

The Lord's Supper

The greatest act of love was when Jesus laid down His life to pay for the sins of the whole world.

John 15:13

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

The love of Christ, as demonstrated in His death on the cross, is something that He never wants us to forget. To continually remind us of His love and His sacrifice, Jesus told His church to have a special commemorative meal in which we remember the death of Christ, look forward to the return of Christ, and celebrate our unity in Christ.

That special meal is called 'The Lord's Supper', 'Communion', 'The Lord's Table', and 'Breaking of Bread'. Along with Baptism, it is one of two church ordinances.

In this study, we will look at:

- 1) the institution of the Lord's Supper
- 2) the ingredients and meaning of the Lord's Supper
- 3) the requirements for participation in the Lord's Supper

KEY VERSE: Romans 5:8 *'But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'*

CHAPTERS TO READ THIS WEEK: John 8-14

1. THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper was first instituted by the Lord Jesus with His disciples.

Luke 22:14-20

¹⁴ And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. ¹⁵ And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: ¹⁶ For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. ¹⁷ And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: ¹⁸ For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. ¹⁹ And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. ²⁰ Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

See also Matthew 26:26-30 and Mark 14:22-26.

Jesus said He would not drink of the fruit of the vine until He could do so with His disciples in His Father's kingdom. Therefore, we are to eagerly expect His return or 'love His appearing'. He waits to eat with us in His kingdom.

2 Timothy 4:6-8

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Paul tells the church to keep the ordinances, or teachings, that we have received from the Lord. He then instructs the church about the Lord's Supper as a way to remember Jesus and show forth His death until He comes again.

1 Corinthians 11:2

Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

The Bible is not clear about how often we are to take the Lord's Supper.

In 1 Corinthians 11:25-26, it only says: 'as oft as ye drink' and 'as oft as ye eat'. Therefore, there are no certain times that we eat the Lord's Supper, but we should desire to take the supper like Jesus desired to take it with His disciples before suffering.

2. THE INGREDIENTS AND MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

a. The cup we drink is the fruit of the vine and represents THE BLOOD OF JESUS.

1 Corinthians 11:25

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Matthew 26:28

For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

We drink juice from the fruit of the vine. This is unfermented grape juice. Fermentation in wine, like leaven in bread, seems to be a symbol of corruption. The blood of Christ was pure and holy, so we believe that unfermented grape juice is the best symbol of the blood of Christ. The cup is referred to as ‘fruit of the vine’ in all three gospel records (Matt 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18).

The Bible says, ‘The life of the flesh is in the blood’, and the purpose of the juice is to remind us that God has given His blood to make atonement for our souls.

Leviticus 17:11

For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

Through Jesus’ blood, we have a new everlasting testament or covenant. No more sacrifice is needed. In the Old Testament, the priest had to come and offer a blood sacrifice every year for the remission of sins, but Christ has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Hebrews 9:22–28

²² And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. ²³ It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: ²⁵ Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; ²⁶ For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: ²⁸ So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

When drinking the fruit of the vine from the cup, we should remember that we are now justified by Jesus’ blood and saved from the wrath of God. We can have joy in God because our atonement has been received.

Romans 5:8–11

⁸ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. ¹⁰ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. ¹¹ And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

b. The bread we break is unleavened and represents THE BODY OF JESUS.

1 Corinthians 11:24

And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Luke 22:19

And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

We eat unleavened bread. Leaven in the Bible is a symbol for sin; therefore, we do not use leavened bread.

Matthew 16:6

Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

1 Corinthians 5:6–8

⁶ Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? ⁷ Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: ⁸ Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The purpose of the bread is to remind us that Jesus became flesh and bore the punishment of our sins in His own body so that we could have everlasting life.

1 Peter 2:24

²⁴ Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Jesus willingly gave his body as the sacrifice for our sins so that we could be saved. He was beaten and bruised so badly that He did not even look like a man anymore.

John 10:18

No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Isaiah 52:14

As many were astonished at thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, And his form more than the sons of men:

Isaiah 53:5–6

⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: The chastisement of our peace was upon him; And with his stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned every one to his own way; And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

1 John 2:2

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

The Lord's Supper is not a time of feasting. Instead, it is a time to eat and drink in remembrance of Jesus. We are not to change the ingredients, because they have been specifically given to the church to be followed.

1 Corinthians 11:20–22

²⁰ When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. ²¹ For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. ²² What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

3. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE LORD'S SUPPER

a. To take part in the Lord's Supper, you must be a believer.

You need to check your life and make sure of your salvation.

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Participation in the Lord's Supper is not part of your salvation, but it is a time to remind you about your salvation.

1 Corinthians 11:24–25

²⁴ And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. ²⁵ After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

b. To take part in the Lord's Supper, you must be living in obedience to the Word of God.

You must first examine yourself. You need to judge yourself (not others) before you eat or drink, confess any sin in your life and make sure you are growing in the faith.

You do not want to take it unworthily. He that eats it unworthily brings damnation or judgment on himself. This can mean sickness or even death. We should fearfully or respectfully take part in the Lord's Supper.

1 Corinthians 11:27–34

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. 33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

Believers who examine themselves and are convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit, should confess it to the Lord and then partake of the Lord's Supper.

1 John 1:8–2:2

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. 1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Every believer is commanded by Christ to be baptised, so one important area to consider is whether you have been baptised by immersion after salvation in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If you are unwilling to be baptised, then you should not partake of the Lord's Supper because you are not living in obedience to Christ.

Matthew 28:18–20

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Acts 2:41–42

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

QUESTIONS

Are you trusting in the body and blood of Jesus?

- Has there been a time in your life that you came to understand that Jesus is God come in the flesh, that He died and rose again for you, and have you trusted in Him to save you?
- It is hard to remember something you have not known in the first place.

Are you living in obedience to the Word of God?

- Before you partake, take some time to examine your life for any sin or disobedience. You don't want to bring condemnation upon yourself.
- Has there been a time in your life when you were baptised?
- What sins do you need to confess to the Lord?

Are you thankful for the cross of Christ?

- Do you need to take some time to thank the Lord for dying and shedding His blood for you?

Are you loving the appearing (the return) of Christ?

- Are you looking forward to His return?
- The Lord's Supper is not a permanent remembrance; it is only until He returns. When He comes back, we won't need a meal to remember. We won't be able to forget Him because we will be constantly with Him!