

Introduction:

1. A few weeks ago, we looked at the comparison between the Passover feast and the Lord's Supper.
 - a. Both were instituted before an event bringing deliverance, both were celebrated afterwards, commemorating that event.
 - b. Both preceded a new law being given.
 - c. Both contain the elements of the Lamb, the blood, and the unleavened bread.
2. Today, we will again be looking at the Lord's Supper and the importance of observing it properly.
 - a. The Lord's Supper is often misunderstood or given no significance in the worship of Christians.
 - b. Oftentimes whispering can be heard through the auditorium when the bread and cup are being passed around.
 - c. The Lord's Supper is of eternal importance, and we must observe it correctly or else we risk our salvation!
3. Today we will be looking at the pattern set forth by Christ when He instituted the Lord's Supper and how it was followed by Christians (including the inspired apostles).
 - a. It is important to realize that this was not just groups of Christians doing things the way they thought it should be done.
 - b. The apostles were included in these actions.
 - c. The apostles were inspired by God, and since they observed the Lord's Supper in a certain way, that is the way God wants us to observe it today as well!
- I. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:19-20, I Corinthians 11:23-26).
 - A. Jesus gave thanks before they partook of each element (Luke 22:19, Matthew 26:27).
 1. Matthew and Mark say that Jesus "blessed it."
 2. This is to say that Jesus prayed to the Father, giving thanks for the bread and asking a blessing to those who partook of it.
 3. In I Corinthians 11:24, the Greek word is "EUCARISTEO," which means "to give thanks."
 - a. This is where the term "Eucharist" comes from.
 - b. It is what the Catholics (and other religions) call the Lord's Supper.
 - c. Therefore, they would call it "the thanksgiving" meal.
 - d. This is not a bad concept, because we should take of the Lord's Supper with a massive amount of thankfulness for the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf.
 4. When we pray before the Lord's Supper, we need to remember to give thanks for the bread, but more importantly to give thanks for what it represents: Christ's body sacrificed on the cross.
 5. When we pray before taking the fruit of the vine, we need to remember to give thanks for it, but more importantly to give thanks for what it represents: the sin-cleansing blood of Jesus Christ!
 - B. The unleavened bread represented Christ's body (Mark 14:22).
 1. We know that this was unleavened bread because all leavening must be purged from the house the entire week of the Passover celebration (Exodus 12:15).
 - a. It was called "the feast of unleavened bread" (Matthew 26:17).
 - b. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper during the Passover.

2. Those celebrating the Lord's Supper must take the unleavened bread and eat it (I Corinthians 11:26-28).
 - a. Jesus commanded the disciples to eat the bread (Mark 14:22).
 - b. Paul says Christians should eat the bread (I Corinthians 11:26-28).
 3. Jesus' body was that which was given on the cross so that our sins might be forgiven.
 - a. He was killed, a sacrifice to bring us reconciliation with God (I John 2:1-2).
 - b. He is the propitiation (satisfaction of justice) for our sins.
 - c. It is through His sacrifice that God's demand for justice (our sins deserve a punishment of death) is satisfied.
 4. Was Christ's body broken? (I Corinthians 11:24)
 - a. The King James (and many other translations) renders I Corinthians 11:24 as "this is my body which is broken for you."
 - 1) Yet we are told by the gospel writers that not a bone of His body was broken, in fulfillment of prophecy (John 19:33-36).
 - 2) None of the gospel accounts record Christ as saying "this is my body which is broken for you."
 - b. Many manuscripts (including the ones upon which the American Standard Version was based) do not have the word "broken," but instead read "this is my body which is for you."
 - c. Some have suggested that the verse should read "this, which is broken for you [referring to the bread], is my body."
 - d. However, it is clear that Jesus' flesh was broken, punctured, scarred, mutilated by the torture and crucifixion (according to prophecy – Isaiah 52:11-13).
 - e. There are no contradictions in Scripture.
 5. Christ's body was given for us (Luke 22:19).
 - a. He did not die on His own behalf.
 - b. He did not die because His own sins caused it (for He had no sins – I Peter 2:21-22).
 - c. He gave His life for us, so that we might obtain forgiveness of sins and eternal life!
- C. The unfermented fruit of the vine represented Christ's blood.
1. We know the fruit of the vine was not alcoholic wine because all leavening was to be cast out of the house for the entire Passover feast week, and that would include anything that had leavening (fermenting) in it.
 - a. Those who today claim that the fruit of the vine was alcoholic do so with disregard for the context of the feast.
 - b. They also would have us believe that Jesus commanded his disciples to drink alcohol.
 2. Christ's blood is that which will wash away our sins (Revelation 1:5, I John 1:7).
 - a. His blood washes away our sins at baptism (Acts 22:16).
 - b. His blood also washes away our sins as we continue to walk in the light (I John 1:7).
 3. It is Christ's blood that brought about the new covenant (Matthew 26:28).
 - a. A covenant is dedicated with blood (Hebrews 9:16-22).
 - b. A testament does not come into force without the death of the testator.

- c. Christ had to die in order to put the New Testament into effect.
 - 4. It is Christ's blood that brings about remission of sins (Matthew 26:26).
 - a. The reason Christ shed His blood on the cross was so that we could gain forgiveness of our sins.
 - b. Jesus here uses the exact same phrase (in English and in Greek) as is used in Acts 2:38.
 - 1) Christ's blood was shed for many "FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS."
 - 2) Baptism is "FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS."
 - 3) If, as Baptists and others claim, Acts 2:38 means "be baptized because your sins are already forgiven," then Jesus said He was going to shed his blood for many because their sins had already been forgiven.
 - 4) If their interpretation of Acts 2:38 is correct, then Jesus died for no reason, because everyone's sins were already forgiven!
 - 5) Obviously, those denying baptism is essential for forgiveness of sins are dead wrong.
 - 5. Those celebrating the Lord's Supper must drink the fruit of the vine.
 - a. Paul commands that all Christians are to eat the bread and drink the cup (I Corinthians 11:28).
 - b. This eliminates the Catholic practice of only allowing the "priest" to drink the wine (they use alcoholic wine).
 - c. Every Christian has this command, therefore every Christian must drink of the fruit of the vine.
- II. The early church (with the apostles) observed the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week.
 - A. Paul had gone to Troas, and waited there for seven days so that he could meet with the church (Acts 20:6-7).
 - 1. The Jews counted time inclusively (today would be day one), so he arrived on a Tuesday, and the seventh day would be Monday (the day he was leaving 20:7).
 - 2. The sixth day of his stay in Troas was the First day of the week (20:7).
 - 3. He met with the church that day and preached to them until daybreak (with a short intermission after Euthychus fell from the window near midnight).
 - B. The reason the church gathered together was "to break bread."
 - 1. This was not, as some wish to assert, a time when the church came together to eat a common meal.
 - a. Paul could have easily had a meal with the Christians there on any of the other days.
 - 2. Instead, this was a time when the church gathered in order to partake of the Lord's Supper.
 - a. This is something the early church continually did (Acts 2:42).
 - b. This is what the Corinthians were chastised for NOT doing (I Corinthians 11:20-ff).
 - c. This is what was being done in Troas (Acts 20:7).
 - d. Early church writers made frequent references to coming together on "the Lord's Day" in order to partake of the Lord's Supper.
 - 1) Justin Martyr (110-165 AD) records this: ***'On the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings***

of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons...But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead.

2) *There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen.*

i. A Presbyterian preacher observed this about Justin's writings: *Evidently, the churches known to Justin celebrated the Lord's Supper every time they gathered together in remembrance of Him.*

3) The Didache (which some believe was written as early as AD 65 or as late as AD 160) says of Christian worship: *But on the Lord's day, after that ye have assembled together, break bread and give thanks, having in addition confessed your sins, that your sacrifice may be pure.*

4) These are not given as if they were Scripture (because they are not); these are given to show that the common practice of the early church was to gather together on every Lord's Day for the purpose of taking the Lord's Supper.

5) The idea that we can acceptably take of the Lord's Supper on days other than Sunday, or less frequently than every Sunday is not from the Bible, and did not exist for at least 100 years after the Bible was completed (in actuality, it was over 1000 years before that idea really took hold).

e. Those in Troas made it a regular time to gather (because Paul waited so he could be there).

f. Those in Corinth came together on the first day of every week (I Corinthians 16:1-2).

III. The Lord's Supper is to be taken in a worthy manner (I Corinthians 11:27).

A. Those in Corinth had lost the meaning of the Lord's Supper.

1. They were treating it as a common meal (I Corinthians 11:21).

- a. The more well-to-do members brought food for themselves, filled up with it, and then took the Lord's Supper as part of their meal (11:20-21).
 - b. The members were not waiting for everyone to be gathered together (11:33).
 - c. Instead, it appears that some members were filling their stomachs on the Lord's Supper and others who did not arrive as early (or were further back in the room) got nothing.
2. They were chastised for taking such a light view to the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:22).
 - a. Paul said "should I praise you for this? I do not praise you!"
 - b. Instead, Paul reminded them of the sacredness of the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 23-26).
 - 1) It was ordained by Christ on His last night before the crucifixion.
 - 2) It looks back to the one event upon which our salvation hinges: the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.
 3. They were reminded of what the consequences would be for not taking of the Lord's Supper correctly.
 - a. They would be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord (11:27).
 - b. They would be eating and drinking damnation to themselves (11:29).
 - c. They would be spiritually weak or even dead (11:30).
 - d. They would be condemned (11:34).
- B. What is the solution to this problem?
1. Remember that the Lord's Supper is a God-ordained memorial (I Corinthians 11:23).
 - a. It was instituted by Jesus Christ Himself.
 - b. It was commanded to all His disciples to take in remembrance of Him.
 2. Remember what the elements represent.
 - a. The bread is Christ's body, given on our behalf on the cross.
 - b. The fruit of the vine (cup) represents Christ's blood which washes away our sins.
 3. Remember your own state.
 - a. Examine yourself (11:28).
 - b. Are you worthy of heaven without Jesus' sacrifice? Of course not!
 - c. Are you concentrating on Jesus Christ and what He did for you when you take of the Lord's Supper?
 - d. Are you making sure you are taking it in a worthy manner?
 - 1) Do you appreciate the sacrifice?
 - 2) Are you living in a way that shows you appreciate the sacrifice, or are you just giving Jesus lip-service?
 4. If we examine ourselves, we will not be condemned with others (11:31-32).
- C. This was the teaching of the apostles of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:

1. Remember the example Jesus gave for us.
 - a. Jesus gave thanks for the bread and the fruit of the vine.
 - b. Jesus told us what those elements represent.
 - c. Jesus told us that we are to take it in a way that would show His death until He comes again.

2. Remember the commands of Jesus' apostles.
 - a. Take the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner, examining yourself.
 - b. Take the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner, not mixed in with a common meal.
 - c. Take the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner, remembering Christ's sacrifice because of our sins.
 - d. Take the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner, realizing that it affects our salvation!
3. Are you saved?
 - a. Are you really sure of it?
 - b. If you are not a Christian, you do not have access to Jesus' blood in order to have your sins washed away.
 - c. If you have become a Christian, have you taken the blood of Jesus Christ for granted?
 - i. Do you constantly thank God for the blessing of Christ's death on the cross?
 - ii. Do you take of the Lord's Supper in a manner which would please God?
 - iii. If not, please repent and resolve to make things right today!