

FBC POWELL, 10-30-16 AM NOTES
"What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Lord's Supper"
1 Corinthians 11:17-34
(Non-Series Message)

Ordinance—That which was ordained or prescribed by Jesus

I. There Is Distortion That Must Be Avoided (vv. 17-22)

1 Corinthians 11:17-18 (NIV) "In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it."

1 Corinthians 11:19 (NIV) "No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval."

II. There Is a Purpose to Be Accomplished (vv. 23-26)

A. Adoration (vv. 23-25)

"The mental action of the Lord's Supper is foundationally remembering. Not imagining. Not dreaming. Not channeling. Not listening. Not going into neutral. It is a conscious directing of the mind back into history to Jesus and what we know about Him from the Bible. The Lord's Supper roots us, time after time, in the nitty-gritty of history. Bread and cup. Body and blood. Execution and death."
—John Piper

Nehemiah 4:14b "remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your houses."

Psalms 77:11 "I shall remember the deeds of the Lord; surely I will remember Your wonders of old."

Psalms 105:5 "Remember His wonders which He has done, His marvels and the judgments uttered by His mouth."

John 16:4a "But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them."

2 Timothy 2:8 "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel."

2 Peter 1:13 (NIV) "I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body."

1 John 4:19 "We love, because He first loved us."

John 1:29 "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

B. Anticipation (v. 26)

III. There Is an Examination That Must Precede It (vv. 27-34)

1 Corinthians 11:30 (ESV) "That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died."

First Baptist Church Powell 10 30 2016 AM

Sermon: What Every Christian Needs to Know about the Lord's Supper

Non-Series Sermon

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

On the night before Jesus was crucified, He celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples. As a part of this celebration, He gave the Passover new meaning. God had initiated the Passover with the Jews after He delivered them from 400 years of Egyptian slavery. Specifically, the Passover meal celebrated the death angel's *passing over* the Israelite homes as he brought death to the firstborn of all the Egyptians. The reason he passed over the Israelites' homes was because an innocent lamb had been slain by each family and its blood was smeared on the doorposts and lintels of their houses.

The deliverance of the Jews from Egypt was the greatest deliverance known to man until the cross and resurrection of Christ. As Jesus prepared to go to the cross, He transformed the Passover meal into a celebration of an infinitely greater deliverance that He had come to bring all who would repent and believe the Gospel. The deliverance Jesus came to bring is deliverance from slavery to Satan, the flesh, the world system, and the power of sin which dwells in us. The blood that would bring the deliverance Jesus speaks of was not the blood of lambs, but Jesus' own blood shed on an old rugged cross.

The Lord Jesus gave two ordinances for the church to regularly experience. The word "ordinance" means that which was ordained or prescribed by Jesus. These ordinances are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all give us a record of the last supper that Jesus had with His disciples, but the epistles of Paul are the earliest testimony we have of what this ordinance looked like in the early church. This ordinance is called "the Lord's Supper" in 1 Corinthians 11:20 and "the breaking of bread" in Acts 2:42. In some circles, it is called "communion." Other traditions call it a sacrament. Traditionally, most Baptists have stayed away from calling the Lord's Supper a sacrament because in some churches "sacrament" refers to an act that is a part of gaining one's salvation. Some Protestant churches use the term "sacrament" but do not teach that it in any way gains salvation for the one participating. Some call the Lord's Supper the "Eucharist." That word means giving thanks and it refers to what Jesus said in Matthew 26:27, Mark 14:23 and Luke 22:17, "And when He had taken a cup and given thanks..."

The passage that we are looking at today is the one that gives the most detail about the Lord's Supper in all the New Testament. I believe that the more we know about this ordinance, the more meaningful it will be for us as we participate.

I. There Is Distortion That Must Be Avoided (v 17-22)

Five times in 1 Corinthians 11 Paul speaks of the church coming together to participate in the Lord's Supper (verses 17, 18, 20, 33, and 34). The Lord's Supper is an act for the gathered church family. It is called "a church ordinance." It is not intended for wedding ceremonies, friends on a camping trip, a home Bible study, or family gatherings. In the church, when taking the Lord's Supper together, there should be a special sense of unity.

Why is there a special unity that takes place around the Lord's Supper? Let's imagine that there are 1,000 people who come together to take the Lord's Supper. If they have all prepared their hearts (which we will cover in the last point) and are all drawing near to Jesus with hearts filled with praise and thanks for the tremendous price He paid for our deliverance from slavery to sin, then there will be a drawing close to one another. Let me give an admittedly flawed illustration of that. If Christ was physically in this room and stood at the front and the invitation was given for all who loved Him to physically draw as close as possible to Him, the byproduct is that we would be physically close to one another. In somewhat the same way, when there is a spiritual drawing near to Him in taking the Lord's Supper, there will be a special unity and closeness with one another. Unity is one of the main purposes of the Lord's Supper. Churches that neglect

the Lord's Supper or treat it in a casual or even flippant way will always have unity problems. When we see the importance of unity in the church and the key role that the Lord's Supper plays in that unity, what would you do if you were the enemy, if you were Satan? You would try to distort or to twist the Lord's Supper. That is exactly what was happening in the church at Corinth. That is exactly what he desires to accomplish in all churches today.

What was the "unity problem" at Corinth? Paul tells them the problem and how serious it is in verses 17-18. Listen to the New International Version: 1 Corinthians 11:17-18 (NIV): "In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it." Their disunity was so bad that Paul, who was writing from Ephesus, had heard about it. The particular form of disunity at Corinth seems to have been the perversion of what was called the love feast (that is what it was called in Jude 12).

These "love feasts" involved the church families coming together to eat a meal. After the meal, they would participate in the Lord's Supper. Evidently these "love feasts" were revealing self-centeredness, and extreme division between the poor and the wealthy. The poor came hoping to share in the abundant food brought by the wealthy, but the wealthy didn't share. Many were glutinous not only in their eating but also in their drinking. As shocking as it sounds, some were actually getting drunk before taking the Lord's Supper! In verse 19, Paul is saying that these love feasts revealed the true character of many in the Corinthian church. 1 Corinthians 11:19 (NIV): "No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval." In other words, the love feasts before taking the Lord's Supper revealed self-centeredness and lack of love and unity that was there all along, but was masked.

What is obvious is that the loveless "love feasts" were distorting the Lord's Supper. In verse 22 he gives a command that was in response to this problem. Contrary to what some teach, verse 22 is not saying that there should be no meals together. This misunderstanding of what Paul said explains why many older churches have a fellowship building where meals take place that are separated from the building where worship takes place. The principle is that anything that is disrupting the unity that should surround the Lord's Supper must be dealt with quickly and decisively.

II. There Is a Purpose to Be Accomplished (v 23-26)

The purpose of the Lord's Supper is twofold.

A. Adoration (v 23-25)

The key word in these verses is "remembrance" (v 24, 25). What we are to remember is not some allegory or mystical event. We are to remember something that happened in history. John Piper gave a good word on this "remembrance." He said:

The mental action of the Lord's Supper is foundationally remembering. Not imagining. Not dreaming. Not channeling. Not listening. Not going into neutral. It is a conscious directing of the mind back into history to Jesus and what we know about Him from the Bible. The Lord's Supper roots us, time after time, in the nitty-gritty of history. Bread and cup. Body and blood. Execution and death.
[John Piper, www.desiringgod.org/messages/why-and-how-we-celebrate-the-lords-supper]

The Bible is big on remembering!

Nehemiah 4:14b: "remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your houses."

Psalms 77:11: "I shall remember the deeds of the Lord; surely I will remember Your wonders of old."

Psalms 105:5: "Remember His wonders which He has done, His marvels and the judgments uttered by His mouth."

In the New Testament we read in John 16:4a: "But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them."

2 Timothy 2:8: “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel.”

2 Peter 1:13 (NIV): “I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body.”

If the purpose of the Lord’s Supper is to remember, let’s make sure that we understand what Jesus meant when He said, “do this in remembrance of Me.” In the Old Testament, it was remembering that encouraged them in the hard times. It was remembering that kept before them their unique identity as God’s chosen people. It was through remembering “out loud” that enabled them to orally pass on truth to the generations following them. That explains why feasts and celebrations were so important to the Israelites. The institution of the Lord’s Supper fit right in that Old Testament pattern of remembering the important things of the faith. Nothing is more important than the death of Christ in our place to pay the debt that we owed that we might have forgiveness that we did not earn.

This word “remembrance” means more than just recalling it to our mind. It is to relive it. It involves meditation on His sacrifice, the cost, and the results. True remembrance always results in worship. The Lord’s Supper at its essence is a prompter to a worship experience. If we participate in the Lord’s Supper without experiencing genuine worship, we have missed its very purpose. In the Lord’s Supper, we see afresh and anew His great love poured out for us. 1 John 4:19: “We love, because He first loved us.” In other words, as we focus on His love, the result is an increase in our capacity to love Him.

Our capacity for adoration is increased as we meditate on, as we remember, the elements of the Lord’s Supper.

First, there is the bread. In the Passover meal, the bread represented the Exodus, but under the new covenant, the bread represents and calls us to remember the fact that Jesus was God in a body – a human flesh and blood body. The bread is an aid to remember His body on the cross. Notice the two words in verse 24, “for you.” This is a precious phrase. Jesus could say to those who would receive Him by faith, “I left the glories of Heaven, ‘for you’; I submitted to abuse, to flogging, to being spit upon, ‘for you.’ I was nailed to an old rugged cross ‘for you!’” He could say, “I gave my body ‘for you.’”

The cup represents His blood. Instead of the Passover lambs blood that was shed to save the Israelites under the old covenant, Jesus’ blood was shed for the payment of sin for all who would repent of sin and believe, trust in Jesus, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he cried out in John 1:29: “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” The old covenant was ratified repeatedly by the blood of animals offered by man. The new covenant has been ratified once for all by the blood of Jesus! We eat the bread representing His body and drink the cup representing His blood not for salvation, not as a sacrament that “helps” with our salvation; we eat the bread and drink the cup in remembrance of Him.

Charles Spurgeon, the well-known preacher of London over a century ago, gave a wonderful illustration of how the bread and the fruit of the vine enable us to remember the Lord. Spurgeon said that the bread and wine are like glasses. What do you do with glasses? Do you look *at* them? No, you look *through* them. We don’t look at the bread and the fruit of the vine; we look through them and see the body of Jesus in agony nailed to the cross with His life’s blood flowing from His wounds to pay the debt that He did not owe, to satisfy the debt that we could not pay. The bread and the fruit of the vine are like glasses that enable us, on this side of the cross, to *see* more clearly the price paid to satisfy the justice and wrath of God, and to provide salvation for all that come to God through Christ.

B. Anticipation (v 26)

The Lord’s Supper is not like sharing a funeral meal together; it is a dress rehearsal for the coming marriage supper of the Lamb! How long is the church to continue celebrating the Lord’s Supper? It is “until He comes!” His death paid salvation’s price, but His coming again assumes His resurrection. A dead savior cannot come again.

The word translated “proclaim” is literally “preach.” There is a sense that when we take the Lord’s Supper we preach to Satan and the demonic spirits that Jesus has risen and is coming again and their time is short! When He comes the second time, it is not to a cross, but a crown and He will rule and reign forever and ever.

III. There Is an Examination That Must Precede It (v 27-34)

I believe the church is often guilty of taking this part of the Lord's Supper lightly. Paul actually warns that if one comes to the Lord's Supper in a flippant, cavalier way that does not recognize the magnitude, the sacredness of the cross, that person may, as a believer, lose their life as an act of God's discipline.

What is meant by the phrase in verse 27, "unworthy manner"? The context tells us that it is failing to appreciate what the elements picture – the giving of Christ's body to deal with sin's power and the shedding of his blood to propitiate (satisfy) the wrath of God that sin brings. In other words, it is to treat the Lord's Supper flippantly superficially, casually, or to treat it as a boring ritual. It is a failure to exercise genuine repentance over the actions in our life that are inconsistent with who we are in Christ.

In summary, it is to treat Christ and His sacrifice and our sin in a manner that says we consider them a minor thing. John MacArthur gives a great example of what this passage is talking about. To trample on or burn our nation's flag is to dishonor our country that the flag represents. To treat with flippancy and disdain the symbol of our Lord's sacrifice and accomplished work is to treat our Lord Himself with disrespect. That is no minor thing. 1 Corinthians 11:30 (ESV): "That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died." The ultimate response of God's discipline is that he takes a person's life. If they were in Christ, their salvation was not taken away – only their physical life. That's pretty serious.

The main activity that ought to be taking place before the Lord's Supper is repentance! I believe that one of the main reasons for taking the Lord's Supper on a regular basis is to motivate us to examine our lives to see and turn from all sin. There is some sin in our lives that we have just learned to live with and it is not brought to the forefront until we have a planned, intense, and thorough examination of our life. The Lord's Supper is a great time for that examination.

What are we talking about when we speak of a thorough examination of our life? Some of our sins are obvious, but some are more subtle and unless we get quiet and open before the Lord, we may miss it. What are some of those easily hidden sins? It may be things like a root of bitterness that we have allowed to spring up in our life in response to someone wronging us. It may be as simple as being slighted in an invitation to some event, a hateful word to us that has never been apologized for, or a failure on the part of another to show gratitude for all you have done for them. It may be as serious as slander against you, an unfaithful spouse, or someone who cheated you in a business deal. Whatever it is, we are commanded to forgive those who have wronged us.

A sin in that same category would be someone you have wronged and never asked the person you wronged to forgive you. It may be a really bad attitude on your part, a self-centered attitude which is the opposite of humility and a revealer of true biblical love in your life. It may be any number of other unconfessed sins. This is why we are having an examination time this morning so that you can seek the Lord and deal with any sin in your life.

I don't want to make it sound like the Lord's Supper is a morbid, sad time. Quite the opposite is true! It ought to be a time of joy that we anticipate and when it is over we start looking forward to the next time we can come to the Lord's Table. At the Lord's Supper, we focus on the past as we remember what Jesus accomplished for us in history – His body and blood given for us that we might be forgiven and spend eternity with Him. At the Lord's Supper, we focus on the present as we see that His body was given and His blood shed that we might be set free *NOW* from the enslavement to sin. At the Lord's Supper, we focus on the future and the fact that He rose from the dead and is coming back to get His Bride, the church and oh, what a glorious day that will be!

NASB (New American Standard Bible)

Unless otherwise stated all scripture references are taken from the NASB.

Scripture taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, © Copyright 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

ESV (English Standard Version)

Scripture quotations taken from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*. Copyright © 2000; 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

NIV (New International Version)

Scripture taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*®. *NIV*®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.