

THE LORD’S SUPPER

STUDY 6

One of the deepest most intimate moments that Jesus had with His disciples was the Last Supper before His crucifixion. We can read about this event in the gospel of Matthew.

Matthew 26:17-19:

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?” He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’ ” So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

26-30: *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom.” When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

This particular event took place during the celebration of the Passover. This celebration (feast) reminded them how God prevented the people of Israel from walking down the road to destruction, thanks to the sacrifice of the Lamb. Even the disciples didn’t know that this ritual signified the marvellous crucifixion of Jesus, which was going to take place just a few hours after the Passover meal.

Read **John 1:29** and respond to these questions:

Who is the true Lamb of God?

What does He do with regard to sin?

Before the time of Jesus, the people of Israel would sacrifice lambs to receive forgiveness of sin. This ritual was only a small shadow of things to come.

1 Corinthians 5:7 “...For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been crucified.”

The Passover before Jesus’ crucifixion was a very special event because the Lord had done something which he wanted his disciples to remember forever; He instituted the ordinance (the sacrament) of the Lord’s Supper (also known as the Communion, or the bread and the wine). He first took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and shared it with everyone present. Then He explained that the bread symbolises His body and that they must eat it in remembrance of Him. The body of Christ is of great significance to us because, thanks to His body that was broken on the cross, we have life.

1 Peter 2:24 *“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness: by His wounds you have been healed.”*

The Lord had been speaking of this symbolism, saying that He is the *“Bread of Life”* (**John 6:25**). Just as the bread is life for our bodies, so our soul is nourished by Christ.

In **1 Corinthians 11:24**, as we break and eat the bread, we remember the words of Jesus, which are:

In your own words, write the meaning of this verse.

Then the Lord presents to His disciples the second symbol: The wine. He took the cup in His hands, gave thanks for it, offered it to His disciples for them to drink, and explained to them that it symbolises His blood; blood that establishes a new pact, a new plan that would bring salvation to many. The old pact was the sacrificing of a lamb, every time blood was literally poured out. In this new pact, blood was poured out just once and never again, but it is remembered ever time that we drink from the fruit of the vine.

Let’s look at the great importance of the blood of Christ:

1 John 1:7 *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”*

Revelation 1:5 *“and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood”*

What effect does the blood of Christ have? What does this mean for us?

The bread and the wine that we use to remember the death of Christ are symbols of something much greater: Christ’s victory over sin, on the cross. Neither the bread, nor the wine have any meaning by themselves; they do not change physically into the body and blood of Jesus. But every time that we take communion (eat the bread and drink the wine), and through these remember the work of the Lord, we have a true encounter with Him. Something that is not symbolic, but real. Thank God for that!

The Bible teaches us how to take the bread and the wine.

Read **1 Corinthians 11:27-30** and answer the following questions:

What does it mean to take part in an “unworthy manner”?

In what instances does God not want us to take part in the bread and wine?

Read in **Matthew 26:27** and answer the following:

Who did the Lord say has to participate in the taking of the bread and wine? Does this change something in the last answer you gave?

How wonderful is the Lord’s instruction! He wants us all to experience His grace, and the gift of His presence by remembering His amazing death on the cross. We are especially called to His last supper; we are His honoured guests every time we gather together around the table of His supper. May we enjoy fully this solemn act that the Lord has instructed us to do.