Tenets of the Faith – Week 10

Communion

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**What is Communion?**

The Lord's Supper is also called the Lord's table.1 Corinthians 10:21, communion, cup of blessing. 1 Corinthians 10:16 and breaking of bread Acts 2:42. In the early Church it was called giving of thanks. Matthew 26:27.

The account of the institution of this ordinance is given in: Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:19, Luke 22:20, & 1 Corinthians 11:24-26.

**Matthew 26:26-29 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat; this is My body. Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.**

**Mark 14:22-25 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, Take, eat; this is My body. Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.**

**Luke 22:19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.**

**Luke 22:20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.**

**1 Corinthians 11:24-26 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me. In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.**

**The Meaning Behind Communion**

Communion is an act or time of sharing in intimate fellowship. We may not naturally associate these words with communion, but actual synonyms for communion are closeness and unity. Communion is a sacred time of fellowship with God, where believers remember Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross.

**What Is the Purpose of Communion?**

To commemorate the death of Christ: Jesus told us why we celebrate communion when He instated it. He said, **Luke 22:19-20 - And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And likewise, the cup after they had eaten, saying, This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.** **Matthew 26:26-28 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take and eat; this is my body. Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**

Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. The bread and wine are tangible, visible reminders of Christ’s love. Rather than simply saying remember, Jesus gave us a reminder.

Communion is a time of just that: communing. It is a chance to bring ourselves before the Lord and partake in the life He has given us through His death and resurrection.

Communion is also a time to be in community with fellow believers. As an ordinance that has stretched from the original disciples to twenty-first century believers and is celebrated all over the world, it brings us together as the body of Christ.

Believers join together in remembering the sacrifice and victory over sin when they come together. Acts tells us it is something believers should *devote themselves to* in addition to teaching and fellowship and prayer. **1 Corinthians 11:26 - For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Acts 2:42 - And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.**

**Matthew 26:26-28 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.** Jesus uttered these words at the last meal He shared with His disciples before His death. It was the Passover, a time during which the Jews commemorated their escape from slavery in Egypt, and it was an important meal.

The twelve disciples were gathered with Jesus, and it was a somber time, though the disciples didn’t quite understand why. He foretold His death, and His betrayal by Judas. However, He had also foretold that His death would be a ransom for many. **Mark 10:45 In this ritual of breaking the bread and taking the cup, Jesus was reminding His disciples of what He was about to do.**

As early as Acts 2, early Christians are recorded breaking bread with one another. In 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Paul gives specific directives for celebrating what he calls The Lord’s Supper. Jesus didn’t give very many specifics on how to take communion. Instead, He gave an object lesson to His disciples: See how this bread is necessary to bring you life? In the same way, I will give you life. **John 6.35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.**

**Luke 22.20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.**

The New Testament does not give a specific rule regarding how often Communion should be taken. In one of the main passages on the topic, the apostle Paul notes Jesus' words are simply "Do this" and "as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup. **1 Corinthians 11:24- 26. And when he had given thanks, he break it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. And 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. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.**

**Another Benefit for Communion: Taking Time to Examine Ourselves**

We should also take the time to examine ourselves to ensure that our relationship with Christ is authentic and genuine. Not only recalling the inauguration of our relationship with Christ, but also seeking to discover if there is any unconfessed sin impeding our current fellowship with God.**1 John 1:6–9. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Jesus gave us the pattern of beginning communion with giving thanks: **1 Corinthians 11:24 and when He had given thanks.** Paradoxically, the Lord’s Supper is not only a reminder of his death on the cross for our sins, but it is also a celebration of the incredibly generous grace of God and the invaluable privilege of being forgiven.

**Misuse of COMMUNION**

**1 Corinthians 11:18-26 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating everyone taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 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. 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: And when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 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. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.**

Paul knew that Christ died to make us one. Paul also knew what the body of Christ was meant to be. The first problem we saw from this scripture verses is DIVISION. **Ephesians 4:11-16 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.** Lastly, we would be remiss to ingest these symbols of Christ without a heart that is purposefully thankful.

Second the scriptures describe HEREISES. What does heresies mean? Apostasy, dissent, infidelity, schism. Where is HERESY the works of? FLESH. **Galatians 5:19-20 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies.** Why is it necessary for heresies to be among us in the Church?That faithfulness is shown for when we are tired, we will receive the crown of life. The same Greek word used for approved in Corinthians is translated tried in **James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.**

How did Paul KNOW that they were not coming together for the Lord’s supper? They were not serving each other but rather serving themselves. Who were they putting to shame? Those that were the poor they were not getting served. **James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.** What are we to show whenever we participate in communion together? The Lord death for others.

How would you eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord unworthily (Greek – Irreverently)? If you have sin in your life. So, we need to examine ourselves and if we have sin we can repent so we are not judged but the consequences of not repenting from sin and eating unworthily we would get sick, weak and or die. God has to discipline us and the reassurance we have when we repent is that ww will not be condemned with the world. **Hebrews 12:5-11 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaks unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives. If ye endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chastens not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.**