

THE LORD, THE BREAD, AND THE CUP
1 Corinthians 11:23-34

Intro: At Christmas time the world remembers the birth of Jesus Christ. When Christ was born an angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds and said,
Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all (lit., the) people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10, 11).

Obviously the shepherds were the elect of God. How much they understood at that time, we do not know, but they were to learn that salvation would cost the Lord Jesus His life. In a very unique sense, the Lord Jesus Christ was born to die! His death was vicarious (meaning, on behalf of others), substitutionary. The birth of Christ and the death of Christ should never be separated from each other because the purpose of the birth was to lead to the death.

As we all know, the disciples failed to understand the need for His death until after He was raised from the dead. The Lord, however, intended that His people would never forget His sacrifice for them, and so He established what we now call, the Lord's Supper. In it His people do two things:

- 1) They remember Him and what He did.
- 2) They proclaim His death until He returns again.

The Lord's Supper was symbolic in every detail. The bread and the fruit of the vine could not have been His body nor His blood because He was in His body at the time; His blood had not been shed. Instead, when He took the bread and said, "This is my body," He meant that the bread represented His body; and when He said of the cup, "This is my blood," He had to mean that the juice of the vine represented His blood.

In like manner, all that the Lord did on that occasion was rich in symbolic teaching, and these are what I want to consider with you from the Scriptures tonight before we observe the Lord's Supper.

Counting what the Lord said, as well as what He did, there are seven things for us to observe and to understand--and to see their application to salvation.

I. THE SUPPER WAS ESTABLISHED BY CHRIST.

It was the Lord Who took the bread. There was no request from the disciples. The Lord suddenly did that which they did not expect. The Supper originated with Him.

This is a very basic truth regarding our salvation. It did

did not originate with man. It was not done at man's request. It was planned from before the foundation of the world by the Members of the Godhead.

It was God Who sent His Son. Cf. 1 John 4:14.

Man did not deserve it. He could not earn it. He did not even request it. God initiated it of His own will.

Cf. Luke 22:22a, "And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined . . ."

II. THE SUBMISSION OF CHRIST.

This is to be seen when our Lord "took" the bread, and then "took" the cup.

A. The bread -- the body. Cf. Heb. 10:5-10 (5 and 10).

The incarnation of Jesus Christ was essential for His death. When He took the bread, He was portraying His acceptance of the Father's will.

Cf. 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; 4:1.

B. The cup -- His death. Cf. Luke 22:39-46.

The act that night was simple, and perhaps its meaning was not realized at that time by His disciples, but the struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane caused our Lord indescribable suffering.

Gethsemane shows us the submission of Christ.

So did Peter's defense of the Lord against Malchus. See what the Lord said in John 18:11.

So did the jeers of the crowd as He was dying on the Cross. Cf. Matt. 27:40b when they called Him to come down from the Cross if He were the Son of God.

The Lord accepted that which was symbolized by the bread and the cup.

III. THE THANKSGIVING OF CHRIST.

None of the Gospel writers record what He said; we can only surmise.

Perhaps three other occasions when the Lord gave thanks will help us. Cf. Matt. 14:19; 15:36; 11:25-27.

This obviously shows that the Father alone is to be praised

for providing salvation. Cf. Eph. 1:3ff.; 1 Pet. 1:3ff.

IV. THE SACRIFICE.

It was the Lord Who broke the bread. Cf. John 10:17, 18; 19:1-12.

V. THE BENEFICIARIES OF HIS DEATH.

The Lord said, "This is my body, which is broken for you" (1 Cor. 11:24). Matthew told us that the Lord said that His blood was "shed for many" (Matt. 26:28).

This is particular redemption.

There is no indication any place in the Bible that Jesus Christ died expecting that all might be saved. He died to secure the salvation of those whom the Father had given to Him.

VI. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WORK.

Again, notice that the disciples did not ask to eat. Nor did they take it of their own will. They were told to take it and eat it! IRRESISTIBLE GRACE - EFFICACIOUS

Cf. John 1:11-13; Jas. 1:18. See also John 6:53.

Christ did not die in vain. He is the One Who draws us to Himself by the Spirit and through His Word.

VII. THE RESULTS OF THE WORK.

Matt. 26:28 says,

For this is my blood of the new testament,
which is shed for many for the remission of sins.
Provision was made for the forgiveness of the sins of all
for whom the Lord died. Cf. Heb. 8:12.

But there is a second which needs to be mentioned. Cf. Heb. 9:15 -- an eternal inheritance.

Cf. John 10:27-30.

Concl: How could the Lord have portrayed the meaning of His death, and the way of salvation, any more than the way in which He did.

As we observe the Lord's Supper in His remembrance, these are some of the truths upon which we should be meditating because this is what the Supper means.