

*“This do in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:24)*

We are going to spend some time today examining the Lord's Supper. We're going to take a look at the who, what, when, where, why and how of this ordinance of the New Testament church. The Lord's Supper is one of those banner indicators of a church, and how we treat it, how we understand it, how we identify with it should be a marker to anyone who is looking for a church of God in this day and age. It is one of those foundational issues that if you don't take seriously, understand it properly, execute it accurately, I'm not sure how you can confidently call yourself a church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before tackling all those elements, I want to briefly discuss that this is an ordinance of the church, and to examine the difference between an ordinance and a sacrament.

A sacrament is an idea that has been promoted by the Catholic church and been adopted by many so-called Protestant denominations. The word sacrament appears nowhere in Scripture, and is an invention of the Catholic beast which was codified by them at the Council of Trent. They define the sacraments of the church as actions which actually confer grace upon a person, and that they are necessary for salvation, meaning, at a minimum, that if you are not baptized, do not take communion, and do not confess your sins to a “priest”, you cannot go to heaven. They of course have to make up some more doctrines like that of purgatory, to get around this box they work themselves into, since the Scripture does not teach such a thing, and you have examples like that of the thief on the cross who didn't get baptized, never took the Lord's Supper, and made no confession of his sins to any priest. Yet he was plainly told by the Son of God that *“To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”* (Luk 23:43)

They claim sacraments are delivered by Christ and commanded by Him to be done, but look at their list of sacraments, and you see this is a very thin argument. They say the seven sacraments are baptism, confirmation, holy communion, confession, marriage, holy orders, and the anointing of the sick. Christ never directly commanded the church to make a specific practice out of any but two of these. He directs us to baptism, He tells us to take the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him, but He never lays out a direction to “confirm” priests, make confession to them, gives no directive to marriage, there are no specific “holy orders” – are not all God's orders holy? – and the anointing of the sick is never called out as a function of the church body. Some of these are clearly good things to do. James tells us about the anointing of the sick by the elders, and visiting the sick is clearly a good, charitable, loving thing to do that we should all take time for. That doesn't make it an ordinance of the church, however.

An ordinance of the church is a thing that Christ taught us to do as a part of the structure and delineation of church behavior from every day matters of our lives. There are two that can be brought out from Scripture – baptism and the Lord's Supper. I refrain from calling it “communion” as a proper noun, because it is not called that

directly in Scripture, and while communion with Christ and communion with one another is part of what we accomplish in performing it, the word has been so bastardized by the false teachers of our day I don't like to use it. The Lord supped with His Apostles, and so I prefer to call this the Lord's Supper. Paul does speak to the communion of the cup of blessing and the bread, so I don't refrain from the term completely, as it is important to understand the communing we do through the ordinance with each other and with Christ.

Some expositors and scholars define ordinances as those events that Christ personally instructed the Apostles in the conducting of. That is a little restrictive in that there are also examples of ordinances in the Old Testament that the Lord delivered to Moses for the Jews, as we see here:

*“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.”* (Exo 12:14)

An ordinance is a commandment, appointment, custom or manner. It is a thing the Lord gives His people to bring to remembrance a momentous event or keep them in mind to do a specific thing as He commands in regard to His worship. This example is, of course, the establishment of the Passover Feast. This is called an ordinance multiple times in the chapter, not just in the orders to put the blood over their doors, but in the specific declaration of a feast to be kept for their generations.

The ordinance of Baptism is brought to us in this passage where Christ commands His church to baptize people:

*“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”* (Mat 28:18-20)

The Lord's Supper is brought to us in a variety of passages like this one

*“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. 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.”* (1Co 11:24-25)

While neither of these is called ordinances in the New Testament as they are in the Old, the concept is still the same. All of these are given by God to tell His church how to worship Him in a given dispensation. You'll note that these are commandments to follow but there is no Scripture given that indicates by performing these actions grace

falls upon us or we are changed in some fundamental way that sanctifies, justifies, or saves us. These are things we do to honor God, not the other way around.

We conduct these not because they impart salvation upon us, but because they are signs of obedience and faith. Let us be clear here. You don't go to heaven BECAUSE you eat the bread and drink the wine of the Lord's Supper. It doesn't make you holy, it doesn't bestow magical powers upon you. Neither does baptism. These are things we do because they are a part of the worship of our Lord and expressions of our faith. He has defined worship in the New Testament, the same way He defined His worship in the Old Testament through the priestly and congregational ordinances of that dispensation.

And that sets the basis of the why we conduct these ordinances. God provides for us the direction necessary to know how to properly worship Him. As the Sovereign God, He also has the supreme right and is righteous to establish for us not just guidelines but specific instructions. We aren't left in some nebulous state or wandering about without knowledge of what we are to do for Him.

The Lord's Supper is the only authorized and commanded feast in the New Testament. There's no provision given for X-mas, or Easter, or any of these other rituals committed in the name of God by false religions. While there are several feasts directed in the Old Testament, there is no direction in the New Testament for honoring God with such activities, and those feasts established in the Old Testament were directed at and tied to the Jewish economy of things. There are at least seven major feasts established in the Old Testament:

1. The feast of the passover, established at Exodus 12.
2. The feast of unleavened bread, also established at Exodus 12.
3. The feast of firstfruits, established at Deuteronomy 26.
4. The feast of weeks, established at Exodus 23.
5. The feast of trumpets, established at Leviticus 23.
6. The feast of atonement, also established at Leviticus 23.
7. The feast of tabernacles, also established at Leviticus 23.

There are other events which are called feasts by some scholars, such as Sabbath year feasts, Jubilee feasts, and New Moon feasts, but I don't see them specifically called out in the same way.

These feasts all had set guidelines for when they were to be kept, some of them had specific foods that were to be eaten, like the feast of the Passover and feast of unleavened bread. Others had more to do with the location and event itself, not with the menu, so to speak, like the feast of tabernacles.

This is a feast we hold when we take the Lord's Supper. Perhaps not in the sense you might think of as a feast, with music and merriment all around, but this is a remembrance feast of that sacrifice our Savior made when He submitted to the cross.

This is a place holder feast, which while it should bring us into remembrance of our Savior, is not meant to be despairing and wholly sorrowful. The Lord's words are "*this do in remembrance of me*". There's no directive to singular heaviness here. To only remember the fact that He suffered and died is not the commandment. It is to do this in remembrance of Him *in total*. We should remember not only that He died, but why He died, and what the outcome of that death was. We come into this house to remember that He came into the world to save His Elect, to fulfill that covenant He made with the rest of the Trinity, and to find strength and comfort in that sacrifice.

To put this another way, we commit the ordinance to remember not only His death and burial, but His resurrection as well. To bring us into remembrance that this is not our home, this is a waystation on a pilgrim way, and that our hardships, persecutions and afflictions while in this way are but fleeting things not worth remembrance! There is joy in this feast, not just sorrow or guilt.

It's important to note that the Lord's Supper is not a mere replica of the Passover, nor is it a replica of the feast of Unleavened Bread. Let's look at those details briefly:

The Passover feast is defined as this:

*"And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it."* (Exo 12:8)

There is no mention of any drink, but only the food itself. Each element has importance and symbolism. This was kept as a memorial by the Jews going forward, but there was also a specific feast that started the next day and lasted a week called the feast of unleavened bread. The feast of unleavened bread is defined as this:

*"Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel."* (Exo 12:15)

Again, the feast of unleavened bread doesn't speak to any drink requirement, it speaks to the eating of unleavened bread. This is an indication to us that this is not simply a modernization of the feasts of Passover or unleavened bread. While each element of these feasts has symbolic importance, as do the elements of our ordinance, this is not a replay of the Passover feast or our modern celebration of it. Christ used the Passover celebration to establish this ordinance, but they are singularly different events. The Lord's Supper is a precursor to our obtaining victory through Christ, which I believe we can see in the actual example of this feast from the days of Abraham and his encounter with Melchizedek.

We know that Jesus is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek,

*“Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”* (Heb 6:20)

And this is what we know about Melchizedek

*“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.”* (Gen 14:18-20)

It's interesting that these verses are just about all we have, but he is clearly an important figure and his actions have great meaning because of his tie to Christ. He brought forth bread and wine to celebrate the victory God gave Abraham over his enemies. This is the example Christ drew upon in establishing this ordinance, *“after the order of Melchizedek”*. This was intentional, and gives me confidence in saying to you that while we remember our Lord's suffering and sacrifice, we are not only to remember that when we take part in this event, we are also to remember His victory over death.

What we do here is an emblem of our future time with Christ. Jesus says at Matthew 26:29

*“But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.”*

I believe this to be an affirmative declaration, not just a mere passing statement. He wasn't just saying “I'll pass on this for now”. This is a declaration that we will come together around His table at a future time where He will host us as His children, and feed us from His table. There is an expectation Christ sets with His people here that they will be gathered together again in a familial, close, personal setting as His apostles were with Him at this Passover. I also point to Revelation 3:20

*“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”*

As another instance where this idea is expressed. This isn't just a metaphorical expression, it has a literal connotation to it as well.

Now you might ask, then, about Revelation 7:16

*“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.”* (Rev 7:16)

How can we be expecting of a victory feast if we don't have need of food, if we no longer hunger?

I think the answer to that question is a simple one – the verse says we don't hunger, it doesn't say we don't eat. This may be a simplistic view of things, but it falls on me that there are too many examples of feasts in Scripture – proper, moderate, celebratory events that draw focus on elements of God and Christ that it seems strange for that to be abandoned once we are fully in His presence. Feasts are not about hunger. Feasts are about drawing together in communion with one another, and Christ is the bread of life, He will draw us to fountains of living waters to drink; perhaps His remark about not drinking of the fruit of the vine again until that day is metaphorical, but it just doesn't seem that way to me, there is too much emphasis put on these types of events throughout both the Old and New Testaments for it to be so. The feast of tomorrow will not match precisely the feast of today, because when we have Christ in our midst constantly, we don't have to eat or drink in remembrance of Him. I don't pretend to have some amazing light on how this will look precisely, and perhaps the 'how' of it in Heaven is where the metaphors come into play, but there is no doubt in my mind that a key element of our heavenly existence is the communion of the Body with Christ, and the way that looks on earth is through feasting.

So if we're drawn together to feast, who is the we?

Basically the members of a local church body are the we. There is no universality of "communion", and I believe to adopt that mode of operation is a doctrinal error. While Paul tells us

*"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."* (1Co 11:28)

And that is a personal examination, not a public one, this is a feast of communion of the local, visible church body, not a communing of the whole Church as it has ever or will ever exist. In other words, the local church membership takes part in their local honoring of the ordinance. While we are baptized into the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, membership is in the local body. That membership requires an understanding and inspection of the fruits of a person, and while someone could be legitimately baptized outside this body, that does not admit them into our membership and afford them a seat at our feast table. I don't think this is a splitting of hairs. The Scripture doesn't address this specific logistical issue anywhere I find, but we have this little passage tucked into Romans

*"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also."* (Rom 16:1-2)

We have Paul recommending Phebe, from the church in Cenchrea to the body of the church at Corinth, which is of course a situation we are fundamentally unfamiliar with. There are no other churches we know of in our age, and all those we know of who truly worship God in truth and in an appropriate way are here with us in this church house. I have to believe, though, that were someone of Paul's credentials known to us and there were other churches known to us, and some member of that church came to us with a good report like this, it would have some influence on their being offered a seat at our local feast table. I'm surmising obviously, but I think that's accurate.

Further, if you look to the pattern you see this was an exclusive event, limited to a specific set of people that Christ wanted present

*"And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:"* (Luk 22:14-15)

Christ had fed the masses before, and was used to communing with large numbers of people, but here we have an invitation-only event, limited to these specific souls. The pattern is one of exclusivity, not inclusivity. We should be following the pattern, and the pattern is clearly not one of a general invitation to feast.

When we come to the feast table, we owe it to our God to come with a proper sense of the event. Sobriety and consideration of the sacrifice made are key elements of that sense. It also requires us to insure we are in a proper state of mind toward one another before we sit down at the table:

*"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."* (Matthew 5:23-24)

To set aside our earthly thoughts and focus on these spiritual matters is no less a sacrifice than any gift brought to the altar. Setting aside our earthliness is a sacrifice of ourselves, and we have an obligation to set aside our petty selfishnesses toward one another when we come into this house to remember our Lord, for how can you properly remember if you're consumed in your thoughts with how upset you are at another person?

While the people partaking in this feast are members of a local church, this is not an indication of nor a gateway to salvation. Simply taking of this bread and wine and going through the steps of looking sober and maybe shedding a tear or two don't get you into heaven. This is one of the key problems with the idea of a sacrament, because the idea surrounding that doctrine is that participating in sacraments is a requirement of and accomplishing them is a means to salvation. That kind of thinking

is so easily answered from Scripture when we consider one of the participants at the advent of this ordinance – Judas Iscariot.

Judas was obviously present at the event. Some will argue that he got up and left before Jesus took the bread and blessed it and brake it, but I don't see, with a close examination of the tellings, that the words bear that out conclusively. We know he was there, and there is nothing specific that points to his departure PRIOR to the ordinance being established.

The object lesson here is that there are those, perhaps even in this house right now, that take of the feast even as they do dishonor to themselves and it, knowing they do not believe, and knowing that they do not have any interest in the sacrifice made by our Lord. On the one hand, it is a saddening thing to think, but on the other hand, it is a thing that should cause each of us to deeply examine ourselves and our hearts to know whether we love our Lord or are we another Judas, playing the game, as it were, not serving the Master.

We can't know another person's heart, but we are drawn to the fact that God does, by this incident with Judas. He knows our hearts and this specific element with Judas should have us asking God as David did

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psa 139:23-24)*

When we are to come together to perform this ordinance isn't dictated to us in Scripture, but Christ does give us indication that it isn't a onetime sort of event when He says *“this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me”* (1 Cor. 11:25). That gives us an indication that it is a frequent thing to do, and that every time we do it, we do it in remembrance of Him, and for no other reason than that. This is entirely about Christ, and if we make it about anything else, we make a mistake.

Some scholars take this “as oft” to mean it should be done at every service, others at set intervals or only at momentous occasions. Since we aren't given specific instruction on the matter of when, I believe it is left to us to determine, through prayer and study, what is necessary for us to do to properly serve God.

It also seems fairly clear to me that this is an ordinance of the Church, not one of individual expression. While we worship in our homes as families and have our own individual elements of service and worship of God, this is not one of them. There is again, no Scriptural direction to conduct this ordinance in our homes when there is a church body to attend to.

If we look to the pattern Paul leaves us in 1 Corinthians, we see support for this idea.



*“When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 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.” (1Co 11:20-22)*

Here Paul is exhorting the church at Corinth for not treating the event of the ordinance with the proper gravity, and instead treating it like a social event. What we see is that while they had issues with what they were doing specifically, they were coming together as a body. Furthermore, *“have ye not houses to eat and to drink in...”* gives us some indication of the separation of the two places in this context. When gathered as a Church for the Lord's Supper it isn't time for a party; likewise, the home is not the proper place to conduct the ordinance. This isn't about a church building, per se, since we know that many times church bodies have gathered in people's homes. It is about the gathering together of the local assembly to formally worship their God and to demonstrate their common faith. I don't think this means we have to all be together to perform the ordinance. The realities of our lives today don't always allow for that to happen, but this is the proper place and this the proper group of people to conduct the ordinance with.

How we conduct the Lord's Supper is very important, as Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians shows us. The Lord has been merciful in giving us clear instruction on the matter.

Paul lays out the ordinance details as it was related to him directly by Christ as follows:

*“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: 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. 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. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 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. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.” (1Co 11:23-29)*

As you can see, this is consistent with the relating of the event in the Gospels

In Matthew

*“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup,*

*and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.” (Mat 26:26-29)*

And Mark

*“And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” (Mar 14:22-25)*

And finally in Luke

*“And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.” (Luke 22:19-20)*

You can see that there is great consistency in the specifics of this ordinance, and there should be no straying from them. That consistency gives us confidence in the accuracy of it, and the establishment of a pattern to be followed. The elements of this Supper are simple and clear – unleavened bread and a single cup from which all members of the body drink. There is no room for invention, compromise or tweaks in this. Every telling relates the same pattern, and to do anything other than that is rebellious.

Consider the loaf

*“the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 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” (1Cor 11:23-24)*

This is an unleavened loaf, as would have been used in the Passover, even though this is not a re-enactment or Gentile keeping of the Passover, as I've already said. Leaven in Scripture represents sin in an otherwise wholesome body. Yeast, which creates leaven is a tiny, tiny organism that permeates the entirety of a thing it inhabits. You can't have a partially leavened loaf.

*“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” (Galatians 5:9)*

Likewise, even a teeny, tiny, little sin makes you all sinner. In other words, there is no such thing as just a “little” sin. We eat an unleavened loaf at the Lord's Supper to cause us to consider the sinlessness of Christ the man. He came as a man (Matt

1:23), walked as a man (Acts 2:22), was tempted as a man (Mark 1:13), suffered as a man (Matt. 27:35), and died as a man on the cross (Mark 15:37), to pay the price for His remnant of Mankind. After three days He arose in that same form to show us the truth of the resurrection and that the debt has been paid that could not be paid by our own bodies (Acts 1:3). These are the things that we must consider here when we take the loaf. He died for His elect, not all mankind. We consider here the tokens we have that we are members of that elect remnant, and to bring to our remembrance the example He set for us in His submission to God and His willingness to sacrifice Himself for a race of creatures who from the beginning have been steeped in and defined by their disobedience to Him.

*“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” (Joh 6:51)*

Despite the disobedience and sinfulness of this remnant, He gave Himself to be this bread that must be eaten to gain eternal life. This bread we eat in the ordinance is to keep us in mind of the sinless nature of that living bread. Be clear, the little loaf of unleavened bread we use at the Lord’s Supper is not the living bread. You will not go to heaven because you eat the unleavened bread of the Lord’s Supper.

It is a foolish, and heretical claim that the Catholics make when they say their wafers literally become the body of Christ when some child rapist peeps and mutters some Latin words over them. The loaf we use doesn’t transmute from being flour and water and a little oil into being human flesh. These times Christ speaks to being the living bread it is clear He doesn’t mean cannibalism is now the order of the day. How silly a notion is that? What a cunningly devised fable to get so many people to buy into it! No, it is just bread, and it is just bread to make it easy for us to properly regard the ordinance and what it means for us. Anything else leaves you questioning the voodoo and not focusing on the remembrance at hand.

The loaf is broken and shared amongst us to remind us of the sacrifice He made, the destruction of His body, the suffering He endured at the hands of those who crucified Him, and cause us to soberly look at ourselves and see the immense value of that sacrifice and the thankfulness we owe. It is one loaf shared amongst the body as there is one mediator, not many. There are not many little crackers distributed amongst the body, as there are not many Christs died to save us. There are no magical words that you can speak to turn lots of little wafers or individually wrapped crackers into one loaf. The pattern should be kept and not modified to try and accommodate some modern sense of germophobia or other strange thinking.

*“For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” (1 Corinthians 10:17)*

And so we must likewise consider the cup

*“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.” (1 Cor. 11:25)*

This should be a clear evidence to you that the Lord’s Supper is not a re-enactment of the Jewish Passover, as there was no cup dictated in that feast, nor that of the feast of unleavened bread, as there was not call for wine in that feast, either.

This use of wine in the Lord’s Supper seems to perplex many. There are an abundance of modern Bible “scholars” who take up the topic of whether grape juice or wine should be used, with lots of super smart sounding scientific arguments and quasi-religious ones about how wine is or is not a leavened substance, and how the Jews modified the Passover feast to include wine, with lots of super-religious sounding reasons why they did that. Most of the scholars we use on a regular basis are either silent on the matter or make the basic assumption that this was wine, no doubt about it. Gill even goes so far as to discuss whether it was red or white, not that it should be anything BUT wine.

I am satisfied that wine is appropriate in this feast for a few reasons. First, look at the example of Melchisedec – he brought bread and wine. Second (and as Melchisedec shows us) wine is a drink of feasting, of nourishment and when used appropriately brings joy to the occasion. Third, Christ drank wine and personally furnished wine to the wedding feast in Galilee, so its use would not have been detestable to Him. And finally we have this from Isaiah

*“And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.” (Isaiah 25:6)*

Which also supports the point I made previously that there is an impending feast of great celebration and victory that this ordinance sits as an example of. That marriage supper of the Lamb and that victory of Christ over His enemies is what we foreshadow with this ordinance, and there is no question but that wine is spoken of in that context.

To any who may be concerned about the question of whether the wine is leavened, I confess this caused me struggle for a long time. I have come to the conclusion that it doesn’t matter whether grape juice is what is leavened since it has yeast in it or whether wine is leavened. The two elements of this ordinance draw attention to two different things. They are distinct, though combined. The body of Christ and the blood of Christ, and it is not necessary that everything symbolized in one is symbolized in the other.

It is important though, that the wine be in one cup. Again, the pattern must be adhered to here, without some silly notions of being sanitary or germophobes. The pattern is important. The blood of Christ was spilled from one vessel – His body – not many. There is again one intercessor, one sacrifice that has been made, one Lamb which was slain and whose blood was violently shed that the sins of His people might be remitted. The water and the blood flowed from one source and it is that which the cup represents. It is not only about the contents of the cup, but the cup itself. Just as it was not about blood in general,

*“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”*  
(Hebrews 10:4)

The blood of Christ, from His body as a man, sinless, without blemish, and His blood alone has the power to take away the sins of His elect remnant, and that vessel that housed that blood while on earth is just as important to the value of it as the blood itself. If just any old blood would have washed away sins, there had been no need for Him to walk amongst men and to die a man’s death. Consider the cup and its contents, what it does for us, how we are unworthy of it, and how it was freely given, without expectation or ability to repay the gift.

Finally, these words *“this is my body”*; *“this is my blood”* should draw us to consider that this was a personal choice made by God the Son in His role as mediator and redeemer. He took it upon Himself to do these things in agreement with the rest of the Trinity and did so willingly. Look to the fallen angels, who have no mediator or redeemer, and see the value and depth of His love in doing so. This was a voluntary, what in Leviticus is called a freewill offering, a sacrifice being made of an unblemished lamb, not a begrudging sacrifice made out of some sense of locked-in duty. How much more should our sacrifices then be made freely, without begrudging or murmuring at the loss of our worldly things or let our covetousness stop us from making the sacrifice? Look to the broken body, the shed blood of Christ, as the example to aspire to. That is how this ordinance should fall on you, as a reminder and a way to invigorate your sacrifices to God.

These are deep waters we go into when we conduct this ordinance, and I can’t tell you all precisely what it must mean to you when we do, but hopefully this gives you some better understanding of these details. The Lord’s Supper is a thing I am confident that if you study it yourself will open up new understanding of its significance for you, as it has for me.