

HWMR - Crystallization Study of the Gospel of Mark

Book Two, Week 11

Message Eleven

The Lord's Supper— a Symbol of the New Testament Economy of God

Scripture Reading: Mark 14:22-26;
1 Cor. 5:7-8; 10:16-17, 21; 11:20, 23-26

Mark 14:22 And as they were eating, He took **bread** and blessed it, and He broke it and gave it to them, and said, **Take; this is My body.**

Mark 14:23 And He took a **cup** and gave thanks, and He gave it to them; and they all drank of it.

Mark 14:24 And He said to them, **This is My blood of the covenant**, which is being poured out for many.

Mark 14:25 Truly I say to you, I shall by no means drink of the product of the vine anymore until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

Mark 14:26 And after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

1 Cor. 5:7 Purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened; for our **Passover**, Christ, also has been sacrificed.

1 Cor. 5:8 So then let us **keep the feast**, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

1 Cor. 10:16 The **cup of blessing** which we bless, is it not the **fellowship of the blood of Christ**? The bread which we **break**, is it not the **fellowship of the body of Christ**?

1 Cor. 10:17 Seeing that there is **one bread**, we who are many are **one Body**; for we all partake of the one bread.

1 Cor. 11:20 When therefore you come together in the same place, it is not to eat the **Lord's supper**;

1 Cor. 11:23 For I received from the Lord that which also I delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took **bread**,

1 Cor. 11:24 And having given thanks, He broke it and said, **This is My body**, which is given for you; **this do unto the remembrance of Me.**

1 Cor. 11:25 Similarly also the **cup** after they had dined, saying, **This cup is the new covenant** established in **My blood**; this do, as often as you drink it, **unto the remembrance of Me.**

1 Cor. 11:26 **For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you declare the Lord's death until He comes.**

THE PASSOVER REPLACED BY THE LORD'S SUPPER

In 22:7-23 the Man-Savior **instituted** His supper as a **replacement** of the Old Testament Passover. In the Old Testament the Passover was a great matter, a matter that may be considered equal to God's creation. In the Old Testament we first have the record of God's creation. Then we see that the man created by God fell and eventually went down into Egypt. When God was about to save His people from bondage in Egypt, He **ordained the feast of Passover**. The **Passover was the time when God's people were saved and brought back to their right, which had been lost**. The observance of the Passover lasted for more than fifteen hundred years, from the time of Exodus 12 until the night in which the Man-Savior had the last Passover with His disciples.

Luke 22:7-23 is a crucial section of the Word, for it marks the **ending** of the Old Testament **Passover**. Here we see that the Man-Savior **instituted His supper, the Lord's table, to replace the Old Testament Passover**. From this we see that the night in which the Lord instituted His supper was a time of transition. A transition was taking place from the Old Testament Passover to the New Testament supper of the Lord. This is a matter of great importance.

In Luke 22 we must see the **distinction** between the **Passover** and the **Lord's table**. Verses 7 through 18 are concerned with the Passover, and verses 19 and 20, with the Lord's supper. Verse 7 says, "And the day of Unleavened Bread came, on which the Passover must be sacrificed." The feast of Unleavened Bread is a feast of seven days (Lev. 23:6). It is also called the Passover (Mark 14:1). Actually, the feast of the Passover was the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread (Exo. 12:15-20).

Luke 22:7 speaks of the day on which the Passover was sacrificed. In the Jewish calendar, which was according to their Scripture, a day began with the evening (Gen. 1:5). In the night of the last Passover day, the Man-Savior **first ate** the Passover feast with His disciples and **then instituted His supper** for them. Following that, He went with the disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane at the Mount of Olives. There He was arrested and brought to the high priest, where He was judged by the Sanhedrin late in the night. In the morning of the same day, He was delivered to Pilate to be judged by him and was sentenced to death. Then He was brought to Golgotha and crucified there at the third hour (today's nine o'clock) in the morning, remaining on the cross until the ninth hour (today's three o'clock) in the afternoon (Mark 15:16-41), for the **fulfillment** of the **type** of the **Passover** (Exo. 12:6-11).

In Luke 22:15 the Lord said to His disciples, “*I have earnestly longed to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*” The Greek words translated, “I have earnestly longed” literally mean, “with longing I have longed.” The Lord longed to eat the Passover with the disciples **before** He suffered, that is, **before** He went to the cross. **The eating and drinking in 21:15-18 were the keeping of the last feast of the Passover** before the institution of the Lord's supper in verses 19 and 20. (Life-Study of Luke, Chapter 49, Section 2)

DAY 1

I. The breaking of bread is to eat the Lord's supper and to attend the Lord's table—Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20; 10:21:

- A. The **Lord's supper** is for His **satisfaction**—11:20:
1. The **emphasis** of the Lord's supper is the **remembrance of the Lord**—vv. 24-25.
 2. The Lord's supper should serve as a **reminder** that we are living on earth **for the Lord's satisfaction**; eating the supper reminds us **to have a life in the church to bring in the kingdom for the satisfaction of the Lord Jesus**—Mark 14:25.

DAY 2

- B. The **Lord's table** refers to the **enjoyment of the Lord in fellowship**—1 Cor. 10:21:
1. The **significance** of the Lord's table is enjoyment **for participation**, enjoyment **for fellowship**—1:9.
 2. Participating in the Lord's table is the best way for us **to be spiritually nourished for our growth in life**—10:3-4; 3:6-7; Eph. 4:16.

DAY 3

II. The Lord's supper, His table, is a symbol of the entire New Testament economy of God—Mark 14:22-26:

- A. **God's economy** in the New Testament age is involved with the **Lord's table**—1 Tim. 1:4; 1 Cor. 10:16-17, 21.
- B. God's New Testament economy is that God **became** flesh, passed through human living, died, resurrected, and became the life-giving Spirit to **enter into us** as our life and to **dispense Himself** into us so that **we may be transformed for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ**—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:16.
- C. God's economy is a matter not of outward things but of **Christ coming into us as food**—John 6:35, 53-57; Mark 7:27-28.
- D. In Mark 14:12-26 the Lord Jesus **partook** of the Feast of the Passover and then **instituted** His supper, His table, **with the bread and the cup**:
1. He initiated this **new practice for the believers' remembrance of Him** to replace the passover feast, the old testament practice of Israel's remembrance of Jehovah's salvation—Exo. 12:14.
 2. The Lord has fulfilled the type and has become the real Passover to us; **now we are keeping the real Feast of Unleavened Bread**—1 Cor. 5:7-8.

DAY 4

- E. This **new practice** of the new testament is **to remember the Lord by eating the bread**, which signifies **His body given for us**, His believers, and **drinking the cup**, which signifies **His blood shed for our sins**—11:24-25; Matt. 26:28:
1. The **bread** denotes **life**, the life of God, the eternal life—John 6:35; 3:15.
 2. The **cup** denotes **blessing**, which is God Himself as our portion—1 Cor. 10:16; Psa. 16:5:
 - a. As sinners, our portion should have been the cup of God's wrath, but the Lord Jesus drank this cup for us—Rev. 14:10; John 18:11.
 - b. The Lord's salvation has become our portion, the cup of salvation that runs over, the content of which is God as our all-inclusive blessing—Psa. 116:13; 23:5.
 3. Such a **bread** and such a **cup** are the **constituents** of the Lord's supper, which is a table, a feast, set up by Him that His believers may **remember Him** by enjoying Him as such a feast—Mark 14:22-24.
 4. **Our eating, drinking, and enjoying the Lord at His supper are our declaration and our testimony**:
 - a. Our **declaration** is that we are **joined** to the Lord and are **mingled** with Him, just as the bread becomes mingled with us after being received into our body—1 Cor. 6:17; John 6:56-57.
 - b. Our **testimony** is that we **live by eating, drinking**, and enjoying the Lord, taking Him as our life every day—1 Cor. 10:3-4.

DAY 5

- F. The Lord Jesus “**took bread and blessed it, and He broke it and gave it to them, and said, Take; this is My body**”—Mark 14:22:
1. The **bread** signifies the Lord's **physical body** that He gave for us on the cross in order **to impart His life into us**—Luke 22:19.
 2. The **bread** also signifies the Lord's **mystical Body**, the means for Christ **to carry out** His heavenly ministry for the accomplishment of the **divine administration**—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; Rev. 5:6.

3. By **participating** in the Lord's divine life, **we become** the **mystical Body of Christ**, His enlargement; by enjoying the bread, we become Christ's mystical Body—1 Cor. 10:17.
4. **Eating** the bread of the Lord's table indicates that **the Lord comes into us as our life supply** and then **becomes us** by being mingled with us—Col. 3:4.
5. In our **remembrance** of the Lord, the bread comes before the cup, because the **bread symbolizes** the Body of Christ as the **focus** of God's original plan and as the ultimate goal of God's eternal purpose—Eph. 3:10-11; 1:22-23.

Throughout the years we have been deeply impressed with the significance of the Lord's table. We know that Jesus' **physical body** was given for the accomplishment of our redemption so that we may enjoy Him in fellowship. Therefore, we often pray, "Lord, thank You for Your redeeming blood. Thank You for redeeming us by shedding Your blood. Lord, we also thank You that you have given Your body on the cross to bear our sins, to die for us, and to terminate the old creation. Lord, now we are here enjoying Your table. You gave Yourself through death and now, in resurrection, You are on the table for our enjoyment." Now we must also be impressed that to eat the Lord's supper is to satisfy Him. It is to give Him our remembrance. This implies that we are here **for the carrying out of God's administration**. In order that God's administration may be carried out, we must care for the oneness of the unique **mystical Body of Christ**. Having such a concern will preserve us in the Body and keep us from any division. If we have this understanding of the Lord's supper, we shall not be divided by anything. Rather, we shall remain in the unique **mystical Body**, **the means for Christ to carry out His heavenly ministry for the accomplishment of the divine administration**. (Life-Study of 1 Corinthians, Chapter 54, Section 2)

DAY 6

- G. The Lord Jesus *"took a cup and gave thanks, and He gave it to them...and He said to them, This is My blood of the covenant, which is being poured out for many"*—Mark 14:23-24:
1. The blood of Christ as the blood of the **new covenant** ushers God's people into the new covenant, in which God gives His people **a new heart, a new spirit, His Spirit, and the inner law of life**—Luke 22:20; Heb. 8:10-12.
 2. Ultimately, the blood of the covenant, the eternal covenant, **leads** God's people into the full enjoyment of God as the **tree of life** and the **water of life** both now and for eternity—13:20; Rev. 7:14, 17; 22:1-2, 14, 17.
- H. By **instituting** His supper, His table, the Lord Jesus indicated to His followers that they would **enter into His death and resurrection**, He prepared them **to receive His death and resurrection**, and He **served** them not only with His body and blood but also with His death, His resurrection, Himself, and His enlargement, His mystical Body—Rom. 6:6; Eph. 2:5-6; 4:16.
- I. The Lord's death, His resurrection, the Lord Himself, and His enlargement are for the producing of **the new man** as the **full development** of the seed of the kingdom—Mark 4:26-29.
- J. **Today the Lord Jesus is still bringing us into the reality of His table for the fulfillment of God's economy**—Matt. 26:26-30; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Eph. 1:10.

THE BREAD-BREAKING MEETING

The **first point** we should emphasize is that we are at the bread-breaking meeting **to remember the Lord**. Therefore, the Lord should be the center. It is unsuitable to offer prayers and supplications at the bread-breaking meeting. Of course, we can thank and praise the Lord through our prayers, but we should not remember our own needs during the bread-breaking meeting. The meeting on the Lord's Day evening is purely for thanksgiving and praise.

According to the light of the Bible, there should be **two sections to the bread-breaking meeting**. **Before** the breaking of bread, **we have the Lord Jesus before us**; **after** the breaking of bread, **we have the Father before us**. Before the breaking of bread, the Lord leads us to remember Himself. Therefore, all thanksgiving and praise should have the Lord as the center; everything should be centered upon the Lord. Before the breaking of bread, we see the Lord Jesus as the only begotten Son; He is the only Son. After the breaking of bread, we see the Lord Jesus as the firstborn Son; we have a share in the Son of God and have become God's many sons. **Before** the breaking of bread, the Lord Jesus is **one grain of wheat**; **after** the breaking of bread, He is the grain that has fallen to the ground and died and **brought forth many grains**. By discerning the Body of Christ, we see the Lord as the firstborn Son, as depicted in Hebrews 2. He is leading many sons into glory, and in the assembly He is leading them to sing praises to the Father. This is what is described in Hymn No. 183 in our Little Flock Hymnal. But this should not be legal; it does not mean that every time we meet we should act this way. If we are willing to learn and follow the Lord's leading, we will be very clear that this kind of spiritual guidance always leads us step by step, onward to the Father. The Lord Jesus first led the disciples to eat the Feast of the Passover. Then they sang a hymn and went to the Mount of Olives. The Songs of Ascents recorded in the Psalms (see the headings of some psalms) were songs the Israelites sang at the Feast of the Passover after they ate the Passover dinner. They sang these songs while they were ascending the stairs. Therefore, **after we partake of the Lord's body, we should ascend to the mountain to praise God. We should allow the Lord to lead us and draw us to the Father**. All of our hymns are hymns of ascent. Our hymns should climb higher and higher after the breaking of bread. This is not just the teaching of the book of Hebrews. The Lord's word, the teaching of the Psalms, and our experience all testify to this. After our salvation, we always thank the Lord first, then praise Him, and then worship God.

The **second point** of emphasis is on learning to follow whatever has begun in the bread-breaking meeting. We are remembering the Lord, but there are many different beginnings for this kind of meeting. Some beginnings emphasize the Lord's **sufferings**, others emphasize the Lord's **glory**, and still others emphasize what the Lord has **passed through**. **We have to pay attention to the way a meeting begins and follow the same line**. No hymn or prayer should come up with another line of emphasis, but they should **strengthen** and **advance** the existing line until the end. There should not be three or four beginnings. Furthermore, **we should never seek for an opportunity to squeeze into the bread-breaking meeting the interesting passages that we have come across during our morning Bible study time or the hymns that we like to sing at other times**. These are things that are related to us personally and should not be things that we do as brothers. We are not in the meeting to take care of our personal relationship with the Lord but of the going on of the meeting in oneness. This is a precious thing. Therefore, the bread-breaking meeting tells us who the good brothers are. Do you care only for your own things, or do you care for the move of the meeting? Sometimes a meeting is about to end, and the thanksgivings and praises are adequate, but a brother suddenly stands up to pray or call another hymn. This becomes redundant.

In a meeting, you should cease from your personal activity and **follow the move of the Body**. If you are in a room by yourself, you can sing or pray at will. But in a meeting, you are not the only one who is present. Therefore, please do not bring feelings that are peculiarly your own into the meeting. Of course, all our thanksgivings and praises are personal; if they are not personal, they are not real and are a speaking before others only. However, even though the meetings are very personal, **we should care for the feeling of the whole Body as well**. This is why we have to follow a line of emphasis.

The same is true with our preaching at the bread-breaking meeting; **we should have the Lord as the center**. It is all right for a brother to read a passage of Scripture **which leads others to the Lord or to remember the Lord**. But there is no need to read other unrelated passages of Scripture. There is no meeting that is as important as the bread-breaking meeting. When we hear a message, we are merely listening to others speak about the Lord, and the goal is for our own benefit. But **the bread-breaking meeting is the time when we meet the Lord and remember Him; it is a time reserved for the Lord Himself**. (The Assembly Life, Chapter 3, Section 1)