

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BREAD AND THE WINE

### INTRODUCTION

Today is Palm Sunday, we celebrate Jesus triumphantly entering Jerusalem on a donkey. Next Friday is Good Friday and next Sunday is Resurrection Sunday. Jewish Passover takes place from sundown on Wednesday, April 8, and ends at nightfall on Thursday, April 16. As Christians, our equivalent of Passover is when we remember what Jesus Christ did for us as we celebrate Holy Communion. Jesus Himself instituted it on the eve of Passover as he and the disciples ate the Last Supper. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:26 said, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."

Passover began in Egypt, when the Israelites had to paint their doorposts and lintels with the blood of a lamb that was sacrificed. God spared all those in houses where the people had obediently followed His instructions, the angel passed over their houses so that they suffered no loss of their firstborn.

God instructed Moses that the Passover was to be implemented as an everlasting ordinance. It was a foreshadowing of Jesus, the precious Lamb of God who would give His life as a sacrifice on the cross of Calvary and as a result sinners from all generations, who called on the name of Jesus would be passed-over in the judgement because of His cleansing, covering blood.

I want to spend some time this morning reminding us what we have in the Communion elements, the bread and the wine and what they mean for us.

### MESSAGE

**Matthew 26:26-28** (NKJV) And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Jesus and the disciples were eating the Passover meal together. To Christians, that meal is known as the Last Supper. They were obeying God's command to celebrate this meal forever in remembrance of His delivering them from Egypt. The bread that Jesus broke would be the same unleavened bread that the Israelites were to prepare, the wine would represent the blood of the lamb that had been smeared on the doorposts and lintels. Jesus now took the opportunity to institute a new covenant meal in its place. A better covenant meal which would remind us of Him, the perfect Lamb, slain from the foundations of the earth, the bread representing His body broken for us and the wine representing His precious shed blood.

### THE BREAD

Jesus Himself explained what the bread represented. He caused serious consternation among the Jews because they thought He was saying they must eat His actual flesh!

**John 6:47-54** (NKJV) Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." 52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?"

- Jesus made a distinction between manna – actual food. It sustains the life of the flesh but eventually the body dies anyway.
- In verse 46 He said, "He who believes in me has everlasting life", Then He said in verse 48, "I am the bread of life". They did not understand because they did not realise the context
- When we believe in Jesus Christ, we partake spiritually of the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ and this results in life, eternal life! This means spiritual immortality!
- The Manna pointed to Jesus, but He is the actual LIVING BREAD that came down from Heaven.
- He was born in "Bethlehem" which meant the house of bread.
- His flesh would be sacrificed on the cross and bring life to the world!
- When we take communion, we normally break the bread and share it. This represents Jesus body broken for us, but it also means that Jesus is the bread that is shared, He can be shared with whoever will receive Him.
- The Passover bread had no leaven. Jesus, the Passover Lamb had no sin in Him, this made Him the perfect sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

**John 6:57**(NKJV) As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58 This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

*When we partake in the bread of holy Communion, we identify ourselves as part of the body of Christ, we abide in Him and we partake of life eternal!*

## **THE BLOOD**

**Hebrews 9:22** (NLT) In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

We need to realise that our God is a righteous God. He demands accountability and consequence for sin. The only way forgiveness can come is through the shedding of blood, sinless, pure blood without spot, wrinkle or blemish. The life was in the blood, our sins were paid for with the very life

blood of Jesus Christ! There was only One who could pay that price, our sinless Saviour, Jesus Christ! Without His blood, there would be no forgiveness! Jesus blood met the righteous requirement of the Law and of the Father. Let us look at what the blood of Jesus Christ achieves:

### **It is the high price Jesus paid to ransom us from the power of sin!**

**1 Peter 1:18-19** (NKJV) knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Jesus Christ our Lord paid the highest price with His precious, supremely valuable blood. He ransomed us from the captivity of sin and **pulled us out of the clutches of the devil!** Jesus made us free, we are no longer slaves.

### **It cleanses us from our sins**

**1 John 1:7** (NKJV) But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Oh, the blood of Jesus, it washes whiter than the snow! What cleansing we have in the precious blood of Jesus.

### **It cleanses our conscience.**

**Hebrews 9:14** (NKJV) how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

It's very difficult to relate to someone if you have a guilty conscience. Think of a child, when they have been up to mischief or naughtiness, its written all over in their body language. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses our conscience, that we can boldly approach God with our heads held high because we have a clean conscience!

### **It satisfies God's righteous wrath.**

**Romans 3:23-25** (NKJV) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had **passed over** the sins that were previously committed,

- Propitiation means a payment that is deemed enough by the offended party.
- Jesus blood was deemed payment enough for our sins by God!
- **The blood of Jesus Christ is the Christian's Passover!**

### **It reconciles us to the Father and sets us at peace with Him.**

**Colossians 1:20** (NKJV) and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

- The blood of Jesus Christ is the ONLY means to right relationship with Father God!

### **It brings us near to God.**

**Ephesians 2:13** (NKJV) But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

**Hebrews 10:19** (NKJV) Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,

Not only does the blood of Jesus Christ bring us near to the Father, it gives us bold access into the very Holy of Holies – right into the presence of God!

### **It sanctifies us (sets us apart) as God's people.**

**Hebrews 13:12** (NKJV) Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

When we believe in the power of the blood of Jesus Christ, it automatically sets us apart, sanctifying us and making us part of His royal priesthood and holy nation. We are different because of the blood of the Lamb!

### **It is the source of our victory over satan!**

**Revelation 12:11** (NKJV) And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

We overcome the enemy's vicious attacks by the powerful authority of the blood of Jesus and as we testify and confess Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

## **CONCLUSION**

Participating in Holy Communion gives us fellowship with God allowing us to abide in Him through the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus is our covenant sacrifice, He is our Bread of Life, which gives us access to eternal life. Each time we take of the bread, we partake in eternal life and we also abide in abundant life in Christ right now.

In the blood of Christ is our redemption, forgiveness, cleansing, full and acceptable punishment for our sins (propitiation), cleansing of our conscience,

our reconciliation and peace with the Father, access to God, even in the Holy of Holies, and our victory over satan.

When we take communion, it strengthens our souls, brings healing to our lives, is a testimony of our faith and identifies us as children of God.

I close with these words of our Saviour: **John 6:54-58** (NKJV) Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

I encourage you to a new depth of understanding of Holy Communion today. The Bread and Wine represent our whole walk with God. Appreciate it, practice it and you will experience a whole new realm of God's blessing upon your life.