

As we continue our series on the topic of worship we will be examining the Lord's Supper this morning. The Lords Supper is a topic of various views in the religious world today. Today we want to consider what the Lord's Supper is, when and how it is to be taken and its purpose.

WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPER? Christ himself instituted the Lord Supper on the night before his crucifixion at the Passover meal. This is recorded in Matt., Mark and Luke. Let's pick up on this story in Luke's account starting at, Luke *22:14-20* *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.*

Jesus told his disciples many times that he was going to suffer and die sometime in the future. Now he knew the time was getting close and realized that this would be his last time to eat this Passover meal with his disciples. This was the apostle's first glimpse into what the Lord Supper is. Notice Jesus tells them that the bread represents his body that would be slain and the fruit of the vine would represent his blood. Matthews account tells us that this shedding of blood was for the remission of sins. This gave the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine a whole new meaning. Until now the bread and fruit of the vine were viewed as a memorial of how the Jews were delivered out of Egypt.

Now, they were being told to partake of them "in remembrance" of Jesus. So this is what the Lord Supper is, a memorial of what the great sacrifice Jesus made for each and every one of us. Through this great sacrifice he made for us he established a new covenant which made it possible for us to receive the forgiveness of our sins. Heb. 9 goes into great detail of how Christ is the author of better covenant and how he died for our transgressions.

HOW IT SHOULD BE TAKEN? Let's consider this by first looking at how it **shouldn't** be taken. *I Corinthians 11:17-22 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. (18) For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. (19) For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. (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.*

You need to understand that the Corinth church had a lot of problems and one was abusing what was supposed to be the Lord's Supper. Corinth was the center for the immoral worship of Aphrodite, goddess of love, whose followers practiced ritual prostitution. The church had been influenced by sinful surroundings and we find these Christians coming together and eating a meal; some were getting drunk while others were being ignored. The word "drunken" means "to an access." Some were becoming gluttons and eating to an access and it could also mean inebriated. Paul was letting them know this was the Lords Supper that they were making a mockery and he did not praise them for this malicious behavior. You see the Lords supper isn't some kind of feast where you make a pig of yourself; it is time of remembrance where unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine are divided amongst the brethren and all partake of it not just selected few. Let's continue on with what Paul says,

I Corinthians 11:23-29 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.

Now Paul has turned his attention on how the Lord Supper should be taken. **First** of all we are to take in remembrance of Jesus Christ. Just Passover was a reminder to the Jew of how death passed them over and brought about their freedom slavery. The Lords Supper is to remind us of how Jesus has made eternal salvation possible for

us by becoming the perfect sacrifice and dying on the cross so that we could be freed the bondage of sin. The Lord Supper is to consist of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. That is all we should use because God has not given us the freedom to substitute these with something else like snicker bars and coke-cola.

Second of all, the Lords Supper is a way of proclaiming his death until he comes again (v26). Proclaim means to affirm. When a Christian partakes of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of the sacrifice Jesus made by his death; he affirms that he believes that Jesus will come again. *Hebrews 9:28 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.*

Third from verse 28-29 we learn that the partaking of the Lords Supper is a time of reflection. We need to examine and partake in a worthily manner. Some hold the view that "*examine yourself*" this has to do with living pure and holy lives before God in order to become a candidate to partake of the Lord's Supper; and that's not what it means. It means your attitude in partaking of the Lords Supper. You examine yourself and insure that your mind is on the significance of the emblems and not wondering off to some other plans you have later in the day. It important that we know what we are doing as we partake of Lords Supper so that we don't partake of it in unworthy manner as the Corinthians had been doing.

Now before we move away from this passage I want to go back to (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.* There are those who say that it wrong to have a fellowship meal in the building and therefore making it wrong to have a kitchen etc. Their argument comes from this verse. But the context of this verse is abuse of the Lord's Supper; it's not talking about have a fellowship meal together. Paul was condemning these people because they were having this feast, getting drunk and causing division. Paul is not condemning a common meal at the place the Christians meet he was only condemning them for making a mockery of the Lords Supper. In all probability they were meeting in someone's home which would have had provision for cooking and eating.

When should we partake of the Lord's Supper? *1 Corinthians 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* The expression "for as often" implies some regularity; it

was observed at least more than once, and if this was all the teaching we had on the matter, then we would have the liberty to partake of it whenever we chose to. But this is not all the teaching we have.

Look at what Luke says in, *Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* In context Luke has just finished talking about the birth of the church and the 3000 that became Christians that day and he states that they continued steadfastly or continually devoted themselves to various things with breaking bread being one them. Now breaking bread here is referring to the Lords Supper. So we can see that they were partaking of it often. But, we get more detail of exactly when they partaking of it in, *Acts 20:7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*

We looked at this passage before when considering the significance of the first day of the week. So you might remember that Paul stayed at Troas for 7 days so he could worship with these brethren even though he was in hurry to make it to Jerusalem by Pentecost. We learn a couple of things from this verse. **First** of all we now know that the disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread. Notice no other day is given so by way of example we can know that only the first day of the is when we should partake of the Lords Supper as a part of our worship to God. If it had been ok to partake it on another day, Paul could have saved some time and not have to wait around for 7 days to partake of it. Another thing we need to understand is that it is to be taken on first day of every week. Many partake of it monthly, quarterly and sometimes yearly but the Disciples of Christ came together on the first day of the week and every week has a first day, we observe the Lord's Supper each and every Sunday. The OT nation of Israel understood the command "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy" meant every Sabbath; so it is with the expression "first day of the week."

1 Corinthians 16:2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. The exact same Greek words are used in Acts 20:7 describing when the Lord Supper is to be taken is used regarding the contribution. So, if you are going to teach that giving must be done ever first day of the week then you must teach the same thing about the Lords Supper.

Now before we leave this section of scripture, I point out that not every time you see the term break bread does it mean the Lords supper because sometimes it can refer to a common meal. You have to look at the context to determine how it is being used. We see it used both ways in Acts 20:7 and 11. ***Acts 20:7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...*** In verse number 7 notice how it says the disciples came together to break bread. This means that all of them were together and partaking which lends our thinking to the Lord's Supper. However after Paul goes down and brings Eutychus back up alive in verse 11, it changes from the disciples to just Paul breaking bread and it adds the word eaten. No doubt after preaching as long as he had, he was hungry so Paul ate a common meal and with him which was different than partaking of the Lords Supper. ... ***Acts 20:11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while,...*** Now finally let's take a look at who should partake of the Lords Supper.

Who Should Partake of the Lord's Supper? Disciples should partake of the Lord's Supper. Let me give you several reasons why only Christians should partake of the Lord's Supper. ***1 Corinthians 10:15-16 I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. (16) The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*** Here Paul tells us that the Lord's Supper is communion; a sharing together. What Paul says here goes hand and hand with what Jesus says in, ***Matthew 26:29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.***

Then the passage that we've looked at several times already says ***Acts 20:7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.*** In Acts 11:26 we read that the disciples were first call Christians in Antioch; so the term "disciples" and "Christians" mean the same thing. When we are partake of the Lords Supper we are in fellowship with Jesus and since it is in the kingdom or we might say in the church that we do this, this tells us that only Christian should partake of the Lords Supper.

To summarize, the Lord's Supper was instituted by our Savior and we should honor our Lord by partaking of the Lord's Supper each and every first day of the week. The Passover was observed in the Old Testament by the Jews in remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt. In the New Testament we now partake of the unleavened bread

and the fruit of the vine in remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ who has delivered both Jew and Gentile from spiritual death. So let's never forget the true significance of the Lords Supper is to the Christian.

Are you a Christian as detailed in scripture?

Invitation