

The Lord's Supper: Why???

The Proclamation

What is so important about the brief religious ceremony that we call 'the Lord's Supper' or 'Communion'?

The last two bulletin articles have focused on the meaning that Jesus gave to the Lord's Supper. He made meaningful connections to events in the history of Israel. Drawing meaning from past events Jesus attach new meaning for us as we celebrate His death each Sunday.

We have learned that the unleavened bread in the Lord's Supper represents the body of Jesus that was sacrificed on the cross. Yet, connected his body to *the Passover Lamb*, a symbol of deliverance. The cup (grape juice) represents the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. Jesus connected the cup to a *new covenant* involving God's promise of eternal life.

These conclusions were drawn from the statements that Jesus made to his disciples at the Last Supper, that is, the last time that He ate the Passover with them.

The Apostle Paul gives us additional insight into the Lord's Supper.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

What does it mean that "you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes"?

An explanation can be found in a beautiful statement made by Paul in the book of Romans. He described the death and resurrection of Jesus:

...who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. (Romans 4:25)

Jesus was *delivered over* to the Roman authorities to be crucified. That was the *Lord's death* to which Paul referred in 1 Corinthians 11.

His death was part of God's plan to save man from sin. His death *delivered* us from the consequences of sin. The eating of the bread in the Lord's Supper is a proclamation of our *deliverance* from sin because of the sacrificial death of *our* Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ.

It is also significant that the proclamation we make when we eat the Lord's Supper is made "until He comes." WAIT! Until who comes? Dead people do not *come* or *go* or *do* anything. Only the living can 'come.'

The phrase 'until He comes' implies that He, the Lord Jesus, is not dead. Of course we know the full story. We know that He was raised from the dead as prophesied. Because he was raised from the dead, He is alive and able to *come*. So, in the Lord's Supper we proclaim that He will come again because of his resurrection.

When we drink the cup we must understand the words of Jesus who said the cup was "the new covenant in His blood." With the cup we proclaim God's covenant promise to us: *our resurrection to eternal life*.

The Bread: He was *delivered over* to death, for my *deliverance from sin...justification*.

The Cup: He was *raised up*, so that I can be raised from the dead...covenant promise.

Every week we each make a proclamation to each other as we eat the bread and drink the cup: *God has delivered me from sin! God has promised me eternal life!*

What shall we teach our children, ritual or meaning???