**Sunday 14th May 2017 Message**

**Division and Unforgiveness Can Kill You Part 1**

**Introduction**

This morning and next week we will have the Lord’s Table set before us so that we may gain revelation as to its purpose and the power it brings to our lives. Once a month in our Sunday services and occasionally in our midweek meetings we corporately partake of the Lords Supper. God has laid it on my heart to ensure that we understand why the Lord instituted this meal for us, and that we participate in it with a correct understanding of what we are doing.

After all we do not want to find ourselves in the place of the church of Corinth to whom Paul wrote:

***1 Cor 11:30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. NKJV***

This was the singular reason that Paul identified for the people in that church being weak, sick and dying prematurely. The church at that time was living in supernatural health of body, soul and spirit. James wrote

***James 5:14-16 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. NKJV***

The implication is that they did not expect anyone to remain sick, and if they were they were to ask for prayer.

What is on offer in the kingdom of God given to us by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the opposite to that which Paul said in 1 Cor 11:30

**If we partake of the Lords Supper properly then we would be**

**Strong not weak**

**Healthy not sick**

**Enjoying long life not dying prematurely**

**What do you see? What do you believe?**

A couple of weeks ago we looked at what those who visited the tomb after Jesus’ resurrection “Saw” and how they missed certain realities by the way they looked at things. That is true for us as we look at the Lord’s supper we can look at its meaning with different perspectives.

Before I was burdened to share about the Lord’s Supper I was going to preach on the next story of Johns Gospel. That of Thomas seeing Jesus for the first time.

***John 20:24-29 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So, he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."***

***NKJV***

Thomas wanted to **eido** see and touch in order to be sure that Jesus was alive, even though he had no reason to doubt the words of other disciples that they had seen. Jesus lovingly presented Himself to Thomas and invited him to perceive and touch. It does not tell us that Thomas put his hands in the wounds, but it does tell us he has supernatural revelation as he responds ***My Lord and my God***

You can look at this table and see the elements, the bread and the fruit of the vine, but we need a supernatural revelation of their importance, significance and power and that is why Jesus invited us to partake of this meal in REMEMBRANCE of Him. Do not consider this table as a ritual, or partake of it without thought, to do so with be to partake of it in an unworthy manner. If Jesus’ took time to share this meal with His disciples to teach us to do the same then it is highly significant and it deserves our careful attention.

Today I believe we should consider spend time thinking of the significance of the fruit of the vine, the cup that we share, and come into union with Christ’s blood. Next week we shall spend time considering the bread that eat and come into union with Christ’s body.

**There is power in the blood.**

Would you be free from your burden of sin – there is power in the blood.

***1 Cor 11:25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." NKJV***

Whenever we partake of this cup, just like Jesus did we give thanks “eucharis” for the blood shed for us, and we REMEMBER what Jesus has achieved by the shedding of His blood.

***Matt 26:28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.***

***Mark 14:24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.***

***Luke 22:20 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.***

***Hebrews 9:22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. NKJV***

The three gospels and Hebrews make it plain that His blood was shed for us for the remission of sins once and for all. For sins past, present and future. Baptism does not remove our sins, drinking this cup does not remove our sins, repentance does not remove the judgement due for our sins, it is the blood of Jesus that removes the judgement for our sins.

When we partake of this cup we give thanks and REMEMBER it is absolutely nothing that we have done that removes the judgement for our sins, it’s His blood hallelujah.

When I come to this table I do not come sin focused, I come blood focused.

***Lev 17:11For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.'***

***NKJV***

**His blood was shed to cleanse everything tainted by sin as foreshadowed in the OT offerings.**

How do we welcome a habitation – we cannot do anything but there are some prerequisites

He delights and responds to openness, brokenness, expectancy and a covering blood.

Where ever you look in the OT you find there was blood shed before the manifest presence. Jesus said that He would be present in the kingdom when this meal was shared. His Presence is symbolized in the elements and activated in our minds and hearts when we REMEMBER Him what this means.

Concept of judgement and punishment is politically incorrect – a righteous judge requires punishment. A sacrifice for the sins of the world must be made so man could be reconciled with God. Who would want a God who was not just?

This Table was instituted at Passover, the time Gods people REMEMBERED their deliverance from Egypt because of the blood on the door frames. Passover – blood on the lintels – the destroyer passed over the blood covered door.

Likewise the Destroyer cannot take our spiritual lives because of the blood on the cross. Fresh blood is no attraction to flies, but dried blood is. Beelzebub, lord of the flies, will be attracted to us if we consider this cup as representative of something that is not alive and powerful.

In fact at the Passover meal Jesus was sharing He used the third cup of the meal known as the cup of REMEMBRANCE.

Remembering Gods salvation works are highly important to God, that’s why we read of altars being built, memorial stones by the Jordan, and other occasions where God calls the people to remember through feasts, festivals and symbols.

Let us look at what God foreshadowed in the OT blood offerings

***Ex 24:6 And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar.***

***Ex 29:12 horns of the altar, base of the altar, around the altar.***

Jesus’ altar the cross was likely covered in blood from the scouring on his back, from the crown of thorns on His head, the nails that pierced His hands and feet, and the spear that pierced His side.

The blood was placed around the altar to cleanse even the ground from where sins had been committed.

The offering was complete for the sins of all and just as the High Priest would be declaring in the Temple, at the time Jesus died, as he made sacrifice he would say “It is finished”.

***Ex 24:8 And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words."***

The blood was placed on the priests, just as it is applied to us as the royal priesthood. Jesus our great High Priest had blood on His ears, toes, thumbs and garments

***29:20 on the ear of the priests, on the thumbs, on the big toes, on the garments, Also in***

The blood covers every part of us that would enter into sin, our hands, our feet, our ears, our eyes, our head and our clothes. The covering of blood you need on every part of your body that would yield to sin, even the ground around you was completely over Jesus.

***Leviticus 4, 8***

**Jesus shed blood for you not just on the cross.**

***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?***

We have a common union with Christ in His blood and His body. So let us remember all the times and reasons His blood was shed for us.

When Jesus approached Jerusalem and the Garden of Gethsemane He crossed the Brook in the Kidron Valley. This would have been a “scary” reminder of what was ahead of Him. In this brook would be flowing the blood from all the animals being sacrificed in the Temple. From the temple little gulley’s had been made to take the blood away outside the city. Jesus knew this was the end of animal sacrifice and it would be His blood that washed the whole earth.

In the garden as He agonized in prayer His sweat was filled with drops of blood. A rare recognized medical condition known as “heamatisdrosis” where in cases of extreme stress and anxiety the blood vessels at the base of millions of sweat capillaries rupture and copious amounts of blood are mixed with sweat. For most people who have suffered this they normally go into shock and die.

I like to think that Jesus’ blood was shed to cleanse me from the effects of all stress which could lead to premature death, because Jesus overcame.

The crown of thorns and purple robe were put on Jesus. The soldiers beat the crown on His head, which bleeds very readily, as they mocked Him, and spat on Him.

I like to think that no matter what abuse and mockery I encounter in life is cleansed from tormenting my mind by the blood that flowed from Jesus’ head.

***Matt 27:26 Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified. Luke 18:33, John 19:1***

Then Jesus was scourged, strung up to a high pole so He could not flinch or move away, as the Roman soldiers lashed him with flagellums with embedded bone and metal that punctured and tore the skin off his body so His muscles, bones and inner organs became exposed. Normally a person was scourged and died as a result of scourging and blood loss, or crucified not both, but God has it planned for a reason.

I like to think that every knife stuck in my back, everything thrown at me to break me has been washed away because of the blood that Jesus shed whilst He was scourged.

Then of course He continued to bleed as they put the robe back on Him and took it off later. Caused Him to carry His cross on the shoulders which would have been torn during the scourging. Then He was nailed through the wrists and feet to a cross where any sins committed by my hands, or walked into by my feet, were washed clean.

Then He was pierced and His broken heart, which shed blood and water, tells me that any broken heart can be cleansed by the blood of the Lamb.

The life changing effects of every sin, every hurt, every pain I have ever suffered and will suffer has been dealt with by the blood Jesus shed, hallelujah.

**Preparation for partaking of the power and work of the blood**

***1 Corinthians 11:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.***

Examine – not to exclude from the table

Like wash your hands before a meal is an instruction parents will give to children not to exclude them from eating. But to protect them from poisoning themselves by what’s on their hands

***1 Corinthians 11:29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.***

Unworthy Manner– not recognizing the work completed, seeing its significance, accepting the completed work. No one is worthy.

Discerning – recognizing the relevance of the elements and the power represented in them

Context ensuring there is no division or unforgiveness to brothers and sisters. Eating and drinking in separate groups etc. c early part of 1 Cor 11

Ie their hands were dirty with division and unforgiveness which was totally contrary to the work of the cross. Therefore, their unworthy manner was not remembering the work of the cross.

***1 Cor 11:32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.***

The judgement we bring upon ourselves is chastening by worldly curses which we are meant to live clean from.

**Judas**

Jesus instituted this meal on the night He was betrayed. It is incredible that Jesus shared the Lord’s supper Judas. Judas drank judgement upon himself and ended up dead as a consequence.

**Frequency**

Jesus did not prescribe a frequency for partaking of communion. The early church always did it on the first day of the week and sadly we have drifted away from that. They also appear to have shared it daily in their homes. Interestingly the foreshadow of the communion table in the tabernacle was the table of showbread in the Holy Place which was before the Lord always and eaten by the priests weekly, as a celebration of God’s presence, the bread of presence.

I encourage you to share communion in your cell groups particularly over the next two weeks. We will make communion available every week for individual sharing, and share corporately monthly. Whenever prayer ministry is being received I would recommend you partake of the Lords Table.

**Matzo**