

The Commands of Christ

Command # 32

“This Do In Remembrance of Me.”

Matt 26:20-30 (26-27)

In our last examination of the *“Commands of Christ”* we looked at *“You had better be Ready”* in Matt 24:42-44. There we saw a series of seven commands in connection with Jesus’ teaching concerning *“The Second Coming.”* Tonight the setting is Jesus’ final Passover with his disciples which he uses to introduce the principles governing the *“Lord’s Supper.”*

What is the Lord’s Supper really all about? Do we fully understand what this ritual we participate in is supposed to mean? Or do we just do the Lord’s Supper because, well, because that is what a person does at church? It’s...it’s tradition!

I read this week of a small-town church in upstate New York. They’d had a pastor in that church for over thirty-five years. He was loved by the church and the community. After he retired, he was replaced by a young pastor. It was his first church; he had a great desire to do well. He had been at the church several weeks when he began to perceive that the people were upset at him. He was troubled.

Eventually he called aside one of the lay leaders of the church and said, "I don’t know what’s wrong, but I have a feeling that there’s something wrong."

The man said, "Well, pastor, that’s true. I hate to say it, but it’s the way you do the Communion service."

"The way I do the Communion service? What do you mean?"

"Well, it’s not so much what you do as what you leave out."

"I don’t think I leave out anything from the Communion service."

"Oh yes, you do. Just before our previous pastor distributed and administered the cup and wine to the people, he’d always go over and touch the radiator. And, then, he would--"

"Touch the radiator? I never heard of that liturgical tradition." So the younger man called the former pastor. He said, "I haven’t even been here a month, and I’m in trouble."

"In trouble? Why?" Asked his predecessor.

"Well, it’s something to do with touching the radiator. Could that be possible? Did you do that?"

"Oh yes, I did. Always before I distributed the cup to the people, I touched the radiator to discharge the static electricity so I wouldn't shock them."

So, for over thirty-five years, the people of his congregation had thought that touching the radiator was a part of the holy tradition. I have to tell you that church has now gained the name, "The Church of the Holy Radiator." [Neil Olcott. "The Lord's Supper" sermon on Matt 26:26 - www.sermoncentral.com]

The setting of the story begins in Matthew 26:20, "When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. (21) Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." (22) And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?" (23) He answered and said, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. (24) The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born." (25) Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said it."

In verse twenty-six Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper (vv. 26-30) "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." (27) Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. (28) For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (29) 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." (30) And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

There is some controversy as to "how" especially "how often" the Lord's should be observed. Some church's and denominations observe it every week, some once a month, and some once a quarter. But how often does the Bible say that we should observe the Lord's Supper? Paul in his explanation of the institution of the Lord's Supper to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 11) twice says, "as often as you do it" (vv. 25, 26). He does not say how often to do it, but when you do he says do so in remembrance of Him.

So I want you to see two things He wants us to remember tonight.

First, The Lord's Supper is a reminder of our Lord's sacrifice for our sins!

There three commands located in these verses and the first two are found in verse twenty-six, where it says, "Take (*labete*) Eat (*phogete*) this is my body."

Jesus interrupts the Passover meal. He interrupts it in order to transform the Passover of the Old Testament into the Lord's Supper of the New Testament. He takes the bread and he tells his disciples that the bread now represents his body. The bread is a symbol of sustenance. Jesus says my body, my life that I have lived, and that I will give is being offered so that you

might live. Luke reports that Jesus added, "given for you; do this in remembrance of me" (22:19).

The third command is found in verse twenty-seven "Drink (*gregorite*) from it, all of you"

"I once heard a story concerning communion concerning this verse. "Bro Hans Velhuis, who was a self supporting missionary for many years to Australia, tells a story of when he was first saved. When he was saved he was a soldier in the Dutch Army and as he was being transported some where for service they reached a port city in Europe. Hans a new Christian, thought all churches were the same. So when he enter the city he looked up a church, one of the old cathedrals of the time. At the conclusion of the service they were serving "Communion" so he in complete innocence when forward. This church used a common cup, and they used real wine. As the minister was servicing the elements, just as the common cup, reached Han, the minister said the words, "And drink ye all of it." And so Hans did, he drained the cup. He said the minister had a really peculiar expression on his face when he handed him the empty cup."

He takes the cup of wine and he says this wine now represents my blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Remission means release. The shedding of Jesus' blood on the cross was so that his disciples might experience release from the penalty of sin. His bleeding and dying purchased our forgiveness.

The disciples were to "take" or "receive" the bread, which represented the body of Christ, and to drink the wine, which represented the blood.

He wants us to remember the cross, his death and his blood. When you think about it, that is an ugly thing to remember. He memorialized his death – not his life, not his miracles, not his teachings – but his death.

The Lord's Supper is a wonderful reminder of the truth that we may have life and forgiveness and release from the power of sin by receiving, taking by faith His blood shed on our behalf. This is the New Covenant that we remember and celebrate today.

The Lord's Supper is not only a reminder of our Lord's sacrifice for our sins, but

Secondly, the Lord's Supper is a reminder of His promise to return and share His kingdom with us.

Verse twenty-nine, "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."

"A small country church in Wisconsin has a special tradition that they have used at the close of their communion services for a number of years. It is adapted from an ancient Jewish closing of the Passover meal. Since it is the hope of every devout Jew to celebrate the Passover

at least once in David's city, the Jewish custom is to end the meal with a toast. Passover participants raise the cup and say, "Next year, in Jerusalem!"

The cup in the Lord's Supper serves as two reminders: we are to look back to the shed blood of Christ and forward to the Lord's second coming. In other words, for all Christians, there will be a last sharing of the bread and the cup on this side of eternity: when they meet once again, they will be in Christ's presence. At the close of communion, the members of this church raise their cups in anticipation and say, "Next time, with Christ!"

[Today in the Word, May, 1996, p. 2 - www.bible.org/illus/c/c-94.htm]

Jesus says that this meal would be observed with the disciples again in the Father's Kingdom. The fellowship would continue. The fellowship would be restored. I believe we will feast with Jesus at the Marriage supper of the Lamb. "Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:9). So we observe the Lord's Supper as a reminder, it is really just a foreshadowing of the real thing, that one day Christ will return for his church and when He does we will enjoy fellowship with Him forever.