



Some Practical Sermons on the Lord's Supper

1.

by Lee M. Ancell
July 2017

It's show and tell day at the Eisenhower Elementary 4th Grade class. Risking her career, the teacher encourages students to bring something for show and tell that symbolizes their core values or belief system.

A boy named John heads to the front of the room and pulls a picture out of his backpack. He says, "I'm Jewish. This is the Star of David and is s a symbol of my religion." He then sits down.

Next, a little girl named Anna comes forward. She removes something from her pocket and says, "This is a rosary and it's a symbol of my Catholic religion."

Finally, a boy named Pete moves to the front of the room and carefully pulls a large tin tray out of a paper sack and says, "I go to the Church of Christ, and this is a green bean casserole." now that tells us something

The Lord's Supper is something very important for all of us. To best understand it, and what we need to do, we have been thinking that a series of short study-devotionals would be a good idea. We will start with the history of the supper, consider the meaning of the emblems, and then look at the way in which we need to approach them.

I. Intro: THE FIRST "LORD'S SUPPER" [LUKE 22: 7-20]

1. THE FIRST SUPPER'S "COMMAND": Time for the Passover: "...**go and prepare it...**" → →
PHASE ONE: PROPHECY REVEALED
2. **FIRST:** The fact that preparation was required is not lost on us today, I hope. -We **ALL** need to go and prepare too, mentally and physically to be a partner in this supper. This preparation is not just showing up, but it is bringing to worship a heart that is given to sharing God this day !!
"I", Jesus, want to be with you, today!!!
3. **SECOND:** As they sat there, reclining at the table, Jesus tells them that the end of his ministry has arrived. This is the "Last Supper".
4. **THIRD:** He has been eagerly wanting to reach this time with the disciple, the twelve and the rest of them, because it is now the time to bring the great change about.
5. **FOURTH: TRUE JOY IN SUFFERING** --- This is the real and compelling fact behind this whole 'final Passover'; --grace is coming, the old law is being done away with, permanently. All past time is now looking forward to this moment and all future time is looking back on this moment !!!

II. THE THREE BETRAYALS OF JESUS [LUKE 22:21-38]

PHASE TWO: PROPHECY COMES HOME !!

1. **Personalization of what is to come:** → from the very heart of this core of disciples, those who are gathered there, there will be an enemy which will do Jesus great harm !!, --just as has been predicted.
2. See **PSALM 55:12-14**
3. See **ZECHARIAH 11:13**
4. **The Story Of Those Three Betrayals**
 - a. **Judas** did actually betray Him
 - b. **Peter** functionally betrayed Him
 - c. And**"I" have betrayed Him, repeatedly**
... → **thus Acts 2 and the sermon of Peter**

...but ...

5. **It is only when I approach the table with a full, open and honest heart, that I can begin to truly remember what Jesus accomplished for me.**
6. **Jesus died for me, a rebellious sinner, ["I'm sweet on the outside, sometimes, but sour underneath"], ... my heart is now broken at my actions, just like His body was once broken for me on the cross.**
It is personal !!
7. **THE LORD'S SUPPER IS ALWAYS PERSONAL, FIRST!!**
.....**'IT IS NEVER A 'TICKET PUNCHING EXERCISE'!!!**
... **JUST so we can stay on the salvation TRAIN.....**

III. Thus, THIS SUPPER, THIS TODAY

PHASE THREE: THIS SUPPER, THIS DAY do Lord's Supper

NOW THAT WE HAVE BEEN REMINDED OF THE HISTORY AND FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY, ...WHY DO WE DO THE LORD'S SUPPER EVERY WEEK ??

1. There are two basic approaches to the Lord's Supper ---- as 'Eucharist' & as 'Command'.
 - Some see it as a **sacrament** that gives you a new infusion of Grace (like a yearly flu injection)
 - Others see it as the only fully proscribed act of worship that we are required to do every week, and thus it is just a required **ordnance / law**.
 - Still others see it as a **reminder** of what Jesus went through, and did for me, so that I can inherit eternal life, and live more obediently.
2. **I believe in the last choice and totally reject the first two choices.** [Repeat what these 2 are and what we all practice & believe here in Coffs.]
3. **Why is all this important??** → It is important because the first two ideas are never even stated in the bible, but the third one is, over in **1 Corinthians 11: 23-34**.
4. **So?** The first two come down to us from the traditions of mere men of the past and not by the declarations of God" → → **PURE, SIMPLE, CLEAR**
→ **GODS WORD, GODS WAY !!!** ...over...

Theology Perspective

Now Go To Practical List

A Nigerian missionary arrived at a Communion service in which four towns were combining, and heard an African addressing the crowded church in a preparatory meeting as follows: "I cannot tell you the gladness that is in my heart today. As I walked along the path with the other members from my town I saw that each man held in his hand his Testament and his hymn-book. No man carried a cutlass or a gun. No man walked with fear; every man with faith in you. And yet it is but four years ago that no man from my town would have walked through your town without a cutlass in his hand, and even then he would not have walked alone. Nor would any man from your town have come unarmed through ours. What is the reason for this difference? At that time we worshiped the same gods as you did. Today we worship the same God as you do, but the God we worship today is the God of peace. We have learned that He is our Father, and that we are brothers."—***Bishop of Croydon.***

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Aside: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SACREMENT AND ORDANANCE

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→ → PURE AND VERY SIMPLE !!!

...over...

Practical list: How true obedience helps us live more assuredly and confidently:

Note: We can not, and we do not, turn to scripture to determine the value of the Lord's Supper, directly.
Practical tradition is our first voice !!!

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1. The L.S. is actually an exercise practiced to improve our "humility skills" and our "obedience drive" behind those humility skills.
2. To develop an on-going eye that sees Jesus as "my Lord" and my supreme sovereign. I now live to serve Him, first.
3. As I thus focus on Him, in the assembly, He becomes ever more real in my work, on an ever-day, all-day, basis.
4. I now work to share and please Him, because I have clearly and consistently communicated to Him my community spirited, lovingly devoted, total bowing down, to Him as the first Lord in my life.
5. To create a mindset of this dimensions will improve ...
 - a. My humility
 - b. My focus
 - c. My strength and dedication
 - d. My compassion of others, because of what He did for me
 - e. My relations with others is now defined by my relationship with Him and I am more patient, forgiving, and nurturing
 - f.**for a start, these are definite boasts in my Christian living, making Him the true and total center-piece of my everything...**

THIRD LESSON INTRODUCTION: In WW2 a group of Texas men were captured and after several escape attempts, by them all, from various other camps they were sentenced to a 'special' camp.

All were men of faith, and all were in the same horrible situation: no escape, "no bread & no wine", and it is Sunday morning. What to do? They can sit in a corner and pray, open eyed, watching the guards, and or they can remember bits of scripture, shearing as they still watched the guards.But what to do about the communion? It was a big worry for them, because they all believed that they needed to partake of the supper, in the biblical way.

Could they steal fruit peelings from the guards mess? Yes. Could they then distil the peelings into a wine of sorts? Yes. Could they save some of their breads from one meal? Yes. If they get caught, they will be disobeying the commands, "Do not steal," and "do not worship in this camp". Can they disobey? Yes. Are they willing to take the consequences of their disobediences and possible die for their disobedience? Yes, -they are willing to take that chance, and yes, --they are willing to die for doing so.

But one man said, "How can we have the Lord's Supper when we have no grape juice and no real unleavened bread?" They thought about this a great deal and thus two very different ideas formed out of their deliberations. One did use the distilled "fruit wine" and did eat the stale, "leavened, camp bread". The other group did not partake of the lord's Supper at all, for three more years, -until they were liberated. Both groups were 'men of faith'. **...but ...** **...Who was actually right?**

THUS → →

One of the points that differs between denominations is the nature of the emblems used in the Lord Supper. Some say anything works and others on the very far opposite side say that we must do the exact same thing that Jesus did. For the sake of clarity in our thinking and to build a degree of faith in the way we do things, let's look at those emblems of the communion.

➔ **IV. What Are The Questions We May Ask, Legitimately ????**

Go back to [page one](#) to discuss these common points / questions...

- **What Really Happened At The First Passover Meal?**
- **Had The First Century Passover Meal Change By Jesus Time?**
- **What Are The Traditional Parts Of A Seder Meal Today?**
- **What Is Real "Unleavened Bread"?**
- **What Is Real Wine Or Was It Grape Juice?**
- **What Does "Fruit Of The Vine" Really Mean?** "Alcohol Or Non-alcoholic , in the light of the first seders???"

... ➔ **So, What Emblems Are We To Use Today? ...**
Jesus used the first Seder format in a strict sense, with the final focus coming at the end of the meal to signify some changes to be made...

**V. The Earlier Passovers:
 ---The Seder Ritual---**

1. Fact: The Jews are very good at keeping their very long standing traditions alive and well tuned with the ways of the past. They know the 'what' and the 'whys'.
2. The Early Seders:
 1. Nisan 10: A yearling, **unblemished** lamb is chosen
 2. Nisan 13: The whole house is searched by candle light for any leaven at all
 3. Nisan 14: The paterfamilias would choose the lowest servant to wash the guests feet. He never did it himself...yet Jesus the head of the family gathered did !!! Primary a servant mission.
 4. Everyone washed their own hands before eat
 5. 4 ritual cups of wine are to be served to everyone: no one is to forego or reject
 6. After sitting down the Kaddush is said for sanctification of all who eat the meal.
 7. **Exodus 6:6-7** is recited then the first cup of wine is drunk by all.
 8. The head of the family then dips bitter herbs of celery and lettuce in salt water and eats.
 9. Second cup of wine is poured but not drunk

--- Continued ---

10. Question from Youngest to oldest, "Why Do we eat this meal?" The story of the first Passover is then told.
11. Singing of **Psalm 113 & 114** The 1st Hallel
12. Prayer over second cup of wine for deliverance
13. The second Prayer of thanks for blessings and for future growth in blessings **Exodus 6:6**
14. Serving up of the Paschal lamb with sour sauce
15. Breaking of bread and its distribution. All is eaten
16. The next cup of wine is poured and a prayer of thanks giving given for God redemptive acts yet to come. With Exodus 6:6 recited again.
17. Fourth cup of wine is poured and the rest of the Hallel Psalms is recited by all. **Psalms 115-118**
18. **This is the Paschai, from which we get 'Pascal'**
19. The Paschal lamb was 'killed' between 12 noon and 3:00 at which the priest would recite all of the Hallel Psalms
20. Commitment to continue to hunt for leaven in the house is then made as Paul says in **I Cor 5:7 with the continuance of Zeph. 1:12 to "tear" out the roots of all leaven**
21. **This is presented in Exodus 10, 12, and 13:8 to be kept as a remembrance of God and redemption.**

"NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD"

“Communion, even for the cannibals” (Luke 22:19). John G. Paton, missionary to the New Hebrides, in describing the first Communion service on the Island of Aniwa, says: 'The whole service occupied nearly three hours. The Islanders looked on with a wonder, whose unwonted silence was almost painful to bear. Many were led to inquire carefully about everything they saw, so new and so strange. For the first time the Dorcas Street Sabbath School Teachers' gift from South Melbourne Presbyterian Church was put to use—a new communion service of silver. They gave it in faith that we would require it, and in such we received it. And now the day had come and gone! For three years we had toiled and prayed and taught for this. At the moment when I put the bread and wine into those dark hands, once stained with the blood of cannibalism but now stretched out to receive and partake of the emblems and of the seal of the Redeemer's love, I had a foretaste of the joy of glory that well-nigh broke my heart to pieces. I shall never taste a deeper bliss till I gaze on the glorified face of Jesus Himself'

(This wonderful service occurred on October 24, 1869).—*From the Story of John G. Paton.*)

One of the points that differs between denominations is the nature of the emblems used in the Lord Supper. Some say anything works and others on the very far opposite side say that we must do the exact same thing that Jesus did. For the sake of clarity in our thinking and to build a degree of faith in the way we do things, let's look at those emblems of the communion.

VI. Jesus' Final Seder Meal: *The Coming of The Great Change*

Fact: Most of the elements of the full Seder meal is never mentioned in any gospel or New Testament documents. It is just not there, and why should it be? ... What Jesus focused on in the final emblems look to the future, from the texts presentation of this last Seder. Thus, we are directed to the final acts of the Seder Meal.

...but I will be with you in the finale of time, when "I will return!" The 'Golden Reality' Of Hope

1. The final reality of the supper is the foundation of our memory of what was done for us at Calvary, thus producing **energy giving hope**.
2. It is our hope that **sustains** us through every trial and through every pain.
3. It is as **significant a symbol** as the rainbow was from the antediluvian world, and on until today.
4. To see the Lord's Supper as a just ticket to be punched is as little and immature as seeing a cork keeping the North Sea out of Holland. It is totally foolish yet so common.
5. The Lord's Supper has never been the only part of worship we are required to perform with the church each week!

VII. What Was Really On Their Table?

WHAT EMBLEMS DID JESUS USE AT THE LAST SUPPER?

1. The first emblem on their table was the impending end of the old contracts and the old laws, symbolized in the fact that they now to look towards Golgotha instead of Egypt.
2. They were to look forward with a piece of unleavened bread and a final cup of real wine.
3. The quantity to be consumed was not as important as the direction of their gaze and the substance of their memory and of their commitments in the future...
4. This was a very heavy and profound change to be taking place.
5. They went to extreme levels to find any leaven in their homes or their lives and to cast it out.
6. They drank real wine because it lasted and was indicative of a sustaining medicinal value in their 'soul-lives'.
7. The supper was, and still is today, a preparation to meet the challenges of the coming week. It was not then, nor should it be today just a symbolic act. It is an act on consecration and preparation to stay the course one more week! ...thus it was not an every month or two idea, it was a way of life.
- 8.

VIII. These Traditional Emblems Today

WHAT SHOULD WE USE TODAY, AND WHY ?

1. Today, we rarely see real wine served at Lord's Supper, outside of European congregation, because of the Puritan movement of the 1500's. Grape juice is okay in a pinch.
2. We normal see unleavened, Matzos crackers, served as bread, but some have drifted off towards leavened regular bread.
3. If we honour Jesus fully, it seems only wise to use what the Lord used. It was intrinsically accepted by God from the first Supper of the first century church down until the 1800's ad.

IV. So, The Lord's Supper Today

1. We believe that the emblems focused on, for the reasons cited, is the proper basic pattern for today's 'Christian Seder / Lord's Supper'.
2. It does not supply a future 'grace' via 'sacraments', but it does remind us, as it reminded the Jews in Jesus day of what had already happened in Egypt. Only now, for us, it reminds us of Jesus' final work on the cross, done once for all, once for all times.
3. It call us to peace from real peace, to action from real action, from hope to hope realized in our lives.

Today's "Lord's Supper" (1 Corinthians 11:26)

The Lord's table is like a great bridge, spanning the entire interval of the Church's history on earth. One end of it rests on the shame of the cross, the other is planted in the glory of the kingdom. This feast sustains a threefold relationship to the Christian:

- ✓ It is the Reminder of our Past Justification.
- ✓ It is the Source of our Present Sustenance in the new life.
- ✓ It is the Pledge of our Future Faith and Blessedness and Glory until glory comes...

So from I Corinthians 10-11, we see that

1. It is a Table of Communion (I Cor. 10:16).
2. It is a Table of Remembrance (v. 24).
3. It is a Table of Obedience—"Take, eat, ... drink ye all of it" (v. 24).
4. It is a Table of Thanksgiving (v. 24).
5. It is a Table of Confession (v. 26)
6. It is a Table of Expectation—"Till he come" (v. 26c).
7. It is a Table of Self-examination (v. 28).

8. ➔ It is the Table of Hope for Israel also (Rom. 11:26).
9. ➔ It is the meal of the remembrance of the fullest grace

—George C. Needham.

In October 1971, the Shah of Iran invited 60 kings, queens and heads of state to celebrate the 2,500 years of the Persian Empire. The cost of the celebration was \$100 million, but it was not the costliest table ever spread. The communion table is the costliest table ever spread. The elements on it cost very little, but the communion feast cost the Son of God His life

As a young person growing up in the church, we discussed in services what the Lord's Supper was all about and who was to partake of it. I was very proud of partaking of my first Lord's Supper. As to why we did what we did in the Supper, most often the preacher just said, 'This is what Jesus did and left it there. I did not really study the what's why's and when's until much, much latter. I do not want that said about us here in Coffs, at all !! **What is the rules about the Lord's Supper then?**

IX. Those Extraordinary Circumstances

DID JESUS ACTUALLY BREAK THE SABBATH LAW IN THE WHEAT FIELDS IN MATTHEW 12:1? DID HE STEAL??

FACT: We all face times when *the law* just does not apply, nor can we fulfil the 'law' explicitly.

1. The 'Thief on the Cross' is one of those times when we must leave matters totally in the divine hands. Thus we are told to reach the necessity of baptism, and so we should, everyday!! **'What saves us then?'**
2. The thief was not in a position to ask to be baptized after the nailing started. He could not ask to be let go to be baptized and then just promise to return, -could he! **...yet he was with Jesus in Paradise that day..**
3. God sorted that one out. We can not make any rules that are so extra-ordinarily tight as to be on a level above the totality of scripture. **Lord → Sovereign**
4. We must do the best we can, at that moment, always honoring God as the absolute sovereign of our hearts. **...rebellion or simple impossible situations...**
5. In the case of the emblems to be used at the Supper, we are to try and duplicate what Jesus did as far as it is possible, using the substances He used at that time, if prudent and possible. [That may mean real wine, from time to time, and leavened bread, again from time to time. [--Aught Oh'--]]

X. The Emblems Used Today

WHAT EMBLEMS DID JESUS USE AT THE LAST SUPPER?

Fact: Jesus used real, alcoholic, wine and real, totally unleavened bread in the Seder done in that upper room.

Fact: Any other argument is a change of the biblical text and an accusation against God's word and will because of conservative philosophy but never because of actual scripture!

Fact: This should be our guiding light in today's services. The substance is so written. The size of the service is never discussed, except to say that it was a cup and not a semi-tasting cup, but again this is just linguistic conjecture.

Fact: It was not just one cup, but could have one cup per person at that last Seder table.

Fact: There is no existing statement on what we are to do, exactly,. -But by saying 'do this in my memory', we are moved to follow as closely as possible the thought and the manners surrounding the amplified elements of the Last Seder.

Problem: what of the 'fruit of the vine' statements, thus meaning 'grape juice?' instead of alcoholic wine ?? "Poetics do not overcome repeated facts, and the fact is wine is wine, and greater than any conservative theology.

XI. The "Infusion Of Grace" Concern Ritual or Right?

1. The emblems are important, as is the whole of our remembrances that each one should seek out as they experience the Supper each week.
2. However, the Supper is not an event that infuses 'grace' to a person's soul or spirit by itself.
3. The emblems place us as close as we can get in a temporal setting to what occurred right before the acts of betrayal, Judas, Peters and my own
4. Jesus was there then and He is with us today. It may be symbolic in that way that memory often is symbolic.
5. We are not given more grace, as if we run out of it like we can with petrol or coffee, or soap but we are reminded of the fact that the one who gave us this grace we need, did do so, freely.
6. **Titus 3:5** reminds us that we are given grace on His love, not on our works, nor as just a ritual.
7. **Hebrews 9:28** reminds us that what He did, He did once for all.
8. Every passage in the bible has a point in which it reaches back to the cross, and the cross is what we are to see and seek for grace. The choice of emblems is a constant reminder of Jesus, Lord and Savior. **It is our right. It is not just a ritual.**

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XII. - The Frequency Debate: Weekly, Monthly, or Yearly --- HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE DO IT?

1. The most common division between congregations is over the frequency of partaking of the Lord's Supper.
2. **Some say that because the Seder was a yearly event, we should not do the Supper but more infrequently than once a week. This is a good point as far as it goes !!**
3. **We believe that the first century church partook of the supper, however, on a weekly basis;**
4. **Why do we believe this to be so?**
 1. **First:** Jesus instituted the Supper on the night of His betrayal, and then celebrated it again with the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus. **Luke 24:30**
 2. **Second:** Remembering Jesus became central to their very lives and was practiced when they came together **Acts 2:42** This was a 'Sunday Service.
 3. **Third:** In **I Corinthians 11:26** it says 'whenever you come together', indicating a degree of flexibility [This particular scripture may mean simple meal and not a full-on Lord's Supper celebration.]
 4. In **Acts 20:6-7** it seems more likely that this was a full Lord's Supper celebration, followed by a common meal.

Justin Mytars 1st Apology on Christian Worship / A.D. 150

"...On (every) Sunday, having ended the prayers, we thus salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the presiding person of the brethren, bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands.

And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. This word Amen answers in the Hebrew language to $\gamma\epsilon\nu\omicron\iota\tau\omicron$ [genoito] (*so be it*).

And when the presiding one has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons, give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion..." **distribution of left overs**

ADDITIONAL GOOD GUIDELINES

- ❑ **Who serves at the table?** ...only the purest among us???? NO!!!- We would never have the Supper if only the absolute purest man was required to preside. *No one is truly worthy to lead!*
- ❑ **-Even male children** who are still very young in the faith, may serve. The Seder tradition of one branch of 1st century Judaism did so practice. ...But it was a male, who lead and served, always, if they knew the answers to the required questions to be asked at the Seder meal.
- ❑ Those who partake need to have **purity of heart** and a resolve of full service, just as those who serve do., **If you have a problem with someone there,** -go, fix it up, and come back.