



Post Tenebras Lux Covenant Theology...

The New Covenant Pt. 3...

Luke 22:14-20

^{NIV} **Luke 22:14**...When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. ¹⁵ And he said to them, **"I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."** ¹⁷ After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, **"Take this and divide it among you. ¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."** ¹⁹ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, **"This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."** ²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, **"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."**

^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 11:17**...In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. ¹⁸ In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. ¹⁹ No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. ²⁰ When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, ²¹ for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. ²² Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not! ²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, **"This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."** ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, **"This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."** ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. ²⁷ Therefore, whoever eats the bread or

drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰ That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. ³¹ But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. ³² When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

My mother lives on a small farm in East Texas. About a hundred yards from her house, there is an enormous blackberry vine. Actually, it is many vines that have grown together into one huge circle. It's about ten feet high and about thirty feet in diameter. Each year in July, it explodes into thousands of ripe blackberries. I always make it a point to be there when that happens.

Now, I like blackberries. I like them right off the vine. I also like them in cobblers. But the main reason I pick blackberries off that particular vine is because my dad planted it.

When he first set it out, it was a scrawny thing. Really, it was not much more than a twig. But my dad pampered it. He fertilized it and he helped it grow from a twig to a giant mound of vines. Each year when his blackberries started to ripen, he would call me. The next weekend I would drive down and we would pick blackberries. As long as we could, we picked them together. Even when he was no longer able, he would still watch me pick them from his truck.

Now, my dad died a few years back but every summer I pick blackberries just like he was still there. I think that's because, in my mind, he is still there. Whenever I pick blackberries off that particular vine, I can see his face. I can see

his bright blue eyes. I can hear his deep East Texas drawl. He is there in my memory and I can see him standing next to me picking berries as surely as if he was there in the flesh. There is also a sense in which he is there in the blackberries too. He is there in the thorns and in the prickly heat of a July day. He is there even in the purple stains on my fingers. When I think about him that way I recognize the benefits of having known him and especially of having been his son.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is something like that. It is like that but ten thousand times more real, ten thousand times more profound. You see sacraments are holy signs for us to see. God gave them to us to make us more clearly understand the promise of the gospel and He uses them to give His children certain spiritual benefits. Of course, that is nothing new. God has always used signs or symbols to demonstrate the reality of His kindness to His people.

In the Old Testament, circumcision was used as a sign of a person's entrance into the Covenant people of God. It didn't matter if a person was an adult convert or the infant child of Covenant believers. When a person was circumcised, they became a member of the visible people of God. We believe that in the New Testament, the sacrament of baptism replaced circumcision and that it signifies the same thing.

God also used the Passover Feast as a sign to His people. It was a sign to help them remember that God had delivered them and it was a sign of God's continual fellowship and kindness. When the Old Testament saints ate the Passover they remembered the way He destroyed their enemies and delivered them when they could not deliver themselves. But they also remembered the

wonderful way God provided for them in the wilderness, when He nourished them with manna and water from the rock. The Israelites used Passover as a time to remember all that God has accomplished and God used it as a time to give them even more.

We believe that in the New Testament, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper replaced the Old Testament Passover meal and that it too is a remembrance of God's deliverance. But it is not just a deliverance from an evil oppressor like Pharaoh; it is a deliverance from the penalty of our sin. It is also a time for us to renew our relationship with God and it is a time in which God gives genuine benefits to His children.

In particular, it is the idea of covenant renewal.

In the Old Testament, the idea of covenant renewal was prominent. You can see it in the life of Abraham as God comes back again and again to renew His promises. He first makes His promise to Abraham in Genesis 15; then He renews His promise in Genesis 17 and in Genesis 22.

You can see the renewal of God's promises to Israel in the Passover, which He appointed as an everlasting ordinance. You can see it in the lives of Israelites as God feeds them every morning with manna and with water from the rock in the wilderness.

You can see it in the times He does things and reminds His people that He is doing so because of the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. You

can see it in the countless offerings made for sin and in the feasts that followed the offerings.

And there is repeated word that emphasizes God's faithful love. It is the Hebrew word *hesed* and it means loyal love. It is used over and over again to speak of God covenantal faithfulness.

^{NIV} **Lamentations 3:22**...Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. ²³ They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

In particular, you see it in the Psalms. If you want to do a great Bible study get a concordance and just look up the word lovingkindness. You will be amazed at how many times it is repeated. For example lets look at Psalm 136.

^{NIV} **Psalm 136:1**...Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever.

² Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever.

³ Give thanks to the Lord of lords: His love endures forever.

⁴ to him who alone does great wonders, His love endures forever.

⁵ who by his understanding made the heavens, His love endures forever.

⁶ who spread out the earth upon the waters, His love endures forever.

⁷ who made the great lights-- His love endures forever.

⁸ the sun to govern the day, His love endures forever.

⁹ the moon and stars to govern the night; His love endures forever.

¹⁰ to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt His love endures forever.

¹¹ and brought Israel out from among them His love endures forever.

¹² with a mighty hand and outstretched arm; His love endures forever.

¹³ to him who divided the Red Sea asunder His love endures forever.

¹⁴ and brought Israel through the midst of it, His love endures forever.

¹⁵ but swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea; His love endures forever.

¹⁶ to him who led his people through the desert, His love endures forever.

¹⁷ who struck down great kings, His love endures forever.

¹⁸ and killed mighty kings-- His love endures forever.

- ¹⁹ Sihon king of the Amorites His love endures forever.
²⁰ and Og king of Bashan-- His love endures forever.
²¹ and gave their land as an inheritance, His love endures forever.
²² an inheritance to his servant Israel; His love endures forever.
²³ to the One who remembered us in our low estate His love endures forever.
²⁴ and freed us from our enemies, His love endures forever.
²⁵ and who gives food to every creature. His love endures forever.
²⁶ Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever.

It is called the Lord's Supper because Christ instituted it on the last night of His life after He and His disciples shared a Passover meal.

NIV Luke 22:16...For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God. ¹⁷ After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "**Take this and divide it among you.** ¹⁸ **For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.**" ¹⁹ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "**This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.**" ²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "**This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.**

The first thing that you should know is that the Lord's Supper is a sign or a picture to remind us of Christ's death. When we see the broken bread and the wine, we remember that our sin led to Christ's death. Of course, that causes every Christian to grieve for their sin. But at the same time, it also gives us a deep sense joy. That is true because His body was not only broken because of us, it was also broken for us. Christ's death paid the penalty for our sins and in doing so it reconciled us to God. We are no longer His enemies. Now, we are His own dear children.

NIV Romans 5:10...For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son...

Since we are His beloved children, God now fellowships or communes with us in the bread and wine. Think of that. God actually meets with us in Communion. In some wonderful way, God is able to draw us into His presence and He fellowships with us as we receive the bread and wine in faith.

He meets us as a gracious friend and feeds us with His kindness. As a result, we see the broken body of our Lord as the spiritual food by which He sustains us. We see His shed blood as the spiritual drink by which He gives joy. Just as the Lord provided manna and water in the wilderness to sustain the Old Testament saints, He provides the body and blood of Christ to sustain us spiritually. We eat the bread and wine in faith and it causes our faith to grow stronger. It's not that we believe that the bread and wine actually turn into the physical body of Christ. But we do believe that God does actually commune with us from heaven and that He does so in the bread and the wine. That is the reason that we often refer to the Lord's Supper as Communion. God meets with us and provides for us in all that Christ has accomplished.

^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 10:16**...Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

When He communes with us, He declares His forgiveness. He declares to us that we are no longer His enemies. Not only are we no longer His enemies, we are His beloved children. He proves that by giving us His Holy Spirit and sustaining us day to day. In Communion, Christ is saying, **"Come My child and eat with Me. Enjoy all that I have given you. Taste and see that I am good."**

Naturally, because we believe we are communing with God, we partake of the elements with deep respect and reverence. That is one of the reasons why the Lord's Supper is a solemn event. It is not a time for frivolity or laughter. Christ's body was broken and Christ's blood was shed because of our sin. When we see the elements, we are reminded that our sin deserved and demanded God's just punishment. So, we recognize the importance of being reverent. In fact, the epistle to the Corinthians makes it clear that God will judge irreverence with regard to Lord's Supper.

^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 11:29**...For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰ That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

That is the reason we do not allow just anyone to participate in the Lord's Supper. We believe that only believers should partake of the Lord's Supper. We do not think it is possible for an unbeliever to rightly understand and reverence the significance of the Supper and since we don't want them to bring judgment upon themselves we ask them to refrain.

That is also the reason that we don't allow young children to partake of the Supper. We try to make sure that they understand the meaning of the Supper and the gospel that it pictures. We even have classes to make sure that children have that right understanding of the gospel. When children do make a profession of faith and display a reasonable understanding of what Christ has done for them, we are happy to receive them as communing members.

Of course, when we commune with God we have a responsibility to consider all that He has accomplished for us. We also have a responsibility to consider the family of believers in which he has placed us. We are obligated to confess our sins to God and to attempt to make right any wrongs we have done to other believers. We call this renewing our vows. In a sense, it is simply recognizing all that God has done on our behalf and displaying the proper gratitude.

We also believe that God uses our contemplation of Christ's death and our Communion with Him to grow us spiritually. That is why we call Communion a means of grace. When we hear the Word of God preached or when we see either of the sacraments being administered along with the Word, we believe that God uses them to help move us to maturity. When we use these things, God pours out His special kindness toward us by moving us a long in our faith. He feeds us spiritually and causes us to grow in our understanding of the gospel. That is why we take Communion so frequently. We believe that God uses it to grow us spiritually so we never get tired of taking it and seeing the gospel that it pictures.

If you are a believer and would like to participate in the Lord's Supper tell speak to your elder. He will listen to your testimony. If you have any trouble explaining your faith, your elder will be able to provide you with helpful suggestions. Then he will schedule a time for you to go before the other elders and share your faith. It is a little intimidating but it is worth it. To participate in the Lord's Supper with other people of God is one of the great joys of being a Christian.

It is a memorial of all that Christ did to obtain our salvation. But it is more than that. It is a time of covenant renewal in which we renew our covenant and feeds us in tender mercy as He renews His covenant with us.