

## Concerning the Lord's Supper

### Luke 22:14-23 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

#### The Lord's Supper

<sup>14</sup>When the hour had come, He reclined *at the table*, and the apostles with Him. <sup>15</sup>And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup>for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." <sup>17</sup>And when He had taken a cup *and* given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; <sup>18</sup>for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes." <sup>19</sup>And when He had taken *some* bread *and* given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "**This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.**" <sup>20</sup>And in the same way *He* took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "**This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.**" <sup>21</sup>But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table. <sup>22</sup>For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" <sup>23</sup>And they began to discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing.

### John 6:48-58 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>48</sup>I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup>Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup>This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup>I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

<sup>52</sup>Then the Jews *began* to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us *His* flesh to eat?" <sup>53</sup>So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. <sup>54</sup>He who eats (**chews—**kc) My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>55</sup>For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup>He who eats (**chews—**kc) My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup>As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats (**chews--**kc) Me, he also will live because of Me. <sup>58</sup>This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats (**chews--**kc) this bread will live forever."

#### Introduction

Once in a while, people ask me a question on the Lord's Supper; why we celebrate the Lord's Supper in the way we do and what's actually happening each time we take the bread and juice. In fact, once a year I preach a sermon on the Lord's Supper to explain some

questions people may have. Today is that day and we also celebrate World Communion Sunday this morning. Millions of believers all around the world partake in the Lord's Supper.

Now, I am going to explain in the following three ways. First, I am going to tell you **why** we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Next, I will discuss the **nature** of the Lord's Supper based on Jesus' own words. Lastly, we will think about the **proper attitude** in receiving Communion.

## Content

### A. Why do we celebrate the Lord's Supper?

If someone asks you why the Church of Christ celebrates the Lord's Supper, how would you answer?

I would explain this way: We celebrate it, because Jesus **commands** us to do so (Luke 22:19). We celebrate it because Christ Himself initiated it and commanded His followers to observe it until He returns. That's why we do it. In the Lord's Supper we **remember** His suffering on behalf of sinners like you and me. On the cross Christ the sinless paid the wages of our sins once and for all. His body was broken so that we may be healed. His blood was shed so that we may be saved. His sacrifice set us free from the bondage of sin and death. Finally, by celebrating the Lord's Supper, we **proclaim** the Lord's death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26). We celebrate the Lord's Supper: to obey Christ's command, to remember Christ's sacrifice, and to proclaim His death until He comes.

Simple enough, right?

### B. Christ explains the nature of the Lord's Supper.

For the curious minds who hunger for in-depth theological reasons for the Lord's Supper, I recommend you reading all the great theologians such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, and John Wesley. However, the best and simplest answer comes directly from the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ in John 6:48-58, where He explains why we need His body and blood for our life eternal.

One day, after feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fish, Jesus began to teach the crowd about Himself. In verse 51, He said to them, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. **If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever.**"

People's ears perked up. *Living forever? Wow. Yeah, I want that bread.* By the time when everyone wanted to have that bread, Christ continued, "**The bread** that I will give him **is my flesh, ...**" *What?! Your own flesh?* The crowd was baffled. They doubted their ears,

because they anticipated some kind of magic bread or formula that automatically would make them live forever. Not the human flesh. They began to argue among themselves, saying, in verse 52, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat? (*After all, we are not cannibals!!*)” Then, in the following verses, Jesus made it very clear what He meant by His flesh and blood.

Listen carefully now. In verses 53-54, He said, “... If you do **not eat** (φαγητε) the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do **not have life** in yourselves. Whoever **eats** (τρῶγων) my flesh and drinks my blood has **eternal life**, and I will raise him to life on the last day.” As the crowd was still struggling with such a repugnant concept of eating human flesh and drinking human blood, Christ made it more vivid than ever.

Please note here that Jesus used two different Greek words for eating: ‘es-thi-o’ (εσθιω) in v. 53 (eat—144 times in the New Testament). In verse 54, 56, 57, and 58, He used ‘tro-go’ (τρῶγων) (gnaw, nibble, munch, eat audibly like animals—6 times—all used by Jesus alone). In my opinion, He intentionally and repeatedly used the verb ‘trogo’ to emphasize the importance of taking His flesh. My personal translation of ‘trogo’ would be “chew or nibble.” So here’s how my translation of v. 54: Whoever **nibbles my flesh and eats audibly** and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him to life on the last day. Folks, you can’t get any more graphic than that. No wonder the crowd got really offended with Jesus’ teaching.

The Christ’s message is very clear: if you are serious about your eternal life, you need My sacrifice—My flesh and My blood—My death. If you don’t eat My flesh and drink My blood, there will be no forgiveness of sin, and you don’t have life eternal. If you do, however, you have eternal life, Christ says. And I will raise you up to life on the last day. Period. That’s how crucial the Lord’s Supper is to us. Why do we celebrate it? Because forgiveness and pardon are offered through Communion. Because as we take Jesus’ flesh and blood, we accept His sacrifice—all for our eternal life.

Jesus continues in verse 55: For my flesh is **true food**; my blood is **true drink**. He is the real food and real drink for our spirit. We say to Christ that we need bread to live on. However, Christ urges us to live on the bread from heaven—the food that matters eternally. We tell Him that we need water for survival. But Christ invites us to have the living water that would quench our thirst forever (John 7:37-38). He is telling us the truth that He alone, nobody else, can and will satisfy our hunger and thirst in our spirit. No other can.

He says more in verse 56: Whoever **chews** (trogon—τρῶγων) my flesh and drinks my blood **remains in me**, and **I in him**. Remember? We just talked about this a couple of Sundays ago (John 15: Jesus the vine, we are the branches). He reminds us of the key to the

relationship between Him and us: His flesh and His blood through which we have the covenantal and abiding relationship with God. God is our God. Christ is our Mediator. We are His people. This relationship is possible and remains effective only when we believe in Jesus and accept forgiveness of our sins through His sacrifice, His body broken and His blood shed. Through Communion, we receive true bread and true drink from Jesus for eternal life.

### C. Proper attitude in receiving the Lord's Supper

First, whenever you receive Communion, take it with full anticipation and longing for the Lord's blessings.

Next, examine self (1 Corinthians 11:28) on faith and sin: The Bible commands us to examine ourselves before we receive the elements (1 Corinthians 11:27-31). For the following two reasons: for our own sake and for the sake of other believers.

As far as we are concerned, if we eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, for instance, without faith in Christ or with unrepentant heart, then, we will eat and drink judgment to ourselves. It will bring upon us judgment rather than the Lord's blessing (v. 29). E.g., I was denied receiving Communion in the Catholic Church when I had no faith in Jesus. Rightfully so. Now I understand why. It was for my own protection.

With regard to others, any unresolved sins before we take Communion negatively affect not only ourselves but also other fellow believers around us (v. 30). For instance, in Paul's time in the Corinthian Church, some believers got ill, remained in poor health, and even died--all because some people took Communion without repentance of their sins.

We receive God's blessings through Communion. Repentance before Communion is a prerequisite for God's blessing. One particular word of Jesus comes to my mind. Matthew 6:23-24: "So if you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift to God" (Today's English Version).

### Conclusion

We remember three things in Communion: First, **Christ is our Passover Lamb** (1 Corinthians 4:7). Like God's wrath passed over the house of Israel where the blood of lamb was applied on the door post, so it passes over us when God sees Christ's blood that covers us. Next, we remember that **Christ is our living bread**, the bread from heaven. He is also our true drink the living water (John 4:14). Whoever comes to Him will not hunger, and whoever believes in Him will never thirst (John 6:35). Thirdly, at the Communion table, we

remember that **Christ is our Lord**, and that we are His servants. He remains in us, and we remain in Him by keeping His commandments. Amen.