

The Lord's Supper: Life Through Death

Today we have gathered to celebrate the Lord's Supper. On one hand, in the ceremony there is life and on the other hand there is death.

When our soldiers fall in battle, we hold them in great esteem. Our soldiers pay the ultimate price so that we and our nation can survive. We celebrate their love, unselfishness and self-sacrifice for us. We remember them always but especially on holidays.

If someone would die for not just our transitory life here but for our eternal life, how much more would we celebrate them. Jesus Christ did just this.

Romans 5:6-8 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Our hearts, our behaviors are naturally selfish. This selfishness is contrary to the principles of God's kingdom. From selfishness springs forth murder, lies, sexual sins, thievery and every kind of evil. But there is no selfishness in heaven. There is no evil. It cannot enter. It will not enter.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

God's law declares that the wages of sin is death.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Your sins prevent you from going to heaven. Yes, naturally you are selfish. If you are honest with yourself you know there is murder in your heart and it is manifest in hatred toward others. You have sinned. With such a record you cannot enter heaven. You are helpless. Who can pay the necessary price? Your fate is eternal death.

But the Bible says:

Romans 5:6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

When you see Jesus, humiliated, scourged, His blood streaming from the wounds from the crown of thorns thrust onto His head, His pierced hands and His feet nailed to the cross, you know that He suffered torture for your sins. You deserved that death.

But God loves you. He doesn't want you to pay the penalty of eternal death. Thus the Bible says:

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Now for Jesus Christ's death to be valid for you, you must accept Him. You must unite with Christ. How do you do that? God's Spirit brings the Spirit of Christ in you. This is a mystery but the Bible tells it:

Romans 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

If the Spirit of Jesus Christ does not live in you, then you do not belong to Christ.

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

What must we do to receive the Spirit of Christ? We receive the Spirit through faith.

John 7:37-39 On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

When we believe with our whole heart that Jesus is our Savior the Holy Spirit comes into us. When the Holy Spirit comes into us we do not remain the same. Streams of living water flow from us. We no longer live according to the flesh, we live according to the Spirit.

We call this life change the new birth. You are a new creature. As it is written:

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

How do you know that you have been born again? There are changes in your life. Perhaps you used to comfortably tell lies. Since the Holy Spirit came in you, you don't tell lies anymore. Perhaps you used to gossip. The Holy Spirit is in you and you don't gossip. Perhaps you formerly fostered an animosity toward someone. But now, instead of hatred there is compassion, mercy and feelings of forgiveness. These things are not something you do, it is the Spirit of Christ which does it.

In a little bit we will partake of the unleavened bread and the grape juice. These represent the pierced body and shed blood of Christ. By eating and drinking, the bread and juice become a part

of our bodies. Symbolically we are uniting with Jesus. Of course these are only symbols. The real unification is done through the Holy Spirit.

Have you been born again? If not, what are you waiting for? Accept Jesus and be changed. Jesus, with His death, has opened the door of life to you.