

# COMMUNION

## THE PROVISION IN THE PLAN OF THE LORD



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PSALM 32:6, 7

**T**he night before the Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed, He instituted one of the two rituals we have as authorized in the Church Age. This ritual is known as the Lord's Table, or the Eucharist. It is the most solemn phase of a worship service, as far as the Church is concerned, but it has a very special trap all of its own. Ritual stops thinking, and this is a trap. People are accustomed to going through ritual without associating anything with the ritual that is meaningful or spiritual. Therefore, in order that we may enter into the Lord's Table this time in a meaningful way, it is necessary to have some explanation which serves to explain not only the ritual, but also to focus our attention on the unique person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have studied the brazen altar, and the animal on the brazen alter. The animal on the brazen alter at the Passover was a lamb. The priest who sacrificed the lamb for the Passover, put his hand upon the lamb's head, specified the sins of the people, the sins therefore are passed on the lamb. Having done so, the priest then cut the lambs throat, and when the carotid was severed, the lamb would bleed to death. The death of the lamb was a physical death. The lamb was without spot and without blemish, overtly, representing the uniqueness of the humanity of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is different than all members of the human race because of one word - impeccability. Jesus Christ is the only Person ever born in human race, whose birth is unique. He was virgin born, virgin born for a purpose, so that He could come into the world spiritually alive as well as physically alive.

As you know, we, as members of the human race, are born spiritually dead because we possess an old sin nature. Jesus Christ

came into the world without an old sin nature, without the imputation of Adam's sin. He lived 33 years, a perfect life, and was therefore qualified to bear the sins of the world. Now this only covers His humanity. He is also Deity. Deity cannot sin, cannot be subject to sin in any way. Deity is never the basis for any temptation. He can neither sin as God, nor tempt any one to sin as God. His righteousness and justice rejects sin, and therefore as God, He could not possibly go to the cross and die for our sins.

As the God-man He was qualified. Therefore a Lamb without spot and without blemish was put on the altar and sacrificed.

Now the lamb only died physically, of course, with the sins of Israel at that time on the lamb, put on the lamb. When Jesus Christ went to the cross, the sins of the world since Adam right down to the moment of the cross and all of the sins of the future of the human race, were all poured on Christ, and judged. **There never was, and there never will be a sin of the human race which was not judged at the cross.**

The night before the cross, the shadow, which included the levitical offerings, the Passover, and all the rest of the rituals, were to be terminated. Now for centuries, the Passover had been observed in a very special way. The special way involved, first of all, eating a portion of the lamb, and second, drinking from the cup, the juice of the grape, which had been boiled. On the Passover they could have no leaven, and that meant no leaven in their bread, and that meant no leaven in their drink, nothing intoxicating as far as drinking was concerned.

Eating and drinking both illustrate the same principle... faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that **faith is non-meritorious**. Who eats and who drinks?? Any member of the human race. Bad people eat just as well

as good people, and sometimes a lot better. The ability to assimilate food, the ability to assimilate liquid, belongs to all members of the human race, therefore eating and drinking are a perfect illustration of faith. Faith is non-meritorious thinking. One small act of faith in Jesus Christ, and we have eternal salvation.

For several thousand years this was portrayed in anticipation of the cross, by the eating and drinking on the day to the Passover. They would eat the flesh of this lamb. They would drink from the cup representing the blood. Now we eat the bread, as Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life. Now we drink from the cup, because the cup portrays the spiritual death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The spiritual death of Jesus Christ is always described in technical terms, "The blood of Jesus Christ."

"The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin." "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin."

"In whom we have redemption, through His blood, even the forgiveness of sin." "We are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, without spot, and without blemish."

By now you are aware of the fact that Jesus Christ did not bleed to death. There is nothing esoteric, there is no form of mysticism as far as blood is concerned. His blood actually represents His bearing our sins. The Father's judgment upon Him during those three hours, when He kept screaming, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Today, you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are invited, in fact you are commanded, by the Word of God to participate. We have some phrases in the King James version of the Bible, that just shouldn't be there, like... "This do ye." And in connection with the bread, it says, "this do ye." And in connection with the cup, "this do ye." Now, any one can tell you that a present tense, active voice, and imperative mood, should never be put in this form. There is no "this" to begin with, and it is a

present tense, which says, "keep on doing this," period. So it is a command.

Now you may say to yourself, well, I am not a member of this church. You know something funny, I am not sure that I am either. I don't remember ever having joined this church. I will guarantee you that as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, I am going to take these elements, that I am commanded by the Lord to do. I will tell you something else. I know some of you who are members, but I don't know if you are not, and I really don't think it is anyone's business but your own.

It is also your own business whether you partake of the elements or not, but, I will tell you this, your church membership doesn't have one thing to do with the Lord's table. It doesn't say in 1 Corinthians 11, "Do this if you are a member of some church, a member of some church and in good standing." It doesn't say that. It says, "Keep on doing this."

There is just one requirement in partaking of the Lord's Table. The present, active, imperative refers to only those people who are priests. Well, some of you may be checking where your collar is. That has nothing to do with it.

If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, one of the many things that happen to you at the point of salvation, is that you became a priest. Every believer is a priest, and every believer-priest is commanded to partake of these elements, with frequency, periodically, and in remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Remember Me!" "Do this in remembrance of Me!" "Keep on doing this in remembrance of Me!" This is the Auld Lang Syne of Christianity.

Now... just one warning. The moment you accepted Christ as your personal Saviour, you entered into union with the Lord Jesus Christ, and you can never get out of this union with Christ. You have eternal life. Jesus Christ is our high priest. We are a kingdom of priests. You are a priest! Every believer-priest in the Church Age has eternal life. You have eternal life. Every believer-

priest has the righteousness of God. You have the righteousness of God. Every believer-priest has a destiny. You have a destiny. Every believer-priest has an election. You have an election. Every believer-priest has a purpose in life. You have a purpose in this life. Every believer-priest is to be involved in worship. You are to be involved in worship.

However all worship must be conducted when the believer is in fellowship with God in time, and filled with the Spirit. If you have committed any sin, that puts you out of fellowship with God, and makes you a carnal priest. As a carnal priest you are not qualified for any form of worship. But God has provided for His priesthood a means by which we can get back into fellowship with Him in time. 1 Corinthians 11:30 says, if you partake of these elements, outside of being in fellowship with God in time, it says, “for this cause, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” If you stay out of fellowship long enough, you can come under maximum discipline from the Lord and come under the sin unto death.

“Weak and sickly” have to do with two types of loss of health. One is chronic and one is non-chronic. These are points of discipline, and this is for the believer who partakes out of fellowship with the Lord.

Now how do you get back into fellowship? You do it yourself. No one else can do it for you. It’s between you and God. It is a personal matter. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Or “If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged.”

All right then self-judgment is the requirement. If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you may be out of fellowship right now. You don’t have to stay that way, that is up to you. But you do have to get back into fellowship before you can enter into any type of worship. In fellowship is the only place where you can enter into any type of worship. In fellowship is the only place where you can give and have it count.

This is Divine good. This is the only place where you can concentrate, in fellowship, and learn the Word of God. This is the only place where you can sing, “as unto the Lord.” If you sing, some do and some don’t. Don’t kid yourself, you can’t make a joyful noise, and thereby get into some choir. “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord,” has to do with a certain type of worship. You can’t make a joyful noise if you are out of fellowship, because “The fruit, the production, of the Spirit, is love, joy...” There is the joyful noise.

You can make lots of noise, and we know that, but a joyful noise? Joy is a product of the Spirit-filled life. It is inner happiness. There is no form of worship open to you as a believer, unless you are in fellowship with God in time, and that includes the Lord’s Table.

Well, this is not trying to put you on the spot. We are trying to prepare you for the Lord’s Table. We recognize the fact that all of us have old sin natures. We recognize the fact that old sin natures can be just as active in a church service as anywhere else, and sometimes more so. We recognize the fact that you can be out of fellowship right now, and it is your business. We also recognize the fact that if you take these elements, and you are not in fellowship, you are in for discipline. This would be the principle of doing a right thing, taking the communion table, in a wrong way, and that “wrong way” is out of fellowship and Divine discipline.

It is discipline in one of three categories, discipline which becomes progressively more concentrated as you neglect this principle. I can tell you one good reason for taking communion, if for no other reason, to get back into fellowship every time you take it, even if it is only once a month.

So, it is our custom, and it is a custom with meaning, to spend a short time in silent prayer, for those who are already in fellowship, and for self examination, for those in doubt. The use of restoration by GRACE back into fellowship by the use of confession of sins, if necessary. That is what we are go-

ing to do, and it will be a short time, because we assume that most of you understand 1 John 1:9 and keep short accounts. But it is vitally necessary that all of us prepare ourselves for the Lord's Table, that we might enter into this short ritual meaningfully, and that we might be occupied with the Person of Jesus Christ, that we might have that filling of the Spirit, which is absolutely vital for worship and rapport with God. So we spend the next few moments in silent prayer, self-examination, so that we can be back in fellowship with God.

So we pray, "How grateful we are to Thee heavenly Father, for GRACE. We are saved by GRACE, we live by GRACE. Thou hast told us in Thy Word, that by GRACE we stand, and we recognize that to stand, means to even be alive, and to be here today, to be the recipient of Thy provision, in every walk and in every facet of life. Thou hast overlooked nothing in providing for us, and we thank Thee that this provision is not sudden, as our needs arise, but the provision that You have for us was designed billions of years ago.

"We thank Thee that when Jesus Christ went to the cross, He knew each one of us by name, even though we were 1900 years from being born. The sins that we have committed, past present and future, were poured out on Him and judged. Today we recognize Thy GRACE, and Thy provision in GRACE. For thou didst know our sins, our weakness, and our failures billions of years ago, and yet totally observing, Thou hast provided for us. We are here today by GRACE. We have assembled ourselves in obedience to the Word of God.

"The first communion service was held at night. The command was given to perpetuate it month by month, year by year. And so from the very beginning, down to this moment, faithful believers throughout the centuries, have remembered the Lord Jesus Christ, and His death in this way. As we join with them today, we ask that God the Holy Spirit, will take this ritual, and make it meaningful to us. We have observed in our day, so much meaningless and vague and

esoteric and abstruse types of ritual, ritual which is based on religion and legalism, not ritual based on the Word, the reality. So Father, in the simplicity of the Lord's Table, today may we, look unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, may we recognize anew just exactly what GRACE means, and how Thou hast provided, and how perfect is Thy provision in the Son of God.

We ask then that to this end God the Holy Spirit will use our minds to focus on Thee, that we might fulfill the very purpose for which the Eucharist was designed. We ask these things in Christ's Name. Amen."

It is our custom to have each one retain the bread until all have been served. Jesus Christ said, "I am the bread of life. He that cometh unto Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst." The bread which you hold in your hand, represents the humanity of Jesus Christ, the impeccable, perfect Jesus Christ who was qualified to become our Redeemer. And on the cross He bore our sins and took our place. In anticipation of that, Jesus Christ took the bread, and having broken it, to indicate the cross, He said, "This represents My body given for you, take and eat thereof."

"Father, we thank Thee that Jesus Christ, 'who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.' We thank thee that 'He bore our sins, in His own body on the tree.' And now as we partake of the cup may God the Holy Spirit refresh our memories with regard to the significance of Christ being judged for us, for we ask it in His Name, Amen."

In like manner let each one retain the cup until all have been served. "We have not been redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold from our empty manner of life, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb without spot and without blemish."

The Lord Jesus Christ took our place in the cross. Our sins were poured out upon Him. The wrath of God the Father, as judgment, was poured out on Him. For every sin we have ever committed, Jesus Christ paid

in full. The cup represents His work on the cross, and as He took up the cup, after they had supped, He said, "The cup represents

the new testament in my blood. Drink ye all of it." We close with "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross."