ministry were forever changed as he resigned from his governmental duties to work with God's people on his estate. At the Lord's table those Moravian Brethren had a moving encounter with the wounded Savior, and they were never the same. I pray that the upcoming Lord's table experience will be just as moving for you and your church.

- ❖ 4. IN THE FOLLOWING SONG JESUS ASKS SOME QUESTIONS. AS YOU READ OR SING THIS SONG, UNDERLINE THE FOUR QUESTIONS.

I Gave My Life for Thee

Frances R. Havergal

I gave My life for thee,
My precious blood I shed,
That thou might'st ransomed be,
And quickened from the dead;
I gave, I gave My life for thee,
What hast thou giv'n for Me?

My Father's house of light,
My glory-circled throne,
I left, for earthly night,
For wand'rings sad and lone;
I left, I left it all for thee,
Hast thou left aught for Me?

I suffered much for thee,
More than thy tongue can tell,
Of bitt'rest agony,
To rescue thee from hell;
I've borne, I've borne it all for thee,
What hast thou borne for Me?

And I have brought to thee,
Down from My home above,
Salvation full and free,
My pardon and My love;
I bring, I bring rich gifts to thee,
What hast thou brought to Me?

PRAY THAT GOD WILL GIVE YOU AND MEMBERS
OF YOUR CHURCH A DEEPER LOVE FOR YOUR WOUNDED SAVIOR
THAN YOU HAVE EVER KNOWN BEFORE. OVER THE NEXT FEW
WEEKS LISTEN TO THE QUESTION "ALL THIS I DID FOR YOU.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME?"

1. Andrew Murray, *The Key to the Missionary Problem* (New York: American Tract Society, 1901), 45.
2. *Ibid.*, 47.
3. *Ibid.*, 49–50.
4. Reverend P. de Schweinitz, in Murray, *The Key*, 36–37.