

THE SIMPLE TRUTH ABOUT THE LORD'S SUPPER

(by George Battey)

The Lord's supper is actually a very simple service, but it has been greatly abused by men. The Lord's supper is described in only five Bible passages: Mt 26:26-29, Mk 14:22-25, Lk 22:14-20, 1 Cor 10:16-17, 1 Cor 11:17-34. There are two other references to the Lord's supper: Acts 20:7 and 1 Cor 5:7-11. Everything we need to know about how and when to observe the communion can be learned in these simple passages.

WHEN?

First we learn when to observe the communion.

Acts 20:7 (NKJV)

7 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, ...

The "first day of the week" is Sunday. According to this simple passage, we learn communion is to be observed only on Sundays and every week.

HOW?

Next we learn how the Lord wanted the communion to be observed.

1) **The Bread**. First Jesus took a single loaf of bread:

1 Corinthians 11:23-24

*23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took **bread**;*

*24 and when He had given thanks, He broke **it** and said, "Take, eat; **this** is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."*

The bread was unleavened (without yeast – Mt 26:17). It was used by the Lord to symbolize His body which was given in sacrifice for the sins of the world. When the scripture says Jesus "broke it," this means He broke off a piece to eat. He did this for an

example. When He said, “Do this,” He meant, “Do what I have done in remembrance of Me.” Therefore, the church should do what He did. The church should:

- *Take one loaf of unleavened bread.*
- *Ask God’s blessing upon it.*
- *Each Christian should break off a piece and eat it.*

1 Corinthians 10:16-17 (NKJV)

16 ... *The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*

17 *For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.*

2) **The cup.** Second, Jesus took a single cup containing the fruit of the vine (grape juice):

1 Corinthians 11:25 (NKJV)

25 *In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."*

The fruit of the vine was used by the Lord to symbolize His blood which was shed “for the remission of sins” (Mt 26:28). The cup itself was used by the Lord to symbolize the new covenant which was ratified by His blood (Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25). When the Lord said, “This do,” He meant, “Do what I have done in remembrance of Me.” Just as He ate from the loaf, He “in the same manner” drank from the cup. He did this for an example for the church to follow. Therefore, the church should do what He did. The church should:

- *Take one cup containing fruit of the vine (grape juice).*
- *Ask God’s blessing upon it.*
- *Each Christian should drink from the cup.*

Just as the disciples all shared together and ate from a single loaf (1 Cor 10:17), Jesus commanded the disciples to all share together and drink from a single cup:

Matthew 26:27 (NKJV)

27 *Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you."*

Mark 14:23 (NKJV)

23 *Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it.*

The idea of “individual communion” is specifically forbidden in the new testament scriptures (1 Cor 11:18-22). “Communion” means “joint participation,” or “sharing together.” Rather than “each man having his own supper” (“individual communion” – see 1 Cor 11:21), the brothers and sisters are to share together the bread and cup.

SUMMARY

The communion is very simple. Yet, as simple as these instructions are, many churches refuse to follow the Lord’s plain instructions. Here are some of the changes men have introduced:

- *Yearly or monthly communion rather than weekly communion.*
- *Plurality of loaves.*
- *The use of wafers.*
- *Plurality of cups.*
- *Water instead of grape juice (Mormons).*
- *Wine instead of grape juice (Catholics).*

Let us be careful not to change the communion. The Lord gave it exactly as He wanted and we must honor Him by following His example and instructions.

Luke 6:46 (NKJV)

46 "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?"

GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION

To be saved from past sins, God requires the following steps:

- 1) **Belief** in Christ as the only begotten Son of God (Jn 3:16).
- 2) **Repentance** of sins (“turning away from”) (Acts 17:30).
- 3) **Verbal Confession** of faith in Christ (Rom 10:10).
- 4) **Baptism** (immersion) into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

Acts 2:38 (NKJV)

38 Then Peter said to them, "**Repent**, and let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins**; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 22:16 (NKJV)

16 And now why are you waiting? Arise and **be baptized**, and wash away **your sins**, calling on the name of the Lord.'

Romans 6:3-4 (NKJV)

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were **baptized into Christ Jesus** were **baptized into His death**?

4 Therefore we were **buried with Him through baptism into death**, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Baptism is the “*point in time*” that God applies the blood of Christ to the sinner’s life. The sinner is baptized into the death of Christ (Rom 6:3-4). Sinners were never told to “*pray the sinner’s prayer*” as is commonly believed today (see Jn 9:31). Only Christians have the privilege of praying for forgiveness of sins (1 Jn 1:9; 2:1 – notice these verses were written to Christians, not sinners). Those who have not been baptized correctly must be rebaptized (see Acts 19:1-5) in order to be saved (1 Pet 3:20-21).

While it *may* be true that the “thief on the cross” was never baptized (perhaps he may have been—see Mt 3:5), it must be remembered he was saved while the Old Testament law was still in force (Heb 9:16-17). This is exactly what the controversy over the Sabbath day revolves around—which law applies today and what does the Lord require of men today. The Lord’s requirement of baptism “*for the remission of sins*” came after His death and resurrection (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16).

After baptism, we must continue in “*all things*” which the Lord “commanded” (Mt 28:20). We must be careful “*lest we fall*” (1 Cor 10:12). Even saved Christians can “*fall away*” (Gal 5:4), have their name removed from the “*book of life*” (Rev 22:19), and suffer a worse fate than “*death without mercy*” (Heb 10:26-29). Christians must “*make their calling and election sure*” by “*giving all diligence*” (2 Pet 1:5-11).