**The Lord’s Supper – the Ultimate Super Glue!**

**Intro** – For several weeks, the Lord has drawn our attention to an important remembrance which Jesus instituted, the Lord’s Supper. It had to be immensely important, because it was the only corporate act which Jesus initiated before His death and then commanded us to continue it:

**Luke 22:19-20 - 19** *He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me." 20 After supper he took another cup of wine and said, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.* NLT

This is probably because the simple act of eating together is one of the strongest bonding experiences which humans do, second only to the conjugal union of man and woman in marriage. The Apostle Paul advised us to be bound together in the “bond of peace.” It is no coincidence that Jesus used this practice to bond with humans at critical moments: Jesus did much, maybe most, of His teaching during meals. It was no coincidence that He revealed Himself to two of His followers after His resurrection during a meal in their home in Emmaus. No coincidence that He was anointed for burial at a meal by a worshipping woman. No coincidence that He ate fish and honey after revealing himself to the disciples after His resurrection. No coincidence that He, in **Revelation 3:20**, said that He stands at the door knocking and wants to come in to eat a friendship meal with us! No coincidence that during the Passover meal, Jesus introduced the most powerful bonding event which the church will ever know: The Lord’s Supper! Almost everyone alive today has experienced the quick, powerful bond produced when your fingers touch with super glue between them. This is what the Lord’s Supper is for the Christian – The Ultimate Super Glue! In the first 300 years of church life, it was eaten as a feast (**Jude 12** – “love feasts”). The poor and the rich shared what they had. All the people, regardless of their quirky humanness, were designed to be there to get bonded to each other. The meal was done in homes (**Acts 2:46** *They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity*. NLT) and wherever the larger congregation gathered (**1 Cor 11:18** - *First, I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church*. NLT

In the 4th century (312 AD) the amazing conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine to Christianity changed the life of the church from then until now. Constantine made Christianity the official religion of Rome. He ended, for a time, the persecution of Christians and helped the church get out of shabby homes and into nice cathedrals. Much of the work of the ministry got concentrated into the hands of specialized workers, called clergy. The clergy chose to conduct church gatherings more formal in nature than the simple meals and meetings done in homes up to that point. The services bore a more-than-vague resemblance to the services of the Jewish synagogue and the layout of the Jewish Temple. The “Lord’s Supper” became a separate part of the “Lord’s Supper meal,” and finally was eliminated from the meal altogether, being spliced into the formal church service and called “the Eucharist.” Today, even as our church practices it, with some crackers and some juice, it doesn’t remotely resemble the beautiful meal Jesus instituted.

We must understand that most of today’s church in the Western world (the US, UK, Germany, and Italy) is STILL following the patterns generated after the 4th Century Edict of Milan. The subtle process of shrinking activities which we deem too time consuming has taken its toll over the centuries. We no longer do much of the one-on-one mentoring done in the early church, opting for mass lectures and large concert settings for our music. The “laity” or common Christians, are not approved to do much except listen and tithe. My opinion concerning the recent COVID-19 disruption of our way of life is that God is using it primarily to speak to the weak Western church about getting back to the type of church life which Jesus started. The churches hardest hit were the biggest, which rely on huge meetings to operate. Early Christians ate with one another often!! We need to do the same!! WE need to get back to small meetings!!

I’d like to propose answers to some questions I posed in an earlier lesson. In all of these answers which are new, I am not asking anyone to override your conscience about the Lord’s Supper. If I did that, I would cause you to sin. I hope that you will consider the Scriptures and the historic context and make your decisions from there:

**Question:** Do we need wine and unleavened bread to be “official?”

**Proposed Answer:** **Colossians 2:16-17** So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. 17 For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality. NLT No. It can be done with any bread or any drink. The important thing is that we proclaim the benefits of His death, remembering His body and blood. Colossians plainly states that the detailed trappings of the Old Testament worship were only a shadow of Jesus, who is the real substance. This would have to include the Passover meal and its detailed menu. If you are honest, we haven’t been strictly following any modeling of the Passover for years. We use leavened soup crackers because they are easy to get, and white grape juice so it doesn’t stain our carpet. Concerning wine, God has given it to man as a blessing: Eccl 9:7-10 So go ahead. Eat your food with joy, and drink your wine with a happy heart, for God approves of this! 8 Wear fine clothes, with a splash of cologne! 9 Live happily with the woman you love through all the meaningless days of life that God has given you under the sun. The wife God gives you is your reward for all your earthly toil. 10 Whatever you do, do well. For when you go to the grave, there will be no work or planning or knowledge or wisdom. NLT Numerous Scriptures refer to wine as a reward from God. We should be careful not to declare something bad which God has called *good*. Some Christians dutifully exclude wine from their lives as if there is some Scripture against it. *Drunkenness* is warned against by the Scriptures, but not the moderate consumption of wine. Some Christians feel that it is a trigger for a former addiction. This is worldly knowledge about something which is not true. We are “new creatures in Christ, old things are passed away” (**2 Corinthians 5:17**) including addictions. If a person does have a trigger which elicits bad habits, it will be something other than sharing a small amount of wine with his brethren as they rejoice over the finished work of Jesus!

**Question:** How often should we do it?

**Proposed Answer**: Whenever we want to. Jesus probably purposely left it without a schedule. It does not have to be done at church services as a ritual. The actual pattern from 1 Corinthians 11 was a big meal in conjunction with a church gathering. If it was done in homes as Acts 2 says, then it could be done in restaurants, or anywhere Christians are gathered. I propose that we have a feast, at least every quarter, and that we include wine in our meal. If you don’t like wine, you can certainly drink something else.

**Question:** can you do it by yourself?

**Proposed Answer:** It’s really hard to think that Jesus would consider a solo Lord’s Supper to be a sinful thing. It’s probably a matter of “According to your faith be it unto you” (Matthew 9:29). When contemplating the Supper as a ritual, like doing it as part of a wedding between bride and groom, we have to keep in mind that the real purpose was a multi-person bonding meal.

**Question:** What makes the Lord’s Supper different from a regular meal? Can we just have a burger together and talk about fishing or shopping without having a religious service?

**Proposed Answer:** The Lord’s Supper happens when we take time during a regular meal, either at church or at home or elsewhere, to take bread and remember his broken body and all its benefits, and when we take some kind of drink and remember the Lord’s blood, shed for our sin. It is a distinct act we do to remember Jesus, even though it is part of a regular meal. A busy mom can do it at home with her kids and husband. Workers on a job site can do it at a lunch break. We certainly don’t have to do this at every meal. At most of our meals, we’ll just ask Jesus to bless our food and then eat it up as we talk about other stuff. You can see how powerful it will be to stop and rehearse what He’s done for us. Every time we do it, we are “proclaiming His death” until He comes. If it was done in homes as Acts 2 says, then it could be done in restaurants, or anywhere Christians are gathered. You could stop mid-meal at your favorite restaurant and have a very effective “Lord’s Supper.”

**Concl.** – This teaching introduces a big change in concept for our church. I am really addressing two of the three important dynamics by which we live our Christian faith: Beliefs and Practices. The third dynamic which precedes the two is Values. What we Value (the Word of God, the Wisdom of God, the Love of God, etc.) will determine our Beliefs (Jesus meant for the Lord’s Supper to be a meal, the object was to remember Him, not keep an Old Testament Passover meal) which determine our practices (Have a congregational feast instead of our present ritual, for those who want to, use wine in our meal, do this in our homes as often as we want to, etc.)

My purpose is to introduce this new idea to you gently and slowly so you can weigh the merits of it. If your conscience objects, at least search out the matter in the Scriptures before rejecting it. Talk it over with our elders and deacons. Next week we will be exploring 1 Corinthians 11, Paul’s detailed teaching on the power connected to the Lord’s Supper.