

The Armor of God – Salvation – Teaching

(This week is going to be a **communion week**, so the lesson is shorter. Bring some real bread and grape juice if you can. If you have a baker in your group, ask them if they can make a celebration type loaf of bread and cut it up.)

(Check out my blog MyPrayerNotebook.com if you need *it's-ok-to-yeast information*, **To Yeast or Not to Yeast**. As soon as I lengthen the study, it will be here.)

(We are teachers/preachers, and we need to lead the way. There is a comment about how often communion is done. Start doing it every day!)

Really quickly: Last week we studied the shield of faith. Did anyone try the tactic of speaking out loud when an attack to your mind came? Did anyone remember to do that? Did anyone say the converted Navy Seal sayings out loud? I don't want anyone to divulge their personal life, but did anyone notice a difference when making love adjustments? We all should be raising our hand to that! We live in a world that hates God and loves evil. Walking in love is a practice, practice, practice kind of thing. weeping

This week! A very exciting piece, the helmet of salvation, that started this whole study, and then next week hopefully everyone's favorite the sword, the Word of God. The Sword study will be *fun*. We're going to talk about archeology findings to enhance the Word.

The Helmet of Salvation

Ephesians 6:17 NKJV

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

This piece of armor started the study! In the same verse, Paul tells us to take the helmet of salvation, and then the sword of the Spirit. I believe the Holy Spirit put these pieces in the same verse to show us something. A while ago, I asked the Lord how we upgrade our helmet, and if we all have this same helmet. The answer came while praying! It was just like the lights were turned on; you upgrade your helmet of salvation by taking communion. Paul writes that Jesus said of communion, "*this cup is in the new covenant in my blood.*" What opens up the New Covenant to a person? Salvation! Paul goes on to say that communion is proclaiming the Lord's death until He comes. That's another way to say, "*proclaim salvation until the coming of Jesus.*" Partaking of communion, especially when it's not imposed, will strengthen your relationship with God and begin to build something special inside of you. Think of it like a married couple renewing marriage vows to strengthen their relationship, or kids reciting the pledge of allegiance to create patriotism. It gives us a modern-day understanding of its deep importance. Paul wrote about communion in **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**.

"...that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "**This cup is the new covenant in My blood.** This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶For **as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.**"

There is the answer! How do you partake of the new covenant in Jesus' blood? Salvation! What is communion? **Communion is rehearsing our Salvation Package**. We'll get to the package in a minute. But this is very exciting to me! **We can strengthen our helmet of salvation through performing communion.**

Everyone comes from different backgrounds, and communion may not be an exciting event for you. Before we move on, I want to share this amusing story from a minster about communion when she was a teenager. (Tell an amusing story about misunderstanding the point of communion, before it gets *tense*. My story below is true. I did this monthly as a teenager)

Years ago, as a teenager, I dreaded communion Sunday. Not only would I have to quickly choose a stale wafer that I could be reasonably sure that no one else touched, but I would also have to find a clean, untouched cup

that was surrounded by other cups. I sat in the very back of the church, and there were well-known nose pickers in the pews in front of me. But it wasn't just that. No, there was more! The "Communion Sunday Drama" was about to begin. Being an ill-mannered teenager with ADHD, in my bored head, I did one sided sports-style commentating and post-game interviews of the body-and-blood prayers. One of those post-communion interviews is still in my head to this day.

"Congratulations on your win, Jeff! Tell us, did you feel pressure going against Randy for best communion drama?"

"The pastor turned in a great performance last month. He sniffled, cried, and used his suit jacket sleeve to wipe his eyes and nose. Were you nervous going into this?"

"Tell us, did that massive wedgie help you cry? That looked painful!"

"Did you pack that in there yourself, or did it happen naturally on that tiny piano stool?"

"Nice work, Jeff! Because it's so high up there, I can see your ankles under your pant legs."

It's still one of the worst wedgies I have ever seen! Had he just wiggled or pulled out the fabric, I wouldn't even remember it, and along with it, my awful behavior. Thanks Jeff!

Being an adult, I realize that I had no understanding of communion because I was *never* taught anything about it other than crying about how Jesus died, and how unworthy I am to receive it. They would confess and cry over and over, "I'm so unworthy." That turned me away from truly understanding the truth of communion. The first thing I had to learn is that **Jesus made us worthy before God**. If I've asked for forgiveness for my sins and checked my heart for offense and unforgiveness towards people, then I'm worthy! After we're washed by the blood of Jesus, God doesn't want any of us to cry about being unworthy **as if Jesus' blood doesn't restore us**. "Never forget that you are worthy to take communion." Those words of a different pastor took a while to sink into my heart, even though my head already knew it, but I needed to hear more than that after so many years of only ever hearing that I'm unworthy!

I don't want anyone to feel like Jeff, either with an uncomfortable wedgie or unworthy to take communion. Let's look at scripture concerning communion. I want to encourage you to read Luke 22, just the situation surrounding communion. The entire chapter has 71 verses but read at least up until verse 39. It's important to see these scriptures in the light of what we're talking about for yourself. We're going to **briefly cruise through the events of the night** in...

Luke 22

v1 – Feast of Unleavened Bread, Passover, is coming up.

v3 – Satan entered Judas

v4 – Judas goes to the chief priests and captains to betray Jesus

(At some point Satan leaves Judas)

v7 – Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb must be killed

v8 – Disciples prepare the Passover (women love to hear how the men prepared the food)

v14 – They sit down to eat

v17 – They take the first cup, and all drink from it

v19 – He breaks bread saying it's His body broken for us

v20 – After supper cup, which is His blood shed for us

v21 – **But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table**

v23 – They want to know who

(According to The Book of John chapter 13, at this point Jesus identifies Judas to John by giving him bread. Satan returns to Judas again. Judas leaves the supper.)

v24 – They had a *dispute* among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest

v25 – Jesus corrects them

What we're looking at is the fact that Judas was there at the table for communion. Often times, no one wants to talk about **Judas still being at the table**, but we should! **Jesus could have very well sent Judas off to betray him prior to communion** but Jesus was still lovingly offering Judas salvation until the last moment. What we must learn from this is that we are so much more worthy to receive this blessed meal than 12 men

still under the Old Covenant, and one of them playing Satan's games. I also believe Jesus told Judas to "go now," because He didn't let go of his plan to betray Jesus, even after he was offered communion (salvation) by Jesus one last time, and Jesus probably didn't want everyone to unknowingly hang out with Satan. He wasn't chasing Judas away from the end of the Passover meal, communion, or salvation. **Jesus lovingly did what was best for the group.** He could have left Judas at the table a little longer so He would have less time to suffer through the night. But Satan showed up, and Jesus told them both to take a hike! The next time you read those scriptures, reflect on that sacrifice.

Why shouldn't we make a show of crying unworthy? Do you remember what we **studied in the breast plate of righteousness**? Poor wedgie Jeff was actually carrying on crying, "*I agree with Satan. I'm guilty. I don't deserve an innocent plea. I deserve punishment. Hand down my sentence.*" What do we say?

I am innocent. I am not guilty. I am shameless. I am blameless. I do not deserve punishment.

Yes, you should make things right before the Lord in your heart before communion, but that **doesn't** mean we should agree with demons against the cleansing blood of Jesus. We are no longer to label ourselves as old sinners saved by grace, but as sons and daughters of the Most-High God (think prodigal son).

Communion supper can be a happy time with good food, fellowship, and singing. **You can use real bread.** To yeast or not to yeast is another study. In short, **yes, it's ok to yeast.** But while you're having communion it's ok to enjoy yourself and not try to force yourself to *feel* horrible so that you can *feel* holy. God doesn't want a show from us. No where in the Bible are we forced to ritualistically mourn. Communion was a celebration supper! **We really should be eating the bread and drinking the cup at home every day with a meal and have enjoyable fellowship with our family,** and it's even OK if you use a dip to finish up your communion bread or crackers, because Jesus did!

When you do communion regularly at home, it will become very enjoyable, because **you're inviting the Lord to your dinner table.** We (started?) do(ing) it every day as part of our evening meal, and I understand that there might be times where you cry and feel thankful for Jesus' sacrifice, rejoice with or without tears, or rejoice with praise and maybe even laughter that we are victorious in Christ. *Whatever is in my heart that day is what comes out, and that's truly what the Lord wants from us!*

What is the **proper way to take communion**? I believe we should **quote scripture**, or if it's not available do our best to quote it. Once you memorize it, it only takes a few seconds to quote. If you have children, give them the scripture quoting job, even if it's one sentence. It's a perfect way to help them carry communion with them throughout their lives. For adults, you don't have to use a somber voice, speaking normally is fine. There is a large church on the internet, whose name I will not mention, that has good praise and worship music, but every time they read scripture, they sound like they're about to break out into weeping. When it comes to communion, they have *tearless drama crying with a weepy voice.* **We do not have to do that! God wants what's real to you!**

After you quote scripture, **then pray.** You don't have to have long-drawn-out death, burial, and resurrection recounts. *There is food on the table getting cold.* We have longer communion events in church, that's where it belongs. This is our daily remembrance we're discussing. Simple **thank God for our covenant.** If you are taking communion for a specific purpose, then **say why you are taking communion.** You can take communion for anything that we received in our salvation package.

What is in this salvation package? Every one of the new covenant promises. As you read through the New Testament next time, look for your promises in Christ. Some of the promises in Christ:

- Sins being washed away, and not remembered
- Our bodies becoming the temple of the Holy Spirit (this isn't an anti-smoking scripture)
- Grace, unmerited favor
- Healing, broken hearted and physically
- Peace, peace of the Lord
- Gifts, spiritual and physical

- Holy Spirit living inside of us, a guide, teacher, comforter, helper
 - Royal priests, means we don't have a priest/man above us
 - Power/Authority over all the enemy
- ...and more!

Promises of Abraham are still ours. Blessings from the Old Testament are still ours. Any promise or blessing you find in the Bible; you can take communion for it.

2 Corinthians 1:20

For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

That's enough to get excited when doing communion! It's so much more than just only crying about the enemy beating Jesus for us, feeling horrible, and feeling so unworthy. That's staying at Jesus' death. We're supposed to be walking by His death, going through the promises, and focusing on His second coming.

Here is **an example** of how our communion prayer sounds:
(use mine if you don't have a flow yet)

After scripture reading, we just take a few seconds to praise God, a sentence or two, for what we're thankful for in our heart that day, and maybe what we're taking communion for in the covenant.

Healing: *Thank You, Lord. Thank You, Jesus, that we have a healing covenant. Thank You, Jesus that You took stripes for our healing. I am taking this as medicine.*

Peace: *Thank You, Father for peace. Thank You, Jesus, that the chastisement for our peace was upon You. Thank You Holy Spirit that You're here with me. I am taking this for peace in the storm at work.*

We all talk quietly at the same time, because there is food on the table, and we aren't always taking communion for the same purpose. Then, whoever is praying over the food asks blessings on our food. We eat a piece of bread or cracker, and then drink juice. We don't eat other food or speak until we eat our bread and drink our juice out of honor for the Lord. If one of us forgets, we point at their bread or juice.

We must make sure that communion feels like an enjoyable time of inviting the Lord with us at the dinner table and not some forced ritualistic event that everyone dreads. Remember Jesus said about two sentences over bread and wine. The head of the family can say, *"We put all sickness and problems back to the cross and receive all the blessings God has for us today."* Short and simple.

There are different **occasions in which you can take communion**. Remember this is about covenant, it's a covenant meal. Other than church, Christmas, Easter, and dinner, you can take communion to end a fast, end prayer time or Bible time, before you go on a trip (take it over protection, Psalm 91), if you received some bad news, if you have received some good news to say thank You, or just because you walked in the kitchen and want to have hummus, crackers, and juice with Jesus. When you take communion regularly, sometimes it will be long, and sometimes it will be short. That's all ok. When I'm alone, I sometimes start talking, and then eat while I'm still talking to the Lord. We eat and talk with friends; we can do this with Him too! I just want to stress, please don't have long drawn-out communion with food on the table. Do communion after you eat, if you'd like it to be longer.

You have probably heard it said that communion is symbolic, but **I believe it's both literal and symbolic**. It's symbolic in this natural realm, but in the supernatural realm, it's literal. We believe our sins were *literally* nailed to the cross. We believe Jesus *literally* took the stripes for our healing. In the natural realm, no one could see any of it, but in the spirit, we know it as literal truth. I believe communion is no different. It's our opportunity to receive everything that belongs to us in the new covenant in Jesus' blood. It's also **our opportunity to literally transfer the curse of the law** (such as sickness, captivity, and poverty) **back to the cross**. Our eyes may see a pita cracker and pomegranate juice, but **our spiritual eyes should see the transfer from us to Him**, making an exchange with Jesus. His health and life for our broken bodies. His riches for our poverty. It might be difficult to think of communion in this way, but Jesus **never** said it was symbolic. *Religion did! The translation of symbolic means EMPTY ritual or thing, reminds you to go look at something else! The definition*

of symbolic is a representation. Calling communion symbolic is a fancy way to say dead practice. No, that's not harsh. It's the truth. **Most of us have been taught it's symbolic, and we just march on without looking up the definition.** I did it too until I was challenged by the Holy Spirit to look at scripture! *We must believe something is taking place in the spiritual realm when we take communion.* We must **take it by faith** like everything else in the New Testament.

Let's look at scripture!

John 6

⁵²The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" ⁵³Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.** ⁵⁴Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵For **My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.** ⁵⁶He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. ⁵⁸This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

I'm not hearing the symbolism. Jesus said it over and over, so we all get the point, but our mind just says, "Yuck, that's symbolic." Our answer is at the end, "***not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.***" We are being told to spiritually, not symbolically, eat and drink. **How do we know?** Well, the disciples were disturbed, and Jesus sorted it out.

John 6

⁶⁰Therefore **many** of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" ⁶¹When **Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this,** He said to them, "Does this offend you? ⁶²What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? ⁶³It is the **Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.** The words that I speak to you are **spirit, and they are life.** ⁶⁴But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. ⁶⁵And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." ⁶⁶**From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.** ⁶⁷Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" ⁶⁸But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ⁷⁰Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

I love Peter. He says what we're all thinking! Jesus knew, by the Holy Spirit, what these additional disciples were thinking. That would have been the *perfect* time for Jesus to claim symbolism! But if you skip down a few verses, when they were weirded out, Jesus said that His words are spirit and life. That's it, it's **literal in the spiritual realm!!!** I encourage you to read **John 6:48-69** and ask for revelations as you read because the Lord will open it up even further as we keep meditating on this revelation.

Back to the helmet!

A common *misconception* about the **helmet of salvation** is that it protects your mind. Emphatically, this is NOT the case. If you think about it, the helmet protecting your mind/thought life, just means once you're saved, you'll *never* have any struggle in your mind. We all know that's not true! I've heard it said about the helmet, "*Just say 'Thank You God I'm saved' and tighten that helmet of salvation.*" Let's read **2 Corinthians 10:3-6**:

³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, **bringing every thought into captivity** to the obedience of Christ, ⁶and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

What are our weapons of warfare? Our suit of armor! We can read this, "*Our armor of God is not carnal, but mighty in God for.... bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*"

Paul is referring to the battle that's in your mind. Some interpret this as pulling strongholds down from cities. This scripture just refers to your mind only, because it's our biggest battle ground. Look at what Paul said again, "**WEAPONS,**" not one weapon. **We need more than one to conquer our mind**, not as in just a salvation helmet, to bring thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Then what is the helmet of salvation for exactly, if not mind protection. **It does protect our head, our thinking, but doesn't alone win the battle you face every day in your mind.** If an attack from the enemy comes, "*You're no Christian. Now you're really going to hell.*" There should be no doubt of your salvation in Christ. If you lose your head thinking you're not a Christian and you're going to hell, you've lost every battle! *Headshot, you're done!* Secure your position in Christ. If you are unsure about Heaven and hell, get some scriptures out and read, repent, and rededicate if you need to repent and rededicate. **Learning what's included in your Salvation Package is digging in deeper. Communion is practicing the covenant, using your Salvation Package knowledge, and strengthening your helmet.** It's all easily done with food and the Word! Why wouldn't we get excited about this?

I hope you feel encouraged to enjoy communion often at home. The only requirements that I believe we have are to check in with the Holy Spirit about our hearts, and to be thankful and reverent. After that, if you feel it in your heart to weep and imagine "*The Passion of Christ*" movie, do it! Maybe you simply feel it in your heart to say thank You, and that's perfectly OK as well. Just be real with God because He knows you, and He's happy you're taking the time to recognize the covenant and to commune with Him.

Homework this week!

1. Print or write communion scripture for your eating area
2. Take communion every day!

Take communion as a group.