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The Supper of the Lord

(Matthew 26:26-29)

Introduction

1. If you are a visitor here with us today, we want to thank you for your presence among us.
2. It is our prayer that you will find our service uplifting, beneficial to you in your faith.
3. If you have worshiped with us before, it may be that you experienced something in our worship which caused you to wonder, "Why do they do that? What does it mean? Why is it important?"
4. Maybe you are a member of this congregation who has some questions about the subject I am about to address this morning.
5. This morning, at the request of our elders I will use this time to explain to you two aspects of our worship.
6. Today, we have gathered here on the first day of the week around a Memorial Table, as Christians have been doing every first day of the week for almost 2000 years to remember another sacrifice and its eternal benefits.
7. We call this memorial meal "the Lord's Supper" because it was our Lord Jesus Christ who instituted this supper and called upon us to keep it in remembrance of Him.
8. As we reflect upon this supper of which we are about to partake, let's us consider the teaching of Scripture about this most important meal.

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I. A Supper with Great Symbolic Meaning

A. THE ONE LOAF OF BREAD BROKEN IN PIECES AND SHARED BY ALL REPRESENTS . . .

1. The physical body of our Lord (*Matthew 26:26*)

- a. Which was given for us so that we might be saved.
- b. The eternal Son of God took on human flesh in His incarnation (*Philippians 2:6-7*).

“who, although He existed in the form of God, [He] did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.”

- c. He lived a perfectly sinless life (*1 Peter 2:22*; *1 John 3:5*)

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“who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth” (*1 Peter 2:22*)

“You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.” (*1 John 3:5*)

- d. He endured our temptations without sinning, so that he could die in our place by taking our sins upon Himself (*Hebrews 4:15*).

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“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin” (*Hebrews 4:15*).

- e. This bread represents the actual body of Christ, in which our Lord came to earth, successfully endured all the temptations we face, and then in His body, suffered and died in our place.

“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed” (*1 Peter 2:24*).

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2. Christ’s spiritual body, the church (*Ephesians 1:22-23*)

“And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1:22–23, NASB95)

- a. The church is “His body” (cf. Ephesians 1:22-23).
- b. The “sweet communion” of which we sing is not a private celebration, but one which is observed by the entire church when it gathers to observe the Lord’s Supper.
- c. A little over 100 years ago, (1922), one of our brethren, Tillit S. Teddlie wrote the words this hymn which expresses this communion in the first stanza:

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When we meet in sweet communion

Where the feast divine is spread;

Hearts are brought in closer union

While partaking of the bread.

- c. By partaking of a piece of the one loaf, we proclaim the unity of the church, the body of Christ and our fellowship with the rest of the saints (1 Corinthians 10:17).

“Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.”

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- 3. Our partaking by faith in Christ’s work on our behalf at Calvary.
 - a. In our Lord’s work on Calvary we are cleansed from our sin and guilt and made recipients of His righteousness.
 - b. This is our Lord’s teaching in John 6, following His feeding of the 5,000, but no one understood it until after His death and resurrection (cf. John 6:51).

“I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life

of the world is My flesh.” (John 6:51, NASB95)

- c. So it is that in our partaking of the bread, we declare that we are all equal sharers in the saving work of Christ.

(PRAYER FOR THE BREAD)

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B. THE CUP WHICH WE DRINK REPRESENTS . . .

- 1. The physical blood of our Lord (Matthew 26:28)

“for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26:28, NASB95)

- a. The pouring out of his blood on the cross was necessary for the forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22)

“And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

- b. It is through the blood of Jesus that we are redeemed (Ephesians 1:7) and justified (Romans 5:9).

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“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him” (Romans 5:9).

- c. When we drink of this cup, we not only proclaim His death until He comes again (1 Corinthians 11:26) but we also proclaim our redemption and justification as well.
- d. Our participation in the Lord’s Supper is essential for eternal life (John 6:53-54).

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“So Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh

of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day' ” (John 6:53-54)

Slide 11**2. The new covenant** (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25)

“And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.” (Luke 22:20, NASB95)

“In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”” (1 Corinthians 11:25, NASB95)

a. What is a covenant?

- 1) A covenant is an agreement — usually between two parties.
- 2) Some covenants were bilateral in that there were obligations and commitments for both sides:

a) Abraham and Abimelech (Genesis 21: 27)

“Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant.” (Genesis 21:27, NASB95)

- i) This covenant was to resolve an issue concerning the well which Abraham had dug at Beersheba.
- ii) The two men agreed to treat each other with kindness and to recognize the well as belonging to Abraham.

b) Marriage (Malachi 2:13-14)**c) God's covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai**

“Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ ” (Exodus 19:5–6a, NASB95)

“I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.” (Leviticus 26:12, NASB95)

- b. Jesus is the mediator of God’s new covenant (Hebrews 9:15).

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- c. He entered into God’s presence with His own blood in order to obtain our eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:11-12).

“But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” (Hebrews 9:11–12, NASB95)

- d. The new covenant promises the forgiveness of our sins:

“For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” (Hebrews 8:12)

- 1) When Jesus spoke of the new covenant in His blood, the Jerusalem Temple was still standing.
- 2) Day after day its priests continued to offer sacrifices , but “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4).

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- 3) But now that our sins have been forgiven through the blood of Christ we can “draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

(PRAYER FOR THE FRUIT OF THE VINE)

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II. Giving Of Our Means: A Gracious Work

A. OUR GOD IS A GIVER

1. The apostle Paul told the philosophers in Athens that it is God who “gives to all mankind life and breath and everything” (Acts 17:25b, ESV).
2. James wrote that “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.” (James 1:17, NASB95)
3. He provided water and food for the Israelites during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness — though they complained, they never truly wanted for anything.
4. The truth is that everything we consider to be ours is actually on loan to us from God.

“... the world is Mine, and all it contains” (Psalm 50:12b).

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5. Though it is not in our hymnals, many of us have sung these words written almost 80 years ago by Lloyd O. Sanderson:

I'm rich! I'm saved! I am happy!
I've health and prosperity!
I've friends! I have doors ever open!
The Lord has been mindful of me!

The Lord has been mindful of me!
He blesses and blesses again!
My God is the God of the living!
How excellent is His name!

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B. WE GIVE TO THE WORK OF THE LORD OUT OF OUR GRATITUDE

1. At Mt. Sinai when it was time for the Tabernacle and its furnishings to be built, Moses spoke to the people:

“Moses spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, “This is the thing which the Lord has commanded, saying, ‘Take from among you a

contribution to the Lord; whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as the Lord's contribution: gold, silver, and bronze," (Exodus 35:4–5, NASB95)

2. Near the end of King David's reign, he not only provided massive amounts of gold, silver, bronze, iron and other materials for the building of the temple, but so did the leaders of the people and the people themselves (1 Chronicles 29:2-9).
3. In the early days of the church, Luke tells us that "all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need." (Acts 2:44–45, NASB95)

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4. In Acts 4, we read "there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need." (Acts 4:34–35, NASB95)
5. In Acts 11:29, we read that the disciples in Antioch gave in proportion to their means toward the relief of the brethren living in Judea who were suffering the effects of a famine.

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6. In his first letter to the Christians in Corinth, Paul wrote, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed ("given orders," KJV, NKJV; "told," NIV84) the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come." (1 Corinthians 16:1–2, NASB95)
7. In his second letter to this same congregation, Paul wrote, "Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every

good work” (2 Corinthians 9:7-8, NASB95)

(PRAYER FOR CONTRIBUTION)

Conclusion

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1. As I said earlier, our participation in the Lord’s Supper is essential for eternal life.

“So Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day’ ” (John 6:53-54).

2. There is one last thing which I must add.
3. The Lord’s Supper has meaning only for those here today who have had their sins washed away in the blood of Christ.
4. The bread of which we partook this morning, represents His body which was given for us on the cross almost 2,000 years ago (Luke 22:19).
5. The cup of which we partook this morning, represents His blood, “which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28).
6. All of this has meaning and purpose only if you have had your sins washed away in obedience to His will.
7. As Jesus told His disciples, “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16, ESV)