

PROCLAIM HIS DEATH ... UNTIL HE COMES

1 Cor. 11:26; Matt. 26:29

Introduction

Read Matthew 26:26-29... Every few weeks, in our morning service, we gather before the table, we eat a small piece of bread and we drink a little cup of grape juice. Why do we do it? What significance is there in the bread and the wine? What is accomplished by our actions?

I think that most of you could probably give me a pretty good answer to those questions. I realize that most of the people sitting here are quite well versed in the doctrines of the Word of God, and understand quite well what the Bible teaches about the sacrifice of Christ and our salvation.

However, I also believe that it is important to remind ourselves often of the wonderful truth of our Saviour's gift to us. We need to take time every now and then to consider again the wonderful truth in 1 Peter 1:18-19 – "knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."

I would like to focus for a few minutes this morning on a little verse in 1 Corinthians 11. Look at verse 26 – *set the context then read* – "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

There are two important elements in the last half of that verse. "Proclaim the Lord's death" --- "until he comes." I would like us to consider each of those this morning as we review the significance of this event. We begin by ...

I. Looking Back: "Proclaim the Lord's Death"

"proclaim" – "show" (KJV) – means to announce, declare, preach, to make known. It is to be a public demonstration of the things we believe

about the death of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. So what is it that we are proclaiming by this ceremonial event?

1. He sacrificed his body – to bear the sin of the world

The bread symbolizes for us the body of our Lord. (Refer to last week's message – the Word became flesh.) It is only because the Son of God took on himself flesh—a body—that he could offer himself for our sin. Some manuscripts include the word "broken." The Bible makes it clear that not a single bone in his body was broken, but I don't think most of us really have any idea of the suffering and the agony that Christ went through as his body was bruised and torn by the beatings and the crucifixion. Go through a few notes...

- the beatings and mocking (26:67-68; 27:27-31)
- the formal beating at the instruction of Pilate (27:26)
- the crown of thorns
- the cross – nails in the hands and feet
- the thirst and the pain on the cross

1 Peter 2:24 – "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."

The second thing that we are proclaiming in this event is ...

2. He shed his blood – to pay for the sin of the world

The cup we drink symbolizes for us the purchase price for our salvation. The importance of this goes back as far as the Garden of Eden. When God placed Adam in the garden there was one thing he made very clear – the result of sin was death.

Gen 2:16-17 – "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'"

The price to be paid for sin and disobedience has always been death. This means the shedding of blood. And the blood is the life. Without blood there is no life.

Lev 17:11 – “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.”

And so the shedding of one’s blood becomes linked to the giving of one’s life. It was not enough for Christ to simply bleed for a while; the pouring out of his blood was indicative of his dying.

He gave up his life as payment for the sin of the world. He alone could do that, because he himself had never sinned. He did not need to die for his own sin. Rather, he took the sins of the world—yours and mine—upon himself. 2 Cor. 5:21 – “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

3. He died for me

In order to adequately proclaim the Lord’s death, we need to understand and proclaim the amazing truth that he did all this for me. It is one thing to say that Christ died for the sin of the world, but to realize He did it for me, is overwhelming. John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world...” – that’s his universal love. But “... that whoever believes...” – that is where it becomes personal. Yes he died to pay for the sin of the world. But more than that, when he hung there on the cross, he was there in my place, taking my punishment. So, as I eat the bread and drink the juice, I am proclaiming that He died for me.

There is a second element to Paul’s statement. It involves...

II. Looking Ahead: “Until He Comes”

The other area we need to consider from this text is the anticipation of the Lord’s coming again. Paul tells us that when we eat the bread and drink from the cup, we are declaring the death of Christ, not only as a reminder of the past, but in anticipation of the future – until he comes.

I am reminded of the words Jesus spoke to his disciples as he shared that last supper with them. In Matt 26:29, as he gave them the cup with the instruction to drink from it, he said to them... “I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” (Matthew 26:29 ESV)

In that statement we have the promise that one day we, his followers, will again be together with Him. We will join the apostles and disciples around the table. The whole church, believers of all the ages, will gather at the wedding supper of the Lamb, where we, the church, will be the bride. There will be no more need for ceremonial reminders, because we will be with him in person. We will once again eat with him and drink of the new wine with him.

Conclusion

I don’t know about you, but I am looking forward to that day. I find that the older I get the less there is to keep me attached to this world. The anticipation of being with Christ in person in his kingdom is an overwhelming attraction.

Song:

What a day that will be, when my Jesus I shall see,
When I look upon His face, the one who saved me by His grace.
When He takes me by the hand
and leads me through the Promised land,
What a day, glorious day that will be.

Invitation to salvation – lead into communion