

A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLES

“The Lord’s Supper”

Introduction-

Holy Communion is a present truth that the Lord is revitalizing in His Church in our day. One particular focus that it has received is the healing available to the believer when the Lord’s Supper is partaken in faith. The following audio-tape titles are two tremendous resources covering this aspect:

- ❖ “The Power of the Covenant” Perry Stone, Jr., Voice of Evangelism Smoky Mountain Campmeeting [sic.], October 24, 2001 (www.voe.org).
- ❖ “Healing in Communion” Dr. Dale Sides, Liberating Ministries for Christ International. This tape title can be found in the Liberating Partners section of the LMCI web site (www.lmci.org).

The focus of this teaching is not healing in communion. Rather, it is on our preparation for communion and the impact communion should have on our corporate prayer, for the Church is to be a house of prayer for all peoples.

Prophetic Types of the Last Supper-

Isa 46:9-10

- 9 Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.
- 10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. NIV

God claims knowing the end from the beginning and declaring it to be proof of His divinity. Long before Jesus sat down with His disciples for that last Passover together, the Lord spoke of it through prophetic type.

Abram and Melchizedek-

Gen 14:17-20

- 17 After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).
- 18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High,
- 19 and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.
- 20 And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. NIV

Melchizedek, the king-priest of Salem (later Jerusalem) met Abram and gave him bread and wine and blessed him.

Heb 5:5-10

5 So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father."

6 And he says in another place, "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

7 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered

9 and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

10 and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek. NIV

That Christ is a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek is meat that the mature in Christ need to eat. His priesthood is a sign that our covenant, the New Covenant, is a better covenant.

Heb 7:17-25

17 For it is declared: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

18 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless

19 (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

20 And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath,

21 but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.'"

22 **Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.**

23 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office;

24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood.

25 **Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.** NIV

As High Priest, He mediates the covenant and continually intercedes for us.

The Passover-

Ex 12:1-11

1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt,

2 "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.

3 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.

4 If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat.

5 The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.

6 Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.

7 Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

- 8 That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.
- 9 Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire--head, legs and inner parts.
- 10 Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.
- 11 This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover. NIV

This first Passover was ominous, solemn, and frightful. The Israelites ate the meal with unleavened bread and bitter herbs while death passed over them in the way most of us eat a fast food meal – fast and ready to travel.

Once they were at rest in the land, the celebration took on a different atmosphere. Instead of standing, they reclined at table to indicate that the Lord had brought them into the land of rest. Though still solemn in many aspects, the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened bread was a joyful event commemorating their liberty from Egypt and birth as a nation.

Ex 13:3-7

- 3 Then Moses said to the people, "Commemorate this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, because the LORD brought you out of it with a mighty hand. Eat nothing containing yeast.
- 4 Today, in the month of Abib, you are leaving.
- 5 When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites--the land he swore to your forefathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey--you are to observe this ceremony in this month:
- 6 For seven days eat bread made without yeast and on the seventh day hold a festival to the LORD.
- 7 Eat unleavened bread during those seven days; nothing with yeast in it is to be seen among you, nor shall any yeast be seen anywhere within your borders. NIV

During the preparation for the feast, the house is searched diligently with a lamp to make sure no yeast is left in the home.

The Table of Shewbread-

With regard to the table of shewbread, or the Lord's table, I refer you to a teaching by that title ("The Table of Shewbread") which is Tape #5 in the series The Tabernacle of Moses. The following insights come from that teaching.

- ❑ The table was placed on the north side of the tabernacle (Ex. 40:22-23). North is the place of God's throne (Ps. 75:6-7; Is 14:13). From God's perspective, the table was on His left hand, the place of judgment.
- ❑ The bread on the table was unleavened bread, which speaks of the sinlessness of our Lord and His purity.
- ❑ Along with the bread there was wine and incense on the table. The wine was poured out as a libation and signified the blood sacrifices being done in the courtyard. The incense was

burned on the golden altar in place of the bread. It signified the bread being a burnt offering as well as the prayer of intercession.

□ Of wine and bread:

“What has to happen for there to be wine? The vine ripened fruit has to be picked (Jesus arrested), then put into the press and crushed (torture and crucifixion) for the juice to flow. The grape juice is caught up in jars or skins and placed in a cool, dark place (usually a cellar or cavern) to ferment (Jesus' burial). Once the wine is properly aged, it is brought out and poured into vessels for enjoyment (resurrection and outpouring of the Holy Spirit).”

To get bread, one has to grind the wheat into flour, mix it with water and salt and bake it in the oven.

“After the grinding torture of the judgment hall, Jesus Christ, the holy wheat kernel of God destined to bear fruit to a field, was placed in the oven of Calvary. The bloody baptism of the cross was also a baptism of fire, for Jesus was a burnt offering unto God (Lev. 1:17; Eph. 5:2) and “our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb. 12:29)”

The New Testament Anti-type

The Last Supper-

Matt 26:18-20; 26-30

18 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."

19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

20 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve.

26 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."

27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.

28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

29 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."

30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. NIV

It was during the Passover meal that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, signifying the New Covenant. Note that when they had partaken and finished dinner, they sang a hymn. This hymn would have been the second half of the Hallel Psalms, Psalm 115-118. Think about where Jesus was headed as you read these selected verses from those Psalms.

Ps 115:2-7

2 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?

3 But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

5 They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:

6 They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:

7 They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. KJV

Idols had no mouths, eyes, ears, noses, hands, feet, nor throats that were alive. But the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. God among men walked on feet of flesh to a cross of wood and cried out for the forgiveness of His people.

Ps 116:3-9

3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

6 The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.

7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living. KJV

With prophetic juxtaposition, the psalmist captures both the trial of the cross and the triumph of the resurrection.

Ps 116:12-18

12 What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?

13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

16 O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people, KJV

The Son had said, "Here am I, send me." Now, in the presence of his people, he would fulfill His vow to save them. Note the words, "I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid." In accepting the Lord's destiny for her, Mary had said, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord." (Luke 1:38).

Ps 118:5-6, 10, 12-13, 17-18, 22-24, 27-29

5 I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place.

6 The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

10 All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them.

12 They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

13 Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the LORD helped me.

17 I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.

18 The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.

22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

23 This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

24 This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. KJV

27 God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.

28 Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.
29 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. KJV

Imagine the encouragement this song must have been to Him as He headed to the garden!

We understand the significance of the Lord's Supper. His body was broken for our healing and His blood shed for the forgiveness of our sins. The focus of this teaching is to understand the need to examine ourselves before we approach the table and to understand its impact on our corporate prayer life.

Examining Ourselves-

1 Cor 11:17 NIV

In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good.

When we examine the original language, we see that this verse literally says that people were leaving the Corinthian meetings in a weaker condition than when they arrived. When Christians gather, it should be to the edification of the saints. The people should leave with more power than they had when they arrived. Our meetings should be encouraging and revitalizing, not discouraging and draining. What was the problem in Corinth?

1 Cor 11:18-22 NIV

18 In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it.

19 No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval.

20 When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat,

21 for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk.

22 Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not!

Not only were they divided as a body, but they were celebrating the Lord's Supper in such an unworthy manner that the Apostle Paul said it wasn't fit to be called the Lord's Supper!

In the fellowships of the New Testament church and for centuries thereafter, the saints held love feasts during which they celebrated the Lord's Supper. These love feasts served as a forum of fellowship and a means by which the poor were to be fed. But as these verses in 1 Corinthians and others in Jude and 2 Peter indicate, certain churches had let the love feasts become occasions of the flesh where divisions, excesses, and immorality were present. Eventually, the Church abandoned the practice and only retained the ceremony of Communion.

With regard to religious ceremonialism, Alfred Edersheim has this insightful comment, "Ceremonialism rapidly develops, too often in proportion to the absence of spiritual life."¹ We should not allow the high ceremony that attaches itself to Holy Communion in many Christian circles to distract us from the spiritual truths contained therein.

¹ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Book 5, Chapter 10, Hendrickson Publishers, ©1993, p. 814

1 Cor 11:23-31

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,

24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

27 Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

28 A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.

29 For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. NIV

*We need to examine ourselves **before** we eat the bread and drink of the cup. We need to recognize the body of Christ – the rest of the saints we are entering into covenant with.*

1 Cor 5:6-8

6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?

7 Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast-as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth. NIV

The Lord's Supper was instituted during a Passover meal. Before the Passover, Jews would carefully examine their homes with a lamp to make sure they had thoroughly cleansed them of all yeast. We are to examine ourselves with the Lamp of God (the Holy Spirit, who convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment and the Word of God) to make sure our hearts are clear of all leaven. We are not to eat at the table with any leaven of malice (offenses and bitterness toward other saints) or wickedness (unrepented sin before the Father). If we do, we eat and drink judgment on ourselves.

Verse 30 brings home the serious nature of the warning. Eating in an unworthy manner had caused many of the Corinthian church to be weak and sick and even die. We need to examine ourselves.

The Night He was Betrayed-

1 Cor 11:23

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, **on the night he was betrayed**, took bread, NIV

Notice how the Apostle Paul introduces the subject. "The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed." Who betrayed Him? Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

Mark 14:18-21

18 While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me."

19 They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely not I?"

20 "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me."

21 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." NIV

One who was eating with Him was going to betray him. One by one, the disciples examined themselves and asked the question "Is it me?" What Jesus spoke that night is still true to this day, woe to the man who betrays the Son of Man!

John 13:18-30

18 "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture: **He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.'**

19 "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He.

20 I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."

21 After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me."

22 His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant.

23 One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him.

24 Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."

25 Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

26 Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon.

27 As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. "What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him,

28 but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him.

29 Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor.

30 As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night. NIV

Judas stands as the archetype of those who come to the table of the Lord and eat in an unworthy manner. Judas took the bread, went out, and it was night. We know what Judas's end was. Let it not be ours! Let us examine ourselves before we come to the table. The bread and wine do not make us clean. We eat and drink in remembrance of what He did. We receive His forgiveness and partake because we are clean.

One Body, One Lord-

1 Cor 10:14-22

4 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.

- 15 I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.
- 16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ?
And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?
- 17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.
- 18 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar?
- 19 Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything?
- 20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons.
- 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.
- 22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he? NIV

We cannot serve two masters. We cannot sit at the Lord's table and cut covenant with demons. Our God is a jealous God and will not stand for it. We cannot fool Him and He will overpower us! The Lord's Supper is served at a covenant table. When we partake of it, we declare that we are His and are members of one body. In true communion, there can be no pacts with demons. In true communion, there can be no schisms in the body.

Unified in Prayer-

After serving the bread and the wine to His disciples, the Lord prayed to the Father for them.

John 17:20-23

- 20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,
- 21 **that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.** May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.
- 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, **that they may be one as we are one:**
- 23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. NIV

He prayed that we might be unified even as the Godhead is One that the world would know that the Father had sent the Son. When we examine ourselves before Communion and repair any schisms we may have, be it with God or man, we should be unified as a church after it. And a clean and unified Church can be a dynamic house of prayer.

Matt 18:19-20

- 19 "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.
- 20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." NIV

Let us examine ourselves before we approach the Lord's Table and make sure our hearts are clean of all leaven. Let us keep the Feast with the bread of sincerity and truth and as a clean and unified Church, lift our voices to heaven in prayer for all peoples.