

Church of Christ in the 21st Century – Lesson 7

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- Last week we concluded what I categorized as the Biblical organization of the Lord's church
 - How each individual congregation is to be organized with both elders and deacons
 - I appreciate the eldership and the deacons that we have at West Side
- A brief recap of how we've gotten here
 - We've discussed 2 categories of this study (I suppose you could say)
 - Category 1 – Lessons 1-4, Foundational information of the church
 - Christ is the king, the head of the church and the church is His kingdom (Ephesians 1:22-23 and Ephesians 5:23)
 - The church will endure forever (Daniel 2:44)
 - How we are but mere servants in Christ's kingdom
 - Just as Christ came to serve, that is to be our mindset as well (Philippians 2)
 - How there is but 1 church based on 1 gospel (Galatians 1)
 - Anything else is not truly the Lord's church (1 Corinthians 1)
 - How one can become a member of the 1 true church by following the instructions laid out for us in the Bible regarding God's perfect plan of salvation
 - Category 2 – Lessons 5 & 6, the organization of the church
 - We discussed the eldership and how the elders are to shepherd the flock – to love the flock, care for it, and to protect it from false doctrine, amongst the other roles they have
 - We then discussed the role of deacon – how they are to be in submission to the eldership as every individual member is as well
 - How they are to lead over the roles that they've been assigned to the best of their ability
- Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15
 - The Israelites are told to remember the Sabbath day and to keep it holy
 - It's good to have a regularly scheduled reminder of whatever it is you are trying to remember
 - On the Sabbath day, the Israelites were to do no work (Jesus later clarifies in the NT that this means occupational work)
 - Mark 2:24-28
 - Jesus tells the Pharisees that you still need to do whatever is required of you to sustain your life
 - Rather, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath
 - So not only is it a day to remember some things and renew your focus for the upcoming week, but it was also a day off from occupational work
 - If you have servants, they are to do no work as well
 - Notice what it is that they are remembering by keeping the Sabbath holy
 - Exodus 20:11 – *“For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”*

- We know from study of the book of Genesis that God did bless the seventh day and sanctified it
 - Genesis 2:2-3 – *“And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”*
 - They were to remember that as well as the fact that they were slaves in Egypt and that it was the Lord who delivered them from that slavery
 - We can see throughout the course of the OT and the NT that the Jews observed this day every week
 - Even though there is no mention of doing this weekly in Exodus 20:8 or Deuteronomy 5:12
 - The Jews understood that this was to be done every week
 - Every week had a seventh day – therefore, every week had a Sabbath day
 - And God said to remember it and keep it holy
- Hopefully this sounds familiar – it is amazing the parallels between the OT and the NT though they were written many years apart from one another
- Only an all-knowing God could have put this together
 - Psalm 14:1 – *“The fool has said in his heart, There is no God.”*
- 1 Corinthians 15 – Christ died, was buried, and arose to take away the sin of the world
 - To show us that through Him, we can be triumphant over death just as He was
- Romans 6 – Christ delivered us from our bondage to sin so that we may be slaves of righteousness instead
 - No different than God delivering Israel from their slavery to Egypt
- Do you think this is something worth remembering regularly?
 - God thought that the answer to that question is yes
- So the Lord instituted the Lord’s Supper
- First, let’s look at why we partake
 - Matthew 26:26-29
 - Mark 14:22-25
 - Luke 22:14-20
 - The most obvious reason that we partake is because Jesus Himself instituted this
 - Jesus and His disciples were eating the Passover feast
 - You can read the institution of the Passover feast in Exodus 12:1-14
 - This feast was to be a memorial of the fact that God passed over the houses of Israel that had door posts washed with the blood of an unblemished lamb
 - He spared them from having to deal with the death of the firstborn of each household – which the Egyptians were going to be subject to because they would not release their hold on the Israelites
 - God overcame that though – and He overcame sin as well
 - It was amongst this feast that Christ instituted the Lord’s Supper
 - Do you think this was important?
 - Certainly – the Passover feast was very important to the Jews

- Jesus thought the institution of the modern Lord's Supper was so important that He chose the time of Passover to bring it up
 - So the most obvious reason why we partake is because Christ told us to – He instituted it
 - But let's dig a little deeper
 - You can see how the Sabbath and the Passover are somewhat intertwined
 - Why did God instruct the observance of the Sabbath and the Passover?
 - The Sabbath because God made it holy and He rested on the seventh day
 - And because God delivered them from the hands of Egypt
 - The Passover because God spared the Jews from the consequences of the plague of the death of the firstborn
 - So what's the reason that Christ instituted the Lord's Supper?
 - **1 Corinthians 11:24-25**
 - This passage of Scripture adds more details of what Jesus said was His reasoning for instituting the Lord's Supper
 - Luke 22:19 confirms this for us, but Matthew and Mark did not mention this detail
 - When we partake of the bread and the fruit of the vine, we do so in remembrance of Jesus
 - 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 – the gospel is what saves us and it is the fact that Christ died, buried, and arose and it is of first importance
 - Through Christ we can become a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17), one that is not a slave to sin but a slave to righteousness (Romans 6)
 - Christ will lead us to the 1 true Sabbath rest if we allow him to lead us (Hebrews 4)
 - This is important stuff – so important that we need reminded of this every week
 - That is the reason we partake of the Lord's Supper on a regular basis
 - Now, in the gospel accounts that we just read – Matthew 26, Mark 14, and Luke 22
 - Christ mentions some things that they didn't understand at the time
 - How His body was going to be given for them (Luke 22:19)
 - And how the cup is the new covenant in His blood (Luke 22:20)
 - We understand that today because we're looking at this many years later
 - And they would eventually understand it
 - But keep in mind that this is the same group of people who in Acts 1 asked Jesus if He was going to restore Israel to a physically ruling kingdom
 - Jesus was talking about the upcoming baptism of the Holy Spirit – not at all about establishing Israel as an earthly kingdom
 - So they didn't understand at this time
 - But by the time 1 Corinthians 11 is written – they certainly understood by then
- Now that we've looked at why we partake, let's look at when we partake
 - **Acts 20:7**
 - Do you remember the exercise that Mr. Whitacre took us through?
 - This passage of Scripture does not say "On the first day of the month", nor does it say "On the first and third Sundays of the month", etc.

- It says on the first day of the week
 - Which week? The week
 - Every week has a first day
 - Just like every week had a Sabbath
 - God didn't specify in Exodus 20:8 nor Deuteronomy 5:12 that every Sabbath must be observed
 - Because He didn't have to
 - The Jews knew they had to observe every Sabbath
 - As 21st century Christians, we understand that every week has a first day and that we are to partake on the first day, therefore we partake on the first day of every week
 - The things we just discussed are so important that we need the reminder of these things weekly – hopefully you keep these things on your mind daily, but at bare minimum – we have the Lord's Supper to remind us weekly
- Next question: who is to partake?
 - This one should be fairly easy to answer
 - Referencing Acts 20:7 again – who partook on the first day of the week?
 - The disciples of Christ
 - How does one become a disciple of Christ?
 - **Matthew 28:19-20**
 - Baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
 - Teaching them to observe all things that have been commanded
 - It is those who are members of the Lord's church who partake weekly
 - Going back to our discussion of why we partake...
 - God has provided a Sabbath rest for those who have believed and obeyed (Hebrews 4:3)
 - God is going to spare His people from the sure doom that all people deserve (Jude)
 - God rescued His church from the bondage of sin so that we may become slaves to righteousness through His Son & our Savior, Jesus Christ (Romans 6)
 - It is the church who benefits from these spiritual blessings – and anyone can be a part of His church
 - Therefore, it is the church who needs to partake of this on the first day of every week
 - **1 Corinthians 10:21**
 - One cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of the demons
 - If you are not a member of the Lord's church, you can partake of the Lord's Supper
 - Just like Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5
 - Sure, you can try to lie to God
 - But they were not successful
 - God knew they were lying
 - So in the same sense, if you are not a member of the church, you can partake of the Lord's Supper

- But you do not gain the benefit of His blood if you are not in Christ (Acts 20:28, Galatians 3:27)
- Now that we have answered the questions of why & when we partake, also who partakes, let's look at how God instructs us to partake
 - Why did Paul write 1 Corinthians? Logically, we turn to 2 Corinthians
 - 2 Corinthians 7:8-9 – *“For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.”*
 - Paul wrote 1 Corinthians because they obviously had some things that they needed to repent of
 - And Paul did not want to write that letter obviously, he did not want to make them feel bad
 - But he had to – he wasn't sorry he wrote them this letter, but he was sorry that they had gotten themselves in a position to where Paul needed to write this letter
 - And apparently, they repented of some of the things they needed to repent of
 - Reading 1 Corinthians, Paul spent the first ~12 chapters or so getting them straightened out on various things
 - And when we get to parts of chapter 10 and the 2nd half of chapter 11, the focus is on the Lord's Supper
 - Let's answer the question of how we are to partake by first answering the question of how we are not to partake
 - **1 Corinthians 11:17-22**
 - Notice that as a result of the things we are about to discuss, the Corinthians came together for the worse, not for the better
 - So that tells me, like with anything else – we need to make sure we are doing things correctly, how God wants them to be done
 - What was the Corinthian church doing at this time in regards to the Lord's Supper?
 - There are divisions – Paul spoke against this in 1 Corinthians 1 and he's speaking against it here again
 - Because of those divisions, they were meeting to promote themselves
 - There were apparently factions at the Corinthian church
 - And members of those factions – they just wanted recognition for themselves
 - Christianity is not about what we do – it's about the blessings that we can enjoy as the result of what God has done
 - We just simply reap the reward we do not deserve – if we are faithful
 - The Lord's Supper is no different – we must desire to partake of this in remembrance of what Christ has done
 - This should be one of the reasons we assemble – not to promote ourselves

- Vs 21-22 tells us that some were overindulging while others were being neglected
 - One turns it into a supper, while there is nothing left for the other
 - One is drunk, while there is nothing left for the other
 - Paul says “do you not have homes to eat in?”
 - “The Lord’s Supper is not a drunken feast – so do not turn it into one”
 - “I do not praise you for this behavior”
 - So we learn here that the Lord’s Supper is to be looked forward to (it is one of the reasons we should want to assemble) and it is not a feast
 - Let’s look at the positive now
 - 1 Corinthians 11:23-29
 - This of course is referencing back to some Scriptures we looked at previously – Matthew 26, Mark 14, and Luke 22
 - When we partake, we are proclaiming the Lord’s death until He comes
 - This is a very serious matter
 - By partaking, we are saying that I am the Lord’s – He died for me
 - His blood covers me – and I’m going to continue to walk in the light
 - We are to examine ourselves, lest we partake in an unworthy manner – making ourselves guilty of the blood of Christ and bringing judgment upon ourselves
 - Again, the partaking of the Lord’s Supper is very serious
 - We must do so in a worthy manner before the Lord
 - Just a few things our writer suggests focusing on while partaking of the Lord’s Supper that may help us keep our minds focused: Jesus’ life on earth, His death on the cross, His resurrection from the dead, His new body (the church) and how He purchased it with His blood
- Let’s briefly talk about the physical implements that we are partaking of and what they represent
 - Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and 1 Corinthians 11 refer to the following physical implements
 - Bread
 - Cup
 - Fruit of the vine
 - Bread = Christ’s body
 - Fruit of the vine (cup) = Christ’s blood
 - Notice that this is what the Bible authorizes
 - God did not have to specify that He did not want water and gummy bears as part of the Lord’s Supper – you can see the nonsense in that
 - John 6:32-59 also talk in a little more detail how Christ is the bread of life and how His blood gives us life
 - This should not be surprising as if you remember in the OT, God taught the Jews that the life of anything is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11)
 - Our life eternally can only be found by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28)
 - This bread is unleavened – why?
 - Exodus 12:7-11

- The Israelites were supposed to eat this in haste – this is the Lord’s Passover
 - They were supposed to be ready to go because God could call them out of Egypt at any time
 - They weren’t to wait for the bread to rise
 - Hopefully you can see the similarity here
 - How often in the NT are we told that we do not know when the time of the Lord will be
 - But we are to be ready at all times, because He could come at any time
 - Just like a thief in the night (Matthew 25, 1 Thessalonians 5, amongst others)
 - Not only that, but leaven represents sin and sin shall not enter the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9)
 - **Matthew 16:6-12**
 - Jesus equates leaven to the doctrine of the Sadducees and Pharisees
 - We are to not have any false doctrine in us
 - Nor any sin in us – Christ washed that away, He nailed our sins to the cross
 - So we are to partake of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine – nothing else
- Finally, would God be pleased if we neglect the partaking of the Lord’s Supper or if we do so improperly?
 - Revelation 22:18-19 – *“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”*
 - So based on this Scripture alone, if we add to God’s instructions concerning the Lord’s Supper or anything – He’s going to add punishment to us
 - And if we take anything away from God’s instructions pertaining to the Lord’s Supper or anything else – He’s going to take our names from the Book of Life
 - So of course, God is going to be displeased with us if we do not partake of the Lord’s Supper as He has laid out for us
 - So not only this, but consider the Corinthian church again
 - They had perverted the Lord’s Supper and Paul had to correct them in 1 Corinthians 11
 - 2 Corinthians 7:8-9 tells us that they had to repent of the things Paul corrected them on – including 1 Corinthians 11
 - So they had to repent of improper partaking of the Lord’s Supper
 - So again, God is not going to be please with us if we do the same today
- Let’s close with **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**
 - The gospel is of first importance
 - It saves us (Romans 1:16)
 - And it is the fact that Christ died, was buried, and arose
 - This is what we remember when we partake of the Lord’s Supper every week
- I think we can all agree that we will never be perfect on our own

- This is why we needed a Savior
- This is why we need to be clothed with Christ
- So God does not see our imperfections, rather He sees the precious blood of Christ (Galatians 3:27), He sees the seal of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14)
- We do not want Him seeing the filthy rags that is our outer garments (Isaiah 64:6)
- Though we cannot achieve perfection on our own, Christ bought us with His blood (Acts 20:28)
- And we are much better off belonging to Him than to ourselves
- Let's remember this every week as we partake of the Lord's Supper