



The Lord's Supper

*“For as often as yet eat this bread, and drink this cup,
ye do show the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Corinthians 11:26).*

Most bird lovers have a difficult time liking one of the most beautiful birds in the world—the male peacock. He is gorgeous as he struts out of the jungles of India, holding high his crested head so all can admire his graceful neck and breast of iridescent greenish-blue. He proudly displays his magnificent tail feathers of colorful gold and green with their elaborate eyespots of blue before his plain, brown mate. Yes, male peacocks are lovely in the jungle.

But admiration ceases when bird lovers remember how peacocks live around people. From early morning till dark, they continually call out in their disagreeable, shrill cries. Worse than their horrible squawks are their eating manners. They ruin all the flowers and shrubs, damage nearby grain crops, and spoil the grass. Filled with self-importance and pride, their actions seem to reflect how great they think they are—puffed up, wanting everything for themselves. They are blinded by their own self-importance.

Could it be that the pride and self-esteem of Christ’s disciples prevented them from seeing their true selves? As they gathered around the Passover table, Jesus saw they were thinking of who should be the greatest in His kingdom. What could He do to help them understand that true greatness is revealed by humility and loving service?

Preview

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus gave His disciples two parting gifts—sacred mementos—something tangible and visible to remind them of His life of self-emptying service. First, He gave them the ordinance of foot washing—the sacrament of service. Wrapping Himself in a towel, Jesus poured water in a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples.

Their Master as a servant! Filled with shame, the disciples humbled themselves. As they felt His loving hands wash their feet, their dirty, envious hearts broke at His unspoken rebuke. Now they understood that Christ had come to wash their hearts from the stain of sin. He also gave them an example in humility and service.

After this ordinance of humility, Jesus instituted the celebration of the Lord’s Supper—the sacrament of sacrifice. In the broken bread and wine, Jesus gave emblems that would remind the church forever of His great suffering and death for the sins of humanity. Forever, these mementos of His great love would remind His followers of the redemption and victory that is theirs through Christ.

Points to Ponder

1. Why did Jesus indicate that the foot-washing service must precede the communion service? This preparation service gives everyone an opportunity for:
 - a. Personal self-examination of their hearts.
 - b. A time to confess specific sins.
 - c. A time for reconciliation of differences.
 - d. An opportunity to ask and receive forgiveness.

2. What additional purposes make this service meaningful?

We remember the humility of our Lord. We remember that Christ lived a life of selfless service, and we want to do as He did. We must live to serve.

The rubber trees stand tall in straight rows, offering their lives in service. The rubber tappers take their knives and score the bark with a series of diagonal cuts. Before sunrise, the tappers reopen these wounds by scraping off an additional layer of bark. The warm morning air causes the sap to drip into little cups. These trees give their lives to be a blessing to humankind. Rubber is used every day in some form by most people. Like the rubber tree, we could be a blessing to others. Jesus wants us to know the joy of service.

Nuts & Bolts

1. What is the significance of the foot-washing ordinance?

- a. It reminds us of Christ's condescension. He "made Himself of no _____, and took upon him the form of a _____, and was made in the likeness of _____" (Philippians 2:7).
- b. It is a type of higher cleansing. Jesus said to Peter, "He that is _____ needeth not save to wash his _____, but is _____ every whit:..." (John 13:10).
- c. It is a fellowship of forgiveness, for only as we forgive others can we experience God's forgiveness. Jesus said, "But if ye _____ not men their _____, neither will your _____ forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:15).
Jesus also gave us the command, "Ye also ought to _____ one another's _____" (John 13:14).
- d. It gives us a fellowship with both Christ and other believers. Jesus told Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no _____ with me" (John 13:8). Jesus also tells us, "If I then, your _____ and _____ have washed your feet; ye also _____ to _____ one another's feet" (John 13:14).

2. What is the significance of the Lord's Supper?

- a. The bread symbolizes the body of Jesus that was broken for our sins. Jesus said, "Take, _____: this is my _____, which is _____ for you: this do in _____ of me" (1 Corinthians 11:24).
- b. The wine symbolizes the blood of Jesus that was shed for our sins. "After the same manner also He took the _____ ..., saying, this _____ is the new _____ in my _____; this do ye as oft as ye _____ it, in _____ of me" (1 Corinthians 11:24).
- c. The communion service brings unity and stability to the church. "For we, being _____ are one bread, and one _____; for we are all _____ of that one _____" (1 Corinthians 10:17).

When we meet at the Lord's table, having washed each other's feet, we come to partake of the emblems of His suffering and death for our sins. Around that table, there is forgiveness, reconciliation, and one fellowship.

- d. The communion service reaches from Calvary to the second coming of Jesus. "For as _____ as ye _____ this _____, and _____ this _____, ye do show [proclaim, NKVJ] the Lord's _____ till he _____" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

3. Before we take the Lord's Supper, what are we to do?

"Let a man _____ himself." (1 Corinthians 11:28). Before we eat the bread or drink the grape juice, we need to examine our hearts, lest we are not ready. Being ready means that we have made everything right with God and with our fellow believers. Unconfessed sins and broken relationships make us unready to take the communion. "For he that _____ and _____ unworthily, eateth and drinketh _____ to himself, not _____ the Lord's _____" (1 Corinthians 11:29). The word *damnation* can also be translated "judgment." When we take part unworthily, we come under God's judgment.

The cup of blessing will bless us if we have searched our hearts, confessed our sins, and accepted His forgiving love.

Words to Remember

Condescension: Willingly and voluntarily accepting an inferior position—such as Christ, being God, becoming a man.

Wine: The unfermented juice of the grape. Christ never commanded anyone to drink alcoholic beverages.

The Difference Between

Higher cleansing and bodily cleansing: The first is what God alone can do, cleansing us from sin. The second is what we do when we bathe.

I Truly Believe

It was night, and in the Upper Room the oil lamps were dimly burning. Eleven men with heavy hearts were gathered around the Son of Man. The frugal Passover meal was ended. Calmly, He spoke of a journey which He must take alone.

He took the cup and gave thanks.

It was a cup of sorrow.

The agony of Gethsemane was in it.

The mockery of the crown of thorns was in it.

The thirst of Calvary was in it.

Yet He gave thanks.

It was the cup of death.
It held the symbol of His blood,
The shadow of the Cross was upon it.
Yet He took the cup and gave thanks.

And then, and then, He invited them to drink.

He gave thanks, for He had eyes to see,
Eyes that needed not the dim light of lamps;
Eyes that saw through the darkness and beyond,

He saw the cup as the cup of life.
The symbol of His power was in it,
The promise of forgiveness was in it,
The emblem of His love was in it.
He saw the cup as the cup of triumph.

The joy of the redeemed was in it.
The glory of His crown was in it,
The vision of His kingdom was in it;

And so He took the cup and gave thanks,
And invited them to drink.
It was the cup of their consecration.

Place a check in the box if you agree with the statement below:
 I choose to take the cup of service and sacrifice with my Lord.

My Prayer

Dear Father,

Thank You for these wonderful parting gifts that help us remember Your life of service and sacrifice.
Thank You for making us worthy so we can become partakers of Your divine nature, promising us the power to overcome. In Jesus' name. Amen.