

## Lord's Table Introduction 6-6-10

The time of the inauguration of the Lord's Supper was the Passover Meal of c. A.D. 33. The Passover recall was a commemoration of the passing over of the death angel in c. 1450 B.C.; it also anticipated the death and victory of the Jewish Messiah to come.

8. In his book *Church History In Plain English*, Bruce L. Shelley writes of the Lord's Table:

"The next day was the Jewish Passover, and Jesus and his disciples prepared for the ritual dinner that evening. At sundown they gathered secretly at the appointed place. Their mind was solemn as they ate the meal commemorating the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt. Reclining on couches arranged around a large table, they drank wine and ate the bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Toward the end of the meal Jesus took a piece of the bread, gave thanks to God, broke it and said, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (Luk 22:19). In the same manner he took a cup saying, "This is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me" (1Co 11:25). What did Jesus mean by this new covenant? He spoke of the "new covenant" in his own blood."

The time of a new covenant, said Jesus, has come. A new people of God, enjoying the forgiveness of sins, is now possible through the shedding of his own blood. A new people, a people who are said to be "in Him."

There is probably no word of Scripture which more clearly defines the essential status of a Christian than the prepositional phrase "in Christ." The Church Age Christian, as the most essential recipient of God's handiwork, has received the marvelous distinction of being "in Christ." There has never been a description with so far-reaching or greater meaning to humanity than this little but powerful phrase "in Christ." This phrase with its equivalents "In Christ Jesus, In Him, Through Him" and "With Him" appears more than 130 times in the New Testament.

This most important fact must not be slighted. Over against the emphasis which is given in this truth, is the corresponding fact that there is no hint of a possible position "in Christ" in any teaching of the law or the kingdom. This alone should sound the clarion for each and every Christian to know what is meant by this phrase "in Christ." The believer's present position "in Christ" is not seen in type or prophecy. In the ages past it was a secret hid in the heart and mind of God. "He who hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world" has elected to reveal this magnificent truth to only Church Age saints. Eph 1:4-12 describes our new position "in Him" and I shall read:

Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us **in him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Eph 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Eph 1:7 **In whom** we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Eph 1:8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

Eph 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

Eph 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things **in Christ**, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even **in him**:

Eph 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Eph 1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Growing out of this glorious relationship of being "in him" is a most natural responsibility of walking worthy of the calling. Eph 4:1-2 and 2:10

Eph 4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Eph 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

To be "in Christ" is to reside in the sphere of His own infinite Person, power, and glory. He surrounds, He protects, He separates from all else and He indwells the one "in Him." He also supplies in Himself all that a soul will ever need in time and eternity. The union of which is formed in Christ is deeper than any relationship the human mind has ever conceived.

Christ likens the union between Himself and the believer to the vital organic relation that exists between the vine and its living branches. The branch is in the vine and the life of the vine is in the branch; but the branch possesses no independent life in itself. It cannot exist apart from the vine. In like manner, the fruit and every manifestation of life in the branch is due to the ceaseless inflow of vitality from the vine. The fruit is as much the fruit of the vine as it is the fruit of the branch. Thus it is with the one who is "in Christ."

From this analogy it should be observed that the unity between Christ and the believer is twofold: The believer is "in Christ" and Christ is "in the believer." The believer is "in Christ" as to "all things temporal and eternal" and Christ is "in the believer" giving life, character and dynamic for living "in Him."

We have earlier studied what our Lord taught in His upper-room discourse recorded in John chapters 13 to 16. In fact at one point in the midst of this conversation Christ compressed the whole doctrinal structure of teaching into one brief phrase. This phrase is notable because it is the key to all the facts and relationships under grace with Him and because of its simplicity and brevity of language:

"Ye in me, and I in you" Joh 14:20

So this morning as we partake together of the Lord's Supper, I want to ask each of you, as those who are "in Christ" to think about what it means to be "in Him" while also acknowledging the power and responsibility of having "Him in you."

Though we may not feel the reality, it is a fact, Christ is in us and we are in Him. We are His and as His we have uniquely been provided a position "in Christ." It is from our new position that we should serve and the Lord's Table is a time of service and at the same time an examination, "are we really different from our last Lord's table? or are we the same old lowborn man, but a breath in the body of Christ, who if weighed on a balance, would weigh next to nothing?"

It is now time to prepare for the Lord's table.

Please stand as we sing the first and last verses of hymn number 99 When I Survey  
The Wondrous Cross. Ken Harrell come and lead us. Be seated: A Song of  
Remembrance.

Ken Harrell, Kim Kaufman and Jim Cooper would you please come forward to assist in our celebration of The Lord's Table.