

WHEN WE DRINK THE CUP

If you've been around the modern Christian church for any length of time. You've probably heard people speak of the sacraments of the church.

A sacrament is a ritual defined as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, instituted by Jesus Christ.

Baptism and communion are two of the most commonly recognized sacraments.

Under the Old Covenant the intricate procedures for temple worship could be considered sacraments, since they all represent different aspects of the Messiah's coming and deliverance.

Although sacraments were originally initiated to bring a revelation picture of God's intentions for His people, they often fell into the category of mechanical and rote behaviors without any spiritual understanding.

Let me share two quick examples of this.

In 1 Samuel 4, the Israelites went to battle against the Philistines. They thought we'll just take the Ark of the Covenant, which symbolized God's presence with them into battle to guarantee their victory. They were soundly defeated, and the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant.

But sadly, temple worship went on unabated for twenty years without it. They knew all the intricate procedures, all they lacked was God.

And in Malachi 1.10, the people were offering their blind and sick sheep as their sacrificial worship to God. God told them, "I wish someone had the guts to shut the gates on this awful show."

These two incidents show that doing these rituals without a right relationship with God are just religious habits.

In Jesus' day, the Pharisees made a lifelong commitment to study and perform outwardly every stroke of the law of Moses. He rebuked them for doing these things "just to be noticed by men."

He also scolded them saying, that "you are whitewashed tombs on the outside, but you are inwardly full of dead men's bones."

I'd like to focus for a few minutes on our current observance of communion in the church.

Typically, the verses in the Bible about Jesus's last supper with His disciples are read. We are encouraged to take a few moments of introspection about our sinful nature and remember Jesus' death on the cross to forgive us.

Let's examine those scriptures a little closer.

When the hour had come, He reclined *at the table*, and the apostles with Him. And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; Luke 22.14

The original Greek word, translated as "earnestly desired," is the word "epithumia". It appears in the scriptures most times as "lust".

Strongs concordance explains it as:

passion built on strong feelings. These can be positive or negative, depending on whether the desire is *inspired by faith* which is God's inbirthed *persuasion*.

We know that all of Jesus's actions were inspired by God, but why was He so passionate about this last meal with His disciples?

Well, I don't believe that Jesus' final meeting with His disciples before His crucifixion and resurrection was to establish a church ritual that would have His disciples continually focus on their sins.

I believe that it was to establish an eternal blood covenant with them.

Blood covenants are one of the oldest agreements between men, but are not understood or used in our modern world.

My first exposure to a blood covenant was in the Western movies, when the Lone Ranger and Tonto cut their skin, rubbed their hands together and became blood brothers. But I still had no idea what it really meant.

A blood covenant signifies that everything that one person is and everything they have is available to the other person. And when the other person accepts the covenant they commit that everything they are and everything they have is available to the other person. These covenants were eternal and could not be dissolved.

Let's read on.

And when He had taken *some* bread *and* given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood. Luke 22.19

His words, "do this in remembrance of me", seemed strange to me.

I thought to myself, does He actually think that these men who for three years, had seen Him walk on water, heal the sick, make the blind see, turn water into wine, calm storms with His words, and raise the dead, and had actually sent them out to do the same things, would ever forget knowing Jesus? I don't believe any of us would.

I believe that Jesus was telling them, every time you eat this bread and drink this wine, remember that we are now in an eternal covenant relationship with each other, and I have committed everything I am, and everything I have to you forever.

John 16.14amp is Jesus speaking of imparting His Holy Spirit to them. It seems to confirm this.

He will honor *and* glorify Me, because He will take of (receive, draw upon) what is Mine and will reveal (declare, disclose, transmit) it to you.

Everything that the Father has is Mine. That is what I meant when I said that He [the Spirit] will take the things that are Mine and will reveal (declare, disclose, transmit) it to you.

When we observe Communion, which is also known as the "covenant meal", we are experiencing way more than just doing a little church ritual. We are ratifying our acceptance of this eternal covenant relationship with Christ that He has made available by the sacrifice of His body and the pouring out of the blood of His covenant.

Jesus declared in John 17.3 *amp* what eternal life actually is.

And this is eternal life: [it means] to know (to perceive, recognize, become acquainted with, and understand) You, the only true *and* real God, and [likewise] to know Him, Jesus [as the] Christ (the Anointed One, the Messiah), Whom You have sent.

Hebrews 8.10 explains the covenant that Jesus' supernatural sacrifice invited us into.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will imprint My laws upon their minds, even upon their innermost thoughts *and* understanding, and engrave them upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

And it will nevermore be necessary for each one to teach his neighbor and his fellow citizen or each one his brother, saying, Know (perceive, have knowledge of, and get acquainted by experience with) the Lord, for all will know Me, from the least to the greatest.

Hebrews 10.19 *amp* shows us the effect that the blood of Christ's covenant offered to us.

Therefore, brethren, since we have full freedom *and* confidence to enter into the [Holy of] Holies [by the power and virtue] in the blood of Jesus, by this fresh (new) and living way which He initiated *and* dedicated *and* opened for us through the separating curtain (veil of the Holy of Holies), that is, through His flesh...

From these scriptures it should be obvious to us that the covenant meal is not just a little religious sacrament.

When we drink the cup, we ratify the covenant that Jesus is offering us to redeem us into God's family as His children, His heirs, and joint heirs with Christ, sharing His inheritance.

There is nothing that compares to this on this planet. Let's not miss it.

God bless you.

Jim Fuller

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