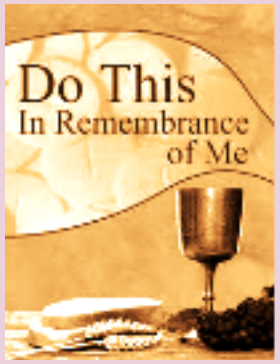
August 25, 2019, Sunday

Sacrament of Holy Communion

OT Ex.12:1-14, Psalm 42, Epistle I Cor.10: 14-22, Gospel Luke 22:7-20

Key Verse: **Luke 22:19-20**



The **Lord's Supper** is the Holy Communion observed by the believers remembering the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is believed that the last meal enjoyed by Jesus and his disciples has been traditionally accepted by the church as the Lord's Supper. The descriptions about the last supper is found in the Synoptic Gospels as well as in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (Matt. 26:17-29; Mk. 14:17-25; Lk. 22:14:21; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). Though John gives an account of a meal (13:21-30), he does not mention about the institution of the Lord's Supper. Among the synoptic gospels, Luke only records the words of Jesus as 'do this in remembrance of me' (Lk. 22:19). Jesus has already proclaimed that the paschal lamb which had been already sacrificed is himself (1 Cor. 5:7).

In the OT we see that no one other than the Jewish people should celebrate this (*pessaha*) (Ex. 12:42-51). But **the NT church** began to observe this as a sacrament to meditate Jesus' vicarious sufferings and death on the cross with penitence and meditation.

Exd 12:1-14

Passover commemorates the **Biblical** story of Exodus - where God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. In houses where a lamb had been sacrificed and its blood painted on the doorposts the promise was that everyone would be safe. The blood on the doors was a sign for the Angel of Death. Death would *pass over* that house. So this day was called Passover. Among the annual celebrations of the Jewish people, Pessaha is the most important one. The Hebrew word Pessah means 'to pass by'. This meal is eaten in the evening on the 14th day in the month of Nissan (April). The blood was not a sign for Him. It says quite clearly, that the blood was a 'sign for you' - i.e. the people. And by extension it is a Sign for all of us who read this account. But how is it a sign? After this event happened the LORD commanded them to:

Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for generations to come. When you enter the land ... observe this ceremony... It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD' (Exodus 12:27)

Even to this day, Jews continue to celebrate the Jewish Passover Festival every year on the same day in their calendar and eat the seder meal in memory of this event in obedience to the command given then.

#1 Corinthians 10:14-22

Paul began a discussion in 1 Corinthians Chap 10. He said that when Christians gathered and shared wine and bread, they are symbolizing their special bond with God

and *communio* with each other. “Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body; for we all partake of the one loaf” (1 Cor. 10:17). The term *Communion* is derived from Latin *communio* (‘sharing in common’), which translates Greek κοινωνία (*koinōnía*) in 1 Cor 10:16. The early church gave much importance to equality, justice, peace, and the fellowship of one another. These features are expressed in the breaking of the bread (Acts 2:42, 46). Early church believed in one God, one Precious Holy Spirit and one Jesus Christ and all these Persons are one. Members enjoyed and belonged to this oneness and they had their being, existence and movement in this oneness. Fellowship in the Lord’s Supper was the reason for growth and development of the life and ministry of the church. We are different persons but one Body of Christ. Anytime we eat the Body of Christ and drink His blood we profess our oneness.

In the Lord’s Supper the church undergoes self examination and sanctification. At this point all disqualifications are cast away and defects are realized and God’s grace is being searched for a Holy living. Lord’s Supper gives the message of judging oneself and sanctified. It’s a time of judging one’s self. In doing so we are not judged (1 Cor. 11:27-33). It is easy for us to pay attention to what divides and separates. We should consider all that makes us one with others and take strength and encouragement from each other. May God bless us with a deeper appreciation of how we are one.

 # Lk. 22:7-20

According to the New Testament, the Holy Communion was instituted by Jesus Christ during the Last Supper; giving his disciples bread and wine during the Passover meal, Jesus commanded his followers to ‘do this in memory of me’ while referring to the bread as ‘my body’ and the cup of wine as ‘the new covenant in my blood’. Jesus’ thanksgiving on this occasion is doubtless the ancient Jewish blessing over the bread. Greek *eucharisteo*, ‘to express appreciation for benefits or blessings, give thanks, express thanks, render/return thanks.’ In v. 18 He proclaims that he will not drink of it again until the Kingdom comes.

We remember that the bread that we break is the fellowship of the body of Christ and the cup we drink is the symbolic of the shed blood of Jesus. We meditate on the invisible host, Christ, at every fellowship (1 Cor. 10:20, 21). Partaking of the elements constitutes a spiritual feeding on Christ himself. Paul indicates that partaking of the bread and the cup are a participation (Greek *koinonia*, ‘sharing’-mutual fellowship) in the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor 10:14-18). ‘**Do This in My Memory’** (22:19b) Jesus intends for us disciples to partake of the Lord’s Supper again and again to remind us of him and the significance of his death.

Christianity is not just love and good works in Jesus’ name, but also remembering again and again Jesus’

forgiveness and sacrifice for our sins. The **New Covenant** has as its purpose the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation between God and man in the blood of Jesus. Christians from earliest days have included the Lord's Supper as the epicenter of worship. The experience of Christ living in us and we live in Christ becomes more alive and active (Jn. 6: 53- 58). It is an act of our personal faith in him. The Lord's Supper proclaims the death of Christ till he comes. It is a testimony to witness the transforming, empowering and enriching work of the Gospel.

HAVE A BLESSED SUNDAY

Rev. Silvan Chandrakumar A.