

"Bread"
Matthew 26:26-28

March 28,2013

Maundy Thursday

Our object for tonight is bread. Sometimes, bread is called the STAFF of life. That means bread is a very basic food. When a prisoner is punished and the authorities want to give him a basic diet, they give him bread and water. Bread is also a very common (normal) food. If you travel throughout the world and go to different countries, you will find various foods. Each country has different foods, but every country has bread. Eating bread is very necessary to support our lives.

Suppose we did not eat. Some people in Africa and other places do not have enough food and cannot eat. Some people have a disease like anorexia nervosa (thin sick). In this disease, people refuse to eat. What happens to these people? Without food, we cannot live. People who do not eat, for whatever reason, become very thin and will eventually die. However, if you were starving and someone fed you bread, your health would improve and you would become stronger. Bread could support your body and lives. Therefore, bread is very important.

Bread is also very important for our worship tonight. Tonight is called MAUNDY Thursday. Long ago, Jesus ate a special supper with His disciples called Passover. During that meal, our Lord Jesus Christ took ordinary bread and wine and used them for a very special purpose. We call that the Lord's Supper. But why bread? Why wine? These ordinary foods teach us an important lesson and give us God's greatest blessings.

We all have a body, but we have more. We all have a soul. We have physical lives, but we all also have spiritual lives. All of our spiritual lives have a problem like anorexia nervosa (thin sick), but much worse. Our spiritual problem is called sin. This problem is not the refusal to eat food. (In fact, many of us eat too much food). We have refused to obey God's will and His Laws. God commands us not to do some things: lie, cheat, be greedy (hungry for money), steal, gossip, hate, and many other things. But we do those things and we enjoy it. God commands us to do many

things: to humbly serve other people, love other people as we love ourselves, to give generously our money and things to help the poor and support God's work, and many other things. But we often fail to do those things. Often, we don't even want to do those things. We choose to follow our wants and ignore His will. We establish our own rules for living while ignoring His Laws.

If we ignore food and refuse to eat, our physical health will decline and our body will die. We can't avoid that. In the same way, if we ignore God's Law and refuse to obey Him - sin, then our spiritual life will decline and our soul will die. We can't avoid that either. This means hell, an eternal separation from God. We are in great danger. We need food for our souls or we will die. We need someone to feed us.

Our Lord Jesus did just that and He used ordinary food to do that. Jesus took ordinary bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to His disciples and said, "Take and eat. This is my body given for you." Then Jesus took a cup of ordinary wine, gave thanks, and gave it to His disciples and said, "Take and drink all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

We have that same Supper when we gather together here in church. When I was a young kid, I thought this was pretty neat. We have part of our worship service and stop for a break because we are hungry and thirsty. We have a meal (eat/drink), and then finish worship. This was a misunderstanding. Jesus established the His (Lord's) Supper, not to feed our bodies, but to feed our souls. That little amount of bread and wine cannot help us physically, but it does wonderful things for our souls. Jesus transformed that ordinary bread and ordinary wine and added something to it. To the bread, Jesus added His body and to the wine Jesus added His blood. Jesus said, "Take and eat...this is my Body. Take and drink...this is my blood."

Why did Jesus do this? Jesus said that this "is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Jesus established the Lord's Supper on a Thursday. On the next day -- Friday -- Jesus offered up His body on a cross and poured out His blood on that cross for the forgiveness for all your sins.

When you come forward to this altar, you receive in your mouth Jesus' very body and Jesus' very blood. This is Jesus' promise to you that your sins are forgiven. You have no more guilt. You have no more conflict with God. You have peace with God. You are no longer His enemies because of your sin, but you are His friends because of Jesus.

And, as you receive this wonderful gift with other Christians, you realize that you are not alone. You share a common faith with the people here tonight. We have a special relationship with one another. We are not just church members, not just friends, but we are brothers and sisters in Christ's family. We are here to love, help, and support one another through all the trials and tribulations of life.

I'm sure you use a lot of bread every day. When you are hungry, I'm sure you go into the kitchen and make a sandwich. Your hunger is satisfied. Tonight, if you hunger for forgiveness for sins, comfort for guilt and peace with God, that spiritual hunger can be satisfied. I cannot feed your bodies here, but I can feed your souls with the most wonderful spiritual food. Tonight, we will use ordinary bread and ordinary wine, but Jesus Christ, the Son of God will come and be present among us – His body with the bread and His blood with the wine. He will speak to each of you, "My daughter, your sins are forgiven...My son, your sins are forgiven. Go in peace." My brothers and sisters in Christ, the banquet is about to begin. Come, let your soul be satisfied. Amen.