

THE BREAD AND THE CUP SYMBOLS OF THE LORD'S BODY OR IS JESUS PRESENT?

The Bible tells us that the answer lies in the heart of everyone who partakes of the bread and the cup.

READ...Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

J. Vernon McGee, in his commentary "Thru the Bible" wrote,

This is a picture of the Lord Jesus at the heart's door of the sinner... it is a glorious picture.

- The English artist, Holman Hunt, attempted to put this concept on canvas... he pictured Christ standing at a door.
- When he first painted the picture, he invited his artist friends to criticize.
- One of them said to him, "Holman, you have left off a very important part of the door... you left off the handle of the door on Christ's side."
- Hunt replied, "This door is a picture of the human heart, and the handle of the door is on the inside."

This is the picture of Christ we have in Revelation... he stands at the door and knocks.

- He will not crash the door... the Lord Jesus has moved heaven and hell to get to the door of your heart, but when He gets there, He will stop and knock.
- You will have to open the door to let Him in.

"I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

- This speaks of fellowship, of feeding on the Word of God, and of coming to know Jesus Christ better.

Paul, in his epistle to the church in Corinth regarding their practice of communion gave this warning...

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body (1Cor. 11:27-29).

Pastor McGee asks, "What does he mean to "discern" the Lord's body?"

- The answer of the Roman Catholic Church is that transubstantiation takes place, that when the priest officiates at the altar; the bread actually becomes the body of Christ, also that the juice actually becomes the blood of Christ.

In the Lutheran church (Martin Luther didn't want to come too far, as he had been a Roman Catholic priest), it is consubstantiation... it is not the body, but it is the body.

- Then Zwingli, the Swiss Reformation leader, came all the way... he said it was just a symbol.

Pastor McGee says, "I disagree with that explanation as much as I do with the other two... it is more than a symbol."

- "Follow me now to the Emmaus road, and I think we shall find there recorded in Luke's gospel, chapter 24, what it means to discern Christ's body and His death."

Two of Jesus' disciples, two believers, are walking home after having witnessed the terrible Crucifixion in Jerusalem and the events that followed it... they are down in the dumps!

- As they walk along discussing these things, our resurrected Lord joins them and asks what they are talking about that makes them so sad.
- Thinking Him to be a stranger, they tell Him about Jesus' being condemned to death and crucified and about the report of the women who went to the tomb...

"And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not." Then he [Christ] said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them."

A few days before He had eaten the Passover with His apostles... now these are two other disciples, and here is the first time after His resurrection He is observing the Lord's Supper.

- *"And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them."*
- Wasn't that wonderful to have Him present for the meal!

In the meal He takes the bread, He breaks it, He blesses it, He gives it to them.

- *"And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us . . ."*
- He had a meal with them.
- Then what did He do? He revealed Himself... that was the Lord's Supper.

Pastor McGee says, "Oh, friend, when you observe the Lord's Supper... He is present. Yes, He is!"

- This is not just a symbol... it means you must discern the body of Christ.
- You have bread in your mouth, but you have Christ in your heart.
- May God help us to so come to the table that Jesus Christ will be a reality to us.
- God forgive us for making it a dead, formal ritual!

READ... 1 Corinthians 11:25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Pastor McGee comments, “The bread speaks of His broken body; the cup speaks of the new covenant.”

- “The interesting thing is that here Jesus calls it the cup... His body was the cup that held the blood.
- He was born to die and to shed that blood.”

Again and again the apostles remind us that we have forgiveness of sins because of the blood, that He has extended mercy to us because of the blood.

- Christ brings us into the presence of God as children because the penalty of sin was paid when the demands of a holy God were met.

J. Vernon McGee says, “Let's not forget that.

- In this day when the notion is that God can shut His eyes to sin and do nothing about it.
- He has done something about it... the blood of the New Covenant.

The apostle John wrote...

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:5-9

Is Jesus present when you receive the bread and the cup?

- The Bible tells us that the answer lies in the heart of everyone who partakes of the bread and the cup.

Jesus said, “*Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me*” (Revelation 3:20).

Have you heard his voice, today... have you opened the door?

- Have you discerned the Lord's body today... have you examined yourself?
- Have you confessed your sins... have you repented?

Is not your heart burning within you because Jesus revealed himself to you... today?