

The Lord's Supper Means ...

I Corinthians 11:23-34

- 23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;**
- 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."**
- 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."**
- 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.**
- 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.**
- 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.**
- 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.**
- 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.**
- 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.**
- 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.**
- 33 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.**
- 34 But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.**

Many shopping malls house a store called Things Remembered, which offers items that can be engraved to commemorate special occasions. Many people give engraved items in honor of a special day or shared moment. If you have received such a gift, you know what a treasure it can become. People like to remember happy times and significant events.

Memories are precious; they keep us connected to people, places, and events that have shaped us and influenced our lives. We may wish we could forget some things, but even life's unpleasantries can offer lasting lessons learned through adversity.

At the Last Supper Jesus shared a meal with His disciples and then led them in the ancient observance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or Passover. Jesus, the Master Teacher, used this opportunity to plant an important memory in His

disciples gathered in that upper room. Jesus shared this meal for their benefit and for ours. As Jesus raised the bread and the cup in thanksgiving, He added new significance to this ancient ritual. Paul records that Jesus told His disciples to observe the Passover **"in remembrance of me,"** (1 Cor. 11:24; see also Luke 22:19).

Jesus took an old symbol and filled it with new meaning. The meaning of Jesus' words and actions is rooted in His command to remember. As the Lord's disciples, today we observe the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Christ. Some congregations refer to this ordinance as the Memorial Supper to highlight the significance of Christ's atoning work on the cross and to call believers to remember His sacrificial death. Others call it Communion to highlight the believer's intimacy with Christ. Some call it the Eucharist which means thanksgiving to emphasize our giving thanks for Christ's sacrifice and for our salvation. Whatever we call this observance, one thing is clear: It is a time to remember.

Notice in verse 24, He says **"do this"**. Jesus expects every Christian to observe the Lord's Supper. It is not something that optional but rather it is a direct command from Jesus.

Every now and then I come in contact with those who say that they love Jesus yet they want no part of His Church. One preacher was talking with a man who claimed to be a Christian and yet was not a part of a church, He told this man that Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments," (John 14:15). The man replied, I do. He asked him when was the last time he had observed the Lord's supper? The man began to stutter and finally said, well it's not that important.

Well he was wrong. It is that important for Jesus said we should do it often in remembrance of Him. What should the Lord's supper mean to us today?

I want to remind you of its meaning in five words:

1. The Lord' Supper is an Expression (1 Cor. 11:24)

24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

We are expressing our faith in Jesus. We are expressing our love for Jesus. It is a way we can say to Jesus, we believe in You, we love You, we remember the sacrifice You made for us.

On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, 350 Japanese war planes bombed Pearl Harbor. 18 battle ships were sunk or destroyed. 200 airplanes were put out of commission. 3, 581 servicemen were either killed or wounded.

Thus America's war cry as she entered World War II was this motto: "Remember Pearl Harbor".

As the church of Jesus Christ, we too have a battle cry and it is: "Remember Jesus Christ."

We are to remember the high cost of our salvation. The good news is that this cost does not have to be paid by us. In fact it cannot be paid by us, only by the sinless Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The invitation to every sinner who needs forgiveness is:

(Isa 55:1 NKJV) 1 "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price.

(Rev 22:17 NKJV) 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

Although salvation is free to you and me because Jesus has already paid the price for us. What is freely given by grace to us cost Jesus dearly, His body and his blood. He paid it all with His very life.

We must never forget that the body of Jesus Christ was broken on the cross for you and me. And so the Lord's supper is an expression of our remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us. It is an expression of our thanks and our love to Him because of how much He loved us.

2. The Lord's Supper is an Explanation: (1 Cor. 11:25-26)

25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

The word "**proclaim**" means to tell, to explain. Thus every time we gather at the Lord's table, we are preaching a sermon that Christ is the Saviour of the world through His death on the cross.

One little boy said to his dad, "I am glad we having the Lord's supper today. I guess that means we won't have any preaching, right?"

The Lord's is preaching. By obervering it we proclaim the Lord's death. We proclaim the new covenant in the blood of Christ. It is through His death and resurrection that we have the new birth, a new life, a new family, a new destination... behold all things are become new!

The Lord's Supper is an explanation of our salvation in the blood of Jesus.

3. The Lord's Supper is an Expectation: (1 Cor. 11:26)

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

When we come to the Lord's table, we are testifying that one-day Jesus Christ will come again.

The Christ who was born at Bethlehem, the Christ who was crucified on the cross, the Christ who arose from the grave, the Christ who we fellowship with today; this Christ is coming again.

As we look around at the world this morning, we see some bad things. Crime is everywhere, in cities and in countryside; Alcohol and drug consumption is destroying people's lives; Families are being torn apart by the devil; All types of sins are abounding everywhere.

But as we come to the Lord's table today, we can still be joyous in the midst of a troubled world for one day Jesus will return and sin will be done away with forever. Death will be no more. Suffering will be a thing of the past. We will live forever with the Lord in His heavenly kingdom.

The Lord's Supper is an expectation.

4. The Lord's Supper is an Examination: (1 Cor. 11:27-32)

27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

Every year I have a physical—that periodic visit to the doctor's office where I'm poked and prodded, screened and studied. It is something that can be easy to dread, and even to fear. We aren't sure what the tests will show or what the doctors will say. Still, we know that we need this evaluation to understand our physical well-being and what is needed as we move forward.

The same is true spiritually in the life of the Christ-follower. We need to pause from time to time and reflect on the condition of our hearts and lives.

One place for an important self-study is at the Lord's Table.

Some people might hear those verses and say, "I will not take of it, for I am not worthy." Paul's purpose in saying that is not to keep people from partaking in the Lord's Supper, but to encourage us to examine ourselves and make sure we are saved and we have forsaken our sin.

The truth is, none of us are worthy. There is only one who is righteous, one who is worthy, and His name is Jesus. The only way for us to be worthy is to be in Christ. As we are united with Him by faith in His death and resurrection, His righteousness is imputed to us. Our sins are forgiven. We come standing on His worthiness.

Now I do believe there are two ways a person can take of the Lord's Supper unworthily. One is for a lost person to take of the bread and the cup without trusting in Christ who died for them and was raised again. To take it without believing in Christ would be to empty Christ's sacrifice of its meaning.

It is so serious that verse 29 says,

29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Taking the Lord's Supper without believing in Christ and His death for you confirms God's judgment on you. If you will not trust Christ to take God's judgment for your sin, that judgment for sin remains on you. The solution for you today is: trust Christ today.

Also I believe a Christian can take the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner if there is sin in their life that they refuse to confess. Verse 30 says,

30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

It is a serious thing to take the Lord's Supper lightly. That is why Paul exhorts us to examine ourselves first. Some in the Corinthian church it seems were doing this so often that the Lord began to discipline them with sickness and even death.

Verse 31 says,

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

We should be like the disciples at the first supper, when they said, Lord is it I?

When a person who is a Christian refuses to take the Lord's supper, they are saying, I refuse to examine my-self, I refuse to repent of my sins. For the commandment is for all to take of it.

Examine you self. Are you without Christ? Come to Him today and be saved.

Christian, what about you. Examine yourself before the table. Are What's your temperature? Hot or Cold?

Verse 32,

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

Examine yourself today. Accept the discipline of the Lord. Then come to the table ready to worship Him who died for us.

5. The Lord's Supper is an Encouragement: (1 Cor. 11:33-34)

33 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

In this chapter about the Lord's Supper, five times, Paul says, "**come together.**" He is saying when you come to the Lord's table, come together. Do not be only thinking only about yourself, but also about others. Put others first. This one problem that the Corinthian church had. They were not waiting for each other, some were over-indulging and others were going hungry. They were not loving each other or encouraging each other in at the Lord's table.

The point of this self-examination is not only to make things right with God but also to make sure we are right with one another. The Lord's Supper is a

remembrance of Christ's body, and we can't celebrate it properly if we're not living in harmony with other believers.

I can't imagine taking the Lord's Supper alone. I need every one of you. I need your presence to encourage me.

When a US Navy vessel arrives or departs from the military bases in Pearl Harbor, the crew of that ship lines up in dress uniform. They stand at attention at arm's length on the outer edges of the deck, in salute to the soldiers, sailors, and civilians who died on December 7, 1941. It is a stirring sight, and participants often list it among the most memorable moments of their military career.

Even for spectators on shore, the salute triggers an incredible emotional connection, but especially between the servants of today and the servants of yesterday. It grants nobility to the work of today's sailor, while giving dignity to the sacrifice of those from the past.

When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, it was surely with an eye toward creating this same kind of emotional bond. Our participation in the Lord's Table honors His sacrifice while also granting us a connection to Him and to each other unlike any other act of remembrance.

Just as the Navy carefully prescribes the way it salutes the fallen, so too Scripture teaches us how to remember Jesus' sacrifice (1 Cor. 11:26-28). These acts of reverence and thanksgiving serve to honor past action while giving purpose to present service.