

A STUDY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

I. Introductory Remarks:

- A. As we consider any subject, the focal point of the issue must be respect for Bible authority.
- B. We must have Bible (NT) authority for everything we do in serving and worshipping God.
- C. We can ascertain what is authorized via commands, authorized examples, and logical, inescapable conclusions.
- D. If we really care about our souls then we must not participate in any practice unless we find it taught in the Word of God, rightly divided (**2 Tim. 2:15**).
- E. If God's Word says to do a thing, we must do it just as He says and not change it. It is just that simple.
- F. Let's remember:

- 1. **Matt. 15:9** - Our worship to God is vain if it is based on human doctrines.
- 2. **Gal. 1:8, 9** - If we teach anything other than what inspired men taught we are accursed.
- 3. **2 John 9** - If we do not abide in the teaching of Jesus, we do not have God.
- 4. The Bible is a complete guide for all God wants us to do (**2 Tim. 3:16, 17; John 16:13; 2 Pet. 1:3**).

G. Thus...

- 1. We do not need to have a passage specifically forbidding us to do certain acts in order to know they are wrong. For example: thou shalt not worship Mohammad, Buddha, Mary, the Pope, etc.
- 2. When God tells us what to practice, it's wrong to do something different, even if He nowhere expressly said not to do something else.
- 3. If He says to do one thing, and we do something else, then we are following human doctrines and uninspired teaching; thus our Christianity is vain and we have not God. For example:
 - (a) Why shouldn't we sprinkle or pour for baptism? God says to bury (**Rom. 6:1-5**). If we don't bury...
 - (b) Why shouldn't we baptize babies? God said men and women (**Acts 8:12**). If we baptize infants...
 - (c) Why not baptize because one is already saved? God stated the purpose (**Acts 2:38; 22:16**). If we baptize for any other reason then....
 - (d) Why not blow off baptism altogether? God commanded it (**Acts 10:48**). If we blow it off...
- 4. These, and many other acts, are wrong because there is no Bible authority for them, **even though no passage expressly forbids them.**

H. Now, if we can understand these principles as they pertain to baptism, why do so many have such trouble when it comes to the Lord's Supper? (Hint: "church of Christ" Traditions – not the **2 Th. 2:15** kind)

- 1. The formula is the same for the Lord's Supper as it is for baptism.
- 2. If we find that God has given us a pattern to follow pertaining to the Lord's Supper, but we do it in some other way, then we would be acting by human authority and, thus, we would stand condemned.
- 3. As we will note at the end of this study, many churches are not content to simply stick with the revealed pattern. This is true with regard to both liberal and conservative churches of Christ.

I. Let's now begin our study proper and resolve to be content with the pattern we are shown in scripture.

II. General Observations:

- A. Who is the one who instituted the Lord's Supper (**Matt. 26:26-30**)?
- B. Let's read **Lk. 22:13-20**. On what occasion did Jesus institute the Lord's Supper?
- C. Let's read **Ex. 12:1-28**. What was the only type of bread that could be used/consumed during the Passover week?
1. Taking this into account, and remembering Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper at the time of the Passover Feast, we must conclude that Jesus (unless He broke the Law and was, thus, a sinner) **MUST** have used unleavened bread (**cf. Lk. 22:1**).
 2. What type of bread should we then use today?
 3. What other bread than unleavened is authorized?
- D. Did Jesus use alcoholic wine when instituting the Lord's Supper?
1. Do any of the accounts of the Lord's Supper say wine?
 2. Did Jesus sin (**Hab. 2:15**)?
 3. Yeast Argument – Fermentation process.
 4. Was Jesus less of a priest than Aaron and his descendants (**Lev. 10:9**)?
 5. Did Jesus and the Holy Ghost disagree – is the Godhead not united (**Prv. 20:1; 29:23ff**)?
 6. Wine is a generic word like “groceries” or “cars” – **Isa. 65:8**.
 7. It is obvious then that the Lord used non – alcoholic fruit of the vine.
 - (a) What must we use today?
 - (b) What else is authorized?
- E. When did the disciples begin to observe the Lord's Supper (**Lk. 22:29-30**)?
1. When did the kingdom come (**Mk. 9:1; Lk. 24:46-49; Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4, 14**)?
 2. What were the disciples doing according to **Acts 2:42**?
- F. Let's read **1 Cor. 11:23-25**. The night Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper is the same night in which He was betrayed.
- G. Per the same verses, we learn that the Lord's Supper is something Christians do in remembrance (#364 ἀνάμνησις *anamnēsis* – **Num. 10:10 LXX**) of Jesus.
- H. Let's read **1 Cor. 11:26**. When we eat the bread and drink the cup we shew (proclaim, announce) the Lord's death. (**cf. Heb. 9:12-14; Rom. 5:6-10; Eph. 1:6-7; Col. 1:20-23; 1 Pet. 1:3, 17-21; 3:18**).
- I. By implication we announce that He will come again (**1 Cor. 11:26; cf. Acts 1:1-11; 1 Th. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:12-19**).
- J. According to **1 Cor. 11:24**, the unleavened bread represents Christ's body. Are we really focused on this?
- K. According to **1 Cor. 11:25**, the cup (i.e. the contents therein – the fruit of the vine – **cf. Luke 22:18**) represents Christ's blood. Are we really focused on this?
- L. Let's read **Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 1:1-2; 11:17-34; Lk. 22:7-11**. Who partakes of the Lord's Supper?
- M. According to **Acts 20:7**, when did the Christians come together to break bread (have the Lord's Supper)?
1. How many times does the “first day” of the week occur in a year?

2. Thus, Christians must partake of the Lord's Supper (as they have opportunity) each first day of the week.
- N. Read **1 Cor. 11:28**. The Lord's Supper must be connected with self-examination.
1. **#1381 δοκιμάζω {dokimáz}**: to make critical examination; to determine genuineness, put to the test.
 2. **Lk. 14:19; 2 Cor. 13:5; 1 Th. 2:1-4**.
 3. Are we appreciative of Christ's sacrifice?
 4. Are we living lives that demonstrate our commitment to Jesus? (cf. **Gal. 2:20**)
 5. Or are we willfully sinning, refusing to repent? (cf. **Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-29**)
- O. By reading **1 Cor. 11:17-34**, it becomes apparent that the Corinthians failed to demonstrate reverence during the Lord's Supper.
1. **Isa. 1:1-20; Heb. 12:28; Rom. 3:10-18**.
 2. How would you feel if people were talking and goofing at your son's memorial dinner?
- P. Read **1 Cor. 11:27**. It is possible to eat the bread and drink the cup unworthily.
1. **#371 ἀναξίως {anaxíōs}** - Unworthily, irreverently, in an unbecoming manner.
 2. In context: Treating the Lord's Supper as a common meal and drinking party & by partaking at different times.
 3. Must we do just the exact same thing to partake unworthily?
 4. Read **1 Cor. 11:27-29**. When one partakes unworthily, he/she is guilty of dishonoring not other saints, or bread, or juice, but actually is sinning by making light of Christ's sacrifice.
 5. When one partakes unworthily, he/she is bringing upon themselves damnation (**1 Cor. 11:29**).
 6. When people partake of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner it is a sure sign they are either spiritually sick or spiritually dead (**1 Cor. 11:30**; cf. **John 11:11**).
 7. This being the case, why do some allow the unworthiness to go on unchecked?
 8. Would someone not stop a chatter-bug at your son's memorial dinner?
- Q. How do we make sure we're not going to be condemned for abusing the Lord's Supper, per **1 Cor. 11:31**?
- R. In what way are we chastened by the Lord within the context of the local church (**1 Cor. 11:32**)? (**Hint: 1 Cor. 5**).
- S. In view of **1 Cor. 10:15-22**, does it matter who we eat the Lord's Supper with?
- T. What does **1 Cor. 10:21** say is impossible to do?
- U. According to **verses 22 and 34** of **1 Cor. 11**, where is the place for common meals to be eaten?
- V. According to **1 Cor. 11:33** we are to tarry for one another before eating. Tarry = **#1551 ἐκδέχομαι {ekdéchomai}** - to wait for someone or something. (cf. **Acts 17:14-16; 1 Pet. 3:20**)
1. Let's read **1 Cor. 10:17**. Who partakes?
 2. Let's read **1 Cor. 11:17-34**. How many times does the word "together" appear?
 3. Putting the last two points together it is clear that Christians are to all partake of the Lord's Supper together.
 4. Is partaking at your home with just your family the same thing as assembling with a local church so as to partake together?

5. Is taking the Lord's Supper to a shut-in the same thing as assembling with a local church so as to partake together?
6. Is partaking of the Lord's Supper in your cabin while on a cruise just before beginning the festivities for that day the same thing as assembling with a local church so as to partake together?
7. Are we free to choose to change specific commands?
 - (a) For example, could Noah have had the approval of God had he decided to build two boats?
 - (b) Could he have built, with God's approval, the one God commanded and another for those who missed the departure of the first boat?
 - (c) If we are not free to change specific commands, then I ask any to please tell me why churches can remove the "together" aspect of the Lord's Supper and invent a 2nd make-up Supper for those who miss the first Supper.
 - (d) What is the difference between what Noah would not have been authorized to do and what most brethren do today regarding the Lord's Supper?
 - (e) Let's remember that the church does not belong to us. The church belongs to the Lord and we must do what He has authorized (**Col. 3:17**).
 - (f) Read **Acts 20:7-11**. Did the church in Troas have a make-up Supper to accommodate those who missed? Yes or no? C'mon now, be honest.
 - (g) Is the way the Lord's Supper was done in Troas an approved or disapproved example?
 - (h) Is there an approved example of having a 2nd make up Supper?
 - (i) Did Troas sin by not offering the 2nd make-up Supper?
 - (j) Would they have been violating the pattern offering a 2nd make up Supper?

W. Think with me:

1. There were two basic problems with the Corinthians in this context: (1) their divisions and (2) their fleshly appetites.
 - (a) These two problems had manifested themselves together in the same situation – abusing the Lord's Supper.
 - (i) It is clear that some had the wrong motive for coming to eat.
 - (ii) Their coming to eat was not to remember the Lord's death, but to feed their faces.
 - (iii) Also, some of them took their Supper ahead of others, not waiting for the whole church to commune together.
 - (b) **Paul condemned all of this!**
 - (c) Perhaps some would come at 9:00 to eat, some others would come at 10:00, and still others would not come till 12:00. **This was all wrong.**
 - (d) They should have had only one proper Supper, and it should have been together with all the saints who could come (**vs. 33**).
2. Do not most churches also have divisions like they did?
 - (a) They have the "showed up in the morning" division and the "only made it in the evening" division.
 - (b) Said churches may not be divided for the same reasons as they were (factions or carnality), but **they are** divided nonetheless.
 - (c) Now, if some partaking on their own at a different time than others was wrong then, how can folks do the same thing and believe it to be OK now?

3. Is it okay if most who partook in the morning are there at night to sit and watch as others partake?
4. Have those who partook in the morning and return at night only to sit there as brother and sister XYZ partake, fulfilling the command of **1 Cor. 11:33**?
5. What if God said, *“When you six elders come together for your meeting, leave the soda and chips at home, meet on Tuesday – wait for one another before you start the meeting– when you are all together each of you do some self-examination and then each of you read aloud John 3:16.”*
 - (a) Would the following situation be lawful?
 - (i) Two meetings are set.
 - (ii) In meeting #1, only 4 elders show up and read after self-examination.
 - (iii) In meeting #2, the 2 other elders show up, (yet 3 of the first 4 are not present at meeting #2 – thus only 3 total elders are present) and only 2 of them (the 2 “first-meeting missers”) read after self-examination?
 - (b) Well, would it be what God authorized?
 - (c) Obviously not.
 - (i) Why then is it so difficult to understand that God’s plan is for the entire church (those who have the ability and opportunity to come) to set aside a time to come together, to use the proper emblems, to wait for any who may be late, for each to do self-examination, and then reverently partake of the Lord’s Supper together?
 - (ii) It is simple to understand the truth (**2 Cor. 11:3**).
 - (iii) Is it not simple to see that a make-up Supper does not match the New Testament pattern?
6. Why would we want to do more than the approved example of Troas demonstrates?

III. Conclusion:

- A. We can prove what we do at Palmer Road is right.
- B. We do not see authority for a make-up Supper.
- C. Let’s continue to be pleased with simply doing what God has told us to do.