

Summary of New Testament Teaching

by W.H. Griffith Thomas

The Lord's Supper is a sacred ordinance that reveals, symbolizes, and proclaims the whole Gospel in miniature, and is a means of strengthening our faith, stimulating our love, safeguarding our loyalty, and sustaining our hope.

Scripture: Luke 22:19, John 6:53, 1 Corinthians 10:16, 1 Corinthians 11:23, 1 Corinthians 11:26

Topics: "Lord's Supper", "Christian Unity"

Description

W.H. Griffith Thomas emphasizes the significance of the Holy Supper, highlighting its simplicity and spiritual meaning. The ordinance is a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice, calling believers to recall His death and partake in the benefits through faith. Participation in the Lord Jesus Christ is essential, symbolized through the bread and wine. The Supper also signifies unity among believers, confession of faith, and anticipation of Christ's return, encapsulating the Gospel message in a tangible way.

Transcript

We have now covered all the Scripture teaching on the Holy Supper, and it is not purposeless to call attention to the extreme simplicity of the institution itself, and to all the allusions to it. The place of institution was a house and not a temple; the persons were ordinary Jews, not of the priestly line; the time was evening; the circumstances were associated with a social meal, a family gathering at the Passover time. There is of course no hint of the existence of sacrificial ministerial powers, much less of their bestowal upon any of the recipients of the Supper.

To sum up; the spiritual meaning and purpose of the ordinance is centered in our Lord's words: "Do this in remembrance of me." This is the heart of the ordinance. We are to recall Him, letting the mind go back to His earthly manifestation, and especially to the culmination of it in His death. As we break the bread and pour out the wine, we are to remind ourselves and remind one another of that Sacrifice whereby our Lord made "by His one oblation of Himself once offered a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

But the bread was also to be eaten and the wine drunk. This means not remembrance alone, but remembrance with appropriation. We are to make our own in spiritual possession and joy the benefits of His Passion, and "feed on Him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving." Christianity means nothing less than actual participation in the Lord Jesus Christ in all the fulness of His Divine person and redemptive work, and the Lord's Supper is one of the Divine channels and means whereby this participation is made

possible.

And all this was to be done, not in secret and alone, but in company with others. This implies our confession of Him, the confession to ourselves and others of our belief and trust in the death of Christ. We "show forth" our appreciation and appropriation of it. We therein realize with others, with all the company of God's people, our joint possession of and participation in that Sacrifice, and at the same time we realize and express our unity in Him who died on the Cross, for "we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. 10:17).

Lastly, both the Master and His Apostles definitely connected this ordinance with the future, and more particularly with the coming of the Lord. We are, therefore, to look forward and expect Him in the glory of His Advent and to live in the power of that great event. The Supper of the Lord thus reveals, symbolizes and proclaims the whole Gospel in miniature. Christ for us, offered on Calvary; Christ in us, appropriated by faith for pardon and life; Christ among us, our center of love and unity; Christ coming, our Lord and King.

And when we "do this," the Holy Feast truly and really enables us to approach, to apprehend, to appropriate, and to appreciate Christ Jesus our Lord in all these varied aspects of His person and work. It makes an appeal to our sense of need, by calling us to pause from time to time in the hurry and bustle of life, to make a break amid daily duties and remember Him. It makes an appeal to our intellect by affording us an opportunity of pondering over the greatest of all historical facts, and offering us a continual proof, stretching across the centuries, of the reality of the death on Calvary.

It makes an appeal to our imagination by depicting in solemn symbol the awful yet blessed meaning and glory of that Sacrifice. It makes an appeal to our conscience by reminding us of the heinousness of the sin that caused the death of the Son of God, and yet by telling us also of the means whereby our sins may be blotted out. It makes an appeal to our heart by displaying to us the "pledges of His love" and inciting us to love Him who "first loved us," and "gave Himself for us".

It makes an appeal to our soul by offering in God's name and on His authority, the personal and permanent blessings of Calvary to every recipient, while it calls for the wholehearted response and surrender of trust in a loving Divine Saviour. It makes an appeal to our desire for certitude by reminding us in blessed symbol that salvation is the gift and work of God, that Christ is the Living Bread which came down from heaven, and that therefore there need be and should be no uncertainty and gloom, but constant trust and gladness in view of the Divine unalterable fact of Calvary.

To all our fears of perfect pardon, and to all our doubts of God's love, the Holy Supper speaks in symbol and pledge, "This is my body which is given for you"; "this is my blood which is shed for you." It makes an appeal to our will by asking for a pledge, a "sacramentum," a soldier's oath of fealty and loyalty, a covenant of perpetual obedience to Him who died and rose again. It makes an appeal to our life by calling for a testimony, a "proclamation," a confession to others of our conviction of the spiritual realities of the Cross.

It makes an appeal to our social instincts by spreading a feast of love, unity and brotherhood whereby may be realized the joint possession (because of the joint deep need) of the benefits of that precious blood-shedding. It makes an appeal to our hope by revealing the prospect of the coming of the Lord and the glories that are to follow, when we shall behold, worship and praise the Lamb that was slain. The Supper of the Lord thus reveals and expresses what has been called the "totality of salvation." [Godet on

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Luke, in loc.] It strengthens our faith, stimulates our love, safeguards our loyalty, and sustains our hope. Whether considered from the Divine side or the human, it is a microcosm of the revelation of God in Christ. By Christ redeemed, in Christ restored, We keep the memory adored, And show the death of our dear Lord Until He come. His body broken in our stead Is here, in this memorial bread, And so our feeble love is fed Until He come. The drops of His dread agony, His life-blood shed for us, we see; The wine shall tell the mystery Until He come.

And thus the dark betrayal night With the last advent we unite, By our blest chain of loving rite, Until He come. Until the trump of God be heard, Until the ancient graves be stirred, And with the great commanding word The Lord shall come. O blessed hope! with this elate, Let not our hearts be desolate, But, strong in faith, in patience wait Until He come.

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