

Let Us Keep The Feast: A Communion Message

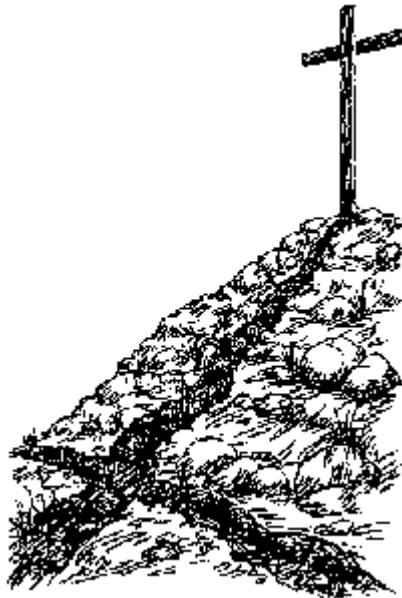
1 Corinthians 5:8

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1 Corinthians 5:8 (KJV) "Therefore let us keep the feast¹, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

The Communion Table is a time when the Church comes together to celebrate what Jesus Christ has already accomplished for us. The work of salvation *has been done*, if you have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior. As we partake of the Table we do so remembering what has, in Grace, been given to us. Those who feast at this Table have asked the question, just as the Philippian Jailer asked,

Acts 16:30 (KJV) "... what must I do to be saved?"

and have been told, just as Paul and Silas told the jailer,

Acts 16:31 (KJV) "... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

If you are going to partake of the Table – and you are invited to partake if you are saved by faith in Christ – the Host of this Table – Jesus Christ – demands that you partake of the Table rightly. No one would go to another person's house and, on seeing the table laid out and prepared for them, leave the Table and go to the kitchen for something else. No one, at least no polite guest, would refuse that which was offered in favor of something else. Children may sit at a table and refuse to eat the good food before them. Children, foolish children, may cry and whine until the steak and potatoes are removed and ice cream is put in its place. Only the

foolish parent would justify such action. Only a parent that cared little about his child would allow junk food to be eaten in place of good food.

¹ heortazo {pronounced heh-or-tad'-zo}, Present Active Subjunctive, celebrate a feast

We come together with Jesus Christ as the Host of our Table. He has invited us here to *celebrate* what He has already accomplished for us. Before we begin this holy celebration – and it should be a celebration, a time for laughter, for joy – we must make sure we are in the proper state of mind.

1. We Must Not Celebrate With The Old Leaven

1 Corinthians 5:8 (KJV) "Therefore let us keep the feast¹, not with old leaven ..."

The centerpiece of the Jewish *Feast of the Passover* was the *unleavened bread* – a substance similar to what we will eat today as we recognize Christ's body broken for us. Prior to the Feast the Jewish wife would go through the house and throw out *all leaven* – a yeast products – and would even go so far as to *sweep out her house* lest there be a speck of yeast left in the house. You see, yeast symbolized *human works and human sin*.

Exodus 12:11-13 (KJV) "And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover. {12} For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast;

and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. {13} And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."

God established the feast of the Passover on the night prior to Israel's release from Egyptian bondage. The death angel would pass over every household that very

1. When was the feast of the Passover established? (Exodus 12:11-13)

2. Why was unleavened bread used?

3. Old, outdated leaven is to be kept out of the Lord's Table. What are some examples of this type of leaven in my life? (Luke 12:1; Hebrews 9:14)

night. If the angel did not see the Blood of the Lamb on the door posts of a house, then death would enter that house. The firstborn child would be killed, and the house would suffer terrible grief.

The death angel was coming, and Israel had no time to dawdle. One feature of *regular bread* is that it takes time to rise. As a bread-maker I can tell you that it takes *a great deal of time* to make bread. First you dissolve the yeast in sugar water. Next you make sure that bread has all the elements necessary for the yeast to live and grow. You see, yeast is a *living organism*, and it requires food

to live. So you work the right amount of salt and sugar into the bread dough, then rest the dough in a warm place until it grows. As the yeast grows it puffs up the bread *leavening* it, making it easy to eat and soft. But all this takes human effort, human work, and time.

Israel had no time! The death angel was coming, and God's people needed to get ready. God wanted them to eat that night in preparation for the next day's journey, but there was no time to wait on bread to rise. The feast had to be kept, but not with old leaven. God was going to show Israel a new thing. He was going to bring Israel out of Egypt with a mighty hand. But ...

1 Corinthians 5:8 (KJV) "... not with old² leaven ..."

² palaios {pronounced pal-ah-yos'}, ancient, worn out, no good, expended or expired

Knowing human nature I can just about guarantee that there were several Jews on the night of the Passover who protested when they heard that unleavened bread would be their meal that night. But God was specific. The Feast couldn't be kept if you used leavened bread. You couldn't even use *old leaven*. If you are a baker then you know that every package of yeast has an *expiration date* on its reverse. Yeast that is sold past that expiration date is of *dubious value*, for it may actually be *dead* or only *partially potent*. I have tried baking with expired or old leaven before and I can testify that the results are always terrible. Sometimes half of the loaf rises, and the other half falls. Old leaven is useless, for it is untrustworthy. As we come to the Lord's Table we are to put away that *old leaven* of self righteousness as Jesus commanded:

Luke 12:1 (KJV) "... Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

We are to put away the leaven of *dead works* that do nothing to honor God our Savior:

Hebrews 9:14 (KJV) "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

The Pharisees and the Sadducees were *covered* with dead and useless works. They lived lives packed with old leaven: human but not Divine good; sin but not sincerity of faith; ritualism without a relationship with God; cloaking their lawless way of life with an outward show of lawfulness.

As you approach the Lord's Table you are commanded to put away all the old leaven – that way of life you so loved before you accepted Christ as Savior. That stuff has to go away as your heart looks for Christ in the Table. Put away that old way of life and rejoice – for your life is hid in God for Christ's sake!

2. We Must Not Celebrate With The Wrong Leaven

1 Corinthians 5:8 (KJV) "Therefore let us keep the feast¹ ... neither with the leaven of malice³ and wickedness⁴ ..."

³ kakia {pronounced kak-ee'-ah}, depravity or wickedness that is not ashamed to

break laws

⁴ ponia {pronounced pon-ay-ree'-ah}, iniquity, malice outwardly expressed

There are more than one kind of leavening agents, things that make bread rise, but *none* of these agents are allowed at the Table of Christ. We only use *unleavened* or *unyeasted* bread at this Table – nothing else will do.

The design of the Table is Love. The Table was designed by Jesus Christ, the perfect embodiment of Love. Everything that our Lord did expressed Love and kindness. Malice, anger, hypocrisy, evil, meanness – none of these things have anything in the Lord's Table.

Ephesians 4:32 (KJV) "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

The Table is a place for the *forgiven* and the *forgiving*. Malice and wickedness have no place at the Lord's Table. Our verse is found in a context where Paul was addressing a young man who had romanced away his

<p>4. The Lord's Table is a place for the forgiven and the _____ . (Ephesians 4:32; Luke 23:34)</p> <p>5. As Samuel P. Jones said, God's Gospel is to teach man to _____ .</p>
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father's wife. I assume by the text that this was a case where he was romancing his *stepmother*, not a case of incest. The Church saw this thing happen publicly and in its midst and *was proud* over what happened. When a Church or a Christian becomes proud over someone

else's hurt, that entity has stepped away from the Table of God. As that great evangelist **Samuel P. Jones** stated:

"If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from unrighteousness." Jesus Christ knew how to preach, brethren, and Jesus Christ touched that subject to one man, an intelligent man who staggered back and asked, "Why, how can this thing be?" Hear me, brother. God's Gospel is to teach a man to quit his meanness."

Those who celebrate the feast celebrate it following Love. Love made the Table possible. Love shed His Blood for us. Love cried out, **"Father, forgive them (Luke 23:34)"**. We dare not sit at Love's Table and act hatefully – even in our hearts – to one another. Repent of any wrong in your heart, and look at Love as we partake of His Table.

3. We Celebrate The Table With Sincerity and Truth

1 Corinthians 5:8 (KJV) "Therefore let us keep the feast¹, ... with the unleavened bread of sincerity⁵ and truth⁶."

⁵ heilikrineia {pronounced i-lik-ree'-ni-ah}, purity, sincerity, clarity of thought

⁶ aletheia {pronounced al-ay'-thi-a}, what is determined to be true by God

When Jesus stood before Pilate he asked out Lord:

John 18:38 (KJV) "... What is truth?"

Pilate, an outwardly *good man*, a person who tried to do his best, an honest man, was nonetheless blinded to what truth is. So is our society today. People, like Pilate, ask “What is Truth?” Just like it was in the first century Church, we define truth by what we experience. Unless I have felt it, it is not true. Unless it is of value to me, unless it satisfies me, it is not true.

Josh McDowell defines post-modern thought for us when he wrote in the article *Reaching Youth Today*:

“Post modernism now says that there is no objective truth. Now, here’s the key to understanding much of what you hear from the younger generation. Truth is not there to be discovered; truth is there to be created. That’s key. This is why when you read a book, you’re not trained to discover truth. Whatever you think is true is just as true as whatever the author was writing. So now you’re there to create truth. It doesn’t matter what the author was writing. Whatever it says to you is just as true as whatever the author was writing. This is why phrases are coming out like, “The author must die so the reader can live” or “The reader becomes the author.” Doesn’t that sound screwy? To you and me it does; to the average person in the younger generation it makes all the sense in the world. See, there’s been no generation of pastors in the history of America that’s faced a crisis like this. Never. A cultural change. You create truth.”

That is what the world teaches, **you create truth**. When Pilate asked Jesus “What is truth?”, he was making the same statement. The world, the unsaved, the unbeliever

thinks that you **create truth** in your own life. If I believe its true, then its true. If I disbelieve it, then it is not true. And, Beloved, many of our children believe this today. This is why *most Churches see large turnouts of children and youth when we have fun activities, but little or no turnout when we do not*. That is because the world teaches, perhaps louder but just as it did in Pilate's day, that **there is no absolute truth**.

When we come to the Lord's Table we are recognizing

6. Postmodernism teaches that we all _____ truth, that there is no absolute truth.
7. We participate in the Lord's Table by recognizing there is an *absolute truth*, and it is found in _____ (John 1:17)

absolute truth. We are, by partaking of this Table, telling the world that **God's truth is my truth**. Pilate asks “**What is Truth?**” The world says “**What is truth?**” We join together with God today and say:

John 1:17 (KJV) "... grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

What is truth? Jesus Christ is truth. The fact that He died for our sins and rose again is truth. The fact that He ever lives and makes intercession for us is truth. The fact that He is our Lord and Savior, if we have believed on Him, is truth. We do not create truth, but Truth eternally exists, and in the Person of Jesus Christ our Savior.