

# What's For Supper?

As we continue our series on what we believe, let's examine the ninth (part 2) of the 22 tenets in the Foursquare Declaration of Faith. **The Lord's Supper: We believe in remembering Jesus' death as we observe the Lord's Supper by receiving the symbols of the bread and juice of the vine and rejoice in His triumph over death on the cross** (1 Corinthians 11:24-26).

The Lord's Supper (or Communion) is one of only two ordinances Jesus initiated for His church (the other being Water Baptism). The Passover celebration from the Old Covenant was reinstated in the New Covenant with the added realization that Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, would be the final sacrifice for all sin (Exodus 11 – 12:30; Jeremiah 31:31-34; John 1:29). The Jews looked ahead in their Passover to their coming Messiah; Christians look back in the Lord's Supper to the finished work of that Messiah, the firstborn Son of God. His blood has been applied to the "doorposts" of our hearts to spare us from spiritual death and give us eternal life. This moment and the moments we spend remembering it, change the way we look at everything in our lives, especially our relationships with each other.

## 1. A Historical Perspective

Just as the Jews were set free from Egyptian slavery and were spared judgment by the blood of the Passover lamb, those of us who follow Christ today are set free from the bondage of Satan and our own sin. The judgment we deserve "passes over" us when the blood of Christ is applied to our lives. When Jesus sat down with His disciples to celebrate their last Passover together, He reinterpreted each part of the ceremony and applied it to Himself (Luke 22:14-20). Then He applied it to His disciples and us by modelling an attitude that always seeks to serve others selflessly and sacrificially. This attitude affects everything we do (Philippians 2:1-15).

## 2. A Theological Perspective

Different streams of Christianity have interpreted what Jesus did and said about this ordinance in very different ways.

- Transubstantiation (eg. Catholic view) – The belief that the emblems of communion (or the Eucharist) become the actual physical body and blood of Jesus when blessed by the priest. Only the priest may touch these emblems before they reach the church member's mouth.
- Consubstantiation (eg. Lutheran) – The belief that, though the emblems are unchanged, the actual body and blood of Jesus are mystically present with the emblems when they are consumed.
- Memorial – The Lord's Supper is merely a memorial service and there is no physical or spiritual transformation associated with the ceremony.
- Orthodox (eg. most evangelical churches) – There is no physical transformation of the emblems but reminding ourselves of their spiritual significance can transform our lives.

Good exegesis requires an understanding of context. The words Jesus said about eating His body and drinking His blood (John 6:22-63) are best understood by the qualifying verse: *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life* (v.63).

Jesus was talking about a very real spiritual identification, but not a physical one.

## 3. A Practical Perspective

Right after the Lord's Supper, Jesus applied it to His disciples and all of us. It has everything to do with how we treat each other – serving not striving (Luke 22:23-27). Then He modelled that attitude by washing their feet, commanding them to show the same kind of sacrificial service to each other (John 13:1-17). It's not easy to always live like that – that is why we regularly remember the Lord's sacrifice for us through the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.