

The Lord's Supper

Pastor Chad Wagner

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- I. Jesus instituted the ordinance of communion the night before He died, whereby local churches commemorate His death for their sins (**1Co 11:23**).
 1. However, it is not recorded that Jesus gave the ordinance a name.
 2. The ordinance is referred to by a few different names in scripture.
 - A. Paul called it "the Lord's table" (**1Co 10:21**) and "the Lord's supper" (**1Co 11:20**).
 - B. Paul also called it "the feast" (**1Co 5:8**).
 - C. Paul wrote that the cup of blessing which we bless is the "communion" of the blood of Christ, and the bread which we break is the "communion" of the body of Christ (**1Co 10:16**).
 - D. It is for this reason that we refer to the ordinance as "communion," "the Lord's supper," or "the Lord's table."
- II. The Lord's supper was given to the apostles as an example that they and the churches they served were to follow.
 1. On the night of the first observance of the Lord's supper, Jesus told the apostles, "this do in remembrance of me" (**Luk 22:19**).
 2. It is not recorded that Jesus told the twelve apostles to continue to do it after His death and resurrection, but we can deduce that He did so from the following.
 - A. Jesus instituted the ordinance of feet-washing on the same night immediately after the last supper ended (**Joh 13:2-5**).
 - i. Afterwards Jesus told the apostles plainly that He had left them an example to follow of washing one another's feet (**Joh 13:14-15**).
 - ii. Of the two ordinances, the Lord's supper is clearly the most important because it commemorates the death of Christ for our sins (more on this later).
 - iii. If the lesser important (though still extremely important and absolutely necessary) ordinance of feet-washing was to be repeated, then it stands to reason that the ordinance of greater importance was to be also.
 - B. The second reason is far more straight forward and obvious.
 - i. Because Paul was an apostle born out of due time (**1Co 15:8**) and was not with the twelve on the night of the last supper, Jesus revealed to him, just as He had to them, that the churches were to continually observe the Lord's supper in remembrance of Him (**1Co 11:23-25**).
 - ii. This ordinance was to be repeated regularly until the second coming of Christ (**1Co 11:26**).
- III. The Lord's supper is a commemoration of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ for our sins.

1. Commemoration *n.* - 1. a. The action of calling to the remembrance of a hearer or reader; recital, mention. 2. A calling to remembrance, or preserving in memory, by some solemn observance, public celebration, etc.; 'solemnization of the memory of anything'
2. The word "commemorate" and its cognates are not used in the Bible, but the concept is.
 - A. Jesus told His disciples, "this do in *remembrance* of me" (**Luk 22:19**).
 - B. Remembrance *n.* - 1. a. (Without article.) Memory or recollection in relation to a particular object, fact, etc. In early use esp. in phrases *to have in r.*, *to call to r.*
 - C. The LORD gave the children of Israel the passover feast for them to *remember* the day that He brought them out of Egypt (**Exo 13:3**).
 - D. The passover feast was given to Israel for a memorial (**Exo 12:14; Exo 13:9**).
 - E. Memorial *n.* - 1. Preserving the memory of a person or thing; often applied to an object set up, a festival (or the like) instituted, to commemorate an event or a person.
 - F. Jesus' shed blood and death for His elect was the fulfillment of what the passover typified (see next section).
 - i. The Lord's supper is the New Testament reformed version of the Old Testament passover feast (see next section).
 - ii. It is therefore fitting that just as the passover feast was given as a memorial of the day that the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites covered in the lamb's blood, so the Lord's supper was given as a memorial of the day Jesus the lamb of God died for our sins and spared us from the wrath of God.
3. Remembrance of God is a key factor in our worship of Him (**Psa 30:4**).
4. Every time we keep the Lord's supper we show His death (**1Co 11:26**).
5. The fundamental purpose of the Lord's supper is *remembering* Jesus' death for us.
 - A. The Lord's supper is not a sacrament which we keep to have our sins forgiven.
 - B. Jesus *purged* our sins *by Himself*, not by way of a sacrament that we keep (**Heb 1:3; Heb 9:12**).
 - C. The bread is to be broken and eaten in *remembrance* of Christ (**1Co 11:24**).
 - i. The broken bread represents Christ's body which was broken for us.
 - ii. The bread was produced by breaking and grinding grains and roasting them with heat.
 - iii. Before it is eaten it is ripped apart.
 - iv. So was Christ's flesh ripped apart for us when he was scourged and crucified.
 - v. He endured the fiery wrath of God while hanging on the cross.
 - vi. We should remember these things when we partake of the bread.
 - D. The wine is to be drunk in *remembrance* of Christ (**1Co 11:25**).
 - i. The red grape wine represents the blood of Christ.
 - ii. To make the wine, the grapes had to be crushed so that the juice would flow out of them.
 - iii. Christ was bruised and crushed in order for His blood to be shed for us.
 - iv. We should remember these things when we partake of the wine.
 - E. It is very important to partake of the Lord's supper worthily.
 - i. He that eats the bread and drinks the wine unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord (**1Co 11:27**).

- ii. Unworthily *adv.* - 1. Without being worthy, fit, or qualified; without having sufficient merit or ability; unmeritedly.
- iii. A man should examine himself before taking the Lord's supper to ensure that he is doing it in a worthy and fit manner (**1Co 11:28**).
- iv. How does a man partake of the Lord's supper unworthily?
 - a. By not discerning the Lord's body while doing so (**1Co 11:29**).
 - b. Discern *v.* - 1. *trans.* To separate (things, or one thing from another) as distinct; to distinguish and divide. 2. To recognize as distinct; to distinguish or separate mentally (one thing from another); to perceive the difference between (things).
 - c. To discern the Lord's body during communion, we must separate our thoughts and focus exclusively on remembering what Jesus did for us on the cross.
 - d. If we do that, we will be partaking of the Lord's supper worthily.
- v. When it says we need to examine ourselves, does that mean we need to make sure we have repented of all our sins and have made everything right with our brethren before taking communion?
 - a. The command to examine oneself prior to partaking of the Lord's supper is not specifically referring to searching our hearts for unrepented sin and resentment or ill feelings towards brethren.
 - (i) We only need to do these things to take the Lord's supper worthily as a supplement to discerning and remembering the Lord's death for us.
 - (ii) We should be repenting, confessing, and forsaking sins, including resentment and strife towards brethren, daily, not just prior to communion.
 - b. The fundamental purpose for taking communion is to remember the Lord's death for us.
 - (i) If we do that, we take it worthily and have fulfilled the commandment and the purpose.
 - (ii) But unconfessed sin and resentment, bitterness, or strife toward our brethren in our hearts will prevent us from focusing our minds on Christ's death for us while taking communion.
 - (iii) Therefore, it is important to make sure we go to the Lord's table with a clean heart and a clear conscience so that we can properly discern the Lord's body.

IV. The Lord's supper is a reformed version of the Jewish passover.

1. The first Lord's supper happened *during* the passover feast (**Luk 22:15, 19**).
2. The Lord's supper was not simply the passover feast given a different name though.
 - A. The passover meal included eating a lamb and bitter herbs (**Exo 12:3, 8, 14**).
 - B. The Lord's supper included neither of those.
 - C. While Jesus was eating the passover with His disciples, He took bread and broke it, gave each of them a piece of it, said it was His body, and told them to eat it (**Mat 26:26**).

- D. Jesus did likewise with the wine (**Mat 26:27-28**).
 - E. When Paul gave the church instruction on partaking of the Lord's supper, he only told them to eat the bread and drink the wine (**1Co 11:23-26**).
 - F. No mention was made of a lamb or bitter herbs.
 - G. In fact, Paul made it clear that the Lord's supper is not to be a complete meal to satisfy one's hunger (**1Co 11:34**).
3. Jesus was the fulfillment of what the passover typified.
- A. He is called "Christ our passover" who "is sacrificed for us" (**1Co 5:7**).
 - B. The feast of the passover was a commemoration of the first passover in which the Israelites were told to slay a blemish-free lamb and spread its blood on the sides and top of the doors of their houses (**Exo 12:5-7**).
 - C. When the LORD came through Egypt to slay the firstborn He passed over the houses which were covered in the blood of the lamb (**Exo 12:12-13, 23**).
 - D. The picture of the sacrifice of Christ is unmistakable.
 - i. Jesus is the lamb of God without blemish and spot (**Joh 1:29; 1Pe 1:19**).
 - ii. He was sacrificed for His people (**Eph 5:2; Heb 10:12, 14**).
 - iii. They were washed and sprinkled by His blood (**Rev 1:5; 1Pe 1:2**).
 - iv. Because they were covered by His blood, God will pass over them when He executes wrath on sinners (**Rom 5:9**).
 - E. The Lord's supper is the reminder which God has given us of how we are saved from the wrath of God by the death of the lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.