

THE FIRST LORD'S SUPPER

Mark 14:22-25

Intro: We believe that the Bible teaches that there are two ordinances which those who believe in Christ are to participate in. The first is baptism; the second is the Lord's Supper. Both of these are very important in the life of the Lord's people. And only those who are truly saved are to participate in them. Baptism is observed only once. The Lord's Supper is observed over and over again. The Bible does not specify how often the Lord's Supper is to be observed. The Apostle Paul in writing about it said "as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup." So every church is at liberty to determine how often the Lord's Supper shall be observed. Some do it quarterly. Some do it monthly. Some, as is our particular practice, observe it twice each month. We do it on the first Sunday morning of every month, and also on the third Sunday evening of each month. We do it once in the morning and once in the evening each month because some are not able to attend in the mornings, but they can come in the evenings. Those who attend all of the time observe the Lord's Supper twice every month. And then there are some churches that observe the Lord's Supper every Sunday, usually in the morning.

Baptism is observed just once because we are saved just once. Baptism by immersion, which is what we believe is the Scriptural mode, pictures our salvation. When Christ died on the Cross, all who had ever been saved, or would ever be saved, died with Him and in Him. When He was buried, we were buried with Him. When He arose, we arose in Him. He died in our place in order to pay the penalty for our sins, and so that we would not have to die. Water baptism in no way contributes to our salvation. We are saved by Christ alone. If a person is not saved when he or she is baptized, baptism means nothing. But once a person has trusted in Christ, he is baptized as a symbolic witness of his faith in Christ. The person being baptized is put down in the water as a picture of his death with Christ, and then he is raised up out of the water as a picture of his resurrection with Christ, raised to live a new life. So a person who is baptized is publicly declaring his faith in Christ as his Savior, *and* his intention to live as a Christian for the rest of his life on earth. If you are a Christian but have not been baptized, you ought to be baptized; you need to be baptized.

But in our text in the Gospel of Mark which we have for today, we are considering the Lord's Supper, which, incidently, we are observing

tonight. The Lord's Supper, like water baptism, also pictures the Gospel, but because it is repeated, it has an added feature that is suggested by the fact that we eat bread, and drink the fruit of the grape vine. The bread pictures the body of our Lord; the cup of grape juice pictures the blood of our Lord. When we are saved we are by grace through faith partaking of Christ. The Lord described salvation in these words which are found in John, chapter 6, beginning with verse 53:

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever (John 6:53-58).

The Lord was not speaking here of actually eating His flesh, or actually drinking His blood, but He was speaking of such a vital relationship with Himself that we become united to Christ. We have Christ and Christ has us. As the Apostle John wrote in 1 John 5:11-12,

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

12 He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Don't let anyone deceive you into thinking that when you take the Lord's Supper you are eating bread that has been turned into Christ's flesh, or that when you drink the grape juice, it has actually become the blood of Christ. When Christ did what we have read about in our text today, He was still in His body, and His blood was still running in His veins. He meant that the bread *represented* His body, and that the juice in the cup *represented* His blood.

Now I hope that you can see that salvation is partaking of Christ. In baptism we have a picture of our union, or our oneness, with Christ in His death and resurrection. In the Lord's Supper we have the picture that we have been saved by partaking of Christ, all of Christ, His body and His blood. But we observe the Lord's Supper over and over because that is

the way we as Christians live. We feed on Christ. We keep learning about Christ. We depend upon Christ. We are being transformed and made like Christ as we feed on Christ. The Apostle Paul expressed it this way in his letter to the believers at Colosse. He said, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" (Col 2:6). We live as Christians the same way we were saved, by feeding on Christ, by daily continuing to trust Him. We were saved by faith, and we walk, or live, by faith.

You see, this is all pictured for us in the Lord's Supper. And you see why a person who is not born again, should not partake of the Lord's Supper. What the Lord's Supper means, is not true of a non-Christian. Lucille and I would be happy to have any of you in our home for dinner, whether you know the Lord, or not. But I don't have the liberty to invite you all to observe the Lord's Supper if you are not trusting Christ as your Savior. If you are a believer, then, although you may not attend Trinity Bible Church regularly, I can invite you to join with us because this is the Lord's Supper for those who belong to Him.

Now let's go to the Word.

The Lord's Supper is described for us four places in the New Testament. It is found in here in Mark 14:22-25. It is also found in Matthew 26:26-29. You will find it also in Luke 22:18-20. And the fourth place it is found in the passage we usually read when we observe the Lord's Supper (although we are not limited to this passage. I am speaking of Paul's description of it 1 Corinthians 11:23-25.

Now I want to read all four of these passages to you this morning, and then I want to explain from these what we are doing when we observe the Lord's Supper.

First, I will read our text here in Mark's Gospel, 14:22-25. (Read.) We can include verse 26 with it.

Second, you will see when I read Matthew's account of the Lord instituting His Supper, that his words are almost identical with Mark's. This is what Matthew said:

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;
28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.
29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

And then Matthew included what Mark said:

30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives (Matt. 26:26-30).

Luke revised somewhat the order of his account as compared with Mark and Matthew, but he included all that they included. I will begin reading with Luke 22:14, and read down through verse 20:

14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.
15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:
16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.
17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:
18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.
19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.
20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you (Luke 22:14-20).

You will notice in all three of these accounts, it was as our Lord and His disciples were eating the Passover that the Lord introduced what we know as the Lord's Supper. This would establish a clear relationship between the Passover and the Lord's Supper. Both speak of Christ, and both speak of His death.

You will also notice that all three of these accounts show that the Lord served the bread first, and then the cup. I believe that in taking the bread first, the Lord was calling attention to His body, His incarnation, that He had come into the world as a Man in order that He might die for sinners. Thus when we take the bread we are declaring our faith in the fact that

Jesus was the Son of God in human flesh. Taking the cup which is a symbol of the blood of Christ, is an expression of our faith that it was in the shedding of His blood, that He made propitiation for us with the Father.

But now let us go on to Paul's description of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11. This is not the only place in this epistle where Paul referred to the Lord's Supper, but this is where he spoke of the order in which it was to be observed, and what we do when we take communion.

First, let's read what Paul wrote to the believers at Corinth. We find it in chapter 11 of 1 Corinthians, verses 23 through 26. But before I read I want you to notice that a warning precedes what he wrote, and a warning follows what he wrote. Verses 26 through 34 are verses we need to pay close attention to every time we observe the Lord's Supper. Our time at the Lord's Table should be preceded always, even before we come to church, by a time of self examination and heart searching, to make sure that we are not observing the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner.

But let me read, and you follow in your Bible, what Paul said about the Lord's Supper:

23 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:

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 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.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

Paul was not a believer in Christ when the Lord gathered His disciples into the Upper Room just before His arrest. He could have learned about the Lord's Supper from Peter, or John, or any of the other apostles. But he didn't learn about it from any of them. *This was such a tremendously important truth that when it came to informing the man who was appointed by God to be the Apostle to the Gentiles, the Lord Himself told the Apostle Paul about the Lord's Supper, how it was to be observed, and what it was to mean to believers starting with the Corinthian church, and*

coming down to you and me in this present hour.

The order is exactly the same which is given in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The bread first, then the cup. The bread represented His body; the cup represented His blood.

You will probably have noticed as we have read over these passages together that the Lord “took” the bread, and then He “took” the cup. This means that He accepted the mission upon which the Father had sent Him. And when He broke the bread it was an illustration of our Lord’s words that when He died, it was not because men took His life from Him, but He laid it down of Himself. Cf. John 10:17-18:

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

And did you notice two words that were descriptive of what the Lord did as He took the bread. He “gave thanks,” and He “blessed” it. Here are some wonderful truths which we should not overlook. For what could our Lord Jesus Christ give thanks at such a time as this? F. W. Krummacher, a German pastor who lived back in the 1800's, gives us the answer. Listen to what he wrote:

For what did He render thanks? O my friends, for what else than for the decision of divine mercy, to save such poor sinners as we, which He saw in spirit, as already accomplished in His blood, and for the deliverance of the children of Adam from the curse of the law, the power of Satan, and the gulf of perdition. It was they who lay continually upon His heart; to whose restoration all His cares and anxieties were directed, and whose exaltation and beatification was the object of His highest interest and sweetest hope (*The Suffering Saviour*, pp. 51-52).

Is this not what our Lord must have had in mind when He told Paul that, after the Lord had given thanks, He said, “This is my body, which is broken for you”?

But Matthew also tells us that the Lord “blessed” the elements. This, of course, meant that they were to be received above and beyond their normal usage. Again referring to F. W. Krummacher, he had this to say about the Lord’s blessing:

O, what superabundant riches and fulness of blessing have rested on the bread and wine of the communion from the benediction, which our Lord pronounced upon them! Since that festal evening, how many thousands have received heavenly refreshment, invigoration, and encouragement by their means! How many a wounded heart, in the course of eighteen centuries, has been healed, how many fainting spirits revived, and the passage through the dark and mortal vale illumined, alleviated, and sweetened! And how innumerable are those who, till the end of time, will joyfully experience all this (*Op. cit.*, p. 52).

Who can possibly measure the blessing that the Lord has in store for those who observe the Lord's Supper with the love and devotion that He intended that we should observe it in love responding to such an amazing display of His love.

Two more points and I reluctantly will close.

Did you notice that the Lord told His disciples to "take" the bread to eat it, and for all of them to "drink" from the cup? It wasn't because we of our own initiative came to the Lord, took the bread, and drank from the cup. It was not our idea that we come and eat and drink. He constrained us to come. He commanded us to eat, and to drink. Our salvation is the result, not only of His work for us on the Cross, but of His seeking us, and telling us to eat and to drink of the fulness of His grace.

Concl: There is so much more that could be said, but let me point out the high ground upon which we are to come to the table. We are not to think of the person next to us, nor of the men who are serving us, but we take the bread and drink from the cup, as our Lord said, and it is recorded both by Luke and Paul, "in remembrance of Me." Could we ever forget Him? Or, could we ever forget what He has done for us, and what He continues to do in carrying out His saving grace in your lives? The answer is, Yes, we can. And not only can we, but we so often do!

We all need to come to the Lord's Table. I hope you will be there tonight. We need it. I need it. You need it. We need these elements to remind us of two things: 1) Who He is, and 2) how much He has done for us because He loves us. There is much to learn at the Lord's Table, and much to remember that we may have forgotten. It is at the Lord's Table as we feast upon Him that our spirits can be revived, and our cups can overflow.