

**Thank you, Tom West!
Speaker for today**

Reminder!!

Daylight Saving time next Sunday
Turn clocks forward one hour!

Business Meeting

Next Sunday, March 10 at 2:30 p.m.

February Birthday Inadvertently Missed

5 Lyle Graddon

April Birthdays

3 Amanda Hoffman 6 Susan Hudson
16 Alana Hudson 23 Shannon Hudson
30 Aaron McCollum 30 Margaret Graddon

April Anniversaries

19 Bill & Kena Brown

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What About Sickness, Death, & Suffering?

By Doug Dingley

Sin, sickness, death and suffering were never a part of God's desire for His human creation. In the beginning, He created a beautiful garden that was completely free from all of those horrific evils. Indeed, it was very good (Genesis 1). It was so good, so perfect, and so pristine in fact, that the pure and sinless, eternal God and Creator of the entire universe walked freely therein, along with His beloved creation (Genesis 3:8).

But although God so loved and provided them with every possible blessing they would ever need in order for them to remain eternally joyful, fulfilled, and sin, sickness, death and sorrow free, true love is always a choice. Thus God, in His great and infinite wisdom, knew He must allow His beloved and much-blessed creation to make their own choice, as to whether or not they wanted to truly love Him in return. Did they truly love Him enough to trust Him, and hence trust Him enough to obey and remain loyal to Him, or not? That was the test, the choice, the decision and the question, which He knew He must allow them to fully and freely make and answer for themselves. So; God stood back, allowed the devil to make his play, and Adam and Eve to make their choice (Genesis 3). As we know, it was an epic fail. They chose to love, trust, listen to and obey Satan, instead of their Lord God and Creator. Hence, sin, sickness, death and suffering entered the world as a result, driving a deep wedge of division between their pure and sinless Creator, and His now unholy and sin-stained creation (Genesis 3:22-24; Isaiah 59:1-2).

But even then – despite their lack of love for, trust in, and obedience to their almighty and all-loving God and Creator – He did not stop loving them... not for one moment. Despite the fact

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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that due to their own chosen disobedience they would now have to live in a world far less wonderful and much more painful than He had ever planned, purposed, or wanted for them in the first place, He promised His now-fallen and sin-stained creation that He had a plan in place to give them yet another chance to be with Him forever (Genesis 3:15), if they would but simply choose to love, listen to, and trust and obey Him this time.

Each and every day, we are given the same exact choice as Adam and Eve were. God still loves and provides for us more than we can ever imagine (John 3:16; Romans 8:28-32). And so, the question is not does God love us, but do we love God – according to His definition? Jesus said, *“If you love Me, you will obey My commandments”* (John 14:15; see verses 21-24). Do we love Him, enough to listen to and obey, only Him (Matthew 4:10)? Have you obeyed the gospel – God’s commandment to be baptized for the forgiveness of our sins (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Acts 2:38)? Am I daily listening to, learning of, and walking in, obedience to and with the Lord our God? Or are we choosing to love, trust, listen to and live for someone else, resulting in eternally more death and suffering?

It is Not a Ritual...It is a Path to Holiness

By Dan Jenkins

Because it happens every week, it is easy for the partaking of the Lord’s Supper to become somewhat of a religious ritual and we fail to understand the part it plays in our spiritual growth. The abuse of this feast in Corinth brought dire consequences. *“For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep”* (1 Corinthians 11:30). If one does not remember Jesus and discern His body as he partakes of the bread and cup, he eats and drinks damnation to his soul.

In the New Testament we remember Him, but in the Old Testament they remembered their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. From the time the Sabbath was given until the close of the Old

Testament, there was not a weekly assembly, but a time when the Jews, their families, their Gentile neighbors, and even their animals stopped all activity and spent that day thinking about God delivering them from bondage. Tragically, by the time of the New Testament, it had become a day which involved the precise distance one could walk on that day, whether it was sinful to walk through a field of grain and eat the wheat in that field as they walked. It had become a day where one could water his donkey and help his ox get out of a ditch, but the Messiah was forbidden to heal on that day. It was so ritualistic that keeping the rites of that day became a symbol of righteousness!

The failure to keep that day holy by remembering their deliverance from Egypt was a primary reason for the Babylonian captivity that lasted seven decades. God described it this way: *“Her priests have violated My law, and have profaned My holy things...and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them”* Ezekiel 22:26). The sabbath was holy and so is the Lord’s supper.

So, what happens to us as we remember, not the sabbath, but the Lord in His feast? Peter described those who were failing to add the “Christian Graces” to their faith when he says, *“For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten he was cleansed from his old sins”* (2 Peter 1:9). The Lord’s Supper is a weekly reminder of how He purged us from our sins and delivered us from the bondage of sin. It is a time we examine ourselves as we visit the cross. The Lord wanted Israel to remember deliverance from the bondage of Egypt every week and gave them a memorial day to ensure their spiritual growth. The Lord wants us to remember our deliverance from the bondage of sin every week and has given us a memorial feast to ensure our spiritual growth.

As we eat the bread and drink of the cup, never let it become a ritual. But let it be that time when we commune with Him around His table and visit the cross of our salvation.