

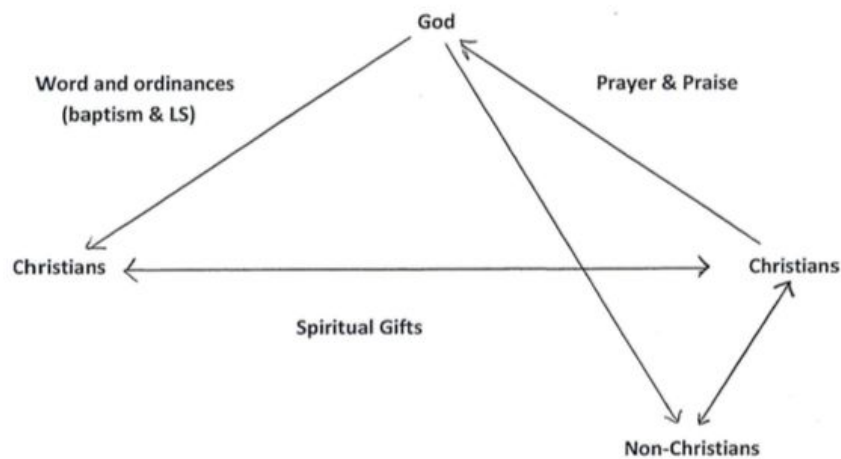
CBC Topic - Lord's Supper

Sunday evening, 20th May 2018

Will Cockram

Recap:

- All of life is worship - we are to be 'living sacrifices' in response to God's mercy (Romans 12:1).
- We gather to engage with God (vertically), to encourage and equip one another (horizontally), in view of a watching world.



Q - What difference would it make to you if we you were able to take the Lord's Supper at home by yourself?

What IS the Lord's Supper?

1. A meal instituted by the Lord Jesus:

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, **24** 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." **25** 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." **26** For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

2. A meal *about* the death of Christ

2.1. We eat and drink *symbols* of it.

2.1.1. Bread - "This is my body, which is for you."

2.1.2. Wine - "This cup is the new covenant in my blood."

- Symbolic, or actually Jesus' body?

- *Early Church* - 'Grace comes through it.'
- *Rome* - transubstantiation - his body/blood is the elements.
- *Luther* - consubstantiation - his body is there 'in, with and under' the elements. "*Hoc est enim corpus meum!*"
- *Zwingli* - his body is in heaven! It's a public testimony of a previous grace. But not mere memorialism.
 - Alter to table
- Calvin - Zwingli's right, but in some mystical way we feast on Christ (John 6) by faith in the Lord's Supper. We enjoy our union with him.
- Cranmer - "feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving."

2.1.3. We remember it - *do this in remembrance of me.*

- Passover background
 - To remember the redemption from captivity.
 - In the Lord's Supper, we remember our rescue too.
 - But a finished sacrifice!
 - Early church¹
 - Rome (in some sense a *real* sacrifice)
 - Protestants - a finished sacrifice!

25 "Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. **26** Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. **27** Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, **28** so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him." (Heb 9:25-28)

2.1.4. We remember the person and the work of Christ.

"The Lord's Supper is a stark reminder, time after time, that Christianity is not new-age spirituality. It is not getting in touch with your inner being. It is not mysticism. It is rooted in historical facts. Jesus lived. He had a body and a heart that pumped blood and skin that bled. He died publicly on a Roman cross in the place of sinners so that anyone who believes on him might be rescued from the wrath of God. That happened once and for all in history.

¹ 14:1 And on the Lord's own day gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanks, first confessing your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure. And let no man, having his dispute with his fellow, join your assembly until they have been reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be defiled. Didache

*Therefore, the mental action of the Lord's Supper is foundationally remembering. Not imagining. Not dreaming. Not channeling. Not going into neutral. It is a conscious directing of the mind back into history to Jesus and what we know about him from the Bible. The Lord's Supper roots us, time after time, in the nitty-gritty of history. Bread and Cup. Body and blood. Execution and death."*²

2.1.5. We proclaim it - *For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

- *The emblems 'speak - a visible word*
- *We speak - the gospel of Christ crucified*

2.1.6. We 'participate in it' through union with him.

*14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a **participation in the blood of Christ**? And is not the bread that we break **a participation in the body of Christ**? 1 Corinthians 10:14-16.*

"I am taking the benefits of Christ's death to myself through union with Him, and so enjoying my union with him by faith"

2.1.7. We use the ordinance to reaffirm the covenant with God

- God to us (his promises to us)
- Us to God (consecration to him)

2.1.8. We partake in a foretaste, and so we look forward - *"until he comes"*

"I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Matthew 26:29

3. A family meal for believers around the table of the King

3.1. Eating with God in the OT

3.1.1. The Garden of Eden

3.1.2. Exodus 24:9-11

*9 Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up **10** and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli, as bright blue as the sky. **11** But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.*

3.2. A meal for the church

² <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/why-and-how-we-celebrate-the-lords-supper>

... 17 Because there is **one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.** 1 Corinthians 10:17-22

- 3.2.1. The church is the body of Christ - the one loaf reminds us that we are one body together.
- 3.2.2. Something we take together - "So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together." 1 Corinthians 11:33
- 3.2.3. It's a meal that marks out the people of God.
 - Baptised
 - Closed/open communion
 - In good fellowship within the church
 - Not under church discipline
 - "Examining yourselves / In good relationships with their brothers and sisters."
 - The situation in Corinth (1 Cor 11:28 about examining ourselves).

"The scriptures are not barring any who have ever danced with the devil. We all have. You simply cannot come to the Lord's Table still holding the Devil's hand. As long as you are repentant, come."³

"The Lord's Supper isn't a private devotional act that a couple of hundred other people happen to perform at the same time. Instead, the Lord's Supper is something we do not just *with* the church, but *as* a church."⁴

4. Further implications?

4.1. Do this with thanksgiving!

"Too often communion has been treated as a time to beat ourselves up again for our sins, almost as the protestant version of self-flagellation... The point is not to focus on our sin or even Christ's suffering (although both are view). Rather, they are steps along the way to the true centre - the grace of God in redeeming us through the death of Christ."⁵

"At the Holy Table, above all, let there be praise." J.I.Packer

4.2. Do this with a lively imagination.

4.3. Within the context of a wider meal?

The Lord's Supper looks back, looks up, looks forward, looks around, looks within.

³ *The Lord's Supper*, Thomas Schreiner & Matthew Crawford. p387

⁴ *Going Public*, Bobby Jamieson. p120.

⁵ *The Lord's Supper*, Thomas Schreiner & Matthew Crawford. p367