

A Commemoration and Its Secret

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It is good to remember certain events that took place in the past, for instance, one's childhood and family, one's wedding, the birth of one's children, and one's baptism. It is easier to remember an event, if a symbol is connected to it or if certain feasts are celebrated. Therefore, we celebrate, for example, mother's day, anniversaries, birthdays, or have a class reunion. Christians partake of the Lord's Supper to remember what Jesus has done for them, when He died on the cross.

I. The Foot Washing

Closely connected to the Lord's Supper is the ordinance of the Foot washing. The Lord's Supper is explicitly mentioned by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul but not by John. On the other hand, the foot washing is explicitly mentioned by John but not by the other Gospels. Nevertheless, they belong together (John 13:1-16, 26-27).

- Luke 22:24-27 - In connection with the Lord's Supper there was a dispute among the disciples about which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.
- John 13:1-17 - Jesus instituted the foot washing indicating that before God all humans are equal. The foot washing was and is an expression of humility and fellowship with Jesus and each other.
- John 13:14-15 - These verses contain Jesus' clear command to practice foot washing.
- John 13:17 - Jesus promises that those will be blessed who practice foot washing.

The foot washing is not a meritorious work but points to humility and love among Christians, indicating that they are willing to serve one another. Foot washing means participation in and fellowship with Christ and each other. It points to cleansing from sin and equality among the people of God without denying that there are different functions including leadership.

II. The Lord's Supper

- Luke 22:7-13 - Preparation for Passover (cf. Exod 12) which is the festival of salvation.
- Luke 22:14-20; - Transformation of the Passover to the Lord's Supper by Jesus and its duration (Matt 26:29).
- 1 Cor 5:6-8 - Jesus is the true Passover.

1. *The Lord's Supper a Non-Bloody Sacrifice?*

- Heb 9:27-28 - Christ's sacrifice is unrepeatable.
- Heb 9:22-26 - Non-bloody sacrifices do not bring about forgiveness of sins.
- Heb 10:12, 14-18 - Christ's once-for-all sacrifice is sufficient.

2. *The Meaning of the Lord's Supper*

- 1 Cor 11:17-29 - A commemoration of what Jesus did for us, a sign of the new covenant between God and us, proclamation pointing from Jesus' death to His second coming.
- 1 Cor 10:16-17 - Partaking of the Lord's Supper means fellowship with Christ and His people. We accept Christ's sacrifice personally.

3. *"This is" or "This Means?"*

- Matt 26:26 - "This is my blood" (Mark 14:24; cf. John 6:35, 48, 51, 54, 56).
- Luke 22:20 - "This cup . . . is the new covenant in my blood."

John 8:12; 10:9; 15:1 - Jesus says about Himself: I am the light, the door, the vine. These texts indicate that a symbolic understanding is required. The same is true for the emblems of the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper was instituted prior to Jesus' death. The bread and wine that He held in His hands were not His actual body and blood. Paul makes it clear that the Lord's Supper is taken in remembrance to what Jesus has done for us. With the Lord's Supper we receive a wonderful blessing and count on the special presence of the Holy Spirit. We are also looking forward to the time when we will take it in Jesus' direct presence.

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