

Words of Truth

Do We Drink The Cup Or The Fruit Of The Vine?

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Over the years I have studied with numerous individuals concerning different aspects of the Lord's Supper. I have discussed the frequency we are to partake, what we are to call the memorial of the Lord, what kind of bread to use, and even whether or not we should use alcohol. In each of these studies, the erring view is always one that clouds the simplicity of the Lord's Supper. You have to work hard to confuse the few Scriptures on this subject. For example, there are some who struggle with whether or not a congregation should partake of the Lord's Supper with one cup or with multiple cups. This, as with other questions concerning the Lord's Supper, is not a difficult one to answer. When we make questions more difficult than they need to be, we lose the truth in carnal debate (II Timothy 2:23 and James 3:16).

Questions Concerning The Lord's Supper Are Not That Hard To Study

Before we answer the question of this article, let's identify some basic points to get our minds on the right course. When one asks what day of the week we are to partake of the Lord's Supper, we often point them to an example. Here is that example: "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed*" (Acts 20:7-11). When speaking of coming together to "break bread", this is a figure of speech known as a synecdoche [a figure of speech in which a part is made to represent the whole or vice versa]. We know that the phrase "break bread" refers to the partaking of the Lord's Supper (including drinking the fruit of the vine) because the Bible shows us that (I Corinthians 10:16). Thus, we know disciples met on the first day of the week to eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine.

When one asks what we are to use when partaking of the Lord's Supper we often show them that we are to use unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. We know that we are to use unleavened bread because Jesus instituted His memorial wherein only unleavened bread was available (Matthew 26:17-18; cf. Exodus 12:15-20). We know that we are to drink of the fruit of the vine because this is what Jesus used when He instituted His memorial (Matthew 26:29). You can put these two points together by reading the whole context that shows unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine were used in the institution of the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:17-29).

When one asks us why we assemble together to partake of the Lord's Supper rather than eating our own, private memorials, we can show them the Scriptural pattern (I Corinthians 11:18-33). In fact, when

one reads the aforementioned Scriptures, they'll notice that we are to wait for each other before we partake of the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:33). When you combine this fact with the example we used in our first question (Acts 20:7-11), you see that Christians are supposed to assemble together to partake of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. It is that simple!

Notice how we were able to easily answer the questions above using the Scriptures. Each question needed only Scriptural reasoning. This is true because there is simplicity in Christ (II Corinthians 11:3). What do you think we're going to find when we ask the question of this article? Let's find out.

Is It The Fruit Of The Vine, The Container, Or Both That Matters?

Katrina gave our children a box of chocolate candies. She told them to take the box and divide it amongst themselves. What conclusion do you draw from that statement? Did my children divide chocolate candies or did they divide the actual box? In fact, my children took the box of chocolate candies and in following their mother's instructions, they reasoned to take three plastic bags and divide up the chocolate candies. You might be wondering what this has to do with the Lord's Supper.

Those of the "one cup" doctrine believe each member of the body must drink from the same cup during the Lord's Supper. What they conveniently pervert is the clear instructions of our Lord that are very similar to Katrina's instructions to our children. Notice: *"And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And **he took the cup**, and gave thanks, and said, **Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.** And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:15-20).*

There are two inescapable conclusions one MUST draw from the text above. One, they divided the contents of the cup (the fruit of the vine) amongst themselves just as my children divided the chocolates in the box amongst themselves. Secondly, Jesus equates the cup to His blood. The cup refers to the fruit of the vine. The fruit of the vine symbolizes Jesus' blood (Mark 14:24-25). It was His blood, not a cup, which was shed for the remission of our sins (Matthew 26:28-29 and Revelation 1:5). If one concludes that we partake of a cup, they are dishonest. It is only the fruit of the vine that matters!

Conclusion

The Bible says that we are to preach the cross (I Corinthians 1:17-18), glory in the cross (Galatians 6:14), that we are reconciled unto God by the cross (Ephesians 2:16), and that there are enemies of the cross (Philippians 3:18). Any Bible student realizes that all of those statements about the cross are not about the wood Jesus was nailed to (Acts 5:30). A reasonable person can conclude that it is what happened on the cross that is being discussed in each point above (I Corinthians 15:3). If that can be understood, so it should be understandable that when the cup is mentioned we are talking what's inside the cup. To conclude otherwise would be the same as saying that the cross bled for our sins based on this verse: *"And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven"* (Colossians 1:20). Crosses do not bleed nor can you drink a cup. We drink in remembrance of Christ (I Corinthians 11:25). It is that simple.