

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

August 2

2009

ABUSE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

It is quite obvious that many Christians who may be quite devoted in other ways, do indeed "miss the mark" with regard to the Lord's Supper. Consider the following:

1. The attitude and practice of some brethren indicate that they expect forgiveness of their sins of the past week because they have had the supper on Sunday. But the Lord's supper is not at all intended to bring pardon of sins. The body and blood which we remember in the supper **were given for our forgiveness**, but when we eat and drink at the Lord's table, we do that as a memorial: *"this do in remembrance of me"* (1 Corinthians 11:25).

2. As a consequence of the attitude (above), some seem to feel that if they cannot have the Lord's supper on a given Sunday, they will not be forgiven and will be in jeopardy until the next opportunity. Of course, if we cannot assemble with the disciples, we do indeed miss an opportunity to *"show the Lord's death till he come."* The Lord knows when we can't do it, **and he knows why**, but he does not expect the impossible.

3. The New Testament pattern for the supper portrays the disciples **coming together** for this purpose – to remember – and show forth our remembrance – **together**. For instance, we never read of Paul (or any other disciples) having the Lord's supper privately or in any other circumstances while they traveled, except when they were able to meet with the assembled brethren.

Now let us briefly summarize: There is certainly great benefit in regular observance of the Lord's supper, for **every remembrance**

means never forgetfulness. Deliberate absence from the supper means, not only loss of benefit, but disobedience regarding the Lord's directive. Besides the preciousness of this significant memorial of the death of Christ, we have the additional benefit of fellowship in togetherness with those of like precious faith. Obviously the Lord intended for the supper to BRING US TOGETHER (see 1 Corinthians 11: – *"that ye come together..."* (vs. 17); *"when ye come together in the church..."* (vs. 18); *"When ye come together therefore in one place..."* (vs. 20); *"when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another..."* (vs. 33).
✠ Leslie Diestelkamp



"FREEDOM"?

In John 8:32 Jesus told the Jews, *"and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"*. These arrogant, self-righteous Jews replied, *"We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"* (John 8:33). They considered themselves to be free however Jesus said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin"* (John 8:34).

Several years ago I was reminded of this exchange between Jesus and the Jews as I watched a news report of a protest in Washington, D.C. The reporters were interviewing some of the people (mostly women) who had made a trip to Washington to march in protest against any effort to change the law which now makes abortion on demand legal. The statements made by these individuals indicate that they have about as much understanding of "freedom" as did those first century Jews.

One young lady, when asked why she had participated in this march said she thought *"every woman should have the freedom to decide whether to have a child or not have a child."* This is an example of how those guilty of sin seek to cloud the issue. The issue is not whether a woman should have the freedom to decide if she will or will not have a child. The real issue is whether a woman, or anyone else, has the right to take the life of a child AFTER its life has begun within its mother. If the mother's *"freedom"* includes the right to terminate the life of her unborn child because she doesn't want a child where does this *"freedom"* end? Is it limited to just the first few months following

conception? What about this woman's "freedom" after she experiences all the responsibility of feeding, bathing and changing diapers following the birth of a baby? What if she decides then that she doesn't want a child? Surely we can see that once that child is conceived the woman has passed the time of deciding whether she will or will not have a child. From time to time we read or hear about the body of a newborn baby being found in a dumpster or some other trash container. The community is outraged that any mother would discard her baby in such a manner and criminal charges are placed against her. However, if this same mother had done the same thing three or four months earlier she would have been simply exercising her "freedom." How inconsistent can we be?

Another lady, when asked why she joined in this march, said, "It's about freedom; a woman's freedom to do what she wants to do." This is the attitude many have concerning freedom. The thought of God or right and wrong does not even enter the picture. Self is "God" and personal desire is the only standard of right and wrong. As Jesus stated to the Jews of His day, this is not freedom at all but is in fact the greatest bondage of all, bondage of sin.

The only real freedom is the freedom we have in Christ, i.e., freedom from sin. Paul said, *"Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered"* (Romans 6:16,17).

In Romans 1:28 Paul tells us why men would engage in such ungodly acts. He said *"they refused to have God in their knowledge."* It remains so today. When man rejects God he turns from the only source of true freedom. ✠ James Hahn



"I'M HAPPY NOW"

This is the thought expressed by a woman who wrote a letter to one of the newspaper advice columns. She stated that she had been very unhappy in the past while attending a particular church where the preacher constantly questioned her about her failure to attend Sunday evening and mid-week assemblies. Her solution? She went to another

church where the preacher not only did not question her about her failure to attend all the assemblies but he praised her when she was in attendance.

The thinking of this woman is typical of so many today. They wish to do as they please and they do not wish for anyone to remind them of anything they may be doing wrong or to remind them of things they should be doing but are not now doing. If someone does try to do so the reaction of many is the same as that of this woman; they will simply find someone who will tell them what they wish to hear.

Paul speaks of such individuals when he said, *"For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts"* (2 Timothy 4:3). A person may change churches; he may find a preacher to commend him in his wrong doing; however he cannot change the word of God. If what one is doing is not in harmony with the will of God nothing will make it right short of repentance and obedience to God's will.

This woman's attitude also manifests another problem. Many are more concerned about *"being happy"* (which is just another way of saying, *"Let me do as I please."*) than with being acceptable in the sight of God. Jesus teaches that one who gains the whole world but loses his own soul has gained nothing and has lost everything (Matthew 16:26). Let us seek true "happiness" by seeking *"first his kingdom, and his righteousness"* (Matthew 6:33). ✠ James Hahn

Belleville church of Christ
 5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258
www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services	Elders
Sun. Bible Study... 9:30 a.m.	Charles Carpenter... (317) 839-3873
Sun. Morning Worship... 10:30 a.m.	James Hahn... (317) 745-1507
Sun. Evening Worship... 5:00 p.m.	
Wed. Bible Study... 7:00 p.m.	
Evangelist	Deacons
James Hahn... (317) 745-1507	Leon Nevins... (317) 272-2966
	Don Perry... (765) 676-5825
	Alvin Stanley... (317) 831-3514