

This IS My body; This IS My blood

BREAD

There are Christians who believe that once the bread and the fruit of the vine enter your mouth, it literally becomes the body and blood of Jesus. ...that we physically digest Jesus' actual body and blood. This is called transubstantiation.

There are Christians who believe that eating the Lord's Supper is a memorial and simply represents Jesus' body and blood. ...that this bread and fruit of the vine are merely symbols or emblems of Jesus' body and blood. This is called memorialism.

As I read Jesus' words when He established this Communion, neither of those beliefs seems right to me. When I eat this bread and fruit of the vine, I don't taste human flesh and blood. It tastes like crackers and grape juice. On the other hand, symbols are made to represent things that are usually invisible or intangible. Yet when Jesus rose from the dead and is even now sitting at the right hand of His Father, He never gave up His humanity--a humanity that I will one day be able to touch and to hug.

What does Jesus have to say about His Communion with us? "Take and eat it; this IS My body. Drink from it; this IS My blood" (Matt 26:26-28).

If transubstantiation was true, I would expect Jesus to say something different like, "This WILL BECOME My body and My blood." If memorialism was true, I would expect Jesus to say something different like, "This REPRESENTS My body and My blood."

Could there be another belief between transubstantiation and memorialism that better fits with Jesus' words? Could this food remain physical bread and fruit of the vine while also the divine body and blood of Jesus? Could what we eat today be both physical food and spiritual food?

The apostle John had a student named Polycarp and he had a student named Irenaeus. When talking about the Lord's Supper which he called the Thanksgiving, Irenaeus put it very well: "For the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the blessing of God, is no longer common bread, but the Thanksgiving--consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly" (Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol 1, page 486).

This morning, partake of Christ both physically and spiritually. Remember His words: "This IS My body; this IS My blood."

So when you eat here (point to mouth), it is bread. But here (point to head) it is His body.
So when you digest here (point to stomach), it is bread. But here (point to heart), it is His body.

FRUIT of the VINE

This bread, which is Christ's body, is the closest thing we have in being able to see Jesus' body on the cross and to touch Him. And this fruit of the vine is the closest thing we have to see Jesus' blood on the cross and its power to cleanse us.

But let's bring this up another notch. What we are doing right now is so much more than eating food and thinking about Jesus. Jesus said to His disciples who ate this Lord's Supper with Him, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it in a new way in My Father's kingdom WITH YOU" (Matt 26:29).

Just as Christ ate the Supper with his disciples, He partakes with us now. He has not left His church high and dry in this world. He is very close to us today... especially at this event. He made promise to us. I believe this is why we also call this Communion. Communion is not the meal itself. But it is through the meal that Christ Himself has communion with us. Communion is not merely found in something you eat. Instead, we are IN communion with Christ and He with us!

When you drink here (point to mouth), it is fruit of the vine. But here (point to head) it is His blood.
When you digest here (point to stomach), it is fruit of the vine. But here (point to heart), it is His blood.