

“What is Worship?” Blandford and Langton Home Groups - Spring 2007

Information for Session 7 “Worship is ... Sacrament”

(Week beginning 4th March)

What Is Sacrament ?

Some definitions from the web ...

- ❖ A sacrament is a Christian rite that mediates divine grace.
- ❖ A Christian rite instituted by Jesus, (eg Baptism, Lord's supper).
- ❖ An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.
- ❖ An Act or Process which has a specific Spiritual purpose and has become Sacred to a Tradition.

Matthew 23:27 From <http://bible.cc/matthew/23-27.htm>

- ❖ On the 15th of the month of Adair, before the Passover, the Jews whitewashed all the spots where graves were situated. This was done both to beautify them and to mark the spots as to prevent any one from passing over them, which would bring Levitical defilement. For this practice, they cited Numbers 19:16 Ezekiel 39:15. This custom gave the basis for the Jesus' comments. In plain view of Jesus and his hearers, as they stood in the temple court, could be seen the whitened tombs along the western slope of Olivet, some of which are still seen to this day. (People's New Testament)
- ❖ The scribes and Pharisees were enemies of the gospel – they kept away from Jesus themselves, but worse still, kept others from him. Not for the glory of God but for their own credit and advantage they were very strict and precise in smaller matters of the law, but careless and loose in weightier matters. It is not for being scrupulous that Jesus reproves them; while they seem godly, they were neither sober nor righteous. We are really, what we are inwardly. Outward motives may keep the outside clean, while the inside is filthy; but if the heart and spirit is renewed, there will be newness of life; and that begins with us. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was like the ornaments of a grave, dressing up a dead body, only for show. (Matthew Henry Commentary)

1 Corinthians 11:23 From <http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab/bible/1corinthians/1corinthians11.htm>

- ❖ This is the earliest written account of the institution of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament. The narrative emphasizes Jesus' action of self-giving (expressed in the words over the bread and the cup) and his double command to repeat his own action. It follows that the only proper way to celebrate Holy Communion (the Eucharist) is one that corresponds to Jesus' intention, which fits with the meaning of his command to reproduce his action in the proper spirit. If the Corinthians eat and drink unworthily, i.e., without having grasped and internalized the meaning of his death for them, they will have to answer for the body and blood, i.e., will be guilty of a sin against the Lord himself. In verse 28 “Examine himself”, the Greek word is similar to that for “approved” in verse 9, which means “having been tested and found true.” The self-testing required for proper eating involves discerning the body, which, from the context, must mean understanding the sense of Jesus' death, perceiving the imperative to unity that follows from the fact that Jesus gives himself to all and requires us to repeat his sacrifice in the same spirit.