

We welcome those joining us by livestream or over the phone. You cannot eat and drink, because in God's providence, you cannot be here today. The Lord's Supper symbolizes us being together. We are thankful that the message of the gospel of grace can travel to where you are through God's gift of this technology. You are welcome to listen in, and long to be here in God's perfect timing. You get the SAME CHRIST in the gospel preached as we get in the bread and the cup. Please be thankful. Let your communing be with Christ spiritually as you tune in.

For those gathered here in person – I remind you that The Lord's Supper is not about the quality of the elements, but about the meaning of the elements. Our biggest question is not whether we will enjoy the wafer and cup, but whether we are reconciled with God! We get THE SAME CHRIST, even with a diminished bread and cup.

Message:

1 Corinthians 10:16-17, *“The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”*

When we eat the bread, we partake of Christ's body.

When we drink the cup, we partake of Christ's blood.

The Bible presents the Lord's Table as a church meal. The symbolism of one bread or one loaf is a sign that signifies that we are united to Christ. Because we each are united to Christ, we are inevitably united to each other. The single loaf of bread shows that the whole church participates together, because each of us as an individual person is in Christ by faith. We are nourished together. We grow together.

Being one body means that we are bound to each other. The church is a family. We still live in our own families. The church is a family of families. We remind ourselves that we are connected to each other, because the Lord has made us one.

In our passage, Paul was concerned for some in the church in Corinth who were participating in non-Christian religious activities, in addition to them participating in the Lord's Supper. But Paul challenged that practice. There was nothing tainted about the food itself. It was their hearts that concerned Paul. Eating the bread and drinking the cup was a communal event. Eating and drinking is not just for me, but for God's glory and for the good of the church.

What do we receive by eating drinking? We receive the blessing of Christ in the cup of blessing. We receive the good news of the gospel, we

receive assurance of its reality, we receive the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ.

We receive the gift of the body of Christ. Pastors teach and feed us, and live by example. Elders shepherd and care for the flock. Deacons attend to the needs of God's people. Believers remind and teach one another. One brother is strong and wise, and offers us insight into the path that God would have us take. A sister is kind and knows how to accept us through the highs and lows of our poor walk with Christ. Another sister is down to earth and shows us the value of everyday prayer and simple obedience. Another brother often goes unnoticed, but he is humble and never sees his accomplishments and contributions as a reason for pride. One of our fellow church family members may have the ability to connect to unbelievers to welcome them into the realm of the love of Christ that is here. One sister is the one who shows great patience.

What unites us? The fact that all of us have been forgiven much by our precious Lord, and by brothers and sisters in Christ. We are reminded that pastors, elders and deacons need to be forgiven by all of us too, and the church family has room for that to happen, because we are all swimming in God's grace. A young person who has great joy in Christ, is a precious part of our family here in our congregation. One person who would never speak in public, is so solid that she could not possibly be moved away from her example of godly fear. Some help us to sing with more gusto. Others show what it is to give generously. Some are easily discouraged and need our help regularly with encouragements to keep going.

We suffer together. Right now, we are apart, and we feel it keenly when we take the bread and cup without everyone here to partake.

But as we suffer together, we also wait patiently for the time when we will rejoice together. We weep together, and one day we will again sing together.

Today we don't have to wait to have God as our Father, Christ as our Lord, and the apostles as our teachers.

Paul would have us all be passionate about our unity. If our behavior has created a stumbling block for someone's faith, we must remove it.

We do not allow bitterness to take root and grow.

We forgive. We do not ignore the needs of the smallest ones.

We give God heartfelt thanks for the body of Christ. His body, given for us, and His blood shed for us, have made us one body in Him.

*To parents of young children, we say please wait until the children have reached the age to understand these things, in consultation with the elders.*

To visitors, we say **If you are a Bible-believing Christian and you are walking with God and with your church, we lovingly invite you to partake in this blessing with us.**

OPEN THE BREAD.

That we may now be fed with the true heavenly bread, Christ Jesus, let us not cleave with our hearts unto the external bread and wine, but lift our hearts up on high in heaven where Christ Jesus is our Advocate at the right hand of His heavenly Father.

*[Please now peel back the top layer of your cup, so that the bread wafer is ready.]*

*Pray, thanking God for the body of Christ, represented by this bread.*

The bread we break together is the communion of the body of Christ.

Take, eat, remember, and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was given for a full pardon of all our sins.

*[Please now peel back the next layer of your cup, so that the juice is ready.]*

*Prayer of thanks for Jesus' blood, represented, sealed, & applied by this cup.*

The cup of blessing which we drink is the communion of the blood of Christ.

Take, drink, remember, and believe that the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed for a complete cleansing of all our sins.

Let us pray, "Merciful Father, we thank You for this holy sacrament, which shows forth His death. Enable us to live always for Him who gave Himself for us, even Jesus Christ, through whom we ask, Amen.

Blessing from 1 Peter 1:8-9, "*Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*" Amen.

NOTE: much of this meditation came from a book called Spreading the Feast by Pastor Howard Griffiths, and we adapted it for our use here.