

Milk & Honey

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Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ

Some thoughts on
The Lord's Supper

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Available in a free 14 page booklet

On the night in which He was betrayed, Jesus and His disciples came together to celebrate the Passover. This was a remembrance of when Israel was protected from the death angel by placing the blood of a lamb on the side and upper door posts. (Ex. 12:1-20) Each year they were to remember their redemption and deliverance out of Egypt.

As the disciples ate the Passover that night, little did they realize that which it pictured was about to be fulfilled. Jesus, God's spotless lamb, would shortly offer Himself up to God. (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7) Unlike the thousands of animal sacrifices in the Old Testament, His one sacrifice would satisfy God completely and forever, and, as such, it would never need to be repeated. (Heb. 10:10-12)

This being true there would be no need for the Passover, since that which it pictured was fulfilled by the Lamb of God. The Substance had replaced the shadow. (Heb. 10:1)

It was at this last Passover that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. Using the bread and the cup, He instructed His disciples to use them to remember Him. (Lk. 22:19, 20) Rather than a historical event, they were now to remember the Redeemer Himself. The Lord's instructions are given to us again in the apostle Paul's epistle to the church in Corinth. (1 Cor. 11:23-26)

Its Importance

The importance of the Lord's Supper is established by the very fact that it was instituted by the Lord Himself. It was His personal request that we remember Him in this way. It is also the only New Testament church ordinance reaffirmed in Scripture by a glorified Lord. (1 Cor. 11:23) Paul told the Corinthian saints that he received revelation from the Lord concerning the Lord's Supper, and that he had delivered it unto them. This was not just a tradition of the early church. It was taught by the apostle and is now part of inspired Scripture. Sadly, down through the years these simple instructions have not been carried out, or have been perverted in some way.

Its Purpose

The Lord's Supper is to be a time of "remembering the Lord," and, as such, it is a time of worship. While certain spiritual activities are appropriate at other times, they are not fitting as we gather to remember the Lord. We do not gather to hear

one teach or preach the Word. Neither is it a time to evangelize the lost, although any present who may be lost may never hear a better gospel message than that declared by the redeemed in their worship. Lastly, we do not gather to perform or to be entertained.

All that is done is to focus our attention upon the Lord and to exalt Him. He is to have the preeminent place in the gathering. (Col. 1:18) If a portion of Scripture is read, it is to direct our hearts and minds towards the Person and work of Christ. Hymns and audible worship should likewise exalt the Lord.

While the men are to lead in public worship, all believers, men and women alike, are spiritual priests and should be worshipping. (1 Pet. 2:5) Each heart is to be occupied with Christ and, when this is so, much worship will ascend to the Lord.

Often man will, usually with good intentions, introduce things which detract from the purpose of such a gathering. The love feast at Corinth ultimately deteriorated into a drunken party. On the mount of transfiguration, Peter's idea to build three tabernacles may have seemed to be honorable, but the Father saw it as placing others on the same ground as His Son. After the Father's intervention, they saw "no man, but Jesus only." This too should be our desire as we gather to remember Him.

In his book, "Worship—The Christian's Highest Occupation," brother A.P. Gibbs makes an important distinction between prayer, thanksgiving, and worship. It is worth repeating for our consideration.

Prayer is our occupation with our needs.

Thanksgiving is our occupation with our blessings.

Worship is our occupation with the Lord Himself.

Perhaps it would help if we considered the question asked in the Song of Solomon of the bride who was seeking her beloved. "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" (Song 5:10) She did not respond with a list of her needs, or even thanksgiving for her blessings, but described all the qualities that made him different from others. This should be our objective as we gather to remember the Lord. We too should express the matchless glories and beauties of our Lord which set Him apart from all others.

There are His moral glories which radiate from His perfect life and lovely character — His righteousness, faithfulness, kindness, compassion, meekness, etc.. Then there are His personal glories, including, among others, being the Son of God and the Creator. This of course draws to mind His divine attributes. There are also His acquired glories, those glories which are now His as a result of His incarnation, death, resurrection, and exal

Continued on page 2

tation — Redeemer, Head over the Church, High Priest, etc..

A Word of Exhortation

One must not come to the gathering having predetermined that he will participate. One may have lovely thoughts concerning our Lord, but this does not make it mandatory that they be presented publicly. Perhaps further consideration is necessary and the thoughts would be more appropriate in a subsequent gathering. One must be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

We might also note the importance of distinguishing the members of the Godhead in our prayers and worship. Too often we hear prayers in which the Father is addressed as if He died on the cross. While the Lord understands the intents of our heart, it should be our desire to correctly address the Father and the Son in prayer and worship. (John 5:23)

Its Participants

The word “remember” speaks of a “fond remembrance.” One must obviously know the Lord if he is to have a fond remembrance of Him. It has been well said, “As a Jew, Judas had a right to celebrate the Passover, but not being a saint he had no such right to participate in the Lord’s supper.” Peter said, “Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.” (1 Pet. 2:7)

While no Christian who is walking properly is to be denied the privilege of remembering the Lord, the Lord’s Supper is not a public gathering to which all are invited. As on the night on which it was instituted, it is those who know Him personally as Savior who are to gather and unite their hearts in worship.

Its Solemnity

The teaching on the Lord’s Supper found in 1 Corinthians 11 is in the midst of a passage in which Paul is rebuking them for their conduct and reminding them of the seriousness of participating in the remembrance feast. Their conduct was so shameful that they came under governmental judgment. (1 Cor. 11:30)

If there is one thing we should come away with from this portion of Scripture, it is that participating in the Lord’s Supper is a privilege which carries with it great responsibility. The error in Corinth was that they had no real recognition of the spiritual significance of the divinely instituted ordinance. They took it lightly and were very casual about it. Sadly, many today do very much the same thing.

In the Old Testament only a chosen few were allowed to function as priests. In order to be a priest one had to be an Israelite, of the tribe of Levi, and a son of Aaron. Only Aaron functioned as the high priest who entered the holy of holies once a year on the day of atonement. It was a real privilege to be a priest and a very serious thing to enter into the very presence of God.

Today, many saints hastily rush out of their homes, jump into their cars, and rush off to “church.” Upon arriving they hurriedly park the car, casually walk in and sit down, as if they were going to the theater. Some dress as if they are going to a ball game or a picnic. There is no thought as to their position and privilege as priests, and perhaps little

thought as to the purpose of their gathering. With such an attitude is it any wonder that the Lord’s Supper is some times nothing more than another meeting on the schedule?

The High Priest of Israel would not barge into the holy of holies on the day of atonement without preparing properly. Let us likewise take proper steps of preparation prior to entering the presence of the Lord (Matt. 16:8). One thing we might do is pray that the gathering would be honoring to the Lord. Having done so, we can then come with the expectation of seeing this prayer answered. It should be a joy to worship and prayer will help set this tone in our hearts.

Then there is the importance of being physically refreshed. Staying up late the previous night will only dull the mind and senses. Likewise, if we saturate the mind with worldly concerns it will make occupation with the Lord difficult. Time spent meditating upon Him during the week and in the hours preceding the gathering will be invaluable when it comes to our worship.

One could know the Lord, but spend little time in fellowship with Him during the days preceding such a gathering, and thus have difficulty drawing the Lord to mind. This may well explain those gatherings when, other than by way of hymns, little worship is given to the Lord.

Its Simplicity

When the Lord instituted the Lord’s Supper He used simple emblems, bread and the fruit of the vine, as reminders of Himself and of His sacrificial work on the cross. There was a simplicity about this remembrance feast which many today have replaced with ornate religious ceremony. As a result, the real significance of the Lord’s supper has been lost to many in professing Christendom.

Sadly, some have gone to the point of “programing” the Lord’s Supper. Due to the lack of response from cold hearts, they predetermine the order of the gathering. Who will pray and what hymns will be sung are determined beforehand. This, of course, removes the opportunity for spontaneous worship of hearts occupied with Christ. The simplicity of the gathering and the leading of the Holy Spirit have been replaced with the complexity and order of man.

The Bread

The bread reminds us of Jesus Who said, “I am the bread of life.” (John 6:35) He was that bread from heaven, God tabernacling among men in a human body. (John 1:14; 6:33; Heb. 10:5) In this body He gave Himself for us — “This is my body given for you.” (Lk. 22:19) While man is responsible for his rejection and crucifixion of Christ, Jesus said, “I lay down my life...No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.” (John 10:17, 18). Paul spoke of Him “who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20) Scripture teaches us that “Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.” (Eph. 5:25)

The bread would also remind us of the judgment He bore for our sins in His body on the cross. (1 Peter 2:24) We see

the wheat cut down, crushed and baked in an oven. Christ was also cut down in the prime of life and crushed by man to the point that Scripture says He was “marred more than any man.” (Is. 52:14) However, as terrible as man’s treatment of the Lord was, it never caused Him to open His mouth — other than to pray for their forgiveness. (Is. 53:7; Lk. 23:34)

However, those unseen hours in the oven of God’s judgment bought forth those words that pierced the darkness of that day — “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Ps. 22:1; Mt. 27:46) Why would God forsake the only One Who ever did His will? One could imagine the people forsaking Him, or God forsaking them, but why would God forsake Him? The psalmist gives us the answer to this question, “But thou art holy, thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.” (Ps. 22:3) A holy God was no less severe in His judgment of our sins because they were placed upon His precious Son. The Holy One Who knew no sin was made sin for us, and as such, He bore in His sinless body the wrath of a holy God against sin. (2 Cor. 5:21)

But we must not be so taken up with the ugliness of that hour that we miss the beauty of the Person Who gave Himself for us. He said, “Do this in remembrance of ME.” It is not the language of Scripture to say, “We remember the Lord in His death.” While His death is pictured in the emblems, and we dare not forget the perfection of His work, for without it there would be no such gathering, we must not do so at the expense of Himself. It is far too common for His people to be taken up with His sufferings and their blessings to the point where He is forgotten. As the hymn writer has said, it is possible to “see the signs, but see not Him.”

We must see the glories and beauties of the Person Who gave Himself for us and worship Him accordingly. For example, think of the mind of Christ. What led Him, the Word Who was with God and was God, to come to this sin cursed world and endure the cross? (John 1:1) The Spirit of God tells us of His mind, or attitude, which led Him to come. It was a mind that “put others first.” (Phil. 2:3-8) He Who has such a mind deserves our worship.

The Cup

Often we concentrate solely on the fact that Christ died for us. As wonderful as this is, there is a more important truth — that is that He first died to satisfy God. By the cup we are reminded of His life which was poured out at Calvary as a sacrifice which completely propitiated, or satisfied, God with regard to our sins. By His “one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” (Heb. 10:14)

It is the perfection of His work which allows God to be “just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom. 3:26) The hymn writer has well said, “Oh, the peace forever flowing from God’s thoughts of His own Son! Oh, the peace of simply knowing on the cross that all was done!” The best view of Calvary is from above, seeing it through the eyes of the Father as He saw His Son finishing the work He was sent to do. (John 17:4; 19:30)

While much could be said concerning the blood of Christ

which is pictured in the cup, one Scripture reminds us that it was “precious.” (1 Pet. 1:19) It is the value of the blood of Christ that is the basis for Peter’s exhortation to holiness. He reminds us that we were not simply redeemed with silver and gold, “but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (1 Pet. 1:15-19) It cost the Lord a great deal to redeem our souls, and as such we ought to live accordingly, keeping in mind that we have been bought with a great price. (1 Cor. 6:20)

A Living Lord

While the emblems remind us of a dying Savior, we must keep in mind that we worship a “living Lord.” This is seen by the fact that as we partake of the bread and cup we proclaim the Lord’s death “till He come.” (1 Cor. 11:26)

Its Frequency

Some have totally disregarded the Lord’s Supper, viewing it as unimportant. Others have destroyed its simplicity by adding man’s thoughts and traditions to it. Even among Christians there are those who have given it a low priority in the activities of the church, thinking that if it is carried out too often it would become a meaningless, and perhaps even boring, ritual.

These same individuals would never think of remembering their loved ones only once a month, or several times a year. Imagine a husband telling his wife, whom he loves, that he does not want to see her too often, as it will become a meaningless and boring ritual. We can quickly see that the real issue is our love for the Lord. If the Lord’s Supper becomes meaningless or boring, it is not because we remember Him too often, but rather it is because our hearts have grown cold and His presence gives us no joy.

The Lord knows our hearts better than we do. One purpose of His request is to keep our hearts warm towards Him, but another is to reveal to us when our hearts are growing cold. When we fail to remember the Lord “often,” it is easy for our hearts to grow cold without even being aware of it.

In addition to the frequency of the Lord’s Supper, we should also consider the amount of time spent in worshipping the Lord. In the early church they came together specifically to “break bread.” (Acts 20:7) It was not an addendum to a sermon. If anything, the sermon was an addendum to the Lord’s Supper. It certainly was not the Lord’s intention that we add five minutes to the end of a service to simply partake of the bread and cup. Partaking of the emblems without spending time in worship has made “communion” for many in Christendom simply a means of receiving grace, rather than a time of giving worship to the Lord.

Its Fruit

Service is to worship what works are to faith. The Lord wants our hearts first. (2 Cor. 8:5; Rev. 2:4) When the Lord has the chief place in our hearts, we are prepared to yield ourselves to Him as living sacrifices. (Rom. 12:1)

May we be found to be faithful worshipers, and may our worship lead to faithful service for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

“This do in remembrance of ME.”

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For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 1 Corinthians 11:26

May, 2014

The Importance of Reading

Henry Morris

“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.” (1 Timothy 4:13)

In this video age, Christians are in grave danger of forgetting the importance of reading. The word translated “reading” in this verse is the Greek *anagnosis*, a compound word meaning essentially “renewed knowledge.” A sermon or lecture is knowledge heard; an educational film or video is knowledge seen; but reading is knowledge that can be read, rehearsed, reviewed, and renewed again and again, until fully and securely learned. In fact, it is necessary for students to take notes, even when hearing a sermon or seeing a film, if they expect to retain any knowledge received by such means.

The importance of reading is also pointed out by the verb used in the verse. “Give attendance” means, literally, “continue steadfastly.” It is so translated in Acts 2:42: “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine.”

Reading and studying the Scriptures are especially necessary for a fruitful Christian ministry, but even this is not really enough. The Bible also commands us always to be ready to give an “answer” (Greek *apologia*, a systematic defense) to everyone who asks a “reason” (Greek *logos*, a logical explanation) for our Christian hope (1 Peter 3:15). To do this requires steadfast

continuance in the study, not only of the Bible, but also of other sound literature as well. A truly effective and influential Christian is an informed Christian, armed with facts and sound counsel, prepared and capable both in his own professional field of practice and in his spiritual service as a Christian witness.

It is significant that Paul, just before his martyrdom and while imprisoned in a damp, cold, Roman dungeon, still desired his books to read (2 Timothy 4:13). The conscientious Christian must never cease to study and to grow in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18). HMM

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September 2014 - May 2015

Date	Topic	Teacher
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