

Transformational Communion

Lesson 3: Communion Wine

Vocabulary:

previous	to dab (past: dabbled)	to inspire	flock of sheep
to signify	offering (n.)	to confirm	responsibility
in memory of	lamb	transformation	to respect
to pour out	glory	royal	to care about
to sprinkle	acceptable	priesthood	role
bull	to anoint	possession	guilty
ram	constantly	to refresh	to participate
to splash	continually	duty	to strengthen
altar	to defend a case	to hold accountable	

Introduction

In the **previous** lesson, we learned that in the New Testament, yeast **signifies** the negative impact that sin, unbelief, and false teachings can have on our hearts and on the church. We learned that yeast also represents positive concepts, such as faith, holiness, honesty, purity, sincerity, and truth. This is the yeast we should be spreading in the church and around the world! We see Jesus lifting the Passover bread and declaring it to be his own body. He asks his followers to eat this bread **in memory of** him. We now know that Jesus was not only asking us to remember his life, but also his death and sacrifice on the cross for the sin, pain, sickness, misery, poverty, and suffering in our lives and the lives of other believers.

Communion: Jesus's Blood and Wine

Jesus then lifts his cup of wine saying, "This cup is the new covenant [promise or agreement] in my blood, which is **poured out** for you" (Luke 22:20). In the Old Testament, we see Moses **sprinkling** the Israelites with the blood of **bulls** as a sign of a covenant between God and his children (Exodus 24:8). The blood of bulls and **rams** was poured and **splashed** onto the **altar** for sacrifices to make the altar holy. Then the blood was sprinkled and **dabbed** onto the priests who performed the sacrifices, making the priests holy as well (Exodus 29:11-21). Wine was a traditional drink **offering** brought to the altar of the temple as a gift to the Lord. This drink offering, along with two sacrificed **lambs**, was placed upon the altar, where the Lord spoke to the priests and the people. There he made all the people holy by his **glory** and reminded them that he was their God (Exodus 29:38-46).

Based on the Jewish Law that used blood and wine for sacrifices to God, why would Jesus's words be strange to his followers? What was Jesus saying about himself and about his followers?

As the perfect sacrificed lamb, bread offering, wine offering, and purifying blood, Jesus declared to his followers that through his own death and sacrifice, he would fulfill the traditional laws that the Jews once followed – the offering of gifts and the sacrificing of animals to cover their sins and make peace with God. The old covenant was gone, and the new covenant was coming. Through Jesus's sacrifice on the cross, his own blood would be poured out upon the altar, and his followers would regularly drink the

wine together to celebrate this special gift from God! In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus explains that his blood would be “poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (28:28, NIV), and this blood he poured out once and for all on the cross at his death (Hebrews 7:28). Now through Jesus, everything to make men holy and **acceptable** in God’s eyes has been provided.

In this way, God **anointed** Jesus as “a priest forever” (Hebrews 5:6). As an eternal priest, Jesus is able “to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede [to speak to God] for them” (7:25). In the Old Testament, the priests offered sacrifices at regular times over and over until their death. Yet with Jesus, our eternal priest is **constantly, continually**, and forever interceding for us and for our sins through his sacrificed blood. The work is finished, complete, and eternal. If we receive his sacrifice, turn our desires away from sin, and follow Jesus, then we will never have to **defend our case** before God because Jesus’s blood covers over our sinful **condition** and makes us holy in God’s eyes. We celebrate this amazing and beautiful gift every time we drink the cup of Communion, as we remember Jesus!

How does Jesus’s sacrifice encourage you? What does his sacrifice **inspire** you to do?

Jesus’s blood not only purifies his followers, but it also transforms them into holy priests. Peter **confirms** this **transformation** when he says this:

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a **royal priesthood**, a holy nation, God’s special **possession**, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10)

To **refresh** our memory, what is a priest? What were the **duties** of a priest in the Old Testament?

Why does Peter call us a royal priesthood? What does it mean for Jesus’s believers to be priests?

By definition, a “priest” [Gk: *hiereus*] is simply a person who offers sacrifices to God,¹ yet in the book of Hebrews, we learn that priests made sacrifices not only for themselves but also for others. Throughout the Old Testament, we know that the Lord also **held** the priests **accountable** for the physical and spiritual condition of his **flock of sheep**, or the Jewish people whom they were leading.

With this description of a priest, what kind of sacrifices do we as Christian priests offer?

How would being a priest change how you live your life or how you interact with others at work, in your neighborhood, at school, at church, etc.? Explain.

Peter explains this role of Christ’s followers when he says that as a royal priesthood, we offer “spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). In verse 9, Peter talks about a sacrifice of

¹ “2409. hiereus,” *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*, electronic database (Biblesoft, 2011), <https://biblehub.com/greek/2409.htm>.

praise to Jesus and the **responsibilities** that comes through becoming the people of God. Here are a few examples that Peter lists as our responsibilities: to keep ourselves far away from sinful desires, to live good lives, to perform good deeds that bring glory to God, to live honorably according to the laws of the land, to show **respect** to others, and to love the family of believers (2:11-17).

Peter **summarizes** his thoughts when he says, “²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed” (2:24). In other words, how we lived before coming to know Jesus is greatly different from how we live now. Before knowing Jesus, we lived for ourselves and **cared** little **about** sin. As holy priests, we now live for what is right and good according to God. We live to love and serve God’s people and the church. Most of all, we live to serve and worship our great king Jesus!

Paul not only speaks about the love we should have for one another in Christ, but also about our **role** in helping the world to know about Jesus and the love he has for them. In II Corinthians, Paul says, “¹⁷ When anyone is in Christ, it is a whole new world. The old things are gone; suddenly, everything is new! ¹⁸ All this is from God. Through Christ, God made peace between himself and us. And God gave us the work of bringing people into peace with him. ¹⁹ I mean that God was in Christ, making peace between the world and himself. In Christ, God did not hold people **guilty** for their sins. And he gave the message of peace to tell people” (5:17-19, ERV).

Describe this work of bringing people into peace with God. How can we do this work both inside and outside the church?

Have you ever **participated** in this type of work in the church? What about outside the church?

Share your dreams of how you want to serve in Jesus’s church or in the world to help others to know and follow him.

This Week:

Write in your journal:

1. Take time to confess your sins this week to God. Ask Jesus for forgiveness and thank him for purifying you and making you holy. What would turning away from your sin look like? Make a new plan for a new week, and ask a faithful friend to pray for you!
2. Consider your role as a priest and messenger of Jesus’s love and salvation to your family, neighborhood, school, work, church, etc. How can you share Jesus with others who don’t know him or show them Jesus’s love? How can you encourage the believers in your life? How can you serve at church this week?
3. Is there someone you know who is weak in their faith? Consider **strengthening** them by sharing these studies with them!