

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

John 6:41-59

Lesson #25

The Eucharist

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“Many people come to me for pastoral counseling. I ask them first **to do one thing** before they come back. Many never need to come back to me after doing it.”

2

John 6

“⁴¹ The Jews therefore were grumbling about Him, because He said, “I am the bread that came down out of heaven.” ⁴² And they were saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, ‘I have come down out of heaven?’” ⁴³ Jesus answered and said to them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. ⁴⁴ **No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him**; and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the prophets, ‘*And they shall all be taught of God.*’ **Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.**”

- O.T. believers will recognize & receive Jesus. 3

Paraphrase

When Jesus claimed to be the manna from heaven, the Jews whispered to one another “Who does he think he is? Don’t we know his parents?” Jesus responded, “Only those who are of God, the true Israel, will understand or receive the bread of life.”

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“⁴⁶ Not that any man has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Truly, truly, I say to you, **he who believes has eternal life.** ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and **the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.**” ⁵² The Jews therefore began to argue with one another, saying, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?”

- A clear allusion to Jesus’ atoning sacrifice. 5

Paraphrase

Jesus said, "I am not like Moses for I have seen God and my bread is not like manna for it brings eternal life. My body is given to the world so that all who share in it will live forever." The Jews found this to be ridiculous.

6

Bread is the staple food in all cultures & Jesus chose it to represent spiritual life.

- It starts as a seed - a baby in a manger.
- It grows - showing signs of its future glory.
- It is cut down & ground up - suffered & died.
- It is thrown in the fire - of God's wrath for sin.
- It is eaten as a staple - by all who receive Christ by faith.



The Eucharist
seals (reinforces)
the incarnate, installed, ingested
word of life.

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⁵³ Jesus therefore said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. ⁵⁴ **He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.** ⁵⁵ **For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.** ⁵⁶ **He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.**"

Paraphrase

Jesus said that eternal life was only for those who were a part of his body. These would be raised to eternal life in the end.

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⁵⁷ As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me. ⁵⁸ **This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever.** ⁵⁹ These things He said in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum."

Paraphrase

Jesus claimed that his life was grounded in the eternal life of God and all who shared his body and blood would also be grounded in that life.

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General observations:

- John 6 has been a key passage in support of a sacramental view of the Eucharist.
- But John is the only Gospel to have no record of Jesus' baptism or his institution of the Last Supper.
- John may have been clarifying the meaning of our union with Christ by suggesting that a sacramental instrument is not the key to that union.
- The Apostles seem to have agreed.

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Last week we looked at a theological controversy - **God's election & human volition.**

This week we looked at another theological controversy - **The nature of the Eucharist.**

How are we to view the eating of the bread and drinking of the cup?

While the church fathers were not in agreement as to how to handle this issue, the majority of them recognized that it was more than just symbolic.

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The relationship of the bread and wine to the body and blood of Christ.

- **They are united physically** - the bread & wine **become** the body & blood of Christ. (Roman Catholic) 
- **They are united locally** - the bread & wine **coexists** with the body & blood of Christ. (Lutheran) 
- **They are united spiritually** - the bread & wine **spiritually unite** with the body & blood of Christ. (Reformed) 
- **They are symbolic** - the bread & wine **represent** the body and blood of Christ. (Anabaptist) 

Each of these views is a response to the literalness of John 6.

The point is the intimate connection believers have with the Word of Life. 12

Leviticus 17:11

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.”

- **Under the Law the blood was symbolic of the soul of the sinner.**

Matthew 26:26-28

“. . . Take eat, this is my body. . . Drink from it all of you. For this is my blood of the covenant.”

- **Jesus was speaking and serving these elements with his physical hands and certainly not suggesting that the elements were at the same time his body parts. 13**

Matthew 26

“26 And while they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” 27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. 29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day **when I drink it new with you** in My Father’s kingdom.””

- **Are we to understand that Jesus will drink his own physical blood with us when we are united fully with him?**

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1 Corinthians 11:25-26

“In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this as often as you drink it, **in remembrance of me**. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you **proclaim the Lord’s death** until he comes.”

- **“Remembrance”** strongly suggests that the bread and cup were a **memorial** to, not a **manifestation** of the body and blood of Jesus.
- **“Proclamation”** strongly suggests that the bread and cup were a **witness** to, not a **repeat** of the Cross of Christ.

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A strict literal view is rejected by many because:

- **Jesus often spoke in metaphors** - Even in this chapter - “you will never die.” (then why be raised), “My words are life, the flesh profits nothing” vs.63.

John 6:63

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”

- **Jesus served the bread with his hands** - Are we to believe he has two bodies?
- **Paul emphasizes a representative view** - He speaks of “remembrance” and “proclamation”.
- **Ephesians addresses our union with Christ** - It says nothing about the Eucharist as a sacrament. 16

Is the Lord’s Supper a Sacrament?

- **A Sacrament is a means of grace** - all who receive the bread and cup automatically receive its benefits.
- **In 1 Cor.11 the believers who participated and were not circumspect were not blessed but judged.**
- **Many Christians have preferred to look at the Lord’s Supper as an ordinance** - blessing those who partake with a right spirit.

Who should officiate the Lord’s Supper

- **In the N.T. it was under the supervision of the church and we assume its leaders.**
- **There is no special anointing for administering it as in the O.T. temple service.**

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Frequency of observing the Lord's Supper

- Sigmund Freud identified 3 levels of awareness.
 1. **Conscious** - what is on our mind
 2. **Preconscious** - what we need to be reminded of
 3. **Subconscious** - what we are not aware without special help (psychoanalysis, hypnosis, etc.)

A preconscious sacrament

- It should be observed often enough to prevent long gaps between times of reflection on the truths it signifies.
- But not so frequently as to make it seem trivial or meaningless.

Millard Erickson 18

1 Corinthians 11

“²⁷ Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly.”

“Fencing the Table”

1. **Christians only** - recognized (baptized) believers.
2. **Self-examined** - the church receives all upon a faith confession expecting & respecting SELF examination.

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1 Corinthians 11

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“Judge (to discern) the body rightly”

1. Our individual body - the flesh.
2. Our corporate body - the church.
3. Our Lord's body - the sacrifice.

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1 Corinthians 11

“³⁰ For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. ³¹ But if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged. ³² But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world. ³³ So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. ³⁴ If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you may not come together for judgment.”

- To show disrespect to our union with one another in Christ is a sign that we have not discerned “the body” rightly and will be disciplined so that we do not face the harsher rejection that is pronounced on the world.

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What is the Lord's Supper supposed to mean?

Remember our Lord

Reinforce our bond

Renew our hope

Repent of our sin



Eucharist



(thanksgiving) 22



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Many never need to come back to me after doing it.”

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