

'RIGHT AND READY'

(Sunday Bible Study Series – Ready or Not, Jesus is Coming!)
Studies in 1 Thessalonians

'Remember Me'

1 Corinthians 11:23-32

*“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes”*

The 'Lord's Table' is so important that He gave special instructions about it to the Apostle Paul in his 3-year wilderness theological training following his conversion to Christ (*Galatians 1:15-18*). Of course, the Savior could have taught Paul about this special ordinance at some other time prior to his writing about it to the Corinthian church a quarter century later (AD 55) but the fact remains that *'the Lord's Supper'* is an important part of the obedient Christian's life. Certainly, a main reason for Christ's post-ascension, additional education about *communion* was because He knew that this precious observance of His followers would be corrupted and abused later throughout the centuries of the Church Age 'til He comes. Satan has indeed corrupted the beautifully simple *table of remembrance* through his ancient, incredibly effective too much - too little strategy.

The enemy is notorious for adding to and taking away from God's Word in everything Scripture commands. Through the serpent in the Garden of Eden, Satan both took away from and added to God's command to Adam regarding *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* (*you won't die and you will be gods*). Continuing from that time, he follows that successful strategy in misleading multitudes about the simple truth in other things of God. This is especially true regarding biblical ordinances (not *sacraments*, which means *to convey grace through good works*). There are two Christian ordinances which are very important signs of true conversion and commitment, baptism, and communion. Both have been corrupted by Satan and all the devious religious systems under his control (1 John 5:18-19). Believer's baptism (not 'infant baptism' which has no basis in the Bible) is to be by immersion as the important first step of discipleship (*Matthew 18:19*). But false teachers add too much, saying baptism saves from sin, while others take away by saying baptism isn't at all necessary. Baptism illustrates one's relationship with God through faith in Christ; **The Lord's Table** pictures the fellowship believers have with God in Christ. The precious 'Lord's Table' ordinance has been corrupted from being a blessed time of solemn thanks, fellowship and recommitment to Christ to something *more or less* than what was intended.

Some refuse to observe communion, proudly saying *we don't need to remember because we never forget!* making far 'too little' of communion. On the other hand, Roman Catholicism makes far too much of communion, teaching that it actually becomes Jesus' body and blood (*transubstantiation*), repeating Christ's sacrificial atonement over and over, again and again (*this is heresy according to Hebrews 10:10-17*). Similarly, Lutheran theology erroneously teaches a sort of compromised RCC position that Jesus is literally *present in and with the bread and wine* (*consubstantion*) tangibly conveying spiritual merit to the partaker (*this is still 'grace through a good work' / Titus 3:5-7*). Satan's best schemes for deluding multitudes of people into hell is to use religion in manipulating God's Word with *too little or too much* interpretation. A general rule seems to be that when the Holy Spirit is not in a religious denomination or group there will be a tendency of that group to take literally what God meant symbolically and take symbolically what God meant to be taken literally.

To Christians, God has given two simple beautiful *ordinances* which we are obliged to understand symbolically and participate in literally – baptism by immersion (*symbolic of what we believe and are committed to as Christians*) and **the Lord's Table** (*the bread & grape drink are symbols of what we believe our sins did to Jesus' body, and what we know is the only way of forgiveness for all of our sins – His sacrificial, substitutionary pouring out of His blood*). These are the things committed Christians gladly do 'till He comes'. They help us remember and express how awesome Jesus is to us and how dedicated we are to sharing His gospel with others. They also help us live righteously as our love gift to God in all we do. Pause

and **remember**, these are simple things we do, just to say: *'thank You Lord, we remember and worship You 'till You come' and forever. PtL*

*"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 body of Christ?
For we, though many, are one bread and one body;
for we all partake of that one bread."
1 Corinthians 10:15-17*

'The Worthy Walk'
(*The Spiritual Stride of 'The Saved'*)
1 Thessalonians 2:12-20

A Scriptural, Spiritual Race

"...walk worthy of God Who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. For this reason we thank God without ceasing, because when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe."2:12-13

A Steady, Sturdy Pace

"For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from you own countrymen just as they did from the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost." 2:14-16

But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. Therefore we wanted to come to you – even I, Paul, time and again – but Satan hindered us." 2:17-18

A Sprint to the Finish

"For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy." 2:19-20