

THE LORD'S SUPPER
1 Corinthians 11:17-34
2/6/05

The Lord's Supper is a special way of worship that Christ Himself gave to His church.

Historically, it has been the high point of Christian worship.

Our Christian forefathers throughout the 2000 years of Church history have practiced it.

Christians from every continent, country, and culture have seen the communion service as a special time of worshipping our Savior.

Tragically, many Christians in America today view it as an unimportant, optional, religious ritual.

They don't see it as all that important.

Others don't participate because they feel unworthy to partake because of some area of struggle in their lives.

They feel that it would be hypocritical for them to partake.

They may even fear that God will punish them if they eat of the elements.

On the other hand, there are Christians who are willfully living sinful lives and have no qualms about partaking.

They like the Corinthians practice it in a way that is disgraceful and offensive to our Lord.

This morning we will see the significance of the Lord's Supper and how we should approach Him.

2. A Perversion Of The Lord's Supper 11:17-22

We have seen that the Corinthians were divided over a number of issues.

In our passage the morning the issue seems to have been social-economic differences.

The wealthier members of the church were treating the poorer believers as second class Christians.

This is repugnant to God. James 2:1-9

The early church held an agape or love feast in connection with the Lord's Supper.

Apparently some of the wealthier members were not sharing their food.

The "love feast" became a church potluck where the rich ate well and the poor didn't.

Some ate steak, some beans, and some went hungry.

21b On top of everything else, some were even getting drunk.

22 It would be better for them to eat at home than to make a mockery of the supposed love feast and the Lord's Supper.

Communion is among other things a symbol of our oneness in Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Their actions showed their contempt and disdain for other members of Christ's church

It brought shame to the poorer members of the congregation.

Factions in a church are inevitable. cf v. 19

They reveal the true from the false, the wheat and the tares, the sheep and the goats, genuine Christians from pretend believers

Acts 20:28-30 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 "I know that after

my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

3. Why Should We Be Careful How We Partake Of The Lord's Supper? 11:23-30

a. Out of love for our Savior who instituted it. v. 23

The communion service was important to Jesus.

Among the last things that He did before He was taken captive was to introduce to His disciples how they were to worship Him after He was God.

He apparently later introduced it to Paul.

We should partake of the Lord's Table with a spirit of reverence and unity out of love for our Savior who instituted it.

We should also be careful how we partake of the Lord's table . . .

b. Out of respect for His great sacrifice to save us from our sins. vv. 24-25

24 *This is my body*

A symbolic *remembrance*

Not a grace-imparting sacrament

A time when we can freely reflect on the greatness of Christ and His loving sacrifice for us

Symbolic, not Christ's literal body and blood

cf "I am the (vine, door, way, Rock)"

A remembrance of Christ and His death *for you*

25 new covenant- God's new arrangement with man

We are not under the old Mosaic Covenant, but under a new covenant based on the death of Christ.

Notice again that it is a time of remembrance and reflection.

We should be careful how we partake of the Lord's table out of respect for His great sacrifice to save us from our sins.

We should thirdly be careful how we partake of the Lord's table . . .

c. Out of appreciation for Christ's death and in anticipation of His coming. v. 26

It is a proclamation of our faith in Christ's death for our sins.

It is in anticipation of His promised coming again.

Finally we should also be careful how we partake of the Lord's table . . .

d. Out of fear of His discipline. vv. 27-30

To partake in an unworthy manner brings God's discipline.

v. 30 God's discipline includes sickness and even death.

God disciplines sin in the life of a true Christian. cf Hebrews 12:6-8; Acts 5; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 1 John 5:16-17

Unworthy manner

It can mean to partake in a disrespectful or flippant manner.

It can be coming with unconfessed sin

In this case it refers to the undealt with sins of drunkenness and divisiveness.

guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord

Guilty of demeaning or trivializing Christ's death for us

4. How Should We Partake Of The Lord's Supper. 11:31-34

- a. **We should first judge ourselves. vv. 31-32**

31 Judge is the same as **examine** in verses 28-29.

If we honestly confess and forsake sin in our lives, we will not face God's discipline.

Proverbs 28:13

Matthew 5:23-24 "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

1 John 1:9

Psalms 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin.

32 God's discipline however does not mean that you lose your salvation

cf 3:15

We should not only come with our sins confessed, but . . .

- b. **We should come together in unselfish unity. v. 33-34**

We should wait for one another and show respect for one another.

5. How Should We Prepare For The Lord's Table

- a. **Look back. vv. 23-26a**

Have you received Christ as your Lord and Savior?

Reflect on what He did on the cross in order to save you from your sins.

b. Look ahead. v. 26b

Anticipate His coming

c. Look within. vv. 27-32

Examine you life for sin.

Confess it and forsake it.

d. Look around. vv. 33-34

Determine to restore any broken relationships.

Demonstrate the love of Christ to one another.

THE BIG IDEA: We should come to the Lord's Supper in purity and unity out of love, respect, and appreciation of our Savior, and fear of His discipline.

Purpose: My desire is that the people of University Bible Church take Christ and the Lord's Supper more seriously so that their lives and worship bring more joy to Him.