

Meditations on the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ

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 Title: "This is my body which is given for you"
 Text: Luke 22:14-23
 Theme: The fellowship of His suffering always precedes the power of His resurrection. The cross is always before the crown.

Why am I teaching this?

You and I have many habits that we do blindly each and every day. The habits are not necessarily bad, but they can be done without much forethought and consideration. I remember when teaching high school the saying was made, "Practice makes perfect." This idea was corrected because if something is learned incorrectly, then learning a poor practice makes the poor practice perfectly executed. Repeating a bad pattern will never make the bad pattern perfect. It only makes it repeated.

The habits, rituals, and traditions of the church are not necessarily bad or poor. Some habits, rituals, and traditions, should be perpetuated. The Lord's Table celebrated during the Communion Service is one of those traditions that is rooted in the Scriptures and should be practiced regularly. It is our desire to make the celebration of the Lord's Table as rich of an experience as possible for the WBC family. As with all expressions of corporate worship we believe it is a family truth in which we should be active participants.

If you knew you would die soon, would you teach this?

The purpose of the Lord's Table is to remind us of what He has done, who we are in Him, and what is awaiting us in the immediate future. All of this ties into the His cross-work, His resurrection, and His promise to return.

In celebrating the Lord's Table we are being reminded of what is most important in this life.

ILLUSTRATION:

In 2004 a BBC Documentary ran a film entitled, "**DID JESUS DIE?**"

"This film investigates the variety of stories surrounding the New Testament account of the crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, by interviewing historians, theologians and historical researchers. This exploration of the latest theories about what really happened to Jesus 2000 years ago uncovers some surprising possibilities.

At the heart of the mystery is the suspicion that Jesus might not actually have died on the cross. The film concludes that it was perfectly possible to survive crucifixion in the 1st

Century - there are records of people who did. But if Jesus survived, what happened to him afterwards?

One of the most remarkable stories concerns the charismatic preacher Jus Asaf (Leader of the Healed) who arrived in Kashmir in around 30 AD. Just before he died at the age of 80, Jus Asaf claimed that he was in fact Jesus Christ and the programme shows his tomb, next to which are his carved footprints which bear the scars of crucifixion."

Obviously such a film calls into question the reality of the biblical documentation and the true reason as to why God became man.

This morning our text speaks of what we have come to call the Lord's Table. The Lord's Table speaks of our Lord's death in behalf of His people. This cross work is accomplished by His body and His blood being offered up as a sacrifice. The Lord's Table represents this work by the use of bread and grape juice.

What could lead us away from a right perspective on the Lord's Table?

There are two extremes to be avoided. First, we dwell on how bad we are instead of on how good He is. Second, we come to the Table as a simple religious ritual or tradition without considering the weight of the cross and the glory that is to follow.

The Lord's Table speaks of a real, literal, and historical event. This actually happened. It represents the second person of the Trinity being sent by the first person of the Trinity as a race representative in order to satisfy the wrath of God against sin. This necessitated the second person of the Trinity becoming man and dying the death of the cross.

The fact that God died as man demands a literalness to His body.

"The importance of Jesus' humanity cannot be overestimated, for the issue in [God becoming man] is soteriological, that is, it pertains to our salvation. The problem of man is the gap between himself and God. God is high above man, so much so that he cannot be known by unaided human reason. Man is unable by his own moral effort to counter his sin, to elevate himself to the level of God. For the validity of the work accomplished in Christ's death, or at least its applicability to us as human beings, depends upon the reality of his humanity, just as the efficacy of it depends upon the genuineness of his deity." (Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, 706).

What is the biblical idea?

In the drama of the Lord's Table we are remembering the giving up of His body in behalf of His people. This same theology is being reviewed for us by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthian fellowship (1 Cor. 11:24).

“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’” (1 Cor. 11:24).

What does this breaking entail? What does it look like? How was it accomplished? Why was it accomplished? It is unavoidable in any discussion of His death to address the purpose of the death.

The death Christ died deals with the issue of atonement. “In the atonement, we come to the crucial point of Christian faith.” (Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, 781).

Erickson notes this concerning the study of theology and of the cross. “Theology, when properly done, possesses an aesthetic quality. There is symmetry, a balance, among the different facets of doctrine which is surely impressive. There is an **interconnectedness** reminding us of the beauty of a smoothly functioning machine, or the beauty of a painting where each color complements the others, and the lines and shapes are in correct and pleasing proportion to the remainder of the picture. (Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, 782).

Because we error in our ability to make each part play its proper score in the symphony of God, we have a crass and abrasive system of thought. We do well to lay hold of this great and tremendous study.

I would like us to consider the body of our Lord Jesus Christ as it relates to the offering He made in behalf of sin. It is important that we do not draw too sharp of a distinction between the body of our Lord and the blood. The two are inseparably linked. Hebrews 10 speaks of our Lord’s body being the means through which His offering was made.

“Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, ‘SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME’” (Heb. 10:5).

“By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:10).

Christ took upon Himself the form of a man in order that for man He might die and in so doing secure atonement for their sins.

- I. Two thoughts concerning the humanity of our Lord.
 - A. The body our Lord possessed was prepared in order to dwell among His people (John 1:14).

“And the Word became flesh, and **dwelt among us**, and **we saw His glory**, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

The body our Lord possessed made Him like His brethren (Heb. 2:17). The significance of this identification cannot be overlooked. Man’s condition necessitated a representative who would stand in his place before God.

“Since man is utterly unable to do anything to save himself or to extricate himself from his condition of sinfulness, it follows that the atonement, to accomplish for man what needed to be done, had to be made by someone else in man’s behalf. It had to do for what he cannot do for himself.” (Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, 804).

“Because Jesus was really one of us, he was able to redeem us. He was not an outsider attempting to do something for us. He was a genuine human being representing the rest of us. What he took upon himself he could redeem (Gal. 4:4, 5).” (Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, 804).

- B. The body our Lord possessed was prepared in order to suffer for the sins of the world (Matt. 17:22, 23, Luke 9:22, 17:25, 22:15, 24:46, 47).

“And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, ‘The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day.’ And they were deeply grieved” (Matt. 17:22,23).

“and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46, 47).

The body of Jesus Christ will be given for the sins of the world (“This is my body which is given for you” [Luke 22:19]). “Jesus death is of infinite worth. As God, Jesus did not have to die. In dying he did something which God would never have to do. Inasmuch as he is an infinite being who did not have to die, his death can serve to atone for the sins of all mankind.” (Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, 804).

The body our Lord possessed was prepared to be the offering for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2). It was because His body was broken that mankind would taste and see that God is good.

It would be through His death that man might be redeemed and God would be glorified (Phil. 2:5-11).

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:5-11).

The death Christ died was real and its purpose was fulfilled.

II. Some thoughts concerning the sacrifice our Lord made.

Jesus Christ gave up His life in order that through His death His people who are/were dead might live. In the absence of His death life would not prevail for His people. It is only when the grain of wheat died that it could bring forth life (John 12:24).

“And Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit’” (John 12:23, 24).

Why do we celebrate the Lord’s Table? We celebrate the Lord’s Table for in remembering this substitution and selfless sacrifice we find our own lives being raised in newness of life (Rom. 6:4).

- The breaking of His body brings healing to my own brokenness.
- It is only through His stripes that we find our healing (Isa. 53:5).
- It is because His face was so marred (Isa. 52:14) that we can now be changed into His image when we look into His face (1 John 3:2).
- It is through His alienation that we find our reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:21).
- It is through His separation that we find our access.
- His death satisfies the wrath of God against the sin of His people (1 John 2:1, 2).
- It is through His death that our old nature loses its dominion (Rom. 6:6) and the sin debt against us has been paid for in full.
- Because He was innocent of any crime against Him I am now innocent. Because He is blameless of the charges brought so also am I.
- His worthiness has now been transferred to His people. Now we, His people, are worthy before His Father.
- It is because He offered Himself up in fulfillment of a Father’s promise to His people, that we are now worthy to approach the Table and celebrate His victory against sin and in obedience to His Father’s purpose to secure for His people an immutable victory.

In Christ, His people triumph over daily sin. We now come to the Table to worship Him through remembering His actions in our behalf.

- Can anything be more glorious for us?
- Can anything be more celebratory?
- What more do we need; what more do we want; what more could He do than what He has done and is doing?

Oh the glory of resting in His finished work in behalf of His people. This is what the Table declares. The Table speaks to us John 3:16.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

APPLICATION: (What does it mean, what does it matter?)

How will they best hear it?

III. How do we remember His death, burial, and resurrection?

- A. What is the Communion Service? It is a time of reflection where His people remember (Luke 22:19 [“Do this in remembrance of Me”]) the time when the communion of the Trinity was broken in order that communion with His people would be secured (Mark 15:34 [“My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”]). The existing communion is now within the Trinity and between His people (John 17:21 [“As you, Father, are in Me, and I in you; that they also may be one in Us”]). Communion is community.

The Supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by Him the same night on which He was betrayed to be observed in His churches until the end of the world for the perpetual remembrance, and showing forth of the sacrifice of Himself in His death. It was also instituted by Christ to confirm believers in all the benefits of His death; - for their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him; - for their further engagement in and commitment to all the duties which they owe to Him; - and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him and with their fellow believers. **The Baptist Confession of Faith (1689)** with slight revisions by C. H. Spurgeon in <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/creeds/bcof.htm#part28>

- B. As a fellowship we practice an **open** Communion Service. We recognize that not everyone coming to the table will be a believer (Matt. 26:21-29 [“Judas”]). If you are a believer, we invite you to participate in our Communion Service. If you do not know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, we invite you to observe the body of Christ as His body celebrates His Table as a loving and gracious family.

The New Testament says nothing about any particular conditions for participation in the sacrament beyond a willingness to come to Christ in faith and with love for other

believers. The Lord's Supper today should be open to all who wish to feed on Christ and profess faith in him. This implies that unbaptized believers may take part, although it would be normal for such persons to undergo baptism without delay. It also means that there should be no barriers of age; what matters is faith and an understanding of what is happening appropriate to the age of the participant.

The New Testament welcomes sinners to the Lord's table but also warns against unworthy participation in a spirit of frivolity or lovelessness. The church today in maintaining an "open table" should also remind participants of the solemn implications of the sacrament. <http://lords-supper.org/resources/marshall Js.html>

- C. If you are an unbeliever, we want you to hear the gospel that is in the Communion Service (1 Cor. 11:26). The body that was broken and the blood that was shed are so that the charges brought against you by your sins were addressed and dropped. And the only way this could happen is through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To participate as an unbeliever is to "be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord (1 Cor. 11:27). By not judging the body correctly you are eating and drinking judgment to yourself (1 Cor. 11:29). It is for this reason that we are to examine ourselves to make sure we know the Lord as our Savior (1 Cor. 11:28).
- D. As parents we should not encourage our unbelieving children to partake of the Lord's Table. We should, however, use the Lord's Table as an opportunity to share Christ with them.
- E. In believing this, however, I do not believe we are to physically restrain the unbelieving from the table, but I also do not believe the Communion Service is for the unbelieving no more than I believe our time together on Sunday morning is for the unbelieving. The New Testament does not address what to do with the elements when the unbelieving are present. Some fellowships do believe you are to keep the unbelieving from participating and in order for that to happen they take one of two actions. They practice what is called a **closed** communion whereby only members can participate and to insure that this is followed communion is placed on an off day or during a special service. Another approach is to have a **close** communion whereby those of like faith and practice are invited to participate. Again, we practice an open communion. This means you need not be a member or regular attendee of this church to participate. If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior, then we invite you to participate with us at the Table.

How have I applied (or can I apply) this passage/idea to my life?

1. This part of the worship service is specifically accenting the Lord's death and the consequences of that death for His people. In another sense it is no different than our singing, our listening, our fellowship, and our giving or whatever other aspect we bring to the worship service. It is all an expression of our individual and corporate worship of God. Its purpose is for us to focus on Him.
2. Am I seeing my sin in light of His cross? What do I find so important in my sin that I would hold so firmly to it? Am I ready to give my sin up?
3. If I do not know Jesus Christ as my Savior, will I believe in Him today?
4. How can I carry the gospel with me on a daily basis?

How to have 7 Sundays

Monday	Think about the sacrifice Christ made in your behalf.
Tuesday	Think about the benefits of the sacrifice of Christ for you
Wednesday	Are you celebrating the WBC family? What issues are so important as to keep you from enjoying God's family?
Thursday	Thank God for who He is and what He has done
Friday	Thank God for what He is doing and will do
Saturday	Prepare your heart/mind for corporate worship on Sunday