

Communion

Mark 14:12 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

Mark 14:22-26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take it; this is my body."

Then He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it.

"This is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" he said to them. "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

John 6:53 " I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

NIV

Unlike the Jewish people who have many celebrations they were commanded to observe, Communion is the only religious ceremony given to Christians to be observed. Christ did not command us to observe his birthday (Christmas), nor did He command us to celebrate his resurrection (Easter). These additional holidays are all well and good to be observed, but are not required of us.

Christ and his disciples were gathered together to celebrate the Passover. The Passover is a Jewish tradition commanded by God through Moses, wherein future generations were to remember, by partial re-enactment, the miraculous salvation of the people from Pharaoh. The first Passover was not a feast at all. A quick meal of bitter herbs and unleavened bread were to symbolize the hastiness of the people fleeing from Egypt. (Read Exodus Chapter 12)

The lamb that was slain, and whose blood was smeared on the door posts and lintels, saved the firstborn child of each home from being killed by the angel of death that passed throughout Egypt that night. If the doorway had the blood smeared on it, the angel "Passed Over" that house without harm to the occupants. If the doorway had no blood, the angel killed the first born.

The tradition, at first glance, seems a bit macabre. However; the blood on the door frames was meant to symbolize something far greater than the deliverance of the people from Egypt, it also was a foreshadowing of the blood that would be spilled by Christ on the cross for the salvation of the entire world.

Communion represents the transition of the animal blood sacrifices that were required to pay for the people's sins, to the final sacrifice of God's Son on the cross. From this point on, animal blood sacrifices were no longer needed, *and no longer sufficient*, for the forgiveness of sins.

With Christ's death on the cross, a new, perfect covenant with mankind was forged...forged in blood. This new covenant would replace the law of sin and death, with the law of forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ.

Always our example, Christ performed the very first communion on Passover night, right there in front of all the disciples.

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and then he offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" he said to them. "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God." Mark 14:22-26

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 11:17-34), Paul reiterated what Christ had said and done, teaching the Corinthians how and why to observe the Communion. He said:

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you; The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgement on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgement. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgement.

And when I come, I will give further directions.

Today, we celebrate Communion in obedience to the command given by Christ, "as oft as you do this, **"Do this in remembrance of me."**

