**Effective Use of Tools / Slowing Down to Get the Message comm comm 220123**

We all use tools of one kind or another – from silverware to scissors to screwdrivers. I don’t always use them efficiently, though, or use the right tool for the job.

Some tools are not physical, such as the ceremony we are about to participate in. A tool is not always an impersonal thing; in this case it is an aid that helps us in our worship and we need to try to make the best use of it. It reminds us of the great loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who suffered in our place so that we could be accounted as righteous.

We use many tools to communicate. I want to mention the electronic sign in front of a nearby funeral home that I pass by as I travel to church. It is meant to inform the community of those who need prayers for strength in their loss. But it very frustrating because I rarely seem to pass by at the right time.

I have done some study on this: the sign shows time, temperature (these first two I actually have displayed in my car), “In Loving Memory”, and the names of those who have passed (and sometimes other messages). But the pages change only every three seconds.

Driving down the road at the legal limit (which I do as I try to read the sign) gives me a chance to read one or two pages, and I have time and temperature shoπwn in my car. Frequently I get something like: “In Loving Memory” (wait for it…) “46 F”. This may be a nice temperature, but it is not one of my greatest memories. And there are other issues that I won’t take time to discuss. The point is that there is only about a 20 to 25 % chance of catching the names of those who have passed.

The sign is a great tool if we are standing still and have time to take the entire message in, though it is actually designed for passers-by.

Today in a similar way we have to slow down and take the time to absorb the full message of the love of Christ and His sacrifice as we commune with him in partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine. Throughout the week, though, as we move through our lives, we need to find other ways to continue to keep the message close to our hearts.

For the Contribution:

A sign that can’t be understood is no good. We want to make sure that the message that this congregation is showing to those around us is very clear, and one of the ways we do that is to ensure that our contribution goes to help those in need.