

Faith Is Action

March 2015 • USPS 184720 • Volume 54 • Number 3

In This Issue:

COMMUNION: THE LORD'S TABLE



COMMUNION

THE LORD'S TABLE

Robert L. Hardy



*“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: Your fathers did eat bread in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if a man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the **bread** which I will give is **my flesh**, which I will give for the life of the world”* (John 6:35,49-51).

The Bread of Life

Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, stepped onto the stage of Israel and declared, “I am a big loaf of bread!” The prophet Moses had said, “*Bread shall be given, and your water sure.*” God literally rained down bread on Israel in the wilderness for forty years. It was sweet and tasted like honey. David called it *angel’s food* (Psalm 78:25). The Israelites called it *manna*, which in the Hebrew means, “What is it?” They had never seen or tasted it before, and

after the wilderness experience, they never had it again, but it was so fortified with the essential nutrients and vitamins that sustain life, it kept them in perfect health for forty years.

Generations later, Jesus stepped onto the scene and beheld the multitudes of humanity that were starving to death for the *Bread of Life*. Most of them were being fed the *natural* bread that sustains natural life, but they were perishing for the spiritual bread. And He declared, “*I am that bread of life that if a man eat thereof, he shall live, and never die.*” (Death in the spiritual sense means *separation from God*: He will never be separated from God.) And if you will eat this bread, it will not only give you eternal life in the world to come, but it will heal and deliver you right now.

The Children’s Bread

Having declared Himself to be the *Bread of Life*, Jesus began

throwing out slices to the multitudes. He saw them in their sicknesses, diseases, demon-possession, and dying conditions, and He began to throw out slices of healing to them. In Matthew 15:21-28, a Syrophenician (Gentile) woman came to Him, and falling at His feet, cried, "*Master, my daughter is grievously vexed of the devil.*" But Jesus answered her not a word, and His disciples misunderstood His not responding to her call. They wanted to turn her away and hush her up, but she would not be denied. She had spiritual insight; for she saw Jesus as a *loaf of bread* with the power to heal her child. Although Jesus had told her that He was "*only sent to the lost sheep of Israel,*" she did not pay any attention to dispensations. She was going to get some of that healing bread for her daughter!

Again, she cried out, "*Lord, help me!*" But He answered and said, "*It is not meet*" (not proper or right) "*to take the children's bread (healing) and cast it to the dogs.*" Now if that had been most of us, we would have stopped right there and gone away sad and unblest. But Faith doesn't take "no" for an answer!

That little Gentile woman answered, "*Truth Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.*" In essence, she was saying, "I know it is not right to give the children's

bread to the dogs. I do not claim the status of a child. Just let me be like a dog that sits under his master's table and eats of the crumbs. Just give me the crumbs, Lord!" She knew that even the **crumbs** from this bread of life would heal her daughter! Jesus answered, "*O woman, great is thy faith: be unto thee even as thou wilt.*"

I want to show you what the children's bread is, and what it will do for you: This bread is so powerful that if all you get is a crumb, it will deliver you and heal you! And if you are a child of God, you are not promised just a *crumb*. You are promised *the whole loaf!* Jesus said that this bread belongs to the children. It is our daily diet. It is what God wants us to feast on everyday. All we have to do is ask for it everyday.

Jesus taught us to pray, "*Our Father, which art in heaven, Give us this day our daily bread...*" I am not talking about the bread of the natural, but *that bread "that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"* (Matthew 4:4). This is the bread by which we are to live. The *bread* belongs to the children! *Deliverance* belongs to the children! *Healing* belongs to the children! These are benefits of the covenant Jesus cut with the children of God. For those who keep the covenant, freedom from demons, healing, and deliverance are a part of our daily diet. It

belongs to us. It is not something extra. It is like the tongue of a shoe: When you buy a pair of shoes, you get the tongue and the laces with it.

If you are a child of God, these benefits belong to you. Whether or not you claim them, or receive them, is an individual choice of faith. But I am here to tell you that as a child of God, the children's bread belongs to you, and you are to ask for it everyday! When Jesus told that woman that it was not right for Him to give the children's bread unto the dogs, *what* was she asking for? Was she asking for a piece of *wheat*? No! She was asking for *deliverance* from demon powers. She was asking for *healing* for her daughter.

The Children's Covenant

Jesus cut a covenant with us, and *the Lord's Supper is a memorial of this covenant*. He has made us His blood-brothers, bringing us into the family of God. As His covenant partners, we have certain rights and blessings delegated to us. When we come to the Lord's Table, we are celebrating, memorializing, and partaking of this new covenant and its benefits. If I had a need in my body or in my spirit, I would determine to get what I need when I come to the Lord's Table. I would say, "This is my bread! And I am not just going to get a crumb, but I am going to eat *the whole loaf!*"

All of us who are children of God have already eaten the first slice: *Salvation*. This was cleansing and deliverance from our past sins, but God wants us to eat the whole loaf. He wants us to eat the second, third, fourth, and *all* of the slices of this *living bread*. Now, if you read the wrapper on a loaf of bread, you will find that it is fortified with a sufficient amount of vitamins and minerals that are needed in your daily diet. If you will eat so many slices per day, you will get the minimum daily requirements established for certain vitamins and nutrients. It has been fortified to sustain life and prevent weakness and malnourishment.

Well, Child of God, if you will eat enough of this *Bread of Life*, it is fortified with the omnipotence of God! It is strengthened with the vitamins of the Word of God! It is empowered with the *DUNAMIS (reproducing power)* of the Spirit of God. And if you will eat enough slices, you will not get weak and commit sin! You will not get sick! You will not be bound! You will not be defeated! You will have power! You will have life! It will keep you! It will strengthen you!

Think about it: If just the crumbs are powerful enough to deliver one from demons, what do you think would be the results if we will eat the whole loaf? When we come to the Lord's Table, we

are eating *life, healing and deliverance*. On the other hand, the Scriptures also teach that if one comes to the Lord's Table *unworthily*, he is eating damnation, destruction, and even death.

Handling Life & Death

I don't think many even realize what they are doing, and that they are either handling *life or death*. This is one of the most serious things a Christian must do. If you want to stir up the wrath of God, just come irreverently to eat of the broken sacrifice of the body of His Son! God will not stand for it! In fact, He put a solemn warning on it. The Apostle Paul revealed that some in the Corinthian church were actually coming to the Lord's Table *drunken and gluttonous!* I feel scared for those churches where on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, they stagger in drunk to take Communion! No wonder they are dead (spiritually). No wonder they are full of diseases and damnation!

The thing is, every child of God *must* take part of the *Lord's Supper* at least once a year, or he will "cease to live." Paul said, and die spiritually—*But he had better fear to take it if he is not right!*

God instituted a yearly *Passover* meal consisting of a lamb and bitter herbs and unleavened bread for the nation Israel, but 1 Cor. 5:7-8 says, "*Christ is our Passover,*" and we are to keep the

feast "*with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*" Jesus declared in John 6:53: "*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have **no life** in you.*" (In other words, if you do not partake of the Communion of the Lord Jesus Christ, you have no life in you, and you will not go in the rapture-resurrection!)

Read all of John 6, and you will note that Jesus made four references to eternal life and four to the resurrection, and one of these is verse 54: "*Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will **raise him up at the last day.***" One of the conditions for Christians to be resurrected who die in Christ, *is to take Communion at least once a year*. And God told Moses when He instituted the Passover, "This is a perpetual ordinance and memorial. The soul that does not take it shall be cut off."

"*...For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me*" (vv.55-57).

I want you to consider this: If just the *type of Jesus*, the lamb out of the flocks of Israel, if its *blood* sprinkled on the door posts could give God's people life and deliverance from the death angel before

they left Egypt, and if the flesh of that lamb could heal three million Jews of all of their sicknesses and diseases, *what will the flesh and the blood of Christ do for us?*

They not only were *not sick*, but Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and all those who were nearing the one-hundred mark in age, *were not even feeble!* They were not bent over with age! In Psalm 105 David declared, *"He brought them forth with silver and gold, and there was not one feeble one amongst their tribe."* Moses was eighty years old, and his brother and sister were older than him. God knew that before they would get in Canaan Land, they would have to have strength to survive in the wilderness, and He made provision in the lamb.

If you will eat Jesus' flesh (partake of Communion), and remain under the protection of His blood for your spiritual life, discern the Lord's body, and appropriate faith in His flesh, all you will need is the Word of God everyday, and you will stay healed and delivered. God had one diet plan for Israel: The Passover lamb, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herb to remind them of their sufferings in Egypt. Their daily food was manna rained down from Heaven, and the water He provided out of the rock. Paul said, *"...that Rock was Christ"* (1 Cor. 10:4).

On our *exodus*, that is greater

than that of Israel, God has given us not a lamb out of the flock—but the *Lamb of God!* If the blood of the natural lamb saved them from the death angel, how much more shall the Blood of Christ deliver us? (See Rom. 5:9). If the flesh of the natural lamb healed them to the degree that they were not even feeble with age—how much more shall the flesh of the *Lamb of God* drive out every sickness and disease?

All we need everyday after we have eaten the Lamb is the supplement of the manna, *the Word of God*, the anointed Word, not a dead letter, and we will live! We will not be sickly and weak, but we will have spiritual life and strength, as well as enjoy the benefits of divine health. Not only did God heal them and give them divine health, He strengthened them, until even in their eighties and up, they showed no signs of aging. The Bible says that when God took Moses up to the mountain when he was about 120 years old, *"his eye was not dim, nor his natural forces abated"* (Deut. 34:7).

All they needed was Christ. They received Christ in a type as the Passover lamb and the blood sprinkled upon the door posts. Then in their exodus, they received Him as the *bread of heaven*, and the *water out of the rock*. They did not drink ordinary water, but God told Moses to

“*Speak to the rock,*” because that rock was Jesus.

“*Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant...*” Whenever the Holy Ghost says this, He is speaking as plainly as possible. “*How that all of our fathers were under a cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. And all did eat the same spiritual meat.*” (The manna was spiritual food). “*And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ*” (1 Cor. 10:1-4).

The Book of Hebrews tells us that the Old Testament was just a shadow of good things to come. The Passover lamb was just a shadow, but Jesus was the One casting the shadow! Without the shedding of blood, there can be no covenant. They had to shed the lamb’s blood when God instituted the Passover, and He promised them, “*If you will walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, I will keep you from any disease that I brought upon the Egyptians; I will remove sickness from the midst of thee, and I will bless your bread and your water*” (Ref. Ex. 16:26, 23:25).

Now, I know that natural lamb did not have more power than the Lamb of God! I know that if that covenant that was imperfect promised them healing and divine

health, *how much more...how much better is Jesus Christ a guaranteed assurance of a better covenant, founded on better promises!* (Hebrews 8:6).

The Conditions of The Covenant

Jesus plainly stated that *except we eat of His flesh, and drink His blood, we have no life in us*. So what is the flesh and blood of Jesus?

“*For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took **bread**: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take eat: **this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.** After the same manner also he took **the cup**, when he had supped, saying, **This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.** For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death til he come*” (1 Cor.11:23-26).

Jesus did not institute Easter, Good Friday, or Christmas as the memorial of His life and death. (Now I thank God that the world has at least honored these days to turn their minds to God even if only superficially.) But the memorial of the birth, life, and death of our Lord Jesus Christ is *The Lord’s Supper!*

We are **commanded** to par-

take of this memorial of His death, and in fact, we have shown that we *must* partake of it, or we *have no life in us*, and will *not* be raised up in the resurrection! It would seem then that the simple solution is to be sure to partake of *the Lord's Supper*, and for many churches this means every first Sunday. There is a solemn warning, however, to those who take it lightheartedly, foolishly, and "*unworthily*!"

The Warning of Damnation

"Wherefore, whosoever shalt eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (vs.27).

Friend, *Communion* is not just partaking of some grape nectar and crackers. *It represents the broken body and shed blood of Jesus*, and God will not tolerate the sin of irreverence! If one wants to evoke God's wrath, just let him come to the Lord's Table unworthily!

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.... For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (vv.28-29).

To come "*unworthily*" is not to discern the Lord's body, and *discern* means "to distinguish, to make a distinction." It is to not

make the distinction between natural matzoh bread and grape juice and the broken body and shed blood of Jesus. God will hold him as guilty as if he crucified Jesus. He is eating *damnation and judgment* to himself—instead of life and healing. You may have wondered: *Why is there so much sickness in the Church when we have a covenant with promises of healing?*

Verse 30: "*For this cause*" (because they eat and drink unworthily and do not discern the Lord's body), "*many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep* (die)." If he does it once, he gets weak; if he keeps it up, he becomes sickly, and if he continues to commit this act of irreverence, he can die. And this has both a spiritual and physical application, and I have seen it come to pass many times.

God has us boxed in: If we **don't** partake of the *Lord's Supper*, we have no life in us... we die **spiritually**. If we **do** partake, but do so *unworthily*, we will become weak, sickly, and die **physically**. What must we do?

Verse 31: "*For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.*" This is one of the things I love most about God: He sends the Word to convict and instruct us, and we can judge ourselves to see whether we measure up or fall short, and whether we are worthy (properly discerning the Lord's

body) to partake of Communion. If we find ourselves falling short, we must repent and make it right **before** we come to the Lord's Table, or we will be eating and drinking damnation and judgment. Conversely, when we come *worthily*, and appropriate faith in the broken body of Jesus, we are eating and drinking healing and life!

That Passover eve when Jesus said, "*This is my body broken for you,*" His body was to be broken by the cat o'nine tails that would rip open His back at Pilate's whipping post. The Scriptures declare that His body was broken for our healing: "*By whose stripes you were healed*" (1Peter 2:24, Isa.53:5).

How To Examine Yourself

The question to ask yourself is: *Am I discerning the Lord's body?* This is broken down into three categories: First, we have seen the importance of reverencing the juice and unleavened bread as the broken body and shed blood of Jesus: "*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?*" (1Cor.10:16). One is never to come to the table to eat and drink in a gluttonous, casual fashion as the Corinthians were guilty of doing. We must realize that God counts this as the beaten, mutilated, broken body

and shed blood of His precious Son.

The **second** way we must discern the Lord's body is to remember that the Scripture says: "*We are the Body of Christ, and members in particular*" (1Cor.12:27). Our brothers and sisters in the Lord are not just flesh—They are the **Lord's** body and the **Lord's** flesh! "*For we are members of his body of his flesh, and of his bones*" (Eph.5:30).

So if you take your tongue and wound and kill your brother or sister, you have not discerned that you have wounded and killed a part of the *Lord's body*. When you come to the Lord's Table, you will be found guilty and unworthy, and will be eating and drinking judgment to yourself. You must first go to the offended one and make it right before you can come *worthily* to the Lord's Table. I dare say that many Christians have been guilty of committing this offense against Christ.

The **third** way you can take Communion unworthily is not to discern the Lord's body **which is your own body**: "*What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, and which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?.... If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are*" (1Cor.6:19, 3:17).

Obviously, sin defiles the tem-

ple and makes one unworthy. One should fear to defile his body with drugs, alcohol, and sexual sin. Paul warned: "*Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body*" (1Cor.6:13).

Furthermore, do we realize also that if we do not take care of our bodies and break them down physically, by not obeying the laws of health and living temperately, we also have not discerned the Lord's body? This is why many are weak, sickly, and if they keep it up, will die prematurely. Our bodies require a certain amount of rest, sleep, care, and food (the right foods). Just because you are a Christian does not mean you can break the natural laws of health and not pay for it. I know folks who are working themselves to death just to get a few extra dollars and material gain, and they are losing out spiritually and breaking themselves down physically. They are in trouble, and all that prosperity is not helping them one bit. No one can break the laws of health, *abuse his body, which is the Lord's body*, and take Communion profitably. He has not discerned the Lord's body, and he is coming to His Table unworthily. Therefore, he too is eating and drinking damnation to himself.

We must realize what we are doing when we come to the Lord's Table. If we do not judge

ourselves to make sure that we are worthy, we will not be held guiltless. Indeed, God then must judge us and chasten us: "*But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world*" (vs.32).

For myself, I would rather be *chastened of the Lord* than to be *judged with the world*. I would fear to come to the Lord's Table lightly and irreverently, with sin in my life or offense in my heart against a brother or sister in Christ. As we said, God has us in a corner: If we don't partake of the Communion every year, we have no life in us. This is a sobering fact, and as a pastor, I have seen those in my church who failed to take Communion, and before the year was out, they were backslidden and in the world. Moreover, if we take Communion unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body in one or more of the three ways, we are taking damnation and death. *But there is a better way!*

I have witnessed people be healed right at the Communion table. I remember one sister in particular who had a very large tumor that disappeared instantly while taking Communion. And every New Year's Eve at our Communion service in Baltimore many come to receive a new anointing to carry them through another year.

A Final Word

Communion can mean *life* or *death*. It is the very special memorial that Jesus Himself instituted for us in this New Covenant to honor *until He comes*, and God does not count it a light thing. Those who come reverently, worthily, and appropriate faith in this memorial as the body of Christ, the heavenly bread and the shed blood of the Lamb of God, will reap the benefits of life, both spiritual and physical. Those who fail to do so, God will judge and chasten according to His Word.

“Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry (pray) one for another...that ye come not together unto condemnation” (vv.33-34).