

HE GAVE THANKS

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For a long time, some brethren who are asked to offer thanks for the bread or the fruit of the vine when serving at the Lord's table, fail to do this. They often pray a beautiful prayer, but they fail to give thanks for the bread or the fruit of the vine. Is it carelessness or ignorance? In either case, it is bad and should be corrected. Men who lead the church in worship should be thoughtful and serious-minded and in whatever they do they should think soberly, lest they turn the worship into a meaningless performance, displeasing to God and the worshippers.

Paul said, **"the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me"** (1 Cor. 11:23-24). Luke wrote, **"And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me"** (Luke 22:19). Matthew records:

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins (Mat. 26:26-28).

Mark said, **"And as they were eating, he took bread, and when he had blessed, he brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take ye: this is my body. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them: and they all drank of it"** (Mark 14:22-23).

From these Scriptures, we understand that the Lord Jesus **gave thanks** both for the bread and the cup. And this is what we should do when we are asked to serve at the Lord's table. It is not an occasion for us to pray a long prayer, expressing our gratitude to God for His wonderful love manifested in the gift of His Son who died for us, etc., etc. While no one would contend that it is a sin to include such words in our prayer at the Lord's table, we should certainly not leave the impression that this is what we should do on this occasion to the neglect of **giving thanks** for the bread and the fruit of the vine. Some prayers at the Lord's table remind us of the man who at the dinner table thanks God for the rain and the sunshine, for the harvest and the reaping and the reapers, for those who have prepared the good dinner for us, and never offer thanks for the dinner.

Occasionally we hear a brother ask God to "bless this bread," as though God would shower some special blessing upon it. But when we read the records it is easy to understand that when Jesus blessed the bread, He simply **gave thanks** for the bread. To contend that He did more than this, is to contend that He did two things, blessed it and **gave thanks**. The Scriptures teach us to **give thanks** for the bread and the cup, not to ask God to bless it.

I recall hearing a grand old preacher say many years ago, that he had rather hear a brother say at the Lord's table, "Heavenly Father, we thank thee for this bread, In Jesus' name. Amen" than to hear him pray a beautiful prayer and never thank the Lord for the bread and the fruit of the vine. We would therefore emphasize that at the Lord's table we are to **give thanks**. There are other occasions during the worship period when we have opportunity to pray for and about other things.

If you are guilty of this error, have the courage and good sense to admit and correct it. The Lord will be pleased, and you will grow in the knowledge of the truth. But if you try to justify yourself in your error, then excuse yourself when again asked to lead the brethren in **giving thanks** at the Lord's table, and let someone serve who will follow the Lord's example.~

Deceased