

THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST A Reminder Of Five Things Pertaining To Jesus' Death

Introduction

1. During the last Passover meal of which He partook, Jesus instituted a memorial meal using two common elements – unleavened bread and grape juice (Matthew 26:17-30). The spiritual significance of these two elements is explained by Jesus Himself: (i) of the bread, He said, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19), and (ii) of the grape juice He said, “This cup¹ is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:20).
2. The Lord’s church was established in A.D. 33 in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (a Jewish feast day) – The apostle Peter preached the first gospel sermon and three thousand believers were immersed into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:14-41). It was from that time forward that Christians began observing the Lord’s Supper (Acts 2:42) every Sunday (Acts 20:7).
3. Later, we see that the church at Corinth had “forgotten” the spiritual significance of this meal and turned it into a common meal, and so Paul had to correct them by reminding them of Jesus’ words: (i) Concerning the bread, Jesus said, “This is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me” (1 Corinthians 11:24), and (ii) Concerning the grape juice, Jesus said, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me” (1 Corinthians 11:25).
 - a. As we partake of the bread and the grape juice we “proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26).
 - b. In view of the grave realities that the Lord’s Supper represents, it is essential to partake of the two elements (the bread and the grape juice) in the right spirit by reflecting on Jesus’ death (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).
4. In this lesson we shall remind ourselves of five things: (i) The need that prompted Jesus’ death, (ii) The love that was demonstrated by Jesus’ death, (iii) The church that was purchased by Jesus’ death, (iv) The terrible punishment from which we are delivered by Jesus’ death, and, (v) The hope that we have as a result of Jesus’ death.



I. THE NEED THAT PROMPTED JESUS’ DEATH

1. God created man upright (Ecclesiastes 7:29), but sin entered the world through one man (Genesis 3:1-7), and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned (Romans 5:12). In order to prove that all men have sinned and are under condemnation, the apostle Paul strings together two passages from the scriptures (Psalms 14:1-3; 53:1-3): “There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one” (Romans 3:10-12, 23).
2. God is just (Psalms 7:11; Isaiah 45:21) and this means that all who have sinned must be punished for their sins (Hebrews 9:27), and the punishment is physical death (Genesis 3:19; Ezekiel 18:4) and eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord (Romans 6:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10). However, the good news is that God has revealed a way of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16-17; 3:21-26). Charles Box says, “Except for the death of Jesus we would be forever lost; but through His blood, thank God I’m saved!”

The wages of sin is death and God could have justly left all men to suffer eternal destruction from His presence. It was sin that prompted the need for salvation and God’s love that filled the need.

¹ “This cup” is a figure of speech...it is the grape juice that represents Jesus’ blood. Jesus placed no spiritual significance on the actual cup that contained the grape juice and no spiritual significance on the table from which He took the bread. Both the cup and the table are incidentals. There are only two elements that Jesus blessed – bread and grape juice. To add further elements (a cup and a table) and place upon them some spiritual significance is to do something that Jesus never authorised.

II. THE LOVE THAT WAS DEMONSTRATED BY JESUS' DEATH

1. As we said, God is just (Psalms 7:11; Isaiah 45:21), which means He cannot forgive us of our sins unless justice is met. It was God's love for us that prompted Him to provide a sacrifice for our sins in which the demands of justice would be met. The blood of goats and bulls could not take away sins (Hebrews 10:4), but Jesus our High Priest entered the Most Holy Place with His own blood (Hebrews 9:11-12).
2. It was because of God's love for us that "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:2). The depth of Christ's love for us is seen in the fact that He died, not while we were His friends, but while we were still His enemies. Paul says, "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8). F.M. Lehman wrote, "Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the skies of parchment made; were every stalk on earth a quill and every man a scribe by trade; to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry; nor could the scroll contain the whole tho stretched from sky to sky. O love of God how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forever more endure the saints and angels song."

"May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God" (Ephesians 3:19).

III. THE CHURCH THAT WAS PURCHASED BY JESUS' DEATH

1. The church does not consist of the thousands of religious organisations founded by men; rather, it consists of individuals that the Lord purchased with His own blood. Speaking to the elders from the church at Ephesus, Paul said, "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). The apostle Peter reminds us that we were "not redeemed with corruptible things...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 18-19).
2. Since the Lord purchased the church with His own blood, it is essential to know for certain that we are members of His church. We do not join the church, but the Lord Himself adds us to His church when we are saved: "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). If a person desires to be added to the Lord's church, then it is essential to be saved, and a study of Acts chapter two reveals what one must do to be saved.



IV. THE TERRIBLE PUNISHMENT FROM WHICH WE ARE DELIVERED BY JESUS' DEATH

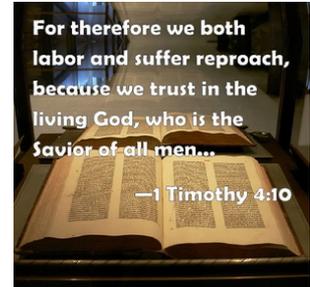
1. Eternal punishment is not something we like to think about and yet it is a reality the majority of the human race will suffer: "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:11-15).
2. Jesus gave Himself for our sins that He might "deliver us from this present evil age" (Galatians 1:4). This refers to the "wicked spirit of the age" that pressures us to conform to its standards. The scriptures teach us higher moral standards, values, and a new hope of eternal life. This is why Paul says, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2). Thus, if we allow ourselves to be renewed in the spirit of our minds (Ephesians 4:23; Colossians 3:10), then we are being delivered from this present evil age (cp. Acts 2:40). It is those who overcome this present evil age that will be delivered from the "second death" (Revelation 2:10-11). "The blood of Jesus provides our only escape from eternal hell. No other religion or 'savior' has any hope to offer" (Charles Box).

V. THE HOPE THAT WE HAVE AS A RESULT OF JESUS' DEATH

1. Having been delivered from eternal punishment (cp. John 5:24), we now live in hope of a resurrection from the dead (Acts 24:15), of being like Christ (1 John 3:2), and of eternal life. Paul spoke of "The hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Colossians 1:5). It is this hope of salvation that we wear as a helmet (1 Thessalonians 5:8) and which is an anchor for the soul (Hebrews 6:19).
2. If we truly have this hope or expectation, then we will purify ourselves, just as He is pure (1 John 3:3). Paul puts it this way: "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). Without holiness no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).

Conclusion

1. In this lesson we have reminded ourselves of five things pertaining to Jesus' death: (i) The need that prompted Jesus' death, (ii) The love that was demonstrated by Jesus' death, (iii) The church that was purchased by Jesus' death, (iv) The terrible punishment from which we are delivered by Jesus' death, and, (v) The hope that we have as a result of Jesus' death. Perhaps this reminder will help us to partake of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner as we discern the Lord's body (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).
2. Jesus is the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14), but not all men will be saved! This is because Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9). What we must do to be saved depends on where we are:
 - a. If you have heard the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-4), then you must believe it (Acts 16:31).
 - b. If you believe the gospel, then you must repent (Act 2:38; 3:19).
 - c. If you are willing to turn from your sin (repent), then you must confess that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:8-10).
 - d. If you have confessed that Jesus is Lord, then you must be baptised for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:20-21).



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The foundation for this sermon was an article written by Charles Box, Walnut Street Church of Christ, Greenville, Alabama.