

We Believe

What We Believe about Lord's Supper

1 Corinthians 11:23-28

December 10, 2017 am

HDBC

This is part 6 in the series, **We Believe**. Looking at some of the more important things that we believe. Why we believe them. What it means to believe them. Remember . . . **Theology Matters**.

This morning . . . **What we believe about the Lord's Supper**.

Some call it communion. Ee do it 4 per year. **It may be the most misunderstood of all the things we do.** So, this morning I want to explain the meaning of the Lord's Supper. Then we will participate together in the Lord's Supper.

Let me quickly say that you will not be asked to do anything that will make you uncomfortable. We invite all follows of Christ to join us in this act of worship, but we do not compel anyone. If, for whatever reason you elect to not participate that is absolutely fine. You can simply pass the tray to the next person.

The Lord's Supper is an act of worship that involves eating a small piece of bread and drinking a small cup of juice in remembrance of the death of Christ. It is a physical act that causes us to think of His sacrifice for us.

READ THE TEXT – 1 Corinthians 11:23-28

1. The Revelation (23a)

The first thing to notice is that Paul is speaking from direct revelation. Jesus, Himself, revealed this to Paul so he could pass it along to the churches.

1 Corinthians was one of the earlier books of the N.T. written. May have been written before any of the Gospels. If that is true, this was the first set of instructions given for what we call The Lord's Supper.

However, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John each share its beginning.

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper while celebrating the Passover with his disciples on the night in which He was betrayed. It is not accidental or incidental that it is tied to the Passover. And because it is, it is important to understand a little about Passover.

It was Jewish celebration to remember miraculous deliverance from Egypt under Moses. On that important night centuries before Jesus' time, the Jewish people were delivered from slavery in Egypt. After repeated refusals by the Egyptians to let the Israelites go, **God delivered** them through the death of the firstborn of every Egyptian family.

God instructed the Jews to sacrifice a lamb and to take some of the blood and sprinkle it around the doorway of their homes. They were to eat the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They were to remain in their homes, protected by the blood which acted as a barrier.

Because of the blood, the Lord would **pass over** the Jewish homes and only brought death to the Egyptians. He then instructed them to celebrate that deliverance event each year in a ceremony called **Passover**.

As Jesus celebrated Passover with His disciples only hours before his betrayal, He broke with tradition and brought new meaning to old symbols. And in doing so brought about a brand new ceremony. Jesus changed the focus and meaning. It would focus on the death of Christ for us! It would remind us not of the deliverance of the Jews in Egypt but the deliverance of all believers from the judgment we deserve because of our sins.

On that night, against a backdrop of deception and wickedness the beauty of God's grace was displayed through the initiation of the Lord's Supper. In the midst of Satan's worst we see God's best.

2. The Symbols (23b-25a)

A. The Bread

Jesus made it clear as He took the bread that it is symbolic. It is offered as an **object lesson**, an illustration of His body.

Unleavened bread used to symbolize:

Haste with which Israelites left Egypt. No time for the leaven to do its work of causing the bread to rise.

Purity: In Bible leaven is symbol for sin. As the leaven causes the dough to be puffed up, so sin causes us to be puffed up with pride.

Somewhere along the way, no one really knows when or why it was begun, but an unusual practice developed surrounding the bread. It was broken into three pieces. They were placed in a bag with three compartments.

The middle piece was taken out and wrapped in a piece of clean linen cloth to be used later. Other two pieces placed on the table. In family settings the middle piece would be hidden away, unseen.

At the correct time, the children would look for this piece. It is called **Afikoman**. It means *that which comes after*. It would be the last thing eaten. Three things happen to it.

1) **Blessed**

Jesus picked up the Afikoman, and offered a prayer of blessing.

2) **Broken and Distributed**

Jesus then broke the bread. 1) So that each could have a piece. 2) To intensify the symbol. As the bread was broken, so His body would be broken. It speaks of His life being taken. He gave His life.

3) Eaten

Given to the disciples to be consumed. In doing so, He shared the **real meaning of the bread**. It pictures Himself and His death for us.

B. The Cup

Four cups of wine were shared during the Passover.

First Cup – Sanctification - Being brought out and set apart for God.

The leader explains that God has set them apart for Himself by bringing them out of Egypt.

Second Cup – Judgment

God used judgment on Egypt to deliver them.

Third Cup – Redemption

Reminded the Jews of a coming Messiah to bring ultimate redemption.

Fourth Cup – Praise *I will acquire you as a nation*

It was used lead into thanksgiving and praise.

It was the third cup, Redemption that Jesus presented to His disciples with the declaration that this was His blood which was shed for them. It was the cup of the new covenant ratified through His death

For the first time in Israel's history they were given a complete understanding of the symbols. The bread and the cup represented his body and blood. Taken together they are a picture of His sacrificial death.

3. The Command (25b)

Do this as often as you do it in remembrance of me.

It was understood that this would be a repeated ceremony by every generation of believers. And it was understood that it was to be done with Christ in mind. As we partake of the Lord's Supper in a few minutes we should remember that it is not about us, but about Him.

4. The Purpose (26)

To proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

The ceremony of the Lord's Supper is a sermon about the death of Christ. It is a look back to His gift, His sacrifice, His death. The death of Christ (taking into consideration the subsequent resurrection) is the most pivotal event in human history. His death was the culmination of the great plan of redemption which was conceived in the mind of God before creation.

The Lord's Supper is about death that leads to life. His death leading to our lives. One other thing before we actually have the Lord's Supper.

5. The Preparation (27-28)

A. A Warning (27)

Unworthy manner. The way in which we participate, not the worthiness of the participant.

1. With no thought of its meaning.
2. Wrong Motive - impress others, cover sin.
3. Unconfessed, ongoing sin in your life.

B. An Examination (28)

Thorough self-exam each time you come. Look into spiritual mirror and take inventory. Motives, attitudes, relationships, thoughts.

INVITATION – Use it to prepare your hearts

Distribute the Bread

Distribute the Juice

Offering

Closing Prayer