

The Sacrament

Chapter 23

Christ Introduced the Sacrament

- What do the emblems of the sacrament teach about the Atonement of Jesus Christ?

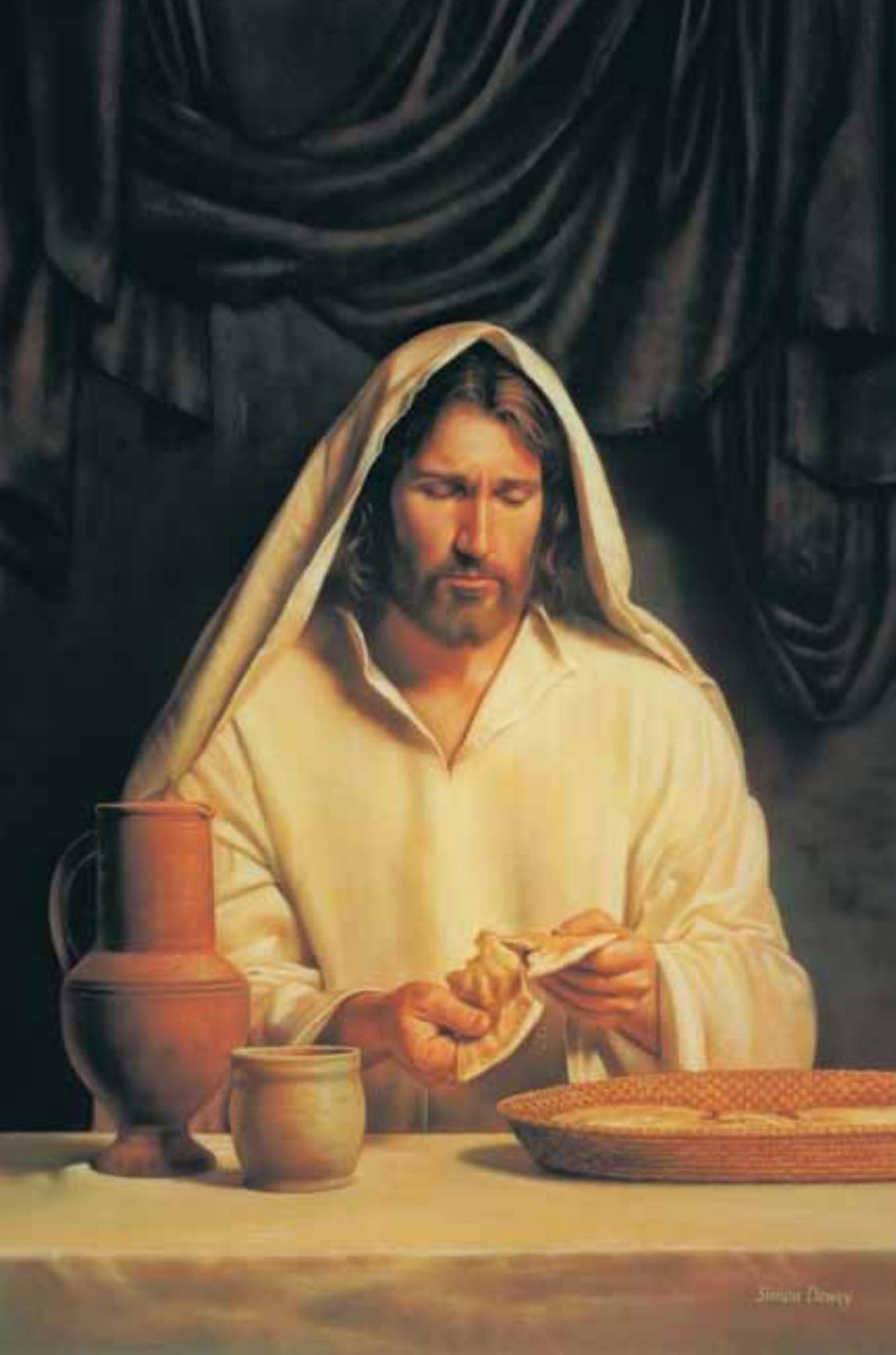
Our Savior wants us to remember His great atoning sacrifice and keep His commandments. To help us do this, He has commanded us to meet often and partake of the sacrament.

The sacrament is a holy priesthood ordinance that helps remind us of the Savior's Atonement. During the sacrament, we partake of bread and water. We do this in remembrance of His flesh and His blood, which He gave as a sacrifice for us. As we partake of the sacrament, we renew sacred covenants with our Heavenly Father.

Shortly before His Crucifixion, Jesus Christ gathered His Apostles around Him in an upstairs room. He knew He would soon die on the cross. This was the last time He would meet with these beloved men before His death. He wanted them to always remember Him so they could be strong and faithful.

To help them remember, He introduced the sacrament. He broke bread into pieces and blessed it. Then He said, "Take, eat; this is in remembrance of my body which I give a ransom for you" (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 26:22). Next He took a cup of wine, blessed it, gave it to His Apostles to drink, and said, "This is in remembrance of my blood . . . , which is shed for as many as shall believe on my name, for the remission of their sins" (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 26:24; see also Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:15–20).

After His Resurrection, the Savior came to the Americas and taught the Nephites the same ordinance (see 3 Nephi 18:1–11; 20:1–9). After the Church was restored in the latter days, Jesus once again



commanded His people to partake of the sacrament in remembrance of Him, saying, “It is expedient that the church meet together often to partake of bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus” (D&C 20:75).

How the Sacrament Is Administered

The scriptures explain exactly how the sacrament is to be administered. Members of the Church meet each Sabbath day to worship and partake of the sacrament (see D&C 20:75). The sacrament is administered by those who hold the necessary priesthood authority. A priest or Melchizedek Priesthood holder breaks bread into pieces, kneels, and blesses it (see D&C 20:76). A deacon or other priesthood holder then passes the sacrament bread to the congregation. Then the priest or Melchizedek Priesthood holder blesses the water, and it too is passed to the members. Jesus gave His disciples wine when He introduced the sacrament. However, in a latter-day revelation He has said that it doesn’t matter what we eat and drink during the sacrament as long as we remember Him (see D&C 27:2–3). Today, Latter-day Saints drink water instead of wine.

Jesus has revealed the exact words for both sacrament prayers. We should listen carefully to these beautiful prayers and try to understand what we are promising and what is being promised to us. Here is the prayer that is offered to bless the bread:

“O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen” (D&C 20:77).

Here is the prayer that is offered to bless the water:

“O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this wine [water] to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee,

O God, the Eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen” (D&C 20:79).

The ordinance of the sacrament is performed very simply and reverently.

- Carefully review the sacrament prayers. Think about the meaning of each phrase.

The Covenants We Renew during the Sacrament

- What covenants do we renew during the sacrament? What blessings does the Lord promise us as we keep those covenants?

Each time we partake of the sacrament, we renew covenants with the Lord. A covenant is a sacred promise between the Lord and His children. The covenants we make are clearly stated in the sacramental prayers. It is important to know what those covenants are and what they mean.

We covenant that we are willing to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ. By this we show we are willing to be identified with Him and His Church. We commit to serve Him and our fellowman. We promise that we will not bring shame or reproach upon that name.

We covenant to always remember Jesus Christ. All our thoughts, feelings, and actions will be influenced by Him and His mission.

We promise to keep His commandments.

We take these obligations upon ourselves when we are baptized (see D&C 20:37; Mosiah 18:6–10). Thus, when we partake of the sacrament, we renew the covenants we made when we were baptized. Jesus gave us the pattern for partaking of the sacrament (see 3 Nephi 18:1–12) and said that when we follow this pattern, repenting of our sins and believing on His name, we will gain a remission of our sins (see Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 26:24).

The Lord promises that if we keep our covenants, we will always have His Spirit to be with us. A person guided by the Spirit will have the knowledge, faith, power, and righteousness to gain eternal life.

- What can we do to remember these promises during the week?

Our Attitude When Partaking of the Sacrament

- How can we prepare ourselves to partake of the sacrament? What can we think about during the sacrament to help us remember the Savior's Atonement?

Before partaking of the sacrament, we are to prepare ourselves spiritually. The Lord emphasizes that no one should partake of the sacrament unworthily. That means we must repent of our sins before taking the sacrament. The scriptures say, "If any have trespassed, let him not partake until he makes reconciliation" (D&C 46:4). The Lord instructed His twelve Nephite disciples, "Ye shall not suffer any one knowingly to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily, when ye shall minister it; for whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul" (3 Nephi 18:28–29).

During the sacrament service we should dismiss from our minds all worldly thoughts. We should feel prayerful and reverent. We should think of the Atonement of our Savior and be grateful for it. We should examine our lives and look for ways to improve. We should also renew our determination to keep the commandments.

We do not need to be perfect before partaking of the sacrament, but we must have the spirit of repentance in our hearts. The attitude with which we partake of the sacrament influences our experience with it. If we partake of the sacrament with a pure heart, we receive the promised blessings of the Lord.

- Why do you think worthily partaking of the sacrament increases our spiritual strength?

Additional Scriptures

- 1 Corinthians 11:27–29 (partake of the sacrament worthily)
- John 4:5–14 (Jesus is the Living Water)
- John 6:30–35 (Jesus is the Bread of Life)

For teachers: If many of those you teach are parents, you may want to ask them to share ideas about how they can help their children prepare to partake of the sacrament reverently.