

Why Do We Observe the Lord's Supper?

Message 4 of 5 in the series: "Why Do We Do That?"

A. We observe the Lord's Supper because Jesus commanded us to.

"For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, '**This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.**' In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with **my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it.**'" 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 (NLT)

B. We observe the Lord's Supper repeatedly so we will never forget what Christ did for us.

1. Christ sacrificed his body and took the punishment we deserve.

"He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! **But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole.** He was whipped so we could be healed. All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all."

Isaiah 53:3-6 (NLT)

2. Christ shed his blood in order to cleanse us from sin and make us right with God.

"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; **it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.**" Leviticus 17:11 (NIV)

"For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness." Hebrews 9:22b (NLT)

"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. **People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood.**" Romans 3:23-25a (NLT)

Note: It is vitally important that we eat the bread and drink from the cup. "Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood **remains in me, and I in him.**" John 6:56 (NLT)

C. We observe the Lord's Supper to celebrate our new covenant with God.

"**This cup is the new covenant between God and his people**—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you." Luke 22:20b (NLT)

"But now Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old priesthood, for **he is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises.** If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it. But when God found fault with the people, he said: 'The day is coming, says the Lord, when **I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah.** This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. They did not remain faithful to my covenant, so I turned my back on them, says the Lord. But **this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says the Lord:** I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people... I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.'" Hebrews 8:6-12 (NLT) (*Jeremiah 31:31-34*)

1. In the New Covenant, we are saved by God's grace. We don't need to earn God's love or forgiveness.

"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; **it is a gift from God.** Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it."

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)

2. In the New Covenant, God gives us the desire and the power to love and obey Him. We aren't able to do this in our own strength.

“And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.” Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NLT)

“For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.”

Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

3. In the New Covenant, our sins have been atoned for (paid in full) once and for all.

“The old system under the law of Moses was only a shadow, a dim preview of the good things to come, not the good things themselves. **The sacrifices under that system were repeated again and again**, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship... Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins. But our High Priest offered himself to God as **a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time**. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God’s right hand.” Hebrews 10:1 & 11-12 (NLT)

“...Jesus said, ‘**It is finished.**’ With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” John 19:30 (NIV)

D. We will keep observing the Lord’s Supper until He comes again because it gives us hope.

“For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death **until he comes again**.” 1 Corinthians 11:26 (NLT)

“And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. **We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us**. We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don’t need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don’t yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)” Romans 8:23-25 (NLT)

E. We observe the Lord’s supper together because we’re all part of God’s family.

“And though we are many, we all eat from one loaf of bread, showing that **we are one body**.”

1 Corinthians 10:17 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

Read Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-26, & 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Then discuss the following questions:

1. When did you participate in the Lord’s Supper for the first time? What do you remember about the experience?
2. What’s the significance of breaking bread and eating it as a reminder of Jesus’ body? (Isaiah 53:3-6, Psalm 22:12-17) Why is it necessary to eat the bread?
3. What’s the significance of drinking from a cup of wine to remind us of Jesus’ blood? (Leviticus 17:11, Hebrews 9:22, Romans 3:23-25) Why is it necessary to drink from the cup?
4. Why did Jesus need to mediate a New Covenant between filthy, rotten sinners like us and Holy God? (Hebrews 8:6-12 & Jeremiah 31:31-34) Discuss the following important provisions of the New Covenant:
 - In the New Covenant, we are saved by God’s grace. We don’t need to earn God’s love or forgiveness. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
 - In the New Covenant, God gives us the desire and the power to love and obey Him. We aren’t able to do this in our own strength. (Ezekiel 36:26-27, Philippians 2:13)
 - In the New Covenant, our sins have been atoned for (paid in full) once and for all. (Hebrews 10:1 & 11-12, John 19:30)
5. How important is it that we observe the Lord’s Supper together rather than observe it on our own? (1 Corinthians 10:17, Acts 2:42-47)
6. Paul said every time we eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord’s Supper, we are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again. (1 Corinthians 11:26) When will Jesus come again? (Matthew 24:36-42) Why does observing the Lord’s Supper give us hope? (Romans 8:23-25)

7. Why do you think the Apostle Paul said we should examine ourselves before we participate in the Lord's Supper? (1 Corinthians 11:27-28) What might cause us to eat the bread and drink from the cup in an unworthy manner? (Matthew 6:14-15)