

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

July 9

2017

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

More and more, there are indications that some brethren are losing sight of the simplicity of the Lord's Supper. Some are adding activities, seeking to enhance or embellish it. Some are attempting to make a meal out of it—which I find quite amazing in light of Paul's strong teaching against this in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. A good friend recently told of seeing a video of a congregation partaking the Lord's Supper while an electronically produced large cross was "floating" around the auditorium. One brother has stated that some "are inclined to make a pageant out of observing it rather than appreciate its simplicity."

We are now hearing of some churches lengthening the time taken for the Lord's Supper. Some are setting it apart as a separate service, while having the other acts of worship during another later service, etc. I don't know or understand all the reasons for these practices. I do know that based upon what we read in scripture concerning the Supper, there is no indication of how much time it took. It is quite evident that it must have been simple, based upon what has been revealed to us in God's Word.

As we follow the New Testament example regarding the Lord's Supper, we find that it was observed each first day of the week in the assembly (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34). It is a memorial of the Lord's death—not of His life or of His resurrection (1 Corinthians 11:26). The Supper was instituted by Jesus Himself (Matthew

26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34), and is to be done "in remembrance" of Him (1 Corinthians 11:24-25). When we follow His example, again, we emphasize that it is very simple; but yet, with such great depth and profoundness to its meaning! It being a memorial of His death—the unleavened bread represents His body that was sacrificed in His death and the fruit of the vine represents His blood that was shed in His death for the remission of our sins. When Jesus instituted the Supper, before telling His disciples to eat the bread and drink the cup, He gave thanks for the bread and He gave thanks for the cup. The verb "blessed" (eulogeo) as used in Matthew 26:26 & Mark 14:22 means "the giving of thanks". (The Bible I use, NKJV, has a footnote at the bottom of the page— M-Text reads gave thanks for.) The word "thanks" (eucharisteo) as used in Luke 22:19-20 & 1 Corinthians 11:24-25 means He "gave thanks". Thus, the two Greek words are used interchangeably meaning the same thing—He gave thanks. For a parallel example, when Jesus fed the 5,000 He "blessed" the loaves, then when He fed the 4,000 He "gave thanks" for the loaves and fish (Matt. 14:19; 15:36). He did the same thing on both occasions—He gave thanks—just as we are commanded to give thanks before eating our food (1 Tim. 4:4-5) Thus, all who lead the prayers at the Lord's table, likewise, must remember to give thanks for the two items—the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine.

In 1 Corinthians 10:16, Paul tells us that observing the Supper is a "communion" of the blood and body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 11:27-34, Paul gives further instructions concerning the Lord's Supper. We are warned not to partake in an "unworthy manner, not discerning the Lord's body"; we are to "examine" ourselves; we are to "wait" for or cordially receive one another; and we must not turn the Supper into a meal—we "have houses to eat and drink in". The consequences of not partaking properly are severe— "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord"; "weak and sick among you, and many sleep"; "judged" and "chastened by the Lord"; and "you come together for judgment".

May we ever be mindful of the importance, significance, and the simplicity of the Lord's Supper.

R.J. Evans

DISRESPECT FOR GOD'S WORD

To anyone who has any respect whatsoever for the word of God it is utterly disgusting to observe the attitude that prevails in the minds of so many today. I believe I am safe in saying that the majority of the people in our society have little or no respect for the teachings found in the Bible. This is also true of many who set themselves forth as teachers of the Bible.

In recent years we have heard and read a great deal about how the various religious groups were going to view the question of homosexuality. This does not present a problem for those who are willing to abide by the teachings of God's word and respect the authority of that word. However, most religious groups have long passed the time when they were willing to go to the word of God as their source of authority, therefore they are now taking positions on this evil practice which are in direct conflict with the word of God. This sin is plainly condemned in the word of God and the end of those who practice such is clearly stated (See Romans 1:24-32).

A few years ago a well known public figure received all kinds of opposition and criticism because she had the courage to publicly denounce this sin. Even some religious teachers are either upholding the sin by condoning those who are guilty of such, or they refuse to speak out against such. One such teacher made the statement that of all the passages in the Bible condemning homosexuality, none were directly attributed to Jesus. What is the purpose of such a statement? Does the man mean to imply that Jesus does not condemn the sin? Is he suggesting that Paul, as he was guided by the Holy Spirit, taught something different from what Jesus taught? This is not so. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth (John 16:13) and that he would bring to their remembrance the things Jesus had said (John 14:26). Paul said that he (and the other apostles) were ambassadors on behalf of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20).

When we read that which was revealed to the apostles by the Holy Spirit it should be received with the same respect as if it were directly spoken to us by the Lord. To reject the apostles teaching is to reject

Christ. See Acts 2:42 and II John 9. When we respect the authority of Christ we will abide in the apostles teaching and will not find ourselves upholding anything condemned therein. Yes, let us learn to respect and reverence the word of God. *✍ James Hahn*



“The church is God's missionary society – God's chosen means of getting the gospel to the lost. And just as the gospel is God's only power of salvation, the church is God's only organization to take the gospel to the lost. God has purpose for the church (Ephesians 3:8-11). The purpose of God for His church is its mission. A part of that purpose is to "build up" the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11, 12). This involves the preaching of the word of the kingdom that others might be brought into it. I think I am safe in saying that in addition to the responsibility to worship, this preaching responsibility is the primary responsibility of the church.”

✍ Cecil Willis

From an article titled “*The Church: All-Sufficient In Evangelism*”
Truth Magazine IV:12, pp. 5-7
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Editor's Note: True in 1960 and true in 2017. (*JH*)

Belleville church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

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