

**DISCOVER  
THE  
LORD'S  
SUPPER**

## DISCOVER THE LORD'S SUPPER

April 12, 2015

**Sermon in a sentence:** Come and feast at the table of the Lord with your fellow members of the Body of Christ.

**Congregational reading:** John 6:48-58 NKJV

**Scriptures:** Ex. 12:3-13; Ex. 12:47-48; Ex. 14:13-14, 16, 29-30a, (1 Cor. 10:1-2); Ex. 16:4; Ex. 17:6; Num. 14:22-23, 29; John 6:35-58; Mark 14:17-31; 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Cor. 10:1-17; 1 Cor. 11:17-34

Old Testament types and shadows give us some early insights into what Communion was intended to represent:

- The blood of the Passover lamb on the doorposts saved the firstborn of Israel (Ex. 12:3-13).
- Only those who had entered into the covenant of circumcision were permitted to eat the Passover lamb (Ex. 12:47-48).
- The children of Israel were baptized in the cloud and in the sea (Ex. 14:13-14, 16, 29-30a; (1 Cor. 10:1-2)).
- God fed them manna from heaven (Ex. 16:4), and gave them water from rocks (e.g. Ex. 17:6). This was their only means of survival.
  - Could they feed themselves? No.
  - Could they find their own water? No.
  - Did they need God's help? Yes! (Food and drink were provided, clothes and shoes did not wear out, a cloud was provided to cool them by day, and fire to warm them by night.)
  - *God fed and cared for 'baptized' sinners and rebels.*

- **The Israelites did not receive God’s blessings in a “worthy” manner.**
  - **They engaged in idolatry**
  - **They were grossly immoral**
  - **They tested God’s patience constantly**
  - **They murmured and complained daily (various OT scriptures, summarized in 1 Cor. 10:6-10)**
  
- **Israelites rejected God’s way, His will and His plan and a whole generation died in the wilderness (Num. 14:22-23, 29).**

**New Testament fulfillment parallels Old Testament typology:**

- **Jesus is the Passover Lamb whose blood alone saves (1 Cor. 5:7).**
- **We are eligible to partake at the Passover table after we have entered into covenant with Jesus Christ through baptism (Mark 16:16).**
- **Jesus identified Himself as the bread from heaven (John 6:51).**
- **He told the crowd that if they didn’t eat His flesh and drink His blood, they had no life in them. There was no other option for their spiritual survival (John 6:53).**
- **Jesus instituted the NT Passover feast: “The Lord’s Supper”, “Communion”, as the way in which we eat His flesh and drink His blood! (Mark 14:22-24).**
- **Who may participate?**
  - **Baptized believers.**
  - **Those who will partake in a worthy manner.**

**How holy and righteous does one need to be to partake at the Communion table?**

- As 'holy' and 'righteous' as the disciples were!
  - James and John – the Sons of Thunder – sought to call fire from heaven upon those who were unkind to them (Mark 3:17; Luke 9:51-56). (John is described as the apostle of love!)
  - James and John again, were seeking power over their brethren, causing anger and strife (Mark 10:35-41).
  - Their disciples' discussion after Communion was "Which of us is the greatest"? (Luke 22:24-27).
  - Judas was a thief (John 12:6), betrayed Jesus and committed suicide.
  - Peter denied Jesus using foul language. (He and all the rest of the disciples had said they would die with Jesus: Mark 14:31).
  - Nine disciples fled and were absent from the trial and crucifixion.
  - Only ONE disciple (John) went all the way to Golgotha with Jesus.
  
- In spite of all this, Jesus served Communion to each and every one of them!

**So what is Paul speaking about in 1 Cor. 11:27? What does it mean when he speaks against partaking "unworthily" (KJV)?**

**Most translations and commentaries expand on the adverb 'unworthily' to render it "in an unworthy manner". In other words, the emphasis is not on my personal holiness and worthiness before God to partake at the table. The emphasis is on the condition of my heart as I partake.**

**As we come to the table, are we honoring God, bowing down in worship to Him, thanking Him for His unbelievable love and sacrifice, or are we treating Him with dishonor, disrespect and a “who cares” attitude?**

**Eating and drinking ‘in a worthy manner’ actually means we are treating the “Body of Christ” in a proper, godly fashion! We must constantly honor, recognize, distinguish and see the Lord’s Body – the Church, as precious. We must treat our brethren as if they were Jesus! (This is a very simple way to test our love for God. All we have to do is look at the way we treat our brothers and sisters.)**

**1 Cor. 12:29 is not a reference to the physical, symbolic or personal body of Jesus as are vv. 23-28. In v. 29, Paul switches back to a discussion of our attitudes and actions toward fellow members of the Body of Christ, going back to his argument in vv. 17-22.**

**The Corinthians *thought* they were coming together for a good purpose to partake of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:17,20), but Paul felt it necessary to free them from that delusion. Their factions, divisions, fractures and ‘classism’ defeated any hope they had of celebrating the Lord’s Supper in the way Jesus intended! Instead of bringing them life, it was bringing them under judgment (v. 34).**

**At dinner, the rich ate well and got drunk, while the poor starved. No doubt the ‘Paul Clique’ had nothing to do with the ‘Cephas Clique’ and both stayed away from the ‘Apollon Clique’ or the ‘Jesus Clique’.**

**As Paul addressed this very serious problem, he taught that our failure to treat our brothers and sisters**

**properly can lead to sickness and even death if we desecrate the table by despising the Body of Christ.**

**However, this is not death leading to eternal damnation, but the complete opposite: this sickness and death is utilized by God to save us from eternal condemnation (1 Cor. 11:32)! (Paul even delivered a sinning brother over to Satan for the “destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:1-5)). Jesus said:**

**“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick” (Matthew 9:12b).**

**The Lord does not chase us from His table because of our imperfections. He welcomes us because of our need.**

**We cannot cleanse ourselves to make ourselves worthy, so He calls us to eat His flesh and drink His blood so we can have life. Not our life, but His life.**

**Do not avoid the table. It gives life. It is to draw us closer to God and closer to each other. It is to show the power of the gospel at work in us and in the body of Christ. It is to remember the work of Christ at Calvary and to celebrate Him.**

**Come to the table.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Pastoral application – (my personal position):**

**I believe all the disciples were baptized into John’s baptism, even though it is not explicitly stated in scripture. Certainly Andrew and another disciple**

**(speculated to be John)<sup>1</sup> were baptized (John 1:35,37). Jesus Himself came to John for baptism in order to fulfill all righteousness (Mt. 3:15), so it is reasonable to assume He required His own disciples to be baptized also. His disciples baptized more people than John did (John 4:1-2), so one assumes they themselves had been baptized.**

**The question I would ask and the statement I would make at the start of a Communion service is that those who have repented of their sins and been baptized are welcome at the table. These are the ones who have entered into a covenant relationship with Jesus and have separated themselves unto Him.**

**Would I deny Communion to those who have not been baptized in Jesus' name, but rather in the titles Father, Son and Holy Spirit? No, I would serve them.**

**Rationale: With the level of understanding they had at the time of their conversion, they willingly did what they had been told to do. There was no doubt in their mind that they were committing their life to Christ. We must recognize and honor this commitment.**

**As we interact with them over time and explain the Word of God to them "more perfectly", they will learn the difference, and why baptism in Jesus' name is our practice. It is the ONLY way anyone was ever baptized in the NT church!**

**If, after explanation, they are not re-baptized, would I still serve them communion? Yes.**

---

<sup>1</sup> See note for John 1:35 in Zondervan NASB Study Bible

**Rationale: When my child disobeys me, I do not deny him a place at the family table. I hope he will obey in the future and change his actions, but I do not starve him. That would lead to his death. I want him to live – and change for the better over time.**

**Applying this to baptism, some simply do not see what we see and understand what we understand. Others clearly see and understand what the Bible says, but have been taught differently in the past, or understand the scriptures to mean either way is acceptable to God. If we faithfully teach the Apostles' doctrine, the response of the hearers is in their own hands.**

**Note: I would not use such people in public ministry positions – preaching, Sunday School teaching, leading praise and worship, as such positions demand full agreement and obedience to our fundamental doctrines.**

**However, in my opinion, serving communion to all baptized believers is permissible, and is not at all to be perceived as a blanket endorsement of their Christian life and actions. (There are also many saints who have been baptized in Jesus' name, receiving Communion, whose personal lives make them totally ineligible to participate in preaching/teaching/worship ministries.)**

**Scripturally, there is a much higher standard for those who are engaged in public ministry than for those who are not.**

**Baptism is mandated for all believers. Communion is mandated for all believers. Public ministry is not.**