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The Beginning Of Communion Pastor Charles Mendenhall

Many partakers of communion in church services today have no idea as to what they are doing or why they are participating in a communion service, but the scriptures are very clear regarding what the Lord has set up for the church. The Passover or communion was originally set up as a memorial for the children of Israel as they were about to leave Egypt and the slavery that they had been under for the past 400+ years. It was to be a feast that they would remember and share generation to generation for ever with their families and why they were to take of the Passover feast and what happened at the first Passover. It provided them with protection, they experienced deliverance, not one feeble person among them and they were provided with an abundance of resources, they also had an expectancy and readiness of where they were to go. It was such an important event that He even changed their calendar years; it provided them a fresh beginning. The children of Israel had been under such heavy bondage for so many years that they did not realize their own self worth, all they knew was slavery, did not know what it was like to be free, their mentality was only of being a slave.

Exo 12:14, 23-27 "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. 23 For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. 24 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. 25 And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. 26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? 27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped." KJV

In the body of Christ today, many times the mentality that born again people have, is that of shame and unworthiness from past experiences, they don't realize that they are sons and daughters of God and Jesus sees them as forgiven and whole, the Father views them as the very righteousness of Jesus because they have been given the gift of righteousness by accepting Jesus. They can only see themselves as unworthy, the Father doesn't see them that way but totally complete in Him, without the sense of guilt or condemnation around them. The Father sees through the finished work of Jesus.

Isa 43:19 "Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; *shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert." KJV

* can't you see it? (in other translations) the wilderness has no direction, there is no hope, seems like God has forgotten you, He is going to make a road and cause rivers to spring forth where there is no life or sustance

We should be able to see that God is making a way in the wilderness of our lives for us, His

word proclaims that He is and He wants us to be an oasis and prosper in those areas of our lives. His plan for us is that we would be free from the boundaries that the enemy has tried to keep us confined in, we are not to be in darkness, we were made to be sons and daughters of God, to be conquerors and overcomers.

In reading the book of Exodus we learn that the children of Israel were more comfortable being as they were in slavery and bondage, they were not happy with having Moses as their leader and were ready to return to Egypt, they had no faith in what was planned for their future. Their boundaries had been set for them and that was all they knew to do. God was wanting to give them a new life, things would be different, they weren't made to be servants and slaves.

The lamb was to be without spot or blemish and we are taught in the epistles that Jesus was our Passover lamb without spot or blemish. The emphasis under the old covenant was the perfection of the lamb to be sacrificed. Under the new covenant Jesus was the lamb without spot or blemish, the sacrifice has already been made and the perfection is not on the one that is accepting Him, but is on Jesus. When we come to Jesus we don't have to worry about all the mistakes, but come to Him just like we are, because now we are in Him and receive Him as our personal Savior, now the Father sees us through Him without spot or wrinkle.

The lamb prepared was to be shared among the families present, depending on the size of the family, if not many in the family, than it was to shared with others, if they were unable to consume or eat all of it, the remaining portion was to be burned. They were to partake of all of it, not just choice cuts.

Jesus, being our Passover lamb, means that we are to partake of all that He provides for each of us, everything that we need is in Him; physical healing, our emotions to be made whole, there is prosperity, happiness, peace and joy, the wisdom of God with divine inspired ideas coming from Him, all of that is in Jesus. The children of Israel were to partake of the lamb, dressed and ready to go, He wanted them in a sense of expectancy, He was doing everything that He could, to do a new thing, making a road in the wilderness for them.

v. 14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever

v. 23 explains what they were to do with the lamb that was slain, how to apply the blood for their protection

There was significance in the blood and it was explained how they were to apply the blood to the door posts and over the top, the blood would be the protection from the destroyer that would be passing through that night, everything and all the first born of the land of Egypt would die. This is the foundation that communion is founded on, the foundational part of the feast was the Passover lamb. There will be protection for all and this shall be an ordinance to all of your sons and you will tell them as they begin to ask, what everything was about and that the sacrifice of the lamb became Passover for them.

This part of the Passover or communion service has been lost somewhat over the years and most of the church people today, do not realize the importance of telling others what the communion service signifies and what part of the service is our responsibility. It has become a ritual that is celebrated in most churches, without realizing there has to be an inwardly and not

just an outward approach to it.

We are told in Peter the importance of the blood that Jesus being without spot or blemish sacrificed for sin, how that the blood just doesn't cover sin, but blots it out completely. The Old Testament people under the old covenant, looked to the future in regards to the lamb or Jesus, however the New Testament believers look back and remember, under the new covenant knowing that Jesus was the lamb who fulfilled the sacrifice for our sins. Jesus' blood is in heaven on the mercy seat and because of the shedding of His blood, there is no more sacrifice for sin. Under the old covenant there was a yearly remembrance of sin which had to be covered with new sacrifices, but under the new covenant, all sin has been forgiven and covered with the blood of Jesus.

The following scriptures have more information regarding the communion service. There is no place in scripture that tell us how often we are to take communion, we should be having communion daily with Jesus, however, the early church took of it daily until their funds ran out. It was more of a feast, that is not how we participate in our services. Paul is writing to the church to correct error that had occurred in remembering the Passover from before. It was written not to do away with but to make some correction.

1 Cor 11:18-30 "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. 20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. 21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? what shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. 23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my *blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." KJV

*blood usually refers to covenant

1 Cor 11:18-30 "For in the first place, when you assemble as a congregation, I hear that there are cliques (divisions and factions) among you; and I in part believe it, 19 For doubtless there have to be factions *or* parties among you in order that they who are genuine *and* of approved fitness may become evident *and* plainly recognized among you. 20 So when you gather for your meetings, it is not the supper instituted by the Lord that you eat, 21 For in eating each one [hurries] to get his own supper first [not waiting for the poor], and one goes hungry while another gets drunk. 22 What! Do you have no houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God *and* mean to show contempt for it, while you humiliate those who are poor (have no homes and have brought no food)? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, [most certainly] I will not! 23 For I received from the Lord Himself that which I passed on to you [it was given to me personally], that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was treacherously delivered up *and* while His betrayal was in progress took bread, 24 And when He had given thanks, He broke [it] and said, Take, eat. This is My body, which is broken for you. Do this to call Me [affectionately] to remembrance. 25 Similarly when supper was ended, He took the cup also, saying, This cup is the new covenant [ratified and established] in My blood. Do this, as often

as you drink [it], to call Me [affectionately] to remembrance. 26 For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are representing *and* signifying *and* proclaiming the fact of the Lord's death until He comes [again]. 27 So then whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in a way that is unworthy [of Him] will be guilty of [profaning and sinning against] the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a man [thoroughly] examine himself, and [only when he has done] so should he eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discriminating *and* recognizing with due appreciation that [it is Christ's] body, eats and drinks a sentence (a verdict of judgment) upon himself. 30 That [careless and unworthy participation] is the reason many of you are weak and sickly, and quite enough of you have fallen into the sleep of death. "AMP

v. 19 - For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. KJV

v. 19 - For doubtless there have to be factions *or* parties among you in order that they who are genuine *and* of approved fitness may become evident *and* plainly recognized among you. AMP

There must be no divisions or strife among groups, some teaching something different than what Paul was teaching, not coming together to take communion leaving some people out or getting drunk, but to eat before coming in order to partake of the communion service recognizing that it is Jesus body that you are partaking of, that you should be discerning or examining one's self. It is important that we judge ourselves, not eating or drinking judgment on ourselves. Coming together in meetings with the emphasis on food, it should not be, Jesus must be the main thing that has brought us together. Remembering and giving an offering to the poor at this time is also appropriate, we cannot only be thinking about ourselves and become selfish. There needs to be an attitude of reverence and respect, not to shame the house of God.

Eph 2:21-22 "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." KJV

We are the temple of the Lord and as we come together corporately it gives the Holy Spirit a place to carry on His work through us always being respectful. What are we doing as we partake of the bread? Are we remembering that Jesus' body was broken for us?

1 Cor 10:16-17 "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the *communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." KJV

v. 16 - The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

*communion means partnership or fellowship to be a companion

This is a time that we discern other members in the body of Christ, we cannot approach with an attitude that we are better than someone else. The cup of blessing is a sense of expectation, God is getting ready to do a new thing making a way in the wilderness, putting ourselves in remembrance that the blood is protection and deliverance, our sins are blotted out, with no remembrance. The bread that we break is the body of Jesus and we are all partakers of that one bread, not just our group but all believers. We remember how and why His body was broken for us in order that we might have healing from the stripes that He took on His back. We need to be teaching our children like they were in Exodus how and why communion is so important.

1 Cor 10:21 "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's

table, and of the table of devils." KJV

We have to decide whether we want to have communion with darkness or light. We want to be partakers with Jesus, we can't ride the fence.

1 Cor 5:7-8 "Purge out therefore the old *leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of **malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." KJV

* leaven being a type of sin, yeast that spreads and effects the whole body, is cancerous

** malice means not excellent in character not a good quality if it takes on evil habits, wickedness is evil pursuits and desires

This sin that was allowed to come into the church had spread and was beginning to affect the whole church and must be dealt with. Paul teaches that the sin must be purged out in order for there to be sincerity and truth.

1 Cor 11:31-34 "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. 33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. *And the rest will I set in order when I come.*" KJV

v. 34 - And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come

God's first priority is that we judge ourselves. He is gracious and gives us a long season to make correction; does He judge us to destroy? Or in order that we won't be condemned with the world? In judging a situation, He may bring to us something that needs to be corrected, at which time we usually will make correction. In reference to communion, what is He going to set in order when He comes? Gods discipline always points to restoration not destruction. He is full of grace and mercy that comes with sincerity and truth.

In taking communion we need to take a course correction, judging ourselves. Putting ourselves in remembrance of what Jesus did for us.

Where is the church now?

Heb 12:1 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us," KJV

Moses partook of the Passover by faith.

Heb 11:23-29 "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. 24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. 28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. 29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned." KJV