

Sailing With Paul

Simple Papers for Young Christians

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Chapter 13

The Lord's Supper

Apart from the historical accounts of its institution in the first three Gospels, Paul is the only New Testament writer who communicates anything to us on the precious theme of the Christian's "forget-me-not" feast - the Lord's Supper. Yet, of such importance is it, that he received a special revelation from Heaven concerning it. This he passes on for our learning in the great Church Epistle, I Corinthians. This letter has well been called "the Charter of the Church," because of the fulness of its instruction in all matters pertaining to assembly life. After Romans it is, I believe, the most important portion of the New Testament for young believers to become well-grounded in. It should be read and re-read until thoroughly familiar with every part of it, and controls the reins and the heart.

To chapters 10 and 11 we turn for truth in connection with the memorial feast. In chapter 10 we have "**the Lord's table**," and in chapter 11, "**the Lord's Supper**." We need to apprehend the true character of the Table, ere we can properly enter into the blessing of the Supper.

Three tables are brought before us, each standing for a distinct fellowship or communion. In verse 18 we are told that "**Israel after the flesh**" are "**partakers of the altar**," which Malachi calls "**the table of the Lord**" (Malachi 1:12). The heathen are partakers of "**the table of devils**" (or demons), while Christians are partakers of the Lord's table (verse 21).

We are responsible to see that we are identified with those who are gathered in a Scriptural way and who observe the supper of the Lord "**as it is written**."

The symbolism of the table is explained in verse 16: "**The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?**" This is divinely simple, and in full accord with the words of the Lord JESUS when He instituted this feast of remembrance. At His table we remember

Him in death. The cup and the loaf, apart, tell of death accomplished, as when the blood is separated from the body.

A whole loaf upon the table would seem to be indicated by the next verse: "**For we being many are one bread** (loaf) and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." The bread then symbolized not only the actual body of the Lord given for us upon the Cross, but it also pictures His mystical body, to which all believers belong. We express, in partaking of the loaf, our fellowship one with another, as well as individual communion with the Lord. But this must be in separation from evil, as verse 21 plainly teaches: "**Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.**"

In the next chapter the mind of the SPIRIT is occupied with the supper itself rather than with its symbolism as in chapter 10. In verses 23 to 26 we learn that Paul had received a special revelation regarding the Supper, yet fully agreeing with the accounts given by the three Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke; only that the thought of the Lord's return is added to the remembrance of Him in His death: "**For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.**" *Thus are the Cross and the glory linked together for faith, and ever kept before the soul in this observance of the Lord's Supper.*

*The word rendered "shew" is often translated "preach" in the New Testament. Every celebration of the eucharist (as the early Christians loved to call this feast - a word meaning thanksgiving) is in itself a sermon. It is a proclaiming of the Lord's death: and were there more holiness, and consequently more power with it, we might often expect to see I Corinthians 14:24, 25 fulfilled when we are thus gathered together: "**But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.**"*

Some of us will never forget such an instance a number of years ago in Sacramento, California, when an unconverted Japanese was present. We had barely replaced the bread and cup upon the table, before this heathen man rose to his feet in great emotion, and burst out in prayer, about as follows: "O GOD, I all broke up to pieces. I, a poor sinner. For long time, for one whole year, I fight you hard - but here I see your people eat the bread, drink the wine, that show how JESUS He die for sinners. O GOD, I can fight no more - I all break down. I take JESUS; He be my SAVIOUR now!"

And that very day, at his earnest request, he was baptized as owning his personal faith in CHRIST. For years he has been in fellowship as simply gathered to the name of the Lord. Alas, that such scenes are not more common!

One more point and I am done. Never become so occupied with the form that you neglect the spirit of the Lord's Supper. It is a place for the heart's affections to flow out. do not make it a ritualistic observance; but let it ever be an occasion where CHRIST Himself is before the soul; who has said, "**This do in remembrance of me.**"

~ end of chapter 13 ~