

HEALING AT THE LORD'S TABLE

by Ruth Hickman

When man was created by God, he was made in His Image -- perfect in all ways. God placed him in a garden where He provided trees and plants with fruit and seeds to eat. (Genesis 1:29-30) In the midst of the garden was the tree of life of which they were to eat freely. (Genesis 2:16) The garden was a perfect place with the Presence of God readily available.

However, we know that Satan was allowed access because he came in the form of a serpent to tempt these beautiful creatures of God. (Genesis 3) His ploy was to cause them to eat of the one tree from which God told them not to eat--the tree of the knowledge of good and evil -- to "tempt" God Himself by suggesting that the woman would "be like God, knowing good and evil."

When man and woman "ate this fruit," they lost their perfect life with God, and He separated them from the tree of life to prevent their living in sin eternally and being separated from God forever. (Genesis 3:24)

The Way back to Light and Life is Jesus. We "know" this, but how do we appropriate this? How can we again **eat** of the Tree of Life?

As I sought the Lord through prayer and fasting, our God opened my eyes to a new understanding of Communion, the Lord's Supper. So many believers know this as a "Sacrament or Ordinance" of the church, but have missed the real revelation that there is "life" in this powerful communion to overcome sin **and** disease and bodily decay! Yes, we can receive healing through communion!

"Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. I Corinthians 11:27-30, NIV.

There are two important admonitions in this passage. 1. We are to examine ourselves **before** we partake, and repent and reconcile with anyone with whom we may have ought. James confirmed this in James 5:16, "Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed." 2. We are to recognize the body of the Lord which includes realizing that the stripes Jesus took for us provided for our healing. As we take communion and eat of His Body, His Flesh, and drink of His Blood, we can receive that healing provision. Isaiah 53:5. Peter confirmed this in 1 Peter 2:24.

Communion is usually taken corporately as the "body" of Christ. The two elements, wine (or grape juice) and bread are received, representing His Very Presence! The wine represents His Blood and we receive forgiveness of sin. As we eat the bread, we are healed in our bodies.

John 6:48-51 *"I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I*

am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." RSV

I always am in awe when I lead a Passover Seder and come to the place **after supper** when "Jesus took the bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body.and the cup saying, ' Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Matthew 26:26-28

This is the "new covenant" -- not a part of the Seder. The bread that Jesus broke was the "afikoman" -- the dessert -- the middle matzo (unleavened, pierced and stripped bread) that had been broken, wrapped in a white napkin and hidden away. In the Jewish ceremony, after supper this is brought by the child who hid it, to the father who must redeem it, or buy it back! It is broken and passed out as the last morsel they will taste -- the dessert. The cup after supper is the 3rd cup -- the cup of redemption, remembering how God redeemed them from the Egyptians.

Imagine the disciples amazement when Jesus breaks the bread -- calling it His Body--and tells them they must eat. And he took the wine --calling it His Blood--and tells them that they must drink. In I Corinthians 11: 24-26, Paul says that the Lord Himself revealed to him that **we** are to do this in remembrance of Him and to do it proclaiming the Lord's death until He comes!

Communion can be taken as often as one desires, sometimes like medicine several times a day. Healing is often gradual as revelation of God's Presence and Purpose in our lives is revealed. I believe this is a sacred event and one can receive sanctification through this Sacrament. Therefore, use a plate and cup that is set aside or "sanctified" just for that purpose.

The early church "took communion" or the breaking of bread daily in their homes. "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." Acts 2:42-47. Communion had a powerful affect on the lives of those early believers. I believe God wants to bring new revelation and revival into our lives and into the Church in our day.

I recently taught a four part series called "Discerning the Lord's Table" now available on CDs for \$20.00. The topics are:

1. Preparation
2. Jesus - the Bread of Life
3. The Blood of Jesus
4. The Resurrected Life

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