

What does all of this mean to us? We should make certain that our prayers offered in the observance of the memorial focus on the elements and what they represent. The Lord's Supper is not the time for prayers for the sick, for our troops, or other things for which we ought to pray. However, the very fact that Scripture uses two words (*eulo-*



*geo* “to bless” and *eucharisteo* “to give thanks”) synonymously for what is commanded regarding prayer for the elements, shows us that either or both can be used to describe what precedes eating of the memorial.

By Kyle Pope

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# Faithful Sayings

## Olsen Park Church of Christ

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### Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.  
10:20 a.m.  
6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

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## “Blessing” & “Giving Thanks” For the Lord’s Supper

In Matthew’s account of the institution of the Lord’s Supper, he records that, “...as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body’” (26:26). Matthew goes on to record that Jesus then, “...took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you’” (26:27). We note that Matthew describes Jesus “blessing” the cup but then “giving thanks” for the bread. This same distinction is found in Mark’s account (Mark 14:22-23). This leads to the question, *is there a difference between “blessing” and “giving thanks” for the different elements?*



The difference in translation in these texts reflects the use of two distinct words in the Greek. The word translated “bless” comes from the word. *eulogeo* (εὐλογέω) which Thayer defines “to praise, celebrate with praises; to invoke blessings; to consecrate a



thing with solemn prayers, to ask God’s blessing on a thing...” The prefix *eu* meaning “well, or good” is combined with a form of the word *le-go* meaning “to speak.” Thus it is literally “to speak well” of something (cf. James 3:10 where the noun is used). The single word in the Greek, rendered “give thanks” is *eucharisteo* (εὐχαριστέω) meaning “to be grateful, feel thankful; give thanks” (Thayer). The name “eucharist,” which (although the Bible does not use) the denominational world applies to the Lord’s Supper, comes from this verb. The idea here is using the mouth to express thankfulness—in the context, thankfulness for the memorial fruit of the vine.

While the accounts of Matthew and Mark might lead us to think that

we must ask the Lord’s “blessing” for the bread, yet express “thanks” for the cup, the accounts in Luke and First Corinthians give us further insight into how these words are to be understood. Luke records, **“Then He took the cup, and gave thanks (*eucharisteo*), and said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves’”** (22:17). This took place before they ate the Pass-over meal. This is clear because Luke goes further to record that during the meal Jesus, **“...took bread, gave thanks (*eucharisteo*) and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me’”** (22:19). Then, Luke tells us, regarding the cup for which Jesus had previously given thanks and divided, **“Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new**

**covenant in My blood, which is shed for you’”** (22:20). Luke uses the term *eucharisteo* “give thanks” in reference to what Jesus did to the bread and the cup. Paul also, although he does not address the fact that Jesus gave thanks for the cup before the meal, echoes the same wording describing Jesus “giving thanks” for the bread and taking the cup after supper (I Corinthians 11:23-25).

*What does this teach us about the different words used in Matthew and Mark?* The account in Luke shows us that while a subtle difference in meaning exists between “blessing” (*eulogeo*) something and “giving thanks” (*eucharisteo*) for it, the two

**cup of blessing which we bless (*eulogeo*), is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?”** (I Corinthians 10:16a). This shows two things: 1) The same things which Matthew and Mark refer to as “giving thanks” Paul speaks of as “blessing” the cup; 2) This is something which “WE bless” as Christians.

words are basically used synonymously. They are both appeals of gratitude to God as well as appeals that God will accept the memorial observance as something well-pleasing to Him.

*Is “blessing” the elements the same as “giving thanks” for the elements?* It might be argued that Christ alone, blessed the bread, but Christians cannot “bless” the elements. That is not correct. While it is true that we do not determine whether God accepts something as well-pleasing to Him, or not, Scripture does teach that the elements of the memorial are “blessed” by Christians. One chapter before Paul recounts the institution of the Lord’s Supper, he asks, **“The**

