

The New Testament Church # 7

Worship of the Church 1; “Lord’s Supper”

Introduction; Many are thinking about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

A. Mel Gibson’s movie has many thinking about Jesus and His death on the cross.

1. Many are thinking about how it will affect the Jews. Will they be persecuted and ridiculed more because of the film?
2. Many are thinking about how terrible the crucifixion was and how much he suffered. Many are upset to see graphically how much He suffered.
3. Many are wondering how accurate the movie is. There is a lot in the movie that scripture does not deal with. We all fill in the gaps in the historical accounts in our own minds. Many wonder why he concentrated only on the last day of His life?
4. Many are just curious. They want to see what all the controversy is about. Many just want to keep up with the latest goings on.
5. A few are thinking about Jesus Christ and His death for us. They realize their sins put Jesus on the cross and want to perhaps understand more His suffering and death for them.

B. The death of Jesus Christ is the ‘high point’ of the Bible.

1. All the O.T. pointed to this event. It began in Eden. Adam and Eve sinned and were cast from Paradise. God immediately began to point man towards Jesus Christ.
2. Jehovah knew this would happen and had planned to save mankind before the foundation of the earth —1 Pet 1:20. Therefore we have the first prophecy of Jesus Christ in the beginning.
3. *Gen 3:14-15 So Jehovah God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”*
4. The prophecy of warfare between the seed of Satan and the seed of woman is seen both in the Bible and in secular history. Man’s history is filled with war, violence, murder, immorality, deceit and all wickedness.
5. There has always been a few who opposed these things and tried to change men. Yet they were usually ridiculed and persecuted. Secular and Bible history both show this.
6. There would come a time though, when right would prevail. The seed of woman would bruise the head of the serpent’s seed. There would be victory for righteousness and man could return to paradise.
7. All the O.T. points to the future when this would happen. In the Gospels we see four accounts of Jesus Christ and His victory over sin.
8. More attention is given to Jesus’ life than any other person’s in scripture. In the Gospels more attention is given to the last 24 hours of His life than any other event.
9. The O.T. looks forward to the Messiah. In the Gospels we see the Messiah is here. Almost half the N.T. is given to the four Gospels.
10. The rest of the N.T. looks back to the gospels. The O.T. tells of the battle between the seed of Satan and the seed of woman. The gospels show the victory of the seed of woman. Acts to Revelation show the results as men are saved and can look forward to eternity in heaven.
11. Genesis 3:14-15 is a prophecy of the history of mankind. Man’s history is one of the battle of good and evil. His victory is in Jesus Christ.

C. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ must not be forgotten.

1. The deaths of many heroes are forgotten soon after they die. A few are remembered for one reason are another. But most who die for a noble cause are forgotten.
2. Some things should be remembered. The most important thing to remember is Jesus’ death and resurrection for us. If we forget this nothing else matters.
3. The Lord’s supper on the day of His resurrection is a very serious and important memorial. We need to take it very seriously and faithfully.
4. We are studying the N.T. church. We want to see how important and necessary it is to our eternal salvation.
5. Today we begin a study of the **worship** of the N.T. church. We will look at the things the N.T. saints did when they came together.

D. Today we will begin with the Lord's Supper.

I. Jesus established the L.S.

A. Jesus did this the night of His betrayal.

1. Matthew, Mark and Luke give the account of Jesus' establishment of the communion. John gives much more time to the last night than the other gospels but he does not actually show the Lord's supper. Since he probably wrote last he often covered material the others did not cover. All however, give a lot of time to His death, burial and resurrection.
2. *Matt 26:26-30 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.*
3. They are eating the Passover –Matt 26:17-25. This was the Jewish feast where Jehovah lead them out of Egyptian bondage. This was an important memorial feast to them.
4. They used unleavened bread. No leavening nor yeast was allowed to be in their homes for the week of the Passover and the accompanying Feast of Unleavened Bread.
5. The Lord's church still eats unleavened bread and drinks 'fruit of the vine' for the Lord's supper. This tradition followed Jesus' example with His apostles and is 2000 years old.

B. The Lord's Supper is very important.

1. Before we consider what the communion means we must realize how important it was to Jesus Himself. This was what He lived and died for.
2. *Luke 22:14-16 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."*
3. The hour was the time after sundown on the 15th of Nisan when the Passover was to be taken. Jesus' disciples have everything ready.
4. Jesus says, *"With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."* This is the literal Greek. The Jews would repeat a word or idea for importance.
5. This shows how important this is to Jesus. He has lived for this moment. The O.T. Passover was a type and prophecy of what the Messiah would do. He would be the **'lamb of God'** that would suffer and die for the people —John 1:29, 35-36.
6. We also see in Luke and Matthew's accounts that Jesus would not eat of this supper again with His disciples until it was **fulfilled in His Father's kingdom**. Matthew and Mark say He would partake with them on *'that day'* when it would be new.
7. The Lord's Supper is the Passover fulfilled. It is not about physical release from bondage in Egypt.
 - a. It is about spiritual release from sins.
 - b. It is not about being taken to a literal land of milk and honey.
 - c. It is about being taken to a spiritual home in heaven for eternity.
8. Jesus partaking of it **new** or **fulfilled in the kingdom of God** can mean several things. The kingdom today, of course is the church. We have seen this in our studies so far.
 - a. Some think this refers to some special fellowship we will have in heaven. They make *'that day'* the day after Judgment when all the saints surround the throne of God.
 - b. While we will have a special communion with God and Christ in heaven the early church partook of the Lord's supper on earth. It was a weekly memorial.
 - c. It is more likely that partaking with Christ is the spiritual feast when we partake of the Communion with the saints on Sunday.
 - d. We do not just partake with fellow Christians but we share Jesus' body and blood. We are one with Him in His death and resurrection.
9. *1 Cor 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*
10. Jesus provided the feast by His death on the cross. We remember what He did for us in the L.S. and have fellowship with Him because we are in His body the church and have shared His death and resurrection in baptism.
11. *1 Cor 10:20-21 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup*

of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.

12. We must be careful we share only with Christ by the life we live and the worship we give. We cannot serve two masters. We must choose.

C. The Lord's supper is very specific.

1. By this I means it must use certain items and be done in a certain way. It must be done on a certain day and be done with a certain attitude.
2. We have seen unleavened bread must be used. Leavening often represented the influence of sin. This may be the meaning of unleavened bread. It may symbolize purity.
3. *Matt 16:12 Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*
4. For the Passover they did not use leavening because they had to leave in a hurry. Unleavened bread symbolized the need to be ready to obey the Lord quickly.
5. The unleavened bread may also symbolize our willingness and readiness to obey our Lord. We are ready to go where He says and do whatever he says. He died for us and we are ready to live and die for Him.
7. The **unleavened bread** is the **body of Christ**. He is both the Passover lamb and the bread. Jesus was sinless. He had no impurities in Him, hence unleavened. He was also quick to die on the cross.
8. The **'fruit of the vine'** we drink is grape juice. The word **'wine'** is never used. It is always fruit of the vine. This may emphasis using juice from grapes. Or it can emphasize being fresh and not impure with the leavening that ferments grape juice and turns it into wine.
9. The **'fruit of the vine'** is the **blood of Christ**. The O.T. was ratified with blood. So was the New. The Old Covenant was dedicated with the blood of bulls and goats. The New Covenant is ratified with the blood of the Son of God.
10. *Heb 9:18-22 Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." 21 Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.*
11. We see then the importance of the Lord's supper. We have fellowship with Christ when we share a meal with Him. He provides the meal and is the meal.

D. The L.S. is a very important part of the worship of the Christian.

II. Paul corrected the L.S.

A. Even in the N.T. period some were perverting the simple teachings of Jesus Christ.

1. The church at Corinth was about 5 years old. Yet they had already changed the N.T. teaching on several subjects. One was the Communion.
2. **1 Cor 11:17-22**; Paul says they assembled for the worst —vs 17. This probably means they did not find God's favor. They were not being taught and edified to be strong in the Lord's work.
3. Paul lets them know why their worship periods did them no good. They were divided (vs 18) and they were not partaking of the Lord's supper properly.
4. These are very serious charges. They did not partake of the Lord's supper as a united group of believers. They met privately in their own little groups and at different times.
5. Paul says in verse 20, **"When you come together in one place is it not to eat the L.S.?"** This was the purpose of the church in meeting on the Lord's day. They met at other times but Sunday was for the Lord's supper.
6. *Acts 20:7 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.*
7. They also gave only on the first day of the week —1 Cor 16:1-2. While many changes worked their way into the church of the centuries the testimony of early writers is unanimous. The Lord's supper was taken on Sunday.
8. Paul also condemns them for making a common meal of the L.S. He said that common meals were for their homes. The church's feast is not a common meal to fill up the stomach but a spiritual meal to fill the soul.
9. Paul does not just tell them what to do. He tells them their sin. He tells them they are wrong and not coming together for the better. Then he reminds them of the right way to partake.

B. Corinth needed to restore the N.T. pattern for the Lord's supper.

1. **1 Cor 11:23-26;** This is a fourth account of the Lord's supper. It is the same as Matthew, Mark and Luke's account. There is only one way to properly partake of the Communion.
2. In the L.S. we remember Christ's body broken for us. We remember His blood as the New Covenant He died to establish. The Communion is a memorial for us to not forget what our Savior went through for us.
3. We do the same thing today Jesus did 2000 years ago with His disciples. We do the same thing faithful saints have done for 2000 years. We remember Jesus' resurrection on Sunday, the day He was raised — Mark 16:9.
4. We remember His sacrifice and suffering. We remember His body that was broken and bruised and bloodied for us.
5. And we remember His blood that gave us the New Covenant that gives us the forgiveness of sin and the hope of Paradise when life is over.
6. Every Sunday when we partake we show of faith in the Lord's coming until He does return. Partaking once a week is not too much to remember Jesus and His sacrifice. We should think about Him daily. This is a time when all the saints do this as His body, the church.
7. We do this as the church. The Lord's supper is not to be taken alone or at home. It is not private worship but public. We come together as the church to partake.

C. We must partake in a worthy manner.

1. The L.S. is very serious. It is not trivial and must be treated seriously. Corinth abused it and were worse off before God after partaking. We must partake properly.
2. **1 Cor 11:27-34;** Paul says we can partake of the L.S. in an unworthy manner. We must be worthy. Albert Barnes said in his notes on verse 27, '*Perhaps there is no expression in the Bible that has given more trouble to weak and feeble Christians than this.*'
3. In verse 28 we see we must examine ourselves. This does not mean we examine ourselves to see if our life is worthy of Jesus' sacrifice. No one is worthy in that sense.
4. Unworthy here is an adverb and not a noun. It modifies '**manner.**' It is the manner we partake of it that makes us worthy or unworthy. This follows the condemnation of the manner they were partaking of it and the proper way to partake.
5. If we partake in an unworthy **manner** we are guilty of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. We do not discern or understand what we are doing. We do not distinguish between a common meal and the Lord's communion. We become guilty of killing Christ. It was that same attitude that put Him on the cross.
6. The hungry are to eat at home —vs 34. The brethren are to wait for one another and eat together. We share the Communion not only with the Lord but with our brethren.
7. Some at Corinth were weak and sick and even asleep. They were in danger of being judged and condemned by the Lord. This was because they did not see a difference between the L.S. and common means. We must always be careful and watchful to distinguish between the physical and earthly and the spiritual and heavenly.

D. There is more to partaking in a worthy manner.

1. Paul tells us in the passage what to think of as we partake. This is part of understanding what we are doing and distinguishing between the communion and a common meal.
2. Verse 26 says that as often as we eat we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. This is three directions. We look back to His death (**past**) and forward to His coming —**future**. And we are doing it now, in the **present**.
3. *Heb 9:27-28 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*
4. In verse 20 we look **outward** because we do this with our brethren. It is for the church. In verses 27 to 34 we look **inward** and make sure we know what we are doing and why. We do not let the church or the preacher do this for us.
5. *2 Tim 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
6. Malachi said Jehovah wanted someone to shut the doors of His temple —Mal 1:10. Jesus may wish this of us if we do not worship properly. We must examine ourselves.

E. We must partake of the L.S. properly for our worship to be acceptable to God.

Conclusion; Many are thinking of Jesus Christ today.

A. Today is Sunday, His day.

1. Many are thinking of Him because of a movie. This may be good if it causes them to seek Him in His word, the N.T.
2. Many are thinking of Him in a service of the Lord's people. They partake of the L.S. & think about the great sacrifice Jesus make for them.
3. Others may see the movie and even go to church but not really think about Him otherwise. This is not right.

B. We need to seek the Lord properly.

1. We do this in faith, repentance and baptism. We believe in Jesus Christ, repent of our sins and are buried with Him in baptism to be forgiven of our sins and have the hope of returning to Paradise.
2. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
3. *Acts 2:38 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."*

C. If we can help anyone become a Christians, please let us.

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Clearwater church of Christ

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