

THE FIRST "LORD'S SUPPER"

Matthew 26:26-35

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: Every Christian has participated in observing the Lord's Supper and there are many ways, means and reasons of observing it as so many emphasize this part or that part with their own specifications. Every Church needs to go back and take a good look at what actually happened that night and follow the example the Lord Jesus gave as He had that last time with His disciples. God's purpose of the Lord's Supper was to melt the Jewish passover into the New Covenant with His Church. Jesus knew all that was coming, that He must suffer and what all would happen to His disciples, so He chose that last quiet evening before being crucified to bestow this parting gift to His Church. If Christians would worship God in the observance of this ordinance, it must be observed as it was established by the Lord Jesus Christ, nothing added, nothing taken away.

I. THE MEANING OF THE ELEMENTS MUST BE UNDERSTOOD

1. There are many beliefs about the elements of the Lord's Supper.
 - Some say the bread and wine actually become the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ as they are taken.
 - Some say the bread and wine are spiritually transformed into the blood and body of Jesus Christ and therefore the elements themselves become holy and convey Grace to the participants.
 - Some take the elements that are left over from the observance and bury them for they have been taught that once the elements have been consecrated, they cannot ever be used again.
 - Jesus said simply, "*...this bread represents my body, this wine represents my blood...*"

2. The Scriptures often state something that is simply a representative of something else:
 - The 3 branches are/represent 3 days - Genesis 40:12
 - The 7 kine are/represent 7 years. Genesis 41:26
 - The 10 horns are/represent 10 kings. Daniel 7:24
 - The field is/represents the world. Matthew 13:18
 - The 7 stars are/represent the angels/pastors of the 7 churches and the 7 candlesticks are/represent the 7 churches. Revelation 1:20

3. The unleavened bread represents the holy human body of the Lord Jesus.
 - Never use soda crackers or light bread.
 - Jesus used unleavened bread because leaven represents sin and Jesus had NO sin!

4. The wine represents Jesus' precious, sin-atoning blood.
 - Never use grape juice, kool-aid, etc.
 - Wine was used because, like unleavened bread, it is free of corruption.
 - Jesus says, "*it is MY blood.*" Human blood, pure blood, precious blood.
 - The "*...blood of the New Testament...*" The new covenant.
 - It was "*...shed for many...*", not for all, but for those who would believe in Him.
 - His blood was shed "*...for the remission of sins...*" for there was no other way by which God could in His holiness, justice, and truth forgive the sins of those who believe in Jesus Christ.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE ORDINANCE, LORD'S SUPPER, MUST BE UNDERSTOOD

1. The scriptures clearly state: *"...This do in remembrance of Me..."* The Lord's Supper was established by Jesus, Himself to be a memorial of Him and His great sacrifice of love for those who believe in Him. NO more, NO less.
2. The Lord's Supper is not a sacrifice.
 - There is no mention of priests or altars, for once Jesus was offered as a sacrifice for sins, all sacrifices, all altars and all priests ceased to be.
 - There is no sacrifice but the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no altar but the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no priest but the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. The Lord's Supper is not a sacrament.
 - The bread and wine are not sacred. The table is not sacred. The act of eating and drinking the bread and wine is not sacred. GRACE is not conferred upon those partaking the Lord's Supper.
 - GRACE is given to the believer through the Lord Jesus alone and by faith alone.
 - "Sacrament" implies a means of grace. It is a "solemn religious ceremony enjoined by the Lord Jesus Christ to be observed by His followers who in doing so renew and ratify their obligations to Him.
4. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic memorial ordinance of public worship.
 - It is not something to be observed privately, but publicly. It is for redeemed sinners, believers in Jesus Christ, for those who are born again by the power and grace of God through the Holy Spirit and by the public observance of this ordinance, believers declare to all:
 - Their sinfulness and need of a Savior.
 - Christ's substitutionary Sacrifice for Sin.
 - Their Faith and Allegiance in Jesus Christ.
 - Their hope of Glory.

III. THE CHARACTER OF THOSE AT THE FIRST LORD'S SUPPER NEEDS TO BE SEEN

1. The Lord's Supper is not a community or family service. It is not nor ever has been something to which unbelievers are invited or encouraged to participate in.
 - Anyone who does not trust the Lord Jesus Christ as his/her Savior is disqualified from both baptism and the Lord's Supper.
 - Unbelievers are unworthy of the Lord's Supper ordinances because they do not understand the necessity of the Lord's body.
 - It is NOT up to the pastor or deacons, etc., to decide who can and who can't partake of the Lord's Supper. Each person must examine him/herself (*1 Corinthians 11:28*).
2. All who were at the First Lord's Supper professed to be believers and followers of Jesus.
 - No where in the Word of God is anybody allowed to forbid communion to those who profess faith in Jesus, the Lord's Supper is restricted to those who PROFESS to be the disciples of the Lord.

3. Although all who were at the first Lord's Supper professed to be believers, yet one of them was not, he was a devil and the Lord Jesus knew it (Judas Iscariot)
 - Jesus knew what Judas had done, yet He did not refuse him a place at the table.
4. One of the disciples sitting at the table of the first Lord's Supper would in a few hours curse and deny ever knowing Jesus.
 - Jesus knew that Peter would experience a terrible fall, yet Jesus still offered him bread and wine.
5. All of the disciples who sat with Jesus at the first Lord's Supper/communion soon left Him in weakness, fear and unbelief.
 - Not one disciple was for any reason exempted from the Lord's Supper. God even allows the devil to sit at the table rather than encourage anyone to keep any believer from receiving this blessed ordinance.

CONCLUSION:

1. No believer, no Christian, should ever look upon the Lord's Supper as unnecessary or "oh, it just the Lord's Supper..." attitude.
2. Let no believer/Christian ever imagine that he/she is unworthy to partake of the Lord's Supper for the believer's worthiness is in the Lord Jesus Christ, not in him/herself. Any person unfit for the Lord's Supper is unfit for the company of the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. No pastor, no Church, no Christian can ever be more strict in the ordinances of Christ than the Lord Jesus, Himself.