



LESSON FIFTEEN - THE BREAKING OF BREAD

Text: Matthew 26: 26 – 29
I Corinthians 11: 17 – 34

In lesson fourteen we have discovered that the Church is the spiritual body of Jesus Christ -- that is the “Living Body of Christ”. The symbol of the resurrected savior in this world is His church. The church (the body of Christ) is to represent Jesus Christ to the World. The world should be able to see all the attributes of God as it is represented by the church. This includes the Oneness (which unfortunately is not well represented by the true church of Jesus Christ), the Power, the Holiness and Righteousness of God, the Truth, and the Love of God. Again, the Church is a symbol to the World.

But within the church, there is another symbol of Jesus Christ – and this symbol or representation is not for the world, but to the church itself. It is not a symbol of the “Resurrected Jesus”, but rather a symbol of the “Dying Jesus”. Although the “Lord’s Table” is a representation of the crucified body and blood of Jesus Christ, his broken body – it was not given as a reminder or symbol to the world – neither should the world be a partaker of this symbol. Unfortunately the modern church world has perverted this ordinance to the church in several ways. It has become ritualized to the point that weekly observance has made it common place and trite. Because it has become a ritual, many churches simply open up the partaking of the “Lord’s Table” to all comers, saint and sinner alike. The injunctions about partaking are not stressed, and just as in the Corinthian church, many partake of the Lord’s Table without sufficient repentance and warning concerning its purpose.

The Lord’s Table is the New Testament symbol of Passover

In the Old Testament, God enacted a feast, called Passover that was a type of the death of Jesus

Christ. Jesus of course was the sacrificial lamb whose blood was shed for our atonement. The Passover feast was to be held each year by all Jews throughout the world as a reminder of their deliverance from Israel. Exodus 12 outlines the purpose and the instructions for observing the Passover feast:

- Exodus 12: 11 – 13 the reason for the Passover was to provide the blood that would be put upon the door of each home where God would “Passover” and spare the first born child of the home
- V14: the Passover was to be observed every year as an ordinance for as long as the Jews shall remain (forever)
- V15 – there could be no leaven bread eaten, for leaven was a type of sin
- V16 – the feast would last seven days and the beginning and end of the feast would be a Sabbath where there would be no work except for the preparation of the Passover feast
- V43 and 45: no stranger may eat of the Passover, nor foreigner nor slave
- V48 only those that were circumcised could eat. Circumcision was a type of the Holy Ghost baptism.

The symbol of the Passover included the slaying of a lamb from which the blood was put upon the door and lintel of the house. The Bible says that this Passover lamb is a type of Jesus Christ which is our Passover. (I Corinthians 5:7) It was Jesus’ blood that allows us to escape the judgment of God for our sins. However, the Passover feast was prepared every year at the same time, and the atonement was made which caused the sins of those who made the sacrifice to be rolled forward every year.

Hebrews 10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which



they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

The Lord Established the New Testament Ordinance

It is significant that both for the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints that such a strong symbol would be given. When we think of eating the Passover, we must note that the blood that was shed and put on the door is only a part of the overall symbolism. The eating of the lamb gives the other great symbol – that is where the lamb that was slain is taken into our bodies – we become partakers of the flesh, the blood, the life of the lamb. As the Jews ate the Passover lamb – they become one with the lamb. The same was true in the New Testament feast called the Lord’s Table – which is really a carry over of the Passover. To “eat his flesh and drink his blood” meant that one is taking into one’s own self the very person of Jesus Christ. John 6: 47 – 56:

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from

heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. 52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

The symbol of eating his flesh was very misunderstood and repugnant to the Pharisees who did not understand His meaning. Even his disciples did not understand, but it was at the last Passover feast before the Lord’s death that Jesus gave to his disciples what has become known as the Lord’s Table. (Matthew 26: 26 – 30)

The Lord’s Table or the Love Feast

“Breaking of bread” for the disciples did not simply mean eating the Lord’s Supper, or communion, as we now call it. The disciples met often to study the word, fellowship, and ate together.

Acts 2:46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

It also seemed fairly common that they would have a meal together on the regular church gatherings on the first day of the week.

Acts 20:7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul



preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

These meals became known as “feast of charity”, in other words, “Love Feast”. Unfortunately, these meals that were held by the church included Christians who really were not living as they should, often times being false teachers or those who did not bring the true meaning of loving one another to the table.

Jude 1:12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

2 Peter 2:13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

The church at Corinth was a church that was full of strife, division, carnality, sin, preacher religion and was in general much like a worldly church today – but it was Apostolic. This did not mean that these weren’t truly Christians – this was a church that Paul founded in Acts 18 along with Aquilla and Priscilla. Apollos preached there in Acts 19. Paul actually used the first letter of Corinthians to instruct the church concerning several major themes:

- Preacher religion – I call it the “Peter, Paul, Apollos” syndrome
- Immorality in the church
- Idolatry in the church
- Supporting the ministry
- The Lord’s Table and its symbols
- The issue of authority, headship, and the symbols regarding hair

- The gifts of the spirit and their use
- Order in the service – both concerning the gifts, of prophesying, and other behaviors
- The resurrection

Problems concerning the Lord’s Table in Corinth

Paul had two main concerns about the Lord’s table that he addressed in 1 Corinthians. One had to do with not associating with idolatry, especially since it seemed that idol worshippers had their own ritualistic feast. In 1 Corinthians 10 let it be known that Christians should not be involved in feast with idol worshippers, if one knowingly knows that the feast was sacrificed to the idols. Although many Christians do not think of it this way – the Catholic mass is purely idol worship and no true child of God should ever participate in partaking of a Catholic mass. Catholicism has basically “Christianized” this ritual, while having statues of Jesus Christ, Mary, and others present in the worship. This breaks the very first and second commandments. If Jesus Christ is God (and they say they believe that), to have a statue of Jesus is an absolute sin. (Exodus 20: 3-5). So in 1 Corinthians 10, Paul is instructing the church about feast eaten outside of the church if there is a religious significance.

But in I Corinthians 11, Paul begins to look at the common practice of breaking of bread with the saints, including the partaking of the Lord’s Table. The very first criticism Paul has is that the communion meal was not really the Lord’s Supper (v.20). Why was that? Because the participants really were there for themselves and not for others:

- V21 – people were interested in themselves and failed to be considerate of those who could not bring anything to eat
- It appeared that some were even getting drunk at the meal in the church
- V33 – some started to eat and did not wait for others – again no consideration for one another



- V17 – 19 there were participants who were not false teachers that brought in heresies to the meals.

Paul uses the real meaning of the Lord’s Table in which the blood and body of Christ is given as an example to instruct the church that when we do not really recognize the “Body of Christ” we can have the consequences of sin – even sickness and death (v.29 – 30)

Discerning the Lord’s body not only includes understanding the death of Jesus Christ and the symbols of eating his flesh and blood, but the body is also the Church of Jesus Christ and the members of that body are our brothers and sisters. When we fail to consider them in our “Lord’s Table” we are also not discerning the Lord’s body.

Should a church practice having fellowship or breaking of bread at church?

Because some churches have taught that there should never be such a meal at church, but only limiting it to the bread and wine part of the communion, we need to see that Paul does not discourage the Love Feast, or communion, or breaking of bread, but rather he says this in 1 Corinthians 11:

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

Instructions for the Church

In summary, an Apostolic church should consider the following in consideration of what we have learned. First, the communion part of the Lord’s Table in keeping with the symbol of the Passover feast should not be taken lightly, should not become trite, and should be restricted to members of

the church only. It is not a symbol for the world, but for the church.

- For our home church, we will partake of the Lord’s Table at or around the time of the Passover. This time of the year was the very time of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- There should always be instruction concerning its meaning and significance given before it is taken.
- Only members of the church that have repented of their sins and having been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ should partake of the Lord’s Table. When a person has been baptized, they are “covered by the blood” which is what the Passover was all about.

For fellowship and communion meals – the Love Feast, these should be our meals of love for one another and should include everyone that fellowships in the church whether they are saved or unsaved. This can be several times during the year – but it is a time when we are to show “Charity” to one another. We certainly don’t want to encourage false teachers or preachers that we know would bring discord – but we certainly would want to show the love of the Lord to sinners or saints who are being won to God. Remember the definition of a “disciple” is one who is in the process of learning or being taught, so that doesn’t necessarily mean a person has been born again yet, even though they come to church for fellowship and instruction.