

The Lord's Table

by T. Austin-Sparks

The Lord's Table is a symbol of the union between Christ and believers, where we participate in Christ's body and blood, and experience a fellowship in life and security.

Duration: 32:05

Scripture: John 6:51-58, 1 Corinthians 10:16, 1 Corinthians 10:21

Topics: "Lord's Table"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the profound and wonderful fact of the union between believers and Christ. They highlight that this union is not just a ceremony or ritual, but a testimony to the deep connection between us and Christ. The speaker warns against the temptation to give up on Christianity, as it would be like committing spiritual suicide. They refer to the scriptures in John 6:51, where Jesus declares himself as the living bread and emphasizes the identity and participation between believers and Christ. The speaker also addresses the need to approach the communion table with a fresh understanding and impact, rather than just going through the motions.

Transcript

Lord, there is, thou knowest thyself and thou knowest where we are concerned, a very special need that is related to this time. It is the need of being freed from familiarity, freed from common acceptance, from tradition, from habit, from just doing something, as something which is done amongst Christians. And the need of seeing in a new way, with a new impact upon us, what this means.

We can have this service and close the conference with it, but it could be the most telling thing of all. It could be something that we never, never forget, and that plows deep into our very being, changes our whole conception. Well, Lord, if you really feel this is necessary, see it to be necessary, then do it, and make this indeed a sacred, a memorable hour.

Oh, may there indeed be in the realm of the Spirit, a tasting of thee, thou living breath. We pray, cleanse our hearts now, do in every way get us rightly related and adjusted to what we are about to do. Hear us, answer us.

For thy name's sake, Amen. I shall make the word that I have to say as brief as possible, so as not to overload this time with words, but I trust that the Lord will enable that however brief, it's an eternal word, something that will go deeper than the words and the ideas, and reach us in an inward way. Will you

please turn to Scriptures, which of course are so familiar in this connection.

From John chapter 6, John's Gospel, chapter 6, verse 51, I am the living bread, which came down out of heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. Yea, and the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.

The Jews therefore strove one with another, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, true meat, and my blood is true drink.

He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him. First letter to the Corinthians, chapter 10, At verse 16, The cup of blessing which we bless, Is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, Is it not a communion of the body of Christ? Seeing that we who are many are one loaf, one body, for we all partake of the one loaf, the cup, Is it not a participation of the blood of Christ? The loaf, Is it not a participation of the body of Christ? Participation of Christ. One loaf.

We will speak of the loaf of the body. Here it is precisely stated that there is an identity between the true believer and believers and Christ. It is a common participation of the one with the other.

Here is a, of course, spiritual body, not a physical body, a spiritual entity and the statement here is as utter as any statement could possibly be. The context, as you notice, is that which we have heard already, the eating of flesh offered to idols. And the apostle says that those who do that become participants with idols, with demons, with demons.

They are participants with demons. They imbibe what is demoniacal. They take into themselves and become constituted in their very being by what they eat of the table of idols.

It is a very utter thing. And so the apostle says of believers that when they eat of the table of the Lord in a spiritual way they are imbibing, taking into their very constitution what is Christ, becoming constituted by Christ. Now you know that we are constituted by what we eat.

First of all, our very measure is determined by our eating. Our continuance. Stop eating and you will shrink away.

You will just grow less and less until there is nothing left. We are because we eat. Very simple language, but this goes to the heart.

We are because we eat. And then, very largely, our character disposition is by what we eat. You see people who are eating too much of one thing, of something that comes about where they are concerned, if you eat too much canned food your skin will become parched.

People will know what you feed on. And what is true in that connection, of course is true in others, that we become what we eat. The mystery, of course, of the transmutation of our food into ourselves may never be solved by the best medical expert, but the fact remains.

The fact remains. And so in order to get certain constitutional values, you eat certain things. The old idea, I expect there is proof in it, is for brain power, eat plenty of fish.

And for this or that particular constitutional need, you should eat certain things. And those certain things make you, both mentally as well as physically, what you are. Well, I need not labor that.

Everybody knows that. But that is what is here. What you take in becomes you.

That's your constitution. Now, the Word is saying quite clearly that in Christ becoming to us our staple food, our basic food, Christ becomes our constitution, our life, our nature, our disposition, our behavior, our temper, our everything. It becomes Christ living in us.

This is what is meant by participating of Christ. It is a union which if you can get in between your food and what you think tomorrow, well, you have worked a miracle. You stop feeding and you will subsequently sooner or later stop thinking.

And when you express your thoughts, you are only really expressing what you had to eat a few days before. You can't get in between those two things. It's a fact.

It's identity, isn't it? Between food and being, food and life. Now, the Lord Jesus is just saying this. The union between himself is like that.

He becomes our constitution, our nature, our disposition, our expression, our conduct, our behavior. He just becomes that, the basic value of our life. There are other metaphors, of course, of this husband and wife, and they twain shall become one flesh.

One flesh. In the deepest reality of their relationship, there is an affinity. And it is so real, if it's a proper kind of relationship, a God-constituted relationship, that one cannot live without the other.

Half as God, if one does. There's a gap. There's a vacuum which can't be filled if it's the right kind of thing.

This union between Christ and the believer is said in the Scriptures to be like that. And for me, or you, to be separated even temporarily, or in sense from the Lord Jesus, means that, well, everything's gone out of our life. We've lost, we've lost the real meaning of life.

A common participation, it says here twice over, a common participation in the body of Christ. It cannot describe it, cannot describe it. But here's the statement.

And, dear friends, would not this revolutionize what we call the Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper, the Sacrament, or whatever you call it? It would completely revolutionize our conception and idea if, when we came to this table, we were reminded, really reminded and reminded ourselves to this position. I am testifying to the fact that there is such a union between me and the Lord Jesus and me that He and I have become one entity. And to divide us is to, well, take our very life away.

That's simple in language. We are learning it in life. But what we're talking about now is not our Christian life and what we're learning is what we mean when we come to this table.

It's not a ceremony. It's not a bit of ritual. It's not something that Christians do, a part of the Christian dream and performance.

It is a testimony to one of the most profound and wonderful facts in this universe that between us and Christ and us there has become a constitutional union. Oh, I do wish that everybody really got hold of this because, you see, there are so many who think they can give up Christianity, give up the Christian life,

and they think sometimes that they will. They feel tempted, as they say, to give it all up.

Give it all up. Well, you may as well go down and see and drown yourself if this thing is real because you're going to give yourself up. You're going to commit suicide.

You're going to take your own life. No, you can't do it. You just cannot do it if you really do know what it means to be a true born-again Christian.

You cannot say, I'm going to resign. I'm going to give it up. You just cannot think like that.

You know quite well that you're going to tear the very heart out of your being to do anything like that. Some people who do get into darkness and see and accept the suggestion that the Lord has left them, they are in hell already. They're in hell already.

Their heaven has gone. Their life has gone. Everything they've got has gone.

They're out wandering in desolation. Isn't that true? So real is a true participation with Christ. Now we follow that through.

That's the body. The body, of course, is the vehicle of the Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. And pass over to the cup.

To the cup. The body is union with His humanity. The cup is the union with the life in the humanity.

And what the Lord Jesus said about the cup was that in this common participation we enter into a covenant. This cup is the new covenant in my blood. A covenant of blood.

And we ought to know where that came from and what that means. A covenant of blood. This is recognized in our then Christian realm.

Probably it came from, originally, from the Semites. We don't know whether it did come from somewhere else and was taken over, taken over by the Semites, by Abram and others, or whether it started there. But the fact is that it is well now universally recognized, especially in the East.

And Henry Clay Trumbull has investigated that and given us a lot of insight. He says this very thing, this covenant of blood amongst the Arabs, works in this way. Two Arabs who are not naturally related want to enter into a fellowship of life to bind themselves to one another and to commit each one to the other absolutely.

And so they institute a covenant and they meet and they bear, each one bears his arm and each owns an artery and then they put the arms together at the point of the opening where each one's blood flows to the other. It's a covenant in blood and the terms are now. You have my very life in you.

Wherever you go you carry my life with you and I carry yours. And whatever is done to you is done to me. Whatever is done to me is done to you.

If anybody speaks against me you say at once, look here, you're speaking against me. Speaking against me, not against him. You speak against me.

If anyone does me an injury you say, look here, that injury is done to me. I am him. Is that right grammar? I am he.

I am he. We have the same blood in us. We are identical by a covenant in blood so that as long as we live the one lives for the other.

We are each other though we be thousands of miles apart. That's the covenant, says Crumble, amongst the Arabs made in blood. Now where it originated, again, doesn't matter.

But that is what the Lord Jesus is saying. This cup is a new covenant in my blood. A covenant made between us.

A covenant demands two parties. I make it with you but you enter into it with me and because of my blood which is my life given wherever you go you represent me. What happens to you happens to me, affects me and so in reverse.

If the Lord is a slave, it hurts us, it goes to us. Anything you said about the Lord why it touches us acutely and keenly so great is the union he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye. And this of course, if we were expanding it is the real meaning of the anointing touch not mine anointing.

The anointing means that he has committed himself to the anointed and touched the anointed and you touched the Lord. And David, even when Saul was hunting him one day he cut off the fringe of Saul's garment and David's heart was wounded. Dare I touch the Lord's anointing even though he is persecuting me? That anointing puts us in a different realm.

Well I don't want to say too much add too many words what I'm getting at, here we are. Does this table really mean this to us when we come to it today? Such a covenant relationship in blood that we share one life have one common participation one common concern. I expect it's true of you all.

But you know we can get into a habit and a custom, can't we? Can't we have the Lord's table and go away and that's the part of the service be it morning or evening we carry out perhaps once a week or more or less often, less frequently. But oh that we might be in the presence of the reality. You see this is a fellowship in the blood a fellowship in the body.

It means on the one side the fellowship of his sufferings participation in the sufferings of Christ you've heard much about that. But this covenant also means a fellowship in security. The covenant makes us secure.

If Christ can be slain and brought to an end then we can. If he cannot then we cannot. In his blood we are secure.

I don't know, I'm not going to open the subject as to whether we can repudiate the covenant. Repudiate the covenant. Trample underfoot the blood of the sacrifice and count it.

Think not in shame, well that, leave it. But while you and I abide faithful to the covenant we are secure. No matter what the enemies are the forces against us.

Fellowship, participation in his suffering participation in his security. So glad that the Lord Jesus is in heaven, aren't you? Is in heaven. You know we talk about the ascension but it's not often spoken of in the New Testament.

It does say he when he ascended upon but it more often speaks of his being received up into glory. Which means that he could be received up. Heaven could be opened to him because he'd done everything that

heaven required.

Heaven was satisfied and so he could be received through the everlasting doors. A mighty reception it was. Lift up your heads all ye gates and be ye lifted up the everlasting doors and the king of glory shall come.

Who is this king of glory? The Lord mighty in flesh. He is the king of glory. A mighty welcome for him.

He sat down at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens. Secure. No heavens, other heavens can reach him and no other earth can reach him and hell cannot reach him.

And we are seated with him in that security. If in you. Secure.

In Christ. In the blood of the covenant. And then participation in his glory.

In his glory. If we suffer with him we shall be glorified together with him. It's all this with, with, with.

Mighty with. And that's the word that stands over this table. With him.

In the very depth of our being, in our very constitution. In our conduct, in our service and ultimately through our suffering. In his glory.

Participants.

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