

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

June 15, 2008

Lord's Supper fallacies

by David King

"Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you" (1 Cor. 11:20-22).

Paul's rebuke in this passage is directed to a local congregation that had somehow developed a misconception about the purpose of the Lord's Supper. An observance that should have been a solemn memorial to their Savior's death and resurrection had been turned into a common banquet. Paul corrected their behavior by reminding them of the purpose of the Supper, as instituted by the Lord Himself (v. 23-26).

In the two thousand years since then, other fallacies concerning the Lord's Supper have arisen. Even among our own brethren, there are some curious ideas about the Supper and its role in our worship.

The most fanciful fallacy is the idea that the elements in the Supper somehow are transformed into the actual flesh and blood of Christ. The Catholic Church calls this "transubstantiation." This concept is based on Jesus' words, "This is My body . . . this is My blood" (Matt. 26:26,28). But these are figures of speech in which the elements represent deeper truths. Jesus also called the fruit of the vine His new covenant (Lk. 22:20). Is that literal, too? These elements are merely metaphors designed to help us think about Jesus' sacrifice.

Another fallacy commonly associated with the Supper is the idea that participation in this ritual has some kind of spiritually therapeutic value; that is, by partaking of the elements, a sinner receives absolution from his sins, or some higher degree of holiness. But there is nothing in the Scriptures that suggests such a benefit. Like any other act of worship, if we partake as we should, with our minds focused on the Savior's sacrifice, it can be an occasion of spiritual renewal (1 Cor. 11:28); if not, it becomes an empty ritual that condemns us (v. 29). But that's no different from other act of worship that we perform without our whole heart. There is nothing about the Supper that imparts any special dispensation of grace.

A third fallacy is the idea that the Supper is the most important part of our worship. You see this idea in action when brethren make a special effort to be present for the Supper, then leave for some personal matter. Or when brethren who are sick or otherwise confined at home request that the Supper be taken to them (rarely is this accompanied by a request for a home-delivery sermon or song service). Or when brethren take the Supper elements with them on opening weekend of hunting season, so they can "observe the Supper" — while skipping everything else. All these behaviors elevate the Lord's Supper to some super-holy status that is not warranted by the revealed facts. It is an important part of our worship, but no more so than any other act of worship.

The Lord's Supper is no more complex than a simple "Do this in remembrance of Me."