

# Communion Epitaphs

Sermons prepared by Gene McCoy

As we grow older we become more aware of our mortality. We realize we will soon be laid to rest 'neath the sod with a piece of cold granite marking our final resting place. On that stone will likely be engraved a pithy sentence summary of our life.

When Christians assemble on Sunday to keep the appointment with the Lord at His supper, there is customarily displayed an epitaph, of sorts, that prompts us to remember the One whose death we commemorate. But I wonder if we have, in our relatively brief weekly observances, given them due consideration.

## IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME

1 Corinthians 11:24

### INTRODUCTION

Agra, India is best known for the Taj Mahal, an extravagant marble monument of love, built by Shahjahan in 1653 as a memorial to his queen Mumtaz Mahal, who died giving birth to their 14th child. Construction took 22 years and employed 20,000 skilled workers.

Shahjahan was a very wealthy emperor who determined, upon his wife's death, to construct this monument to her memory so that all would remember her and his undying love.

From all over the world Shahjahan hired artisans, architects, sculptors, architects, jewelers and laborers to build this lasting memorial of his wife.

So long did it take to construct that many people, even then, did not know the person being commemorated. Even today, most people do not know it is a memorial; a testimony of a man's extreme and undying love.

The Bible contains various memorials. The rainbow is a reminder of God's promise that He would never again destroy the earth by means of a flood. When Israel crossed the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land God told them to construct a pile of twelve rocks taken from the river's bottom. The purpose of that memorial was to give the parents the opportunity to tell their children about God's miraculous deliverance. (Joshua 4:6)

The Jewish feast of Passover provided the opportunity for parents to teach their children about God's mighty deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Exodus 12:26-27 reads, "And when your children say to you, 'What does this rite mean to you?' you shall say, 'It is a Passover sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.'"

On the night in which He was betrayed, Jesus took bread; 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.**" 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.**" 1 Cor. 11:24-25

Today, when children ask questions about the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, parents have the opportunity to explain the gospel story to their own children—the meaning of the cross.

This is the only means by which the Lord has asked — actually commanded — us to remember Him. Note what we are to remember. It is **Him**! In remembering Him we also remember His covenant.

### I. REMEMBER HIM

A. By means of the emblems

1. In the breaking of the bread

a. How His body was pierced for our transgressions (Jn. 19:34)

b. That Jesus' entire incarnate life was for our benefit

1) "**This is My body which is for you.**"

2) We should not think about Jesus in His crucifixion only, but also in His entire ministry (e.g., sinless life, teaching, miracles) and how all of it comes to bear upon our atonement.

2. In the drinking of the cup (contents)

a. When we partake of the cup, we remember the blood that makes a covenant relationship with God possible.

b. When Moses ratified the law with Israel, he sprinkled the blood of the sacrificial bulls on the people (Exodus 24:8). So, too, with the new covenant, the blood of the Lamb. As Christians partake of this cup, they remember the covenant by means of the blood of the

covenant.

B. His abhorrence of sin

1. The blackness of sin and its fatal consequences are seen most vividly at Calvary.
  - a. "The wages (payment) for sin is death" (Romans 6:23).
  - b. "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24)
2. As we participate in the Lord's Supper it is appropriate that we face the reality of our sin and renew our hatred of it.

C. His justice

1. On Calvary's cross is portrayed God's justice in punishing sin, just as His perfect law demands. The terms of His law were satisfied, His hatred of sin and wrath against sinners displayed.
2. God did not relax His demands, even when it was His own sinless Son suffering the consequences. This causes us to remember Jesus for yet another exhibition of His divine nature.

D. His love and grace

1. When we partake of the bread and the cup it is an occasion to remember that what happened to Jesus would have happened to us had it not been for Jesus. It should also remind those who reject Jesus that what happened to Him will happen to them unless they repent.
2. In the cross His holy wrath provoked by sin and His everlasting love for sinners meet in the person of Jesus, the Sinless One Who willingly paid the price for all those displaying faith in his blood.

E. His victory over sin and Satan

1. Hebrews 2:14 says that in His death Jesus rendered Satan powerless. In Colossians 2:15 Paul says Jesus disarmed and triumphed over the hosts of Satanic forces in His death. This He did when He paid our penalty of death for us.
2. Now that our sentence of death has been cancelled, we have escaped all condemnation and are under no threat from the Enemy. Jesus' victory over Satan is our victory.
3. As we participate in the Lord's Supper, therefore, we remember Him Who is our Champion and King.

Cross illustration (auto animation)

The outline of a cross is displayed. Printed vertically on the upright is the word "WRATH." Printed horizontally on the cross member is the word "GRACE." Both words share the same "A." In a block arrow pointing to the word "WRATH" is the word "Law." In a block arrow pointing to the word "GRACE" is the word "Love." The explanation is that God's law and love were both displayed and satisfied at the cross, where, because of Jesus atonement, God is just and justifier, honoring His perfect law by responding to our sin in wrath but at the same time responding in love for the sinner in grace. If memory serves me, this illustration was at least inspired by, if not stolen from, Dr. Jack Cottrell.

## **II. REMEMBER THE COVENANT**

A. Jesus is our covenant

1. Isaiah 42:6 so identifies Him.
2. All the blessings of the covenant of grace are embodied in Jesus, originate with Him, and are dispensed by Him. Receiving the grace of salvation and receiving Jesus are one and the same. He is our covenant.
3. When we observe the Lord's Supper, therefore, we are remembering that we have appropriated Jesus as our covenant. We are to recall the covenant into which we entered when we entered into Christ.
4. In the bread and cup is our reconciliation with God through Christ. Paul wrote, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19).

B. Communion is not merely a ceremony, but the commemoration of a covenant!

1. The Lord's Supper is a weekly reminder that we share in a Divine Person and not a system of rituals. (Fowler, p. 213)
2. The Corinthian Christians needed to be chastised because they were observing the ritual but not partaking of the covenant.
3. As we partake of the emblems of Jesus' body and blood, we must recall more than just the crucifixion scene, but also our own baptism, when we entered the covenant by means of our death to sin; that "we participate in the very life of Jesus Christ, or that he controls, directs, orders our lives" (Fowler, p. 213).
4. We should also remember and renew the vows we took upon ourselves as we entered this covenant. The Lord's Supper is a weekly opportunity to evaluate our faithfulness to the covenant.

## **CONCLUSION**

May 10, 1975 is a date I will never forget — the day of our wedding.

My mother cautioned me about marrying Becky just because she was an accomplished pianist. I knew better than that. I married her for her \$!

Anniversary an occasion to remember more than a wedding ceremony.

- To remember the person I married
- All that she has brought to my life (completeness, children, intelligence, etc.)
- The covenant I entered; evaluation of my faithfulness

What makes the celebration special is not the event of your wedding but the person to whom you are married. How this person to whom you are married has impacted your life and made of you a better, complete person. It is, then, an occasion to recommit to the vows you took on your wedding day.

It is a celebration of the family that has resulted from this union. A wedding anniversary is an occasion to review all the blessings that have resulted from the marriage and to recommit self to the family. So, too, with the Lord's Supper. We'll talk about this aspect in an upcoming message.

It is an occasion to evaluate your faithfulness to keep the covenant into which you entered on that day.

A wedding anniversary is an occasion to give thanks to God for marriage and the person He has provided for you.

## **Communion**

Reflect upon the truth that God loved you so much that He gave His sinless Son to rescue you from eternal loss.

**Communion Hymn** by Charles McMillan and J.C. Blaker

On this Holy Lord's day morning, Master of the earth and sea

Stand we in thy sacred presence, hearts and souls athirst for Thee.

As we come around this table, emblematic of Thy death;

Fill, O fill us with Thy Spirit, till in Thee our souls shall rest.

May this loaf and cup remind us of the sacrifice Thou made,

Bleeding, dying for transgression that our sins on Thee be laid

As we look to Thee, the Author of all hope and joy and peace,

May our loyal consecration to Thee, never, never cease.

Grant us in this sacred service to behold God's love anew

May the vision fill and thrill us, till Thy holy will we do.

Favorite Hymns of Praise      # 439 This Do In Remembrance of Me by Helen E. Fromm  
# 297 My Jesus I Love Thee

# CRUSHED FOR OUR INIQUITIES

Isaiah 53:5; Matt. 26:38; Luke 22:44

He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities.

He told [the disciples], "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death.

Stay here and keep watch with me." NLT

And being in agony He was praying very fervently;

and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

## INTRODUCTION

The communion epitaph most commonly considered is the one we discussed last Sunday, specifically, "In remembrance of Me." But there are several others equally worthy of our consideration. Today we think about the weight of the burden our Lord bore at Calvary as we consider another communion epitaph, "Crushed for our Iniquities."

Ray Vander Laan provides an interesting background for our thoughts in his DVD presentation, "Death & Resurrection of the Messiah" (Faith Lesson 7 "Weight of the World" 5:07-7:28 and 14:15-16:31) which was filmed on location in the Holy Land. Please watch these pertinent segments.

On the night of His betrayal, Jesus' prayers in Gethsemane were so fervent that His sweat became like drops of blood. How fitting. For the word "Gethsemane" is derived from the Aramaic word that means "oil press." With the cross on the horizon, Jesus' blood is beginning to be pressed out like oil from olives.

This epitaph prompts us to consider the weight of the burden our Lord bore at Calvary. How convicting this is to realize I contributed to the weight that squeezed the life blood out of Jesus; that His agony in the garden was due to the intense pressure represented by my sin; that He endured six hours of most excruciating pain as He hung on Calvary's cross.

## WEIGHT OF MY SIN

How much does sin weigh? It may be impossible to measure. But we know that

- the first sin we committed exceeded the limit, thereby disqualifying us entrance into heaven.
- it weighs so much that we cannot throw it off by our own power.

Christians indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit are instructed by the writer of Hebrews (12:2) to "strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up." But even then, we must cast our sins upon Jesus.

### I Lay My Sins on Jesus Horatius Bonar

I lay my sins on Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God;

He bears them all, and frees us from the accursed load.

I bring my guilt to Jesus, to wash my crimson stains

White in His blood most precious, till not a stain remains.

Greek mythology touted the strength of Atlas, who is always depicted as carrying the weight of the world on his back and shoulders. But that is nothing in comparison to the real weight of the world, which only Jesus can carry. But He carried them to the crest of Golgotha's hill, where He nailed them to that tree. But before He took them there, He bore the weight of our sin in the Garden of Gethsemane. Our sins crushed the heart of Jesus.

The Passion of the Christ, directed by Mel Gibson, depicted this most dramatically. But there is no way a film or other depiction of Calvary can adequately convey the true weight of our sin that crushed Jesus.

We think of the whip, the hammer and the cross when we think about the agony, pain and suffering Jesus endured. But it was our sin that squeezed the life blood out of Jesus. The weight of the cross was not measured in the pounds of the wood, but in the emotional and spiritual conflict created as the sinless Son of God is confronted by our sin. Not only my sin and not only our sin, but the sin of the entire world! That which His holy nature cannot abide, much less look upon, He willingly bore in His body (1 Pet. 2:24).

The suffering was physical, but more spiritual as the cross represents the catastrophic conflict between God's love and holiness. The burden of mankind's sin was so heavy, so spiritually intense, emotionally demanding and physically extreme that it pressed the life blood out of the very Son of God.

## GRIEF OF MY GUILT

Many among us have experienced the grief caused by guilt and know how exhausting and debilitating it can be. David is probably the best biblical example. After being confronted with his terrible sins of adultery and murder, he cried to God for mercy. His prayer recorded in Psalm 51 contains his plea from the depths of grief resulting from guilt. "Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night" (vv. 2,3).

Have you ever been weighed down by the grief of guilt? Ex: Judas after betrayal and Peter after denial

Matt. 27:1-5 Filled with remorse, Judas returned the 30 pieces of silver he had received for betraying the Lord, saying, "I have sinned, for I have betrayed an innocent man." The grief of his guilt prompted him to then commit suicide by hanging.

Peter denied his association with Jesus. Feeling the grief of his guilt, Peter went away, weeping bitterly (Matt. 26:74-75).

We can relate with the confession in Isaiah 59:12 — "Our transgressions are multiplied before You, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities."

Is. 53:3 says Jesus was a Man of sorrows Who was acquainted with deepest grief. Verse 10 says "it was the Lord's good plan to crush him and cause him grief." Jesus, in Gethsemane, "became anguished and distressed. He told [His disciples], 'My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death'" (Matt. 26:38). He had no grief from His own guilt, but plenty due to ours.

David celebrates the relief from the burden of guilt (Ps. 32:2,5).

"What joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt."

"You forgave me! All my guilt is gone!"

**My Savior's Love** Charles H. Gabriel

I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene

And wonder how He could love me, a sinner, condemned, unclean.

He took my sins and my sorrows, He made them his very own

He bore the burden to Calvary, and suffered and died alone.

For me it was in the garden He prayed, "Not My will, but Thine."

He had no tears for His own grief, but sweat drops of blood for mine.

**How marvelous! How wonderful! And my song shall ever be:**

**How marvelous! How wonderful is my Savior's love for me!**

## **BURDEN OF MY CONSEQUENCES**

The Bible cannot state the consequences of sin more clearly than does Paul in Rom. 6:23, where he says the wages of / payment for sin is death — eternal separation from God. Because Jesus paid that penalty for us, Paul could add the truth that the free gift God gives us through Jesus Christ is life everlasting / eternal. That is grace!

Grace does not relax the demands of law, but rather provides the payment by a substitute. Our punishment fell upon Jesus. Only the sinless One could stand in for sinners, thereby satisfying the demands of God's law and setting sinners free.

"For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."

2 Cor. 5:21 NLT

"Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing." Gal. 3:13 NLT

"He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right." 1 Pet. 2:24

NLT

"By God's grace, [Jesus] tasted death for everyone." Heb. 2:9b NLT

"Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners — the just for the unjust; the righteous for the unrighteous — to bring you safely home to God." 1 Pet. 3:18 NLT

## **Why Should He Love Me So?**

Love sent my Savior to die in my stead;

Why should He love me so?

Meekly to Calvary's cross He was led;

Why should He love me so?

**Why should He love me so?**

**Why should He love me so?**

**Why should my Savior to Calvary go?**

**Why should He love me so?**

Nails pierced His hands and His feet for my sin;

Why should He love me so?

He suffered sore my salvation to win;

Why should He love me so?

O how He agonized there in my place;

Why should He love me so?

Nothing withholding my sin to efface;

Why should He love me so?

## **CONCLUSION**

I am told that the word "crushed" in Is. 53 is the same word translated "contrite" at Ps. 51:17. A contrite heart is a crushed heart. We should agonize over our sins that nailed Jesus to the cross. Our response when partaking of the Lord's Supper should be a broken and contrite heart.

When I survey the wondrous cross, I pour contempt on all my pride.  
Why? Because the Supper commemorates the occasion when our Lord was crushed for our iniquities. He bore the weight of our sin, the grief of our guilt and the burden of our consequences.

As we come to the Supper each first day of the week, it should be with the **realization** that it represents a seismic conflict the likes of which have never been matched, much less even approximated. And it should be with the **resolution** that we will react to sin with holy hatred.

The Lord's Supper is a re-enactment of the greatest battle that was ever waged — when the King of Righteousness confronted the Sultan of Sin in mortal combat with the eternal souls of all mankind in the balance.

We must be reminded not only of the scene in Gethsemane, but also of the fact that our continuing disobedience displays and expresses our failure to respond to His sacrifice as we ought.

We are confronted with the awful weight of our sin—not that the weight is such a heavy burden for **us** but that our sin was a burden that the Lord should have never had to carry.

Instead of thinking in terms of the trouble my sins have caused me, I am faced with the realization that my sins have created a cosmic conflict in the nature of God, Whose justice must respond in wrath but Whose grace desires to respond in love.

We partake of the emblems with the mixed emotions of sorrow and joy, knowing that He suffered the grief of our guilt when He endured the cross, despising its shame (Heb. 12:2).

We come with the realization that our burden of sin was laid upon Jesus at the cross and that He bore that burden. We receive the emblems of His body and blood in celebration of the fact that we are now forgiven people as a result of His sacrificial death.

"When the feast brings before our eyes the horrific evil of our sins, we must do nothing else but take holy revenge upon ourselves. That is, our attitude will be: if sin was the death of my Savior, why should not I be the death of all my sin?" — Andrew Paris, What the Bible Says About the Lord's Supper, College Press, p. 173

Matt. 26:36-46 (esp. 38)

**O Sacred Head** Bernard of Clairvaux

O sacred Head, now wounded, with grief and shame weighed down,  
Now scornfully surrounded with thorns, Thine only crown;  
O sacred Head, what glory, what bliss till now was Thine!  
Yet, though despised and gory, I joy to call Thee mine.

**Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed?** Isaac Watts

Alas! And did my Savior bleed, and did my Sovereign die?  
Would He devote that Sacred Head for sinners such as I?  
Was it for crimes that I had done He groaned upon the tree?  
Amazing pity, grace unknown, and love beyond degree.  
But drops of grief cannot repay the debt of love I owe.  
Here, Lord, I give myself away. It's all that I can do.

**Nailed to the Cross** by Carrie E. Breck

There was one Who was willing to die in my stead,  
That a soul so unworthy might live.  
And the path to the cross He was willing to tread,  
All the sins of my life to forgive.

**They are nailed to the cross. They are nailed to the cross.**

**O how much He was willing to bear!**

**With what anguish and loss Jesus went to the cross!!**

**But He carried my sins with Him there.**

He is tender and loving and patient with me,  
While He cleanses my heart of the dross.  
But "there's no condemnation" I know I am free  
For my sins are all nailed to the cross.  
I will cling to my Savior and never depart  
I will joyfully journey each day.  
With a song on my lips and a song in my heart,  
That my sins have been taken away

# BY HIS WOUNDS WE ARE HEALED

The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. Isaiah 53:5  
“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness;  
for by His wounds you were healed.” 1 Pet. 2:24

## INTRODUCTION

When we read this epitaph, our hearts are conflicted. For these words bring to mind the fact that this death occurred during and because of the horrific conflict created by our disobedience and open hostility toward the One whose death is hereby commemorated. It is because of our rebellion that this One was pierced through.

But our regret and repentance is accompanied by great rejoicing that His death has effected our healing, the forgiveness of all sin.

We are horrified that the perfect Lamb of God suffered such hostility against Himself by sinners, not only because of our sins, but also so that we could be healed.

Jesus was hard pressed by the weight of our sin and the burden of our guilt — so much so that in the garden He sweat as it were great drops of blood. Our sin ruined our peaceful relationship with God, which grieved our Lord immensely. Beyond the agony in the garden, however, was the punishment for our disobedience, as required by His perfect law.

The punishment that brought us peace was upon him.

## BY HIS STRIPES / WOUNDS

By His wounds we are healed.

Not by His “words” (Lk. 5:24)

- He Who called into existence this vast universe by the power of His word could atone for our sin only by His wounds.
- He Whose words, “Peace. Be still,” calmed the wind and the waves could not effect our peace with God with mere words, but by His wounds.
- He Who demonstrated His authority to forgive sins by telling the paralyzed man to pick up his stretcher and go home (Lk. 5:24) could make us ready to go to our eternal home only by taking our punishment upon Himself.

Stricken, smitten, afflicted, pierced, crushed — all words of wounding. But all words describing Jesus’ healing wounds!

Not by His “touch”

- Jesus’ touch would effect the removal of a fever (Matt. 8:15). But our healing required His wounds.
- The daughter of the synagogue official was raised from her death bed when Jesus took her by the hand (Matt. 9:18-25). But resurrection to eternal life demands the sacrifice of the sinless Son of God.
- The two blind men received their sight when Jesus touched their eyes (Matt. 9:27-30). But it is only because Jesus was willing to suffer the chastisement for our sins that we have the hope of seeing the glories of heaven.

## WE ARE HEALED

Jesus is the Great Physician from whom all healing comes. He knows what ails us. And He knows the cure. He is the cure!

Sin is a cancer that kills the soul. The sinner is sick and weak, his defenses destroyed and vulnerable to the attacks from the evil one. Man is powerless in his struggle to fend him off and to escape the sentence of death. Our only hope is the blood of the sinless Lamb of God.

1 Jn. 1:7 “the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”

Heb. 9:13-14 Under the old covenant the blood of animal sacrifices was sprinkled on those who were ceremonially unclean so as to render them outwardly clean. But the blood of Jesus cleanses the conscience from acts that lead to death.

Heb. 10:22 Consequently, we may “draw near to God with a sincere heart and with . . . full assurance.”

Our sins have created two distinct problems for us. One is legal in nature. We are guilty and subject to the penalty imposed by law. The other is medical in nature. Well, not really medical, but related to health — spiritual health. Our sins leave us weary and sick.

In His atonement is the healing we need for both problems. He provides forgiveness, which is the remedy for our legal issue. In addition He provides the remedy for our weakened condition of spiritual sickness

by giving us the power to overcome temptation and to obey Him. This help He provided by sending the Holy Spirit to dwell within us. He is at once the seal of our salvation, the stamp that authenticates us as belonging to God, and our Guide Who shows us the way of the Lord.

This salvation we celebrate in the Lord's Supper. Because Jesus paid the penalty of eternal death, we have the opportunity to be healed, that is, forgiven and set free from the power and penalty of sin.

## **CONCLUSION**

R.G. Lee tells a beautiful story about a mountain school that had a hard time keeping a teacher. Partly because of where they were and partly because there was a group of big, rough boys who took pride in running the teachers off. The biggest and roughest of them all was named Tom.

A new young teacher won over the boys, however, by letting them write their own rules for the school. It turned out that the boys expected the rules to be very strictly enforced with a rod. This was during the days when corporal punishment was allowed in schools. For example, cheating would be punished with five strokes of the rod, and stealing with ten strokes. All punishment had to be given with the offender's coat off.

Everything went well until one day Tom's lunch was stolen. A frail little boy in hand-me-down clothes that were too big for him admitted his guilt. The students demanded that this boy be whipped. When the teacher called the little boy up front, he came whimpering and begging to leave his coat on. The other students insisted that he obey the rules and take off his coat. When he did, a deathly silence settled over the room. This frail little boy had no shirt on and his emaciated body looked like skin stretched over bones. The teacher gasped and dropped the rod. He knew he could never whip that little boy.

Suddenly, big tough Tom strode up and stood between the teacher and the boy. "I'll take it for him, Teacher. After all it was my lunch he stole." And then Tom pulled off his coat. Reluctantly the teacher started. After the third blow the switch broke. The teacher threw it in the corner and said, "That's all. School dismissed."

The frail little boy laid his hand on big Tom's arm and through his tears said, "Thank you, Tom, it would have killed me."

In his book, "Written in Blood," Robert Coleman tells the story of a little boy whose sister needed a blood transfusion. The doctor explained that she had the same disease the boy had recovered from 2 years earlier. Her only chance for recovery was a transfusion from someone who had previously conquered the disease. Since the two children had the same rare blood type, the boy was the ideal donor.

"Would you give your blood to Mary?" the doctor asked. Johnny hesitated. His lower lip started to tremble. Then he smiled and said, "Sure, for my sister."

Soon the two children were wheeled into the hospital room, Mary, pale and thin; Johnny, robust and healthy. Neither spoke, but when their eyes met, Johnny grinned.

As the nurse inserted the needle into his arm, Johnny's smile faded. He watched the blood flow through the tube.

With the ordeal almost over, his voice, slightly shaky, broke the silence, "Doctor, when do I die?" Only then did the doctor realize why Johnny had hesitated, why his lip had trembled when he'd agreed to donate his blood. He'd thought giving his blood to his sister meant giving up his life. In that brief moment, he'd made his great decision.

"The Passion of the Christ," the award-winning movie directed by Mel Gibson, graphically depicts the chastisement Jesus bore. It was rated R because of the violence it portrayed.

Kenneth Wuest describes the practice (First Peter in the Greek New Testament, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1942, p 68, 69 as cited by Reese, 1 Peter, p. 62)

"The Romans used a scourge of cords or thongs to which latter were attached pieces of lead or brass, or small, sharp-pointed bones. Criminals condemned to crucifixion were ordinarily scourged before being executed. The victim was stripped to the waste and bound in a stooping position . . . (sometimes they may have been suspended above the floor by the wrists) to a post or pillar. The suffering under the lash was intense. The body was frightfully lacerated. The Christian martyrs at Smyrna about AD 155 were so torn by the scourges that their veins were laid bare, and the inner muscles and sinews and even bowels exposed."

Who could watch without emotion as each lash of that whip left open, bloody stripes across the tightly drawn back of our Lord? I remember the tears welling up in my eyes and the urge to stand in the crowded theater and shout, "No! No! No!"

See from His head, His hands, His feet  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.  
Did ever such love and sorrow meet  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine  
That were a present (offering) far too small  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

An appropriate response, according to Peter (1 Pet. 2:24) is that we die to sin and live to righteousness. Rom. 6:2-14.



When we partake of the body and blood of Jesus, it reminds us that our sin created the conflict that resulted in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, the just for the unjust, the righteous for the unrighteous.

Before we can live to righteousness we must die to sin. Before we can be resurrected, we must die and be buried.

**I'll Live For Him** by Ralph E. Hudson

My life, my love, I give to Thee,

Thou Lamb of God who died for me.

Oh, may I ever faithful be,

My savior and my God!

I'll live for Him who died for me,

How happy then my life shall be!

I'll live for Him who died for me,

My Savior and my God!

I now believe Thou dost receive,

For Thou hast died that I might live.

And now henceforth I'll trust in Thee,

My Savior and my God!

O Thou who died on Calvary,

To save my soul and make me free,

I'll consecrate my life to Thee,

My Savior and my God!

# UNITED IN HIS DEATH

1 Corinthians 11:29

“The one who does not regard the body of Christ properly when partaking of the Lord’s Supper eats and drinks judgment to himself .”

## INTRODUCTION

Like many others, my understanding of the word “body” in this verse was limited for so long. I used to think that this verse meant that I must be cognizant of the fact that the bread of communion represented the broken body of Jesus; that to partake of it without the conscious thought of Jesus body hanging on the cross was to eat and drink damnation to my soul. While I am not discounting the conscious awareness of Jesus’ body being nailed to Calvary’s tree as we partake of the emblems, I am suggesting that we are missing the real point of these words if that is all we consider. We are affirming that the “body” in this verse has reference to the church; that our regard for the church, as expressed by our sacrifice for and service to her, has everything to do with partaking in a worthy manner. And, as you will conclude, this is an every day proposition, not merely a 5-10 minute segment of the Sunday celebration.

We derive this epitaph from Rom. 6, a passage that is actually about baptism, at which point we enter the covenant of grace. And we will look consider that passage as we proceed. But the connection between our **entrance** into the covenant of grace and our **maintenance** of that relationship in the Lord’s Supper gives us the opportunity to borrow the phrase for a communion epitaph. The connection may be stated this way. We have been united with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection at baptism. So says Paul in Romans 6. But we have also been united with His body, the church. Both aspects have continuing implications that we must consider seriously as we approach our worship in the communal feast.

The church at Corinth was blessed with every advantage, including the possession of every spiritual gift provided by the Holy Spirit. But it was also plagued by many problems, not the least of which was a factious spirit that resulted in division and strife. From the opening paragraphs in this letter, Paul chastises them for their divisions. Not only was it a poor testimony, but it was taking its toll on the health of the congregation.

One aspect of their worship that was adversely affected by their divisive practices and attitudes was the Lord’s Supper. That which should have been an occasion for unity had become an occasion for division. Jesus’ prayer in the context of His imminent death (John 17) reveals that the focus of His heart was unity among His disciples. Jesus died to bring all people together into His blessed grace family, the church. The church’s observance of that sacrifice ought to honor the heart of the Lord by being a rallying point for unity. Divisive attitudes and practices should be among those things we discard and decry when we come to the Supper. Jesus teaches us (Matt. 5:24) to be reconciled with our brother before we offer our sacrifices. We cannot participate in the Lord’s Supper in a worthy manner when we are divided and fractured.

As He entered the city of Jerusalem for the final time, Jesus’ tearful words were, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing” (Lk. 13:34). The weekly dinner appointment with the Lord is an occasion when He longs to gather His children under His wing. We must wonder if He weeps when His children come to His memorial feast in factions created by an ill-placed focus on ideas and practices that honor our traditions more than His Word.

It has been observed that the most segregated hour during any week is on Sunday morning. This points to the racial divide that is perhaps as pronounced within the **church** as in the **world**. As unfortunate as that is, there is a segregation much worse — the segregation among God’s people. We must do all we can to eliminate racism. And we must devote ourselves to eliminate all segregation, discrimination and division that hinders the church in worship -- especially as it affects the observance of the Lord’s Supper. The communion is an occasion to celebrate our unity as a family. But this has been hindered and prevented many times by attitudes and actions that contribute to division.

It is possible to have a communion service without there being real communion. Two aspects of Jesus’ life of sacrifice that were exemplified at Calvary and that are crucial to being united in His death are self-denial and service.

## I. UNITED IN SELF-SACRIFICE

Being united with Christ in His death at baptism is very important. It is the occasion when we die to sin and self and when we commit ourselves to living for Christ. But is being united with His **body** less important to our Lord? Can unity with the Lord be separated from unity with His body? This unity is displayed when the body of Christ commemorates that which binds us together.

It was the custom of the first century church to have a meal together before observing the Lord’s

Supper. This “agape meal” or “love feast” was perhaps an outgrowth of the institution of the Lord’s Supper in connection with the Passover meal Jesus ate with His disciples in the upper room. In some respects it may have been a precursor of what we call potluck dinners. It was an opportunity for the wealthy to share with the poor; for all Christians to enjoy fellowship and to celebrate their familial relationship because of Jesus’ sacrifice. It may have been the only decent meal some of the poor people would have. But the rich in the church at Corinth arrived early, ate their food in their exclusive circle, and some even got drunk. “The meal or gathering at which the social differences between members of the church should have been obliterated only succeeded in aggravating these same differences” (William Barclay, quoted by Paul T. Butler, [1 Corinthians](#), College Press, p. 211)

This disregard of unity among the Christians in Corinth corrupted the observance of the Lord’s Supper, having a negative impact upon their communion with the Lord and with each other. This defilement of the communal meal that should unite all of God’s people prompted some of Paul’s strongest criticism.

How may this apply to us? Think about your attitude and practice in our church dinners. With whom do you sit? Family and friends? Or do you seek out people you don’t know with a view of extending love and expanding your familial boundary? What is your attitude in providing food? Do you think only of yourself, or do you consider those who may not be able to provide much, if anything at all? Do you prepare a token dish, which is probably a minimal contribution? Or is your offering that which could be considered a self-sacrifice; of thinking of others more than self? Are you content to let strangers sit alone at a table? Or are you ever-conscious of opportunities to go out of your way to sacrifice selfish interests to engage others you do not know?

Are you content to pass the trays containing the emblems of Jesus’ body and blood to a brother or sister you do not know without making a commitment to become acquainted?

Partaking of the Lord’s Supper in a worthy manner is not limited to our attitudes and actions at the Sunday event. We must be mindful of and honor the Lord’s body at all times. This frequently requires each of us to sacrifice our personal preferences.

Ronald G. Davis, preacher in OH and former Bible college professor, addresses (**An Occasion for Unity** June 12, 2011 Christian Standard) the sad state of affairs that the Lord’s Supper has often divided those whom Jesus prayed would be united. He laments that congregations have become embroiled in disputes and dividing over various aspects of the observance, such as:

- Who should be at the table (presiding, serving)
- What the emblems should look like
- How often the emblems should be available (e.g., on Sunday only?, at both morning & evening meeting?, etc.)
- When during the worship hour it should be observed
- Where & how the emblems should be displayed (e.g., location of the table, covered with a linen cloth)
- One cup vs. individual cups
- Partaking in unison vs. as served

The fact is that the Bible has absolutely nothing to say about any of these issues that have tragically divided God’s people. Sometimes, in our zeal to give this supper the attention and respect it is due, we focus on non-essentials, resulting in division, which violates a primary principle and purpose (an inherent quality) of communion. The Corinthians, by their factious spirit, had forgotten the purpose of the agape meal and, by extension, the Lord’s Supper. When we allow ourselves to be distracted by the non-essentials we many times sacrifice that which is essential. The meaning is overshadowed by the methods sometimes. The mechanics can become more important than the meaning.

Listen to Mr. Davis’ concluding exhortation. “Let no one quibble about who should or should not be here. Let no one quarrel over the manner in which the emblems are presented. Let no one fuss about the placement of these acts in the whole series of worship elements. Let all — in the spirit of unity — affirm loudly: ‘We believe that Jesus is God’s Christ incarnate and our only redemption and salvation!’”

Preserving unity in the Lord’s Supper requires that we focus only on the essentials — what the Bible says — specifically, it is the divinely-ordained commemoration of the Lord’s sacrificial death in which those redeemed by His blood participate as Christ’s body in partaking of emblems representing Jesus’ body and blood. The first Christians met for this purpose on the first day of the week. To focus attention on aspects of the supper beyond this is to flirt with division, which negates the unifying purpose of Jesus’ atonement, the very thing being celebrated.

Whenever we become distracted by personal preferences, we need to re-focus on the essentials revealed by God in His Word.

## **II. UNITED IN SERVICE**

In the midst of Jesus' predictions about His imminent death and coming Kingdom, the disciples are engaged in a discussion about chief positions in His administration. In His response to them Jesus said, "**The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many**" (Matt. 20:28). When we are united with Christ's self-sacrifice in His death, we adopt His commitment to service. And as the body collectively is brought together by means of His death and our participation in it, we become a body that is united in serving each other.

Paul uses the Lord's relationship to His church as the example as he provides instructions about our relationships among one another. In Eph. 5:25-30 he says that the husband is to display self-sacrificing love for his wife by loving her like Jesus loved the church; and that he should love his wife as he loves his own body by nourishing and cherishing it. And as we are members of Christ's body, the same should be true for each Christian's relationship to his brothers and sisters in the Lord. Just as the husband is to serve his wife, so each of us is to serve the body of Christ.

But when is this service performed? We have affirmed that the weekly family meal in commemoration of the gospel (Jesus' death, burial, resurrection and return) is a divinely appointed occasion to celebrate our unity. But what we call the "communion service" is not really service at all. The service is done at all other times. This is part of what Paul may have in mind when he urges us to partake in a worthy manner.

Think of this by means of the marriage analogy, as did Paul in Eph. 5. How would your spouse respond and receive your expression of devotion on your wedding anniversary if you did not give attention to and serve the interests of your family the rest of the year? And, to make the analogy realistic, imagine the response of your spouse if you devoted only a few minutes on your wedding anniversary to acknowledging the family. I wonder how the Lord responds and receives our feigned expressions of devotion and worship the few minutes we sometimes struggle to focus our attention upon His sacrifice and service one day a week when we have not served His body throughout the week.

Unfortunately, this negligence is not unique or uncommon. It has been said that the ground is level at the foot of the cross. Every sinner is equal in his need of Jesus' atoning blood. And, receiving redemption through His blood, each Christian is equally a member of Christ's body, the church. Among the members of this body there is no king — only servants. (Butler, [1 Corinthians](#), p. 218)

Assess your service to the body. In what specific and tangible or measurable ways do you demonstrate day in and day out your unity with those among whom you partake of the emblems of the Lord's body and blood on Sunday?

Partaking of the body and blood of Jesus in a worthy manner requires our consideration and recognition of our familial relationship and responsibility every day, not just in a fleeting moment during a worship service on Sunday. And serving one another involves much more than merely passing a communion tray to our neighbor during the church's weekly observance.

When we pass the emblems, it would be good to verbalize our unity: "Thank you, brother, sister."

## **Conclusion**

One cannot partake of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner who is not a part of the Lord's family, the church. Baptism is where we are united in the likeness of His death. In baptism we die to sin and self and commit to a life of serving Christ.

How can you celebrate unity with a brother or sister in Christ in whom you have shown no personal interest? To even know who he / she is? Whom you ignore, if not shun?

# IN A WORTHY MANNER

1 Corinthians 11:27

## INTRODUCTION

This verse begins with a word that communicates consequences. The English word “therefore” indicates a conclusion that involves ramifications. Having spoken about the sacred and solemn meaning of the supper, Paul now impresses upon us the necessity to observe the memorial and to partake of its emblems in a corresponding and appropriate manner — a manner that displays **reverence** for the Person of Jesus, **recognition** of our great need due to our sinfulness and **respect** for His sacrifice.

Somewhere along the line many people have adopted the idea that the worthiness here discussed is our own; that we must somehow prove our moral goodness and performance. Some preachers and Elders are at fault for feeding this idea when they express such in their comments and prayers. “Lord, I pray that we will be found worthy to partake of these emblems.” Or, “Lord, I pray that we are worthy of Your sacrifice.” The fact of the matter is we will never be worthy of anything the Lord has done or is doing for us. It is all of grace and none of works.

So what Paul is addressing here is the **manner** and not the **man**. To partake in a worthy manner requires the participant to recognize and acknowledge his unworthiness.

Negligence in this matter of partaking in a worthy manner results in some negative consequences. Paul said it was for this reason that many among the Corinthian Christians were weak and sick, and some slept. Whether this is to be understood in physical sense or in a spiritual sense I cannot say with any degree of certainty. But I do know that leaving an unworthy observance unchecked will eventually profane every other aspect of worship by/with its hypocrisy and adversely affect the entire body. The ill effects upon the church at Corinth testify to the cancerous results when the Lord’s Supper is observed in an unworthy manner. As is true when cancer is detected in our physical body, radical surgery is often required to excise it, restoring health to the body. Such was the condemning nature of Paul’s letter.

“God has never tolerated careless handling of sacred things.” — Applebury (1 Corinthians, College Press, p. 211)  
Let us consider some practical measures we can take to honor the Lord’s desire that we partake in a worthy manner.

## I. PREPARATION

“If God told the Jews to eat the Passover Lamb only after they had spent four days in diligent preparation, should not the Lord’s supper — the Christian Passover — be eaten only after we have made a thorough, heart-searching examination?” — Paris, p. 328

“Perhaps nowhere was the preparation for the Lord’s Supper taken more seriously than in the Church of Scotland a couple of generations ago, where preparation began usually on the Thursday before Communion Sunday, and included, not only prayer and preaching, but fasting. The practice is still continued in the Gaelic-speaking Presbyterian Churches of the north.” — William Robinson, “The Administration of the Lord’s Supper,” quoted in [The Lord’s Supper](#) by Gresham/Lawson, College Press, p. 58

Robinson continues, “What might happen in any one Church if Celebrant and congregation were to prepare themselves by spiritual and mental disciplines over the weekend, and indeed, throughout each week! Would not the windows of heaven be opened to us?”

## II. EXAMINATION

This is part of our preparation. The obvious first exam question we must ask ourselves today pertains to our preparation. Was your observance of the Lord’s Supper today preceded by serious preparation and sober self-examination? Or would you have to confess that your first thought about the Lord’s sacrifice and its significance to your life was prompted only moments before you took the cup and bread in your fingers and partook of those sacred emblems? “If we come to the Lord’s Supper having not seriously taken stock of our devotion to God and dedication to His purposes and plans for us, we are likely within the group of people of whom Paul speaks as being ‘sick and weak and sleeping.’”

On the occasion of the Passover meal in the upper room Jesus foretold His betrayal and the disciples began to inquire of Jesus, “Is it I?” They were prompted to think of themselves in relation to Jesus and to one another (Butler).

A personal encounter with the Lord demands introspection, inspection. The Lord’s Supper is perhaps the most personal encounter we may have with the Lord, and it is appropriate to ask ourselves probing questions re: our relationship to Him and to our brothers and sisters.

Doctors uniformly say that the best treatment for cancer begins with early detection, which results from regular self-examination. This process of self-examination must be a daily exercise — ritual, if you will. How much more pleasing to God and purposeful to you if your weekly participation in this observance was preceded

by self-examination that grows in intensity and focus in the hours leading up to the family gathering for the memorial supper? As it is, however, those hours are often spent in activities that not only leave us exhausted when the family gathers, but also distract attention and blur our focus so that we are not properly prepared to handle the sacred emblems of the Lord's broken body and shed blood. Can it be said that significant self-examination customarily precedes our commemoration of this event we readily acknowledge verbally to be the atonement for our sin?

These probing questions are not pleasant. They may cause some to recoil and resist — much like the patient who has just been told he has cancer. Self-examination — properly done — is not pleasant. But it is necessary to maintaining health. The one who refuses to heed the indicators of cancer will grow weaker and sicker and eventually will die. Whereas the patient who faithfully examines himself, noting the warning signs and following the doctor's orders, will grow stronger and survive.

The Lord's Supper is a weekly checkup with the Great Physician. If we come, having ignored symptoms of sickness, our illness is only going to get worse. And we will die. Some Christians, having examined themselves and detected spiritual cancer (sin), have concluded they are not worthy to participate in the supper that celebrates the sacrifice that secured their rescue. P.T. Butler says, "Sin should not keep us away from the Communion — it should drive us to it so we may get the right attitude." (1 Corinthians, p. 217)

P. 206 Paris

### **III. MEDITATION**

A natural outgrowth of examination is meditation. This is largely a lost art or exercise in contemporary culture that is uncomfortable with silence and with serious and critical thinking. But having examined our lives in the light of God's Word against the backdrop of our sinful lives silences our boastful lips as we meditate upon God's wondrous grace, mercy and love that was displayed on Calvary's cross.

Simultaneous to meditation comes the natural response of consecration, the dedication of our lives to God.

### **IV. CONSECRATION**

Meditating upon our Lord's sacrificial love necessarily and naturally leads to consecrating ourselves to serving Him as an expression of gratitude and worship.

#### **At the Cross** Isaac Watts

Alas, and did my Savior bleed? And did my Sovereign die?  
Would He devote that sacred head for sinners such as I?  
It was for crimes that I have done He groaned upon the tree.  
Amazing pity! Grace unknown! And love beyond degree!  
But drops of grief can never repay the debt of love I owe.  
Here, Lord, I give myself away. 'Tis all that I can do!

#### **Beneath the Cross of Jesus** Elizabeth C. Clephane

Beneath the cross of Jesus my eyes at times can see  
The very dying form of One who suffered there for me.  
And from my smitten heart with tears two wonders I confess  
The wonders of His glorious love, and my own worthlessness.  
I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place  
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His face.  
Content to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,  
My sinful self my only shame, my glory all the cross.

#### **Living for Jesus** Thomas O. Chisholm

Living for Jesus who died in my place,  
Bearing on Calvary my sin and disgrace  
Such love constrains me to answer His call  
Follow His leading and give Him my all  
O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee  
For Thou, in Thy atonement, didst give thyself for me.  
I own no other Master. My heart shall be Thy throne.  
My life I give, henceforth to live,  
O Christ, for Thee alone.

### **CONCLUSION**

The health of the church depends upon each individual partaking of these emblems in a worthy manner; a manner that corresponds to the sacred and sober event it commemorates.

How much stronger, more impervious to Satan's attacks, spiritually mature and attuned to God's will and work would our congregation be as each person approaches the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner, having

- Prepared properly
- Examined himself
- Meditated upon the significance of the cross
- Renewed his dedication to love, cherish and obey God
- Discerned the body

**Unworthy** by Ira F. Stanphill

Unworthy am I of the grace that He gave,  
 Unworthy to hold to His hand;  
 Amazed that a King would reach down to a slave,  
 This love I cannot understand.  
 My sorrow and sickness laid stripes on His back,  
 My sins caused the blood that was shed;  
 My faults and my failures have woven a crown  
 Of thorns, that He wore on His head.  
 Unworthy am I of the glory to come,  
 Unworthy with angels to sing;  
 I thrill just to know that He loved me so much,  
 A pauper, I walk with the King

**Chorus**

Unworthy, unworthy, a beggar;  
 In bondage and alone;  
 But He made me worthy and now by His grace,  
 His mercy has made me His own.

David Jeremiah relates an interesting story about a church in a large city that mothered some mission churches in the slum districts. On the first Sunday of each year all the mission churches would meet with the mothering church for a combined communion service. One distinct difference between these mission churches and the mothering church was the kind of people in each. The mothering church was comprised of professional and blue collar people, whereas the mission churches were comprised of the poor. In the mission churches were also several who had gotten crossways with the law. There where thieves, burglars, rapists and the like.

According to their custom, those partaking of the Lord's Supper came and knelt down at the front. The preacher observed something very curious and interesting that Sunday. One man from a mission congregation who was making his way to the front for communion the preacher recognized to be an ex-con who had recently been released from prison after serving a seven year sentence for burglary. Upon his release the mission church ministered to him and he became a Christian.

Already kneeling and awaiting the Lord's Supper was a member of the mothering church, a judge. Not just "a" judge, but "the" judge who had sentenced the burglar to prison. Neither man knew the other was present, which made it more interesting when the ex-con knelt down beside the judge. Neither man realized who the other was until they stood to return to their seats. Upon recognizing each other they immediately embraced as an expression of Christian love.

After church the preacher and the judge met in the foyer. The judge said, "Did you notice who was kneeling beside me during communion?" The preacher replied, "Yes, I did." The judge mused, "What a wonder of grace." The preacher replied, "Yes, it is a wonder of grace." After a moment of reflection, the judge asked the preacher, "To what are you referring?" "Well, I'm referring to the conversion of that burglar," replied the preacher. The judge said, "But I am referring to me."

Incredulous, the preacher asked for an explanation. The judge said, "It was natural for that man to receive God's grace, for he had nothing in his past to boast about as a basis for God's favor. But I have been raised in the church and have be taught to honor my word and to be faithful in the Lord's Supper. I graduated with honors from Oxford and have achieved acclaim in my profession. Like Paul, there is much in my life about which I could boast and upon which I could attribute God's favor. That God would save **me** is a wonder of grace."

The truth is, of course, that there is much that could be celebrated about God's grace in the lives of both men. The judge and thief alike stand equally in need of God's grace. And both stand on level ground at the foot of the cross. None of us is worthy His sacrifice. None of us deserves to kneel in His glorious presence. But because of His grace we are able to kneel there in a worthy manner —

- Preparation
- Examination
- Meditation
- Consecration

# **UNTIL HE COMES**

1 Corinthians 11:26

## **INTRODUCTION**

On the communion table in a church building in the South appears this inscription, "Til He Come." Whether we use proper English or a colloquial modification thereof, consecrating ourselves anew in this supper is certainly appropriate as we consider that Paul said "Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing (proclaiming) the Lord's death until he comes again." (1 Cor. 11:26 NLT)

It is a time of anticipation as well as retrospection. As we examine ourselves and consider the body and blood of Jesus, we also consider His return and how our lives are preparing for that Day.

## **PROCLAMATION**

In the supper we proclaim our faith that Jesus "died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18). But there is much more to this proclamation than what appears on the surface. Beyond the historical fact are some spiritual truths that should not only affect our emotions, but also our conscience. And that will impact the way we live in prospect of His return. In proclaiming the Lord's death we are proclaiming

### **A. The awful nature of sin**

Sin cannot be trivialized or rationalized when standing at the foot of the cross. Communing with the Lord in His supper is to be confronted afresh with the horrible nature of sin. It is because of sin that His atonement is required. As we eat and drink we are proclaiming that sin results in death.

### **B. Our guilt, the necessity of His death**

The supper is the occasion when we are further driven to the realization that it is my guilt and shame that was addressed at Calvary. More than the general, nebulous sin of the world should be brought to our consciousness. By our presence and in our partaking we are proclaiming our guilt and our need resulting from our sin.

### **C. His holiness and perfect law**

In proclaiming Jesus' death we also announce our acknowledgement that the penalty of death for sin is consistent with God's holiness. And that God does not ignore sin or treat it lightly. We also affirm that God's law cannot be relaxed or reversed, since it is perfect. We acknowledge and affirm God's justice in demanding death for disobeying His law.

### **D. His love and grace**

The presence of sinners at the Lord's Supper declares our testimony that God is merciful and loving, as evidenced by the fact that He provided a Substitute for us who have broken his law. We proclaim that God's love provided a way to be just in justifying sinners by the sacrifice of the Perfect Lamb, who came to take away the sin of the world. (See Rom. 3:26; John 1:29)

### **E. Our hope of salvation**

Participating in the Christian Passover meal is to proclaim our unworthiness and utter hopelessness apart from the sacrifice of Jesus. We announce that he is our propitiation Who has taken our sin upon Himself, thereby absorbing the wrath and punishment we deserve. We affirm at this upper the fact that there is salvation in no one else (Acts 4:12). Each forgiven sinner, in partaking, proclaims the power and extent of God's salvation.

## **PROMISE**

Jesus is coming again! This, too, is what we proclaim. It is the same promise Jesus made to comfort his disciples on one of those occasions when He told them about His imminent death and departure. He said, **"I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also"** (John 14:2-3). Then again by the angels on the occasion of Jesus' ascension after His death and resurrection, saying, "This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

When we partake of the Lord's Supper, it should be with the conscious awareness and anticipation of the Lord's return. It is to be observed to the end of the age, the end of time, when the Lord returns. From that time on we will need no emblems to remind us of Him for we will see Him and be with Him.

## **CONCLUSION**

Remain faithful, not only in the supper but in living.

In a worthy manner and until He returns remember Him who was crushed for our iniquities, by Whose wounds we are healed and in whose death we are united.