

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. - 1 Peter 2:2

THE SINCERE MILK OF GOD'S WORD

The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword... - Hebrews 4:12

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The Lord's Supper

In **Matthew 26**, Jesus and His disciples observed the Passover meal. Jesus used this time to institute the Lord's Supper. He took two elements of the Passover meal - unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine - and assigned meaning to them that have significance to God's children under the new covenant.

Jesus first took the unleavened "*bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body'*" (**verse 26**). He next "*took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to [His disciples],*" instructing all of them to drink of it (**verse 27**).

While the bread represents Christ's body, the cup ("*fruit of the vine*" – **verse 29**) represents Christ's blood that was shed for us (**verse 28**).

"*The Lord's supper*" (**1 Cor. 11:20**) is also sometimes called the "*breaking of bread*" (**Acts 2:42**) or "*communion*" (**1 Cor. 10:16**). First century Christians steadfastly observed this memorial (**Acts 2:42**).

The disciples at Troas "*came together to break bread*" (**Acts 20:7**), a phrase which, in this context, refers to the Lord's Supper. Notice *who* partook of the Lord's Supper - "*the disciples*" at Troas. The Lord's Supper is a memorial for *all Christians* to observe.

Christians observe this in remembrance of Christ's death (**1 Cor. 11:24-25**). The Lord's Supper is a reminder of the new covenant, which was sealed with His blood (**verse 25**).

The Lord's Supper is also a proclamation to the world of Christ's death. Notice **1 Corinthians 11:26**: *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.*

The Lord's Supper is a special time of fellowship with Christ and with fellow brethren

(cf. **1 Cor. 10:16-17**). Jesus promised to (spiritually) be with His disciples when we partake (**Matt. 26:29**).

Christians should observe this memorial as God instructs. For instance, Scripture shows the day the Lord's Supper is to be observed. Notice the phrase "*upon the first day of the week*" in **Acts 20:7**. This specifies *when* early Christians partook of the Lord's Supper.

The church at Corinth provided an example of *not* following God's pattern for this memorial (**1 Cor. 11:17**). Two key problems brought out in their observance of the Lord's Supper are (1) a divisive spirit (**verse 21**), and (2) turning the memorial into a common meal (**verse 22**). They were exhorted to have a spirit of unity (cf. **verse 33**), and they were told that the time they assembled to carry out the work of the church was not the time to be eating a common meal (**verse 34**).

The Corinthians were told to *examine* how they partook of the Lord's Supper (**verse 28**). Partaking "*unworthily*" (**verses 27, 29**) leads one to "*be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*" (**verse 27**), showing disrespect toward the One whose body and blood the emblems represent. Partaking unworthily also leads one to bring condemnation on him or herself, causing spiritual weakness, spiritual sickness, and spiritual death (**verses 29-30**).

Partaking unworthily does *not* refer to one partaking who is not deserving of Christ's sacrifice. If this were the case, no one could partake worthily. Rather, partaking unworthily refers to the *manner* in which we partake. We must not pervert Christ's design.

If we follow God's pattern for why and how we partake, the Lord's Supper will be a great blessing and defense against forgetting Christ, our Redeemer and Deliverer.

God's Care and Understanding

How wonderful is it to know that God's care for us leads Him to *want* us to cast our cares on Him (**1 Pet. 5:7**)? It is sad when such a privilege is ignored.

As the hymn *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* says, "O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer."

As the hymn *Did You Think to Pray?* says, "O how praying rests the weary! Prayer will change the night to day, So when life seems dark and dreary, Don't forget to pray."

While God's care should lead us to pray frequently and continuously, we should remember that God answers prayer according to *His* will. There are some things we may be tempted to pray for that we know (through God's Word) are not in harmony with His will. We should not pray for such things.

There are other things that, as far as we can know, *might* be in accordance with God's will, but they also might *not* be. Such things are not wrong to pray for, but we should desire God's will to be done above all.

This is exemplified in **2 Corinthians 12**. In that chapter, the apostle Paul spoke about his thorn in the flesh (**verse 7**). Paul did not initially know what the Lord's will was for him concerning this thorn in the flesh. He prayed three times that it be removed (**verse 8**). He came to find out, though, that God did not intend to take this thorn in the flesh away (**verse 9**). Paul accepted God's answer, and became grateful for what good could come from his thorn in the flesh (**verse 10**).

The point is that God's care should not be confused with God promising to conform His will to ours. Though we may not always say these words, an *attitude* we should have when praying is, "*not my will, but yours, be done*" (**Luke 22:42**).

Why We Need Salvation

The central theme of the Bible is God's plan to save mankind through Christ. To appreciate His plan of salvation, we must understand why we *need* salvation.

Notice what the angel of the Lord told Joseph in **Matthew 1:21**: *[Mary] shall give birth to a Son. You shall name Him Jesus, for it is He who shall save His people from their sins.*

Notice also what the apostle Paul said in **Romans 5:9**: *Much more then, being now justified by [Christ's] blood, we will be saved from God's wrath through Him.*

These passages show that what Christ saves us from is *sin and its consequences*.

All of us who've reached a point of accountability before God have sinned (**Rom. 3:23**). The significance of this is seen in **Romans 6:23**: *For the wages of sin is death.*

When death is spoken of in Scripture, it may refer to physical death, spiritual death, or eternal death. The word generally refers to a *separation*. Sin separates us *from God*, making us *spiritually* dead (**Eph. 2:1**).

If someone dies physically being dead spiritually, he or she faces *eternal* death. This means facing eternity away from God's presence (**2 Thes. 1:9**) in hell, "*where their worm doesn't die, and the fire is not quenched*" (**Mark 9:48**).

This is what one sin against God "earns" us. This is why we so desperately needed Jesus to descend to this earth and go to the cross, and this is why we so desperately need to submit to God's requirements for receiving the gift of salvation He graciously offers.

-Michael Hickox (all articles)

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For questions, comments, or to request a Bible study, please contact MichaelDHickox@gmail.com