

# The Lord's Supper

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## Henry Mahan Sermons

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He was telling me that they were having a good number of visitors and it has been a long time since that church has seen that many people come to hear the gospel and worship God. And he is encouraged and delighted and certainly we pray for him and thank God for his ministry there.

But he made a comment, I think, that just about every preacher who... who enters the ministry and begins pastoring a church probably experiences. He said, "One of the things that has surprised me there is that the people who have been there so long do not know nearly as much as I thought they knew. They don't know nearly as much as I thought they knew."

And sometimes I believe we take for granted that our congregations know a whole lot more of the Word and of spiritual truth than we think they do and we go on to... and we say other things and neglect to rehearse over and over again the fundamentals, the foundations.

And tonight I am going to take this subject, the Lord's supper, and go over some things that need to be said. And if you will at least take mental notes if you don't write it down, at least take mental notes of the things which I say... And I am not speaking tonight for your approval or anybody else's. I am too old now to get excited when somebody writes and says, "I agree with what you said." I used to get pretty excited when somebody wrote, especially some older person and said, "I agree with what you have said." But when I passed 55 it doesn't matter now whether they agree now or not, you know, because I have been in it longer than some of them have been living.

But I am going to give you some things about the Lord's table that are scriptural, biblical, honoring to Christ and I believe the very foundation.

Luke 22 I will read first, Luke 22. Now stay with me carefully and listen carefully. Please just for a while listen.

Luke 22:17.

“And he took the cup and he gave thanks and he said, ‘Take this... take this.’”

Now if you will read these things carefully... you see, I was watching and you will be seeing the Christ mass on television the next few days. And you will see people coming down and kneeling at what they call a sacrament and a priest will take the wine. He will take the container of wine and he will go through all these different things, bless it and all that. Then he will take a wafer, not bread, a wafer and if people kneel and stick out their tongues and he will take that wafer and dip it and lay it on their tongue. He does not try to give them the cup. He does not give them the bread.

You see, if you will note these things and I brought that in a message down in Tennessee and a Catholic just hit the ceiling. And I said, “Well, [?] after the service it doesn’t matter to me. This is what our Lord took the cup and gave thanks and said, ‘You take this and you divide it among yourselves.’”

You see, and what folks don’t know is that this man dressed in these vestments and all in this Catholic Church, they claim to have the authority over salvation, salvation in the Church, in the priesthood and they are giving it to you. Therefore they can keep you in bondage, in prison and get out of you gold and silver and all of these things. All they have to do is cease... is to refuse to let you have the wafer, refuse to let you have what they say is actually the body and blood of Christ if they won’t let have it, you are lost. If they take you out of the church you are lost. If they don’t let you be buried in a Catholic cemetery you are lost. And these things it is a hold they have over the people.

But our Lord gave it to them and he said, “You divide it among yourselves.”

It is these little things that people don’t pay attention to that they ought to know. They ought to watch. And that is what we have pastors for if they are faithful men.

“Take this and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, ‘I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come.’ And he took bread and gave thanks and brake it and gave it unto them saying, ‘This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. This do in remembrance.’”

Now, first of all, A) under introduction, we have instructions from our Lord himself concerning this ordinance. We don’t have to be left to guess work. We don’t have to be left to tradition. We don’t have to be left to what we think we ought to do. Our Lord specifically said, “This do. This, nothing more, nothing less. This do. Take bread, bread, unleavened bread, give thanks, break it and eat it. This do.”

Is that very difficult? It is very simple. That instruction from the Lord himself.

He took the wine, the fruit of the vine and he gave thanks and he gave it to them and said, “Divide it among yourselves and drink ye all of it.”

Now take care that you do what the master says, no more, no less. This do. This do. This very simple service, this do.

Now this ordinance was performed at a common meal. It was when the disciples were eating the Passover. It was a common meal. They were eating the Passover. It was not a sacrifice. It was not a celebration. It was not a mass. It was not a grand function. It was not some hullabaloo. Everybody was called to gather in a religious celebration. It was not only specific calendar. It was when the disciples met with his... when the Lord met with his disciples and they ate the Passover. That is when he instituted the Lord's table.

Secondly, the disciples were not kneeling before the Lord. They were reclining about a table. They were sitting or reclining about a table. He blessed the bread and gave it to them. He blessed the cup and gave it to them. And none of the disciples were appointed. Peter was not appointed to be the server. He wasn't appointed to be the pope. He wasn't appointed to be the priest. But they were all together and they all together ate the bread and drank of the wine. Now this do. That is what our Lord said. Nothing... you don't have a special dress. You don't have a special celebration. You don't have a special function. You don't have a special ritual and nothing like that. You just take two simple elements, bread and wine and this bread represents the body of our Lord and the wine represents the blood of our Lord.

Now notice the next part of that statement. "This do." And the whole purpose of the supper is summed up in these words.

"This do in remembrance of me... in remembrance of me."

Now, brethren, let me point out two or three things here and you listen to them and get the full meaning of them. This is not a fellowship supper to bring divided factions together. That is not what it is for.

If I said, "Well, the church has problems and the members are in disagreement and the folks divided, we need to have the Lord's table and come together to bring divided factions together," it certainly should bring divided factions together. When we gather about the table of our Lord and remember his love for us when we are so unlovely, we ought to be able to love others. When we come together about the Lord's table and see his sacrifice and suffering in our place and stead, forgiving us of our sins, we ought to be willing and ready to forgive anyone.

But this is not the purpose of it. He doesn't say, "This do in order to make your church come together in unity."

No sir. He said, "This do in remembrance of me."

And then, secondly, this is not a sectarian ritual in which all of us look around to see who we can shut out and keep to come from the table. That is not what it is for. It is not just

to keep everybody out who is not of our immediate circle. That is not what this table is about. It is in remembrance of Christ.

And then, thirdly, this is not—watch this, now. Be careful here. I must and you must. This is not a ritual which provides as mystic, mysterious religious atmosphere.

You mentioned something along that line in your prayer. Deliver us from that. Deliver us from feeling affected, affected by an atmosphere. Deliver us from putting on. Oh, God, help us. God help us from changing our expression or changing our voices or changing our personality for a situation. God must hate that. He must hate that. Let's be who we are, be what we are. This is not a ritual to provide a mystic, mysterious atmosphere, religious atmosphere for the flesh to feel good, you know, to feel spiritual. Let's don't try to create spirituality. If God brings it and gives it by his Spirit, thank God. But God is plain and forceful, never affected.

Affectation in religion is deadly. It is dangerous. And I know it appeals to a lot of people. I know a lot of people are fooled. They are fooled, strangely fooled by people who can affect things, you know, they can make much of the flesh with their voices and with their expressions and with their oratory full ability and so forth, but this is not what this is all about.

And, fourthly, this is not a mass. This is not a mass to provide a perpetual repetition of his death. He died once. This is a memorial. Now we are not filling in the strings, Cecil. We are not. This is not a mass to provide a perpetual repetition of Christ's death. This is a memorial. This is to remember his death. He died once and for all and he redeemed us once and for all. He put away our sins once and for all and we remember that sacrifice.

Now this is a memorial service, a memorial supper. He said, "This do in remembrance of me."

It was given to his Church. It was given to believers.

You say, "Where do you get that?"

"This do in remembrance of me."

You certainly can't remember one whom you never knew. Now that ought to clear it up. You certainly can't remember something you never knew and never did and never experienced. You have got to have it before you can remember it. You have got to know it before you can remember it. You have got to experience it before you remember it.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 11 just a moment. That is... when Paul passed this along from his master to the church this is what he said, 1 Corinthians 11:23.

"I have received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread. When he had given thanks, he brake it and he

said, 'Take, eat. This is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me.'

"After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood. This do ye as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you do show the Lord's death till he comes.'"

To me, this one statement... if somebody said, "Well, who ought to take the Lord's table? Who ought not to take it?" This one statement, "This do in remembrance of me," sweeps through this congregation and any congregation and sets apart those who are invited and those who are not invited. It hedges the table about and no more rules and regulations are needed.

"This do in remembrance of me."

If I know him I take the Lord's table. If I love him, trust him, believe him, if he died for me, if I am resting in his sacrifice and suffering and his shed blood, then what is to prevent me from coming to the table of the Lord?

That is the way that Philip hedged about the baptism. He said... that man said, "What does hinder me from being baptized?"

He said, "If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you may."

Well, he said, "I do."

Then come on and this do in remembrance of me.

All right.

Let me deal now with three things. Let me show you a Scripture. You don't need to turn to this. Let me read you a Scripture over here in the book of Exodus 12:25. It said, "And it shall come to pass..." This is talking about the Passover. "When you be come to the land which the Lord will give you according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service and ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass when your children shall say to you, 'What mean ye by this service? What mean ye by this service, by this ordinance?' that you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses and the people bowed the head and worshipped.'"

When the children or when you friends say, "What do you mean by this service?" Well, let me give you briefly three things.

I want you to listen to this. I believe I have something here. Number one, what this table sets forth. What does this bread and wine set forth? Number one, it clearly and plainly

sets forth his incarnation, our Lord's incarnation. This is real bread here and this is real wine. And the bread represents a real body, his flesh. He said, "This is my body broken." This is broken bread. And this is real bread which represents real human flesh. And this is real wine and it represents real blood. Our Lord actually became a man.

If he didn't become a man, if he is just... if he is a Spirit and not a real man, real flesh and bones, then we couldn't remember him with real elements. When you have real bread... He talks about, "I am the bread from heaven. This is my body broken, my blood shed." When you have real elements, bread and wine, you are talking about real flesh and real blood, real flesh that was broken and bruised and real blood that was shed.

All right, secondly. It plainly shows, the ingredients and the elements show his holiness. It is unleavened bread. That is what they had to use at the Passover, unleavened bread. When they were sitting about eating that Passover and our Lord took bread, I guarantee you it was unleavened bread because leaven is a type of evil in the Scripture. And when the Jews ate the Passover, they were even to take all the leaven—isn't this right, Cecil—out of the house. They were to search the house to see if there was any leaven which leaven is a type of evil. And this is unleavened bread. This is bread that has no leaven. And our Lord was without sin. His was a perfect flesh and perfect body and this is wine which pure wine, pure fruit of the vine which shows the purity of our Lord's blood. The blood of Adam didn't flow through his veins. Our Lord had pure blood, pure blood.

All right, thirdly. It plainly shows his suffering and death. The wine and the bread are separated. If you separate the blood and the flesh here I am dead. My blood is in a glass here and my flesh is over here on this side, I am dead. It is together they are in life. But he takes first the bread, separated from the wine. He said, "It is my body, the bread, broken. This is my blood."

And so the bread is broken. It represents his body and the wine is poured out which represents his shed blood. Our Lord... and the only way you can take blood from this body is by suffering. That is right, death. So it shows his death.

All right, thirdly. It shows substitution. He said, "This is my body, broken for you, in your stead, for you, in your place, substitution. And this is my blood shed for you."

The eternal God gives this glorious gift for you. It is for you. It is for you.

And then, fifthly, it shows a living union. I take this bread and eat it. I eat it.

Now turn to John six. Let's look at this. I actually eat the bread and drink the blood and that is showing my living union with Christ. He actually comes in to dwell. That is what we are showing when we take this bread. This is my body. It represents his body. It is a symbol of his body. And he said, "You eat it. And this is my blood. You drink it."

And here in John chapter six he says here in verse 51, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he will live forever and the bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of this world.’

“The Jews therefore strove among themselves saying, ‘How can this man give his flesh to eat?’

“And Jesus said unto them, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.’”

You see, he is our life, spiritual life.

“Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath life, divine life, eternal life, spiritual life and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Now do you see those things that it is so clear to me? I hope it is clear to you is the bread and the wine, these elements, actually plainly set forth the fact that Christ became a real man on this earth. And the type of bread it is and the type of liquid shows his holiness, purity. He emphasizes that and insists upon it. And the bread and the wine being separated shows his suffering. And then he plainly says, “The reason my body was broken was for you. The reason my blood was shed was for you. The reason this all came about is for you. It is for you.”

And then it plainly showed that living union. We are not just to admire the bread. We are to eat it. We are not just to admire the wine. We are to drink it. And you are not just to stand back and admire Christ the preacher and Christ the healer and Christ the this, that and the other, but you are to embrace him and receive him and feed upon him and live upon him and pray that he may become your life.

Now, here is something I think very significant. Here is the second major thing I want to point out. How does this bread and wine best show his suffering and death?

Now it may offend you a little bit here, but let’s go at it. As in most things, the religious world is all wrong in their ideas about the Lord’s supper, about what they call communion about what they call the Lord’s table, the sacraments and so forth, about remembering Christ, his person and his work. They are generally all wrong.

In the first place, the Roman Church—and this is where it came from—the Roman Church invented a day to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and they called it Christmas, Christ mass. That is where it came from, now. The Roman Church, the Roman Catholic Church invented this C H R I S T dash M A S S, Christ mass. Christmas is Christ mass. And they invented this to celebrate his birth.

Now listen to me. But our Lord, neither our Lord nor any of his disciples anywhere in the Bible, anywhere, not one verse comment, insinuation or anything else, our Lord, neither

our Lord nor any of his disciples ever gave the Church command to celebrate his birth, not one time in this book, not one time. We don't even know when it was.

Here is the problem. Doris and I were driving down 29<sup>th</sup> Street and I saw an nauseating sign. It just nauseates me to see dumb preachers put things like this on their billboards, "Happy Birthday, Jesus."

If that doesn't nauseate you, you don't know Christ. Now that is a fact. Our Lord has no birthday. He is eternal. He is the ancient of days. He has neither beginning of days nor end of days. What do you mean birthday? You have got a birthday. I was born August the 19<sup>th</sup>, 1926. That is the first time I was ever heard of. You can say, "Happy birthday, Henry," "Happy birthday, Russell," "Happy birthday, Cecil." But don't you be so asinine as to say, "Happy birthday, Jesus." That is stupid. And that is all there is to it and I hate to be so ornery, but that is just the way it is. Now it is awful. And if you can't see it, there is something wrong with your eyes. They need to be opened.

Our Lord is eternal And this is all Catholic influenced, the Christ mass, celebrating Jesus' birthday. And if you fall in with things like that, be careful you are not damned with folks like that.

Now the second thing, another pagan religious holiday is Easter. Our Lord arose. That is right. Thank God he arose. Because he arose we will some day rise and each Lord's day, each first day of the week is a commemoration of his resurrection. And you can't preach the gospel without preaching his resurrection. But nowhere in the New Testament, never, never, never, never was the early Church ever instructed to keep an Easter Sunday or early some morning take a trip to the cemetery. They never did it. It is not in the Bible. That is Catholic. And the very fact that it comes at different parts of the year ought to tell you something. One year it will be in March. One year it will be in April. I think it has even been in May, hasn't it?

But we preach the resurrection, but we go to all these extremes to do what he didn't tell us to do. He said, "This do. This do in remembrance of me. This do. As often as you do this, you show my death till I come." Isn't that what he said?

Clear as a bell, but we are so dumb.

And I will tell you something else we do. The religious world has gone to great, great trouble to set up shrines and altars over in Jerusalem for people to visit and get religious. They save up money and they get with some preacher and he makes a killing on it and they go over to Jerusalem and they visit a little place which is supposed to be where the manger was and none of these things are authentic. God won't let them stand. He is not going to let us find the ark so we can worship it. He is not going to let us find Golgotha's hill so we will act like a bunch of idolaters and pagans. He is not going to let us find the John the Baptist place where he was beheaded. God is not going to let you. And if you have any spiritual sense, you don't want to find it. You don't want to find it because it is idolatry. It is paganism.



That is what they did with that serpent of brass. They started worshiping that thing. And old Hezekiah called it a worthless piece of brass.

You give a religious man any kind of symbol or any kind of visual aids or any kind of anything that has anything to do with his Lord's visit to this earth and he will worship that thing. He will take his affection off of Christ and put it on that thing.

And I will tell you something else we have done. We have made the cross the symbol of religion. Where is that anywhere in this book?

You say, "Paul said he preached the cross."

Paul didn't preach a tree of wood. He preached justification by the blood of Christ. That is what he is talking about preaching the cross.

And I want to show you something. I want you to listen. And it is so subtle. And when you do things like this you make folks angry, but I am going to show you something here and I want you to listen to me, but you don't have to turn to it. Just listen.

Now you listen to this. Suppose you never heard this son before and suppose nobody ever told you this was one of the greatest old hymns ever written and suppose somebody, nobody ever told you that this was a sacred hymn, how would you respond to somebody who said something like this?

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,  
The emblem of suffering and shame,  
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best,  
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

I don't love the dearest and the best, but I love that cross on which he was slain. That is what we are talking about. I love the cross on which he was slain.

Listen to this.

That old rugged cross, so despised by the world,

I didn't know the world despised it. I saw a magician on television and he had three of them around his neck. I see all these black athletes wear crosses around. I didn't know they despised the cross. They despise justification by faith. They don't despise the cross.

Every pagan religious institution this world has got a cross on the front of it. They don't despise the cross.

In the old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,  
A wondrous beauty I see

For there on that old cross Jesus suffered and died,  
To pardon and sanctify me.  
So I will cherish the old rugged cross,  
Till my trophies at last I lay down.  
I will cling to the old rugged cross...

You do and you will be lost. I promise you. You do and you will be lost. That is a fact.

I will exchange it some day for a crown.

Listen to this.

To the old rugged cross, I will ever be true,  
Its shame and reproach gladly bear,  
When he will call me some day to my home far away,  
Where his glory forever...

If you listen to that for the first time and you have never heard it before, you would say, "That fellow is worshipping an idol. He is worshipping a cross. He is wearing one here. He is wearing one around his neck, put one on his shirt."

But that is what we have done. And yet what did the Lord say?

"This do in remembrance of me."

This is the emblem of suffering here, not that cross. It is this bread, the bread and the wine which is his body and blood.

Now let me show you something now. This table, three things about it. The table of the Lord in its simplicity, first of all, it is universal. It is universal. It is observed everywhere. It is not just a... suppose you knew exactly where Christ was crucified, Golgotha's hill was still over there and that cross was still sticking in the ground over there. What would people do in Mexico to remember Christ? What would people do in Canada to remember Christ? What would people do in Africa to remember Christ? You would have to go to that shrine. But this table everywhere you have got some bread and everywhere you have got some wine, you have got a memorial of our Lord. Everywhere that Christians can meet. It may be in the catacombs of Rome and I am sure they met down in those caves and they took some bread and they broke it and laid it right here and they took the wine and poured it out and they prayed and gave thanks and they gave it to one another and they said, "This is his body, broken for us. This is his blood."

They didn't go somewhere. See, it is a universal memorial. It is a universal emblem. It is a universal representation of our Lord's broken body and shed blood, of his death. This is what he has chosen, not a shrine, not an altar, not a cross, but this.

Or, secondly, watch this. It is not only universal, but it is perpetual. Now hills disappear. Hills disappear. Crosses rot. Shrines decay. But everywhere there is bread. Everywhere there is wine. It is always new. This is new. Always new. And you never get away from it. See, it is everywhere.

And then, thirdly, watch this, now. It is personal. You might have a shrine and I will never go there. You may have a cross somewhere and I will never see it. You may even have a table, but unless a man personally, individually takes that bread and puts it in his mouth, takes that wine and puts it in his mouth, that is when you remember Christ. That is when you show [?].

“This do in remembrance of me. As oft as you do this, you show my death.”

It is heart faith and heart union with Christ. Even you could have a ceremony. You could have the elements. You could have the crowd. You could have what you will. But until in just a few moments, myself sitting right here in my chair, take that bread and I say, “Lord, I show to myself that Christ whose body was broken for me, that his blood was shed for me. And I show to you that my confidence and my faith and my hope is in Christ the Lord.”

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and his righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus’ name.

And I show it to my fellow believers. This is my hope. Not in my preaching or my deeds or my works or my decision or my experience or anything else. This is my hope. Christ died for my sins and I show it to my children. I show it to an unbelieving world.

Watch here. I put it in my mouth and I eat it. [?] And I reach and take that wine.

And you can do away with all your shrines and altars and gimmicks and emblems and symbols and all these things. God never ordained them. God almighty never intended for them to be observed.

“This do, this do.”

That’s right. And this right here, baptism. That is what he said. He said that these... and this is representing his death and these are the only ordinances he gave us. And I will tell you all these nativity scenes, I wouldn’t give you that for them. That is the truth.

Now I am not declaring war on the religious world. I am declaring war on evil, period, religious evil, period. And I say fanatic, radical and all that, but you look through the book now and you will find our Lord left two ordinances to his Church and that is so. The rest of them are man made. And they are pagan. And this precious ordinance we are observing tonight, this do in remembrance of me. Nothing more, nothing less. “And as oft as you eat this bread, as oft as you eat it, you eat it, you show my death till I come.”

And another thing that this supper shows is he is coming again. He is coming again.

All right. Russell, you all serve us, if you will.