



# Northside Proclaimer

*Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord*

1 Thessalonians 1.8

**Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!**

**October 4, 2015**

## **“Pinch and Sip?” Or, ‘Munch and Gulp?’”**

*Bryan Garlock*

Questions have risen concerning the amount we use when partaking of the Lord’s Supper. This writer finds it appropriate to deal with such questions in writing so as to establish every word and to place study material within the hands of others.

The arguments espoused by those who would have us believe that we should turn the Lord’s Supper into a full-blown meal are two-fold: first, that it’s called “the Lord’s Supper” and therefore should be taken as a supper, that is, a regular meal, and second, that those who do not eat a meal have not properly observed the Lord’s Supper. They reason that we have distorted Jesus’ instructions by adopting “a new and improved way of observing” this weekly memorial, namely, the “pinch and sip” practice. This phrase is defined as how it sounds: one pinches a piece of bread and sips from a little cup of juice. This “traditional manner of partaking,” as they say, is not how Jesus, His disciples and the early Christians observed this memorial.

It should be agreed upon by all that we must have authority for all that we do. If we are going to practice something in the name of the Lord, we ought to be able to pinpoint the authority in the Scriptures. Therefore, our primary task is to find the authority for the “pinch and sip” practice.

It should also be agreed upon by all that while the silence of the Scriptures does not give allowance to do whatever, God does not necessarily have to specify something for it to be authorized. Hence, general authority includes all that is necessary and expedient to the carrying out of a command. For instance when God told Noah to build the ark He gave him explicit instructions concerning the measurements, etc. These instructions did not include, however, Noah’s use of tools to accomplish his work. We mean, Noah could have used any means necessary to build the ark and yet he had to keep the specified commandments. Additionally, Noah’s use of any means necessary to carry out the commands of God did not change the command. When a command is changed, an addition is made. Thus Noah using aids did not change the command.

Likewise, concerning the Lord’s Supper, God has specified and, in some cases, He has been general in His teachings. The instructions to partake of the bread and fruit of the vine carry with them the authorization to use plates, cups, a table, persons to pass these emblems, etc. When one has observed the Lord’s Supper, the table, persons who passed the trays, etc. have not violated any law nor have they brought about an addition to the law. Obviously an addition to Jesus’ instructions would be peanut butter on the bread and soda instead of the fruit of the vine. We assume none would contend for these things! While we have not dealt with the amount one is to consume while partaking, we have shown that one does not violate Jesus’ commands by using trays, a table, etc.

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## Announcements

- Remember the shut in's.
- Pray for the church and one another.
- Remember the spiritual sick among us.
- Call or email Bryan to add announcements, thanks.
- If you'd like to volunteer to help with Bible studies with our fair contacts, please see Bryan G.
- Ladies' luncheon, Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> 11-1, Kim Haines' house, meat will be furnished

### Chronological Bible Reading Plan

Oct 4 Matt 3, Mark 1, Luke 3

Oct 5 Matt 4, Luke 4-5,

John 1:15-51

Oct 6 John 2-4

Oct 7 Mark 2

Oct 8 John 5

Oct 9 Matt 12:1-21, Mark 3,

Luke 6

Oct 10 Matt 5-7

Prayerfully consider the following arguments concerning the amount one is to consume during the remembrance of the Lord's Supper.

First, let us examine the word "supper." Since Paul calls this memorial "the Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. 11.20), some have argued that taking a pinch and a sip are not in keeping with the definition of this word. A few simple observations should dismantle this misconception.

While it is true that the Greek word for supper means a formal meal or a feast, it must be understood that neither Paul nor Jesus ever meant it to be a physical meal or supper. Rather, the supper was meant to be memorial or spiritual meal. Thus while the word may certainly apply to a supper that satisfies our bodies, the word may also apply to a supper that satisfies the soul. The principles set forth in the following paragraphs will explain our point further. Bible students ought to remember that God does not necessarily define words as we have defined them. Therefore let us not allow words to be distracting. Finally, for further study, there are times when Jesus spoke of food, but not in a physical sense (see John 4.31-34; 6.26-27).

Second, let us examine the night our Lord instituted His memorial meal.

Matthew recorded, "Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins'" (Matt. 26.26-28).

Mark recorded, "And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many...'" (Mark 14.22-24).

Luke recorded, "Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.' ... And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, 'Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood'" (Luke 22.8-9, 14-20).

Paul recorded, "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 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.' In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me'" (1 Cor. 11.24-25).

Those are the facts. Now let us analyze them. Notice that Matthew, Mark and Luke, in describing the institution of the Lord's Supper, agree that Jesus and His apostles were eating the Passover meal. Luke simply states that the Lord introduced His Supper, but does not tell us when this was so, while Matthew and Mark state that the Lord began this institution "as they were eating." All three of them have Jesus breaking the bread, not loaves, and dividing it amongst His apostles. Next, all three of them state that Jesus gave them a cup and were instructed to divide it amongst themselves. Finally, notice the words of Paul. While the gospel writers say Jesus introduced His memorial while they were eating, Paul is more specific in saying "after supper," that is, after the Passover meal.

What is the point of the above synopsis? It establishes at least two important facts: first, that Jesus and His twelve disciples had *already* eaten a full meal when they began to observe the Lord's Supper, implying that this new supper was not actually a full meal; and second, that Jesus only took a loaf of bread and a cup and divided these two elements amongst them all, implying that their portions was not large in scale.

This brings us to our next argument found in 1 Corinthians 11.17-34. In this passage Paul is rebuking the Corinthians for distorting the purpose of the Lord's Supper. Whatever these Corinthians were doing, we undeniably know that they were turning this memorial into a common meal and filling themselves of the emblems. Thus Paul said, "What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not" (22). Later Paul would repeat himself, "...if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment" (34). The point is simple. The Lord's Supper was not meant to be turned into a meal where men satisfied their physical hunger; instead it was a memorial in which men remembered their Lord and Savior. To eat to the full when we come together to worship would be coming together for judgment (vv. 27-34). It would be likened to "work[ing] for the food that perishes..." (John 6.26-27).

This raises the question: "If one consumes a large amount of bread and fruit of the vine will he remember his Lord any different than the one who consumes a smaller amount?" As we seek to answer this question remember that the apostles had already eaten. The institution of this meal was after supper and the disciples were to divide it amongst themselves. Surely we can understand then that the portions consumed by them were insignificant. Consider too that nowhere has God specified how much is to be eaten. Further, the passages we have shown above provide ample evidence in favor of smaller portions. Therefore those who would have us believe that we are not eating enough on a weekly basis have shifted the importance. It is no longer a memorial meal; it is now about the externals! We mean the spiritual focus has now become the physical focus. Additionally, the emphasis is no longer on what the emblems represent (the body and blood of Jesus) but on the emblems themselves.

Interestingly 1 Corinthians 11 destroys this notion that we are to *munch and gulp* during the Supper. To munch and gulp is in opposition to pinch and sip. Those who advocate for larger portions are forced to only partake in larger portions. This raises more questions: "How much is too much?" "How little is not enough?" "Who's to say?" "May one eat a whole loaf of bread and drink a full glass of juice while another eats two loaves of bread and drinks two glasses?" "At what point have we satisfied our hunger and are now in violation of Paul's instructions?"

The simple conclusion is this: The amount does not help one remember more. In fact when one pinches and sips as he is discerning the body and blood of Jesus Christ, he has fulfilled the commandment to observe the Lord's Supper. Further, a larger amount will not make one's communion with the Lord and fellow brethren "extra" spiritual. Therefore it is right and cannot be wrong to keep the portions small enough not to abuse the memorial meal while keeping in mind the purposes Jesus wanted us to keep in mind. BG