

A little background to the Bread and Juice during Communion.

In Luke 22:18, Mark 14:25, and Matthew 26:29 Jesus is participating in His last Passover meal. During that meal, Jesus takes a piece of bread and one of the cups from that festival meal and leaves us with a lasting, tangible reminder of the New Covenant He established with us through the cross.

THE BREAD

Baking unleavened bread is an excellent activity to help your family learn the differences between leavened and unleavened bread. Unleavened bread is not a regular staple of our mealtimes today. We much more prefer a warm, soft, slice of bread smothered in butter. But is that what is referenced in the Biblical account of the Passover and the institution of the Lord's Supper or Communion? Read on to find out more on this topic.

Yeast Is Leavening Agent

Yeast is used as a leavening agent when making bread and baked goods. When yeast is added to a mixture of dough, a fermentation process begins as the yeast eats the sugars and releases carbon dioxide gas. The yeast absorbs the oxygen in the dough and starts the reproduction of cells. The yeast cells produce carbon dioxide which causes the dough to rise. In other words, yeast corrupts or takes over the dough and causes it to grow.

Matthew 16:6 (ESV)

6 Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Yeast Corrupts Dough

Jesus knew that a little yeast is enough to make a whole batch of dough rise (yeast corrupts the dough). In Matthew 16:6, Jesus was warning about the attitude of the Pharisees. The Pharisees thought that only those who believed and behaved like they would be saved. They were focused on following the law and did not care about people. Jesus was all about taking care of others and loving others. He wanted others to understand the most important thing in life was to love God and love thy neighbor.

To Get Bread To Rise

To get bread to rise in Bible times, they would combine flour and water and leave it in a cool place. After a long time, the dough would rise. They saved a little dough from each batch (a starter dough) to add to the next batch. This would speed up the process of how long it would take the bread to rise. Leavened bread involved a lot of work.

Making unleavened bread was much easier. Once the flour and water were mixed, the bread was ready to bake. There was no starter dough, and the bread did not have to sit for a long time. Unleavened Bread represented haste (Example: When the Israelites left Egypt in a hurry), simplicity, powerlessness, and a lack of labor.

The next time you see unleavened bread in the Bible just try to remember how it was made and what it represented. Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament Unleavened Bread was used in the Passover.

Matthew 26:26 (ESV)

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."

THE CUP

During the celebration of the Passover, Jesus makes the statement that He will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the day when He drinks it new in the kingdom of God. (Luke 22:18, Mark 14:25, and Matthew 26:29)

And while there is much debate about the types of fruit of the vine, whether fermented wine with alcoholic content or just simple grape juice, that discussion is for another time.

Why do we use grape juice here at Ord Christian Church. There are a few reasons. Some of them cultural, some of them supported with the Biblical text.

Since Communion is a time of remembering what Christ has done for them personally, there are some who have made that decision to surrender to Jesus before the legal drinking age. It would not be fitting for us to offer a minor alcoholic content.

There are also those that have made Jesus their LORD and Savior, but have in their background a time period of struggling with the overindulgence of alcoholic beverages. We want to sensitive to that and not create a possible stumbling block.

In addition to those reasons, almost every instance where the Greek word ampelos is utilized it is in reference or combination with the clarification of grapes, grapevine or vineyard.

Kyle Butt, who currently serves in the Bible Department at Apologetics Press, states,

"It is an absolutely established fact that Jesus' disciples, as well as the broader first-century readership of the gospel accounts, understood Jesus' phrase "fruit of the vine" to refer to juice from grapes."

So there you have it, a little background into the "the bread and juice" that as followers of Christ we eat to remember God's Grace towards us!

I want to encourage you to take some time this week and read Matthew 26:26-29 with your family and if you've made Jesus your Savior, remember His sacrifice and partake in the Lord's supper.

You can find lots of recipes online, but here are a couple for quick reference that have been shared with me by family and friends. They are easy to put together and can be a fun activity for your kids!

The Basic Recipe:

Ingredients:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup water

Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C).

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Mix flour, oil, and salt together in a bowl; add water and mix using a pastry cutter until dough is soft. Form dough into 6 balls and press into disks onto the prepared baking sheet using your hands.

Bake in the preheated oven until bread is cooked, 8 to 10 minutes.

A sweeter Bread Recipe (sugar)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1/3 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup shortening
- 2 to 2½ tablespoons milk

Directions:

Sift together the flour, sugar and salt. Cut in shortening. Add a little bit of milk at a time, and only enough to form into dough. Roll dough (using floured rolling pin) to ¼ inch thick. Cut into ½ inch squares. Bake at 375 for 15-20 minutes or until done.

A sweeter Bread Recipe (honey)

Ingredients:

- ¾ cup scalded milk Scalded milk is to heat it to an almost boil
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup honey
- 2-½ cups flour
- ¼ cup butter melted
- 1 tsp. Salt

Instructions:

1. Beat milk, honey, olive oil, and butter together.
2. Gradually add 2 cups of flour and the salt. The dough will be sticky.
3. Use a large 12×17 size parchment paper to roll out the dough. Flour the parchment paper well and add the dough.
4. Make sure the parchment paper, rolling pin, and dough are floured well. Use the remaining ¼ cup flour. Roll the dough to ¼" thickness.
5. Place the rolled out dough with the parchment paper on a baking sheet 12×17 size to fit in my baking pan.
6. Prick with a fork.
7. Bake at 375 degrees for 15 or 20 minutes.

For an even sweeter taste, glaze each of the finished bread recipes above with honey.