

## Introduction: The Royal Seal

There once was a king who was loved by all his people. Even so, he felt alone because he had no queen to share his throne. Although he could have had his pick among all the royalty of all the world, he would not marry. He wouldn't marry because he had fallen in love with a servant girl in his court whom he had known from childhood. It was royal decree that he could not marry anyone of a lowly status. A queen had to be of royal blood. After recognizing the decree, the king began making plans to marry someone of royal status.

In the middle of the night, he sent for one of his servants to retrieve for him a royal bride of a distant land. He handed the servant two letters and said, "I have prepared my fastest horse for you at the city gate. Quickly now, take these two letters before you and ride off to the most distant country. Deliver this first letter to the king. The second letter pertains to instructions for you to be opened and read only when you are returning with my new bride."

Off the servant went, traveling for days, weeks, and months. Finally, the kingdom was reached, and the servant was ushered into the king's presence. The first letter was delivered to him, which he read to himself.

After reading, he began to bark out three orders: 1) Prepare a royal wedding gown. 2) Prepare a royal seal for a bride which proves of royal privilege. 3) Prepare an escort of 10,000 soldiers to return and deliver the royal bride to the King. In a matter of days all was accomplished. Then, the servant was ordered to take the royal dress, the royal seal, and royal escort and return. But to the servant's dismay, there was no bride provided. Ordered to leave, nonetheless, the servant was heartbroken having failed the king. In desperation, she opened the second letter and read the Word from her king:

"My dear royal bride, I have prepared these things for you whom I love, whom I have chosen from the beginning to be mine forever. When you arrive, take the royal dress and put it on. It is yours to make you royal status! That will be the day we are joined together as one! And though you will not wear that dress again after that day, I want you to put on the royal seal for all the days that follow. This will be another proof that you are of royal privilege! These will be a constant reminder that you are truly mine forevermore! Finally, my beautiful bride, should you doubt any of these things which now make you royalty, you have this letter with my royal seal. Read it often. It conveys my unchanging and unconditional love for you in no uncertain terms.

I will greet you soon! I'm already on my way! ~ Your King."

## Questions...

- 1) Who do the following characters of this story represent?
- 2) What do the three symbols of the King's love represent? (*Wedding Dress, Royal Seal, and the Second Royal Letter*)

## Illustration...



**A. What is Holy Communion (The Royal Seal)? 3 “Coming Together” – 1) Sacramental Union**

1. This term describes the fact that a miraculous union takes place between the bread and wine and Christ's body and blood. In a union that is beyond our comprehension, all four items are actually present. This is called "Real Presence".

Matthew 26:26-28 <sup>26</sup> While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” <sup>27</sup> Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. <sup>28</sup> This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for **the forgiveness of sins**.”

1 Corinthians 10:16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

2. The institution of the Lord's Supper is recorded in three other places in Scripture (Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; and 1 Corinthians 11:23-25). Nowhere in Scripture will you find the idea that only 2 elements are present as the following ideas say...

a. Unscriptural: The bread and wine changes into the body and blood (transubstantiation)

b. Unscriptural: The bread and wine symbolizes the body and blood (representation)

3. Because of this special union, we can see why the Lord would attach a warning:

1 Corinthians 11:27-30 <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. <sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup> That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

NOTE\* We, therefore, out of love, look to teach people about this doctrine before they take communion at Faith. We call this practice “Close(d) Communion” which is explained verbally and in the Sunday bulletin on Communion Sundays.

NOTE\*\* Since Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper during the Passover meal, we know that the bread he used was unleavened (without yeast) bread and the drink was grape wine. Since Jesus used unleavened bread and wine, that is what we use. The use of any grape product or any type of bread is permissible. But condemning something God has not condemned (i.e. wine) is wrong.

NOTE\*\*\* We also have the freedom to use one or more cups in the distribution of the Lord's Supper. Although we know Jesus used only one cup, he never commands us to use one cup. Therefore it is permissible to use either the common cup or individual cups.

**Questions...**

1) T/F When people receive the Lord's Supper, they only receive bread and wine.

2) Are we saying that each one who receives actually receives Jesus' entire crucified self?

3) Isn't this cannibalism?

4) T/F Holy Communion is a blessing to all who receive it.

## B. What is Holy Communion (Royal Seal)? 3 Coming Together – 2) Christ & Recipient Union

Luke 22:19b *“This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”*

Matthew 26:28 *This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

### Questions...

- 1) A/D Someone who has sinned a whole bunch during the week should not come forward for communion.
- 2) If God keeps forgiving our sins, does that mean that our sins are not always forgiven or are not all forgiven?

### Illustration: Marriage and saying, “I Love You”

- 3) A/D We shouldn't be concerned for a believer who has no desire for communion.
- 4) T/F Holy Communion is a blessing to all who receive it.

## C. What is Holy Communion (Royal Seal)? 3 Coming Together – 3) Among Communicants

1. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper in a group setting. This reflects the biblical principle that partaking of the Lord's Supper is not just something "between Jesus and the individual taking it", but it also involves the other people communing.

1 Corinthians 10:17 *Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.*

2. The Bible further states that Christian unity should not be expressed when there are divisions over what the Bible teaches. This principle will be one that we will be studying in depth in the next couple lessons.

2 Thessalonians 3:14 *If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.*

Romans 16:17 *I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.*

NOTE: This is the second reason why we practice what is often referred to as "close(d) communion." Close communion refers to our practice of only communing with those who have an established unity of belief with us to reflect that we truly are “one loaf” and are “not divided” over Jesus’ teaching. To commune with other Christians is what we desire, but it is to be done honestly where full unity on God’s teaching exists. If there is an obstacle to unity, the Lord would have us first address the obstacle and then express true unity.

### Questions...

- 1) T/F Holy Communion not only connects us to Jesus but to each other.
- 2) A/D Holy Communion should be given to all believers regardless of age, communion instruction, or differing beliefs.

**Conclusion:****Handle with Care!**

The Lord's Supper is a wonderful blessing, but one that needs to be handled with care. Persons who should not commune are professed unbelievers, the impenitent, people unable to examine themselves (mentally unable or uninstructed), and persons who do not agree in what they believe should not commune together.

**Handle Often!**

Even though the Lord's Supper needs to be handled with care, it needs to be used. As we receive it we not only confess together the Lord's death until he comes (1 Corinthians 11:26), but we meet with God in the most intimate way where we receive the forgiveness of sins. Although Jesus never told us how often we are to commune, the more we see our sinfulness and our need for forgiveness, the more we will want to commune.

## **Here's what we believe about the Lord's Supper: (Said every time we have it on Sundays).**

“Our Lord Jesus Christ on the night when he was betrayed took **bread**, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples and **said**, ‘Take, eat; this **is my body**, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’”

“In the same way also he took the **cup**, after supper, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This cup is **the covenant in my blood**, which is poured out **for you for the forgiveness of sins**. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’”

## **What is present in the Lord's Supper according to this?**

The forgiveness of sins.

Both Bread & Body

Both Wine & Blood

- Corinthians 10:16 <sup>16</sup> Is not **the cup** of thanksgiving for which we give thanks **a participation in the blood** of Christ? And is not **the bread that we break a participation in the body** of Christ?

## **Why do we believe these things are present?**

Matthew 26:26-28 –<sup>26</sup> While they were eating, Jesus took **bread**, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this **is my body**.” <sup>27</sup> Then he took the **cup**, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. <sup>28</sup> This **is my blood** of the <sup>b</sup> covenant, which is poured out for many for the **forgiveness of sins**.

Mark 14:22-24 –<sup>22</sup> While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is my body.” <sup>23</sup> Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. <sup>24</sup> “**This is my blood of the <sup>a</sup> covenant**, which is poured out for many,” he said to them.

Luke 22:19-20 – <sup>19</sup> And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

<sup>20</sup> In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “**This cup is the new covenant in my blood**, which is poured out for you.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 <sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>25</sup> In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” <sup>26</sup> For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

## **The Warning Given about the Lord's Supper: (This is why not everyone should take the Lord's Supper.)**

1 Corinthians 11:27-30 – <sup>27</sup> 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**. <sup>28</sup> **A man ought to examine himself** before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. <sup>29</sup> **For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself**. <sup>30</sup> That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. <sup>31</sup> But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.

## **This is why we only commune with people who believe the same:**

1 Corinthians 10:17 – <sup>17</sup> Because there is one loaf, **we, who are many, are one body**, for we all partake of the one loaf.

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 – <sup>14</sup> If anyone does **not obey our instruction in this letter**, take special note of him. **Do not associate with him**, in order that he may feel ashamed. <sup>15</sup> **Yet do not regard him as an enemy**, but warn him as a brother.

Romans 16:17 –<sup>17</sup> I urge you, brothers, **to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.**