

PROCLAIMING THE LORD'S DEATH

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The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus shortly before His betrayal and death (Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23f). Jesus gave the bread and the fruit of the vine so that we might remember His body and blood that was given for our salvation. The apostle Paul adds that "as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). When Paul said "as often as" he meant "on every occasion" that you partake of this Supper. The scriptural occasion that we are authorized to partake of the Lord's Supper is the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). There is no authority for any other day of the week. Since every week has a first day, we partake of the Supper each first day.

What does Paul mean when he states that we "proclaim the Lord's death" when we partake of the Lord's Supper? When we proclaim that our Lord Jesus died on the cross, we proclaim certain truths that are connected with that momentous event. Consider some of the truths we highlight in proclaiming the Lord's death.

GOD'S LOVE. We cannot proclaim the Lord's death without proclaiming the love of God. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3: 16). "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Jesus went to the cross because God loved sinful man and wanted to make full redemption and forgiveness of sins freely available.



JESUS LIVES. When we proclaim the Lord's death, we also proclaim that He lives. The death of Jesus was not the end of the story. In fact, the night Jesus instituted His Supper, He promised His disciples that He would drink the fruit of the vine "new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29). These are not the words of someone who expected to stay in the grave. The Lord's death led to His burial and resurrection which is the essence of the gospel message (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). He ascended to heaven to sit and reign at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:32-36; Colossians 3:1).

JESUS IS SAVIOR. The Lord's death set forth Jesus as the Savior (redeemer) of the world. "And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14). We are "justified by His blood" and "shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5:9). Jesus is the "Savior of the body [church]" (Ephesians 5:23), and Christians proclaim Him as Savior when they proclaim His death.

AUTHORITY OF CHRIST. In submitting to Jesus' command to partake of this Supper, we are recognizing His authority. After His death and resurrection, Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). All men are now to hear God's truth through the revelation of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). In proclaiming His death, we proclaim the authority of Christ and His word.

JESUS WILL RETURN. In the Lord's Supper, we proclaim the death of Jesus "till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). We affirm our belief in the promise of God that Jesus will

“appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (Hebrews 9:28). At His appearing, Jesus will reward the crown of life to His faithful people (2 Timothy 4:8). When we proclaim His death in His Supper, we show our expectation of His coming.

In partaking of the Lord’s Supper, we proclaim our Lord’s death to the world and to one another. We unashamedly declare our faith to those in the world who need to come to Jesus as the Savior. We build up one another in the most holy faith when we have communion together in the bread and fruit of the vine.

Think soberly on these things as you eat the bread and drink the cup. Think about what you are proclaiming and the great truths associated with it.