

“THE LORD’S SUPPER”

Matthew 26:26-28 / I Corinthians 11:17-34

Introduction

1. The apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth.
2. The Corinthians prided themselves in their gifts.
3. Paul had founded the church on his second missionary journey.
4. Corinth (the capital of Achaia) was the richest city in Greece.
5. Paul planted the church in the city, but the city had crept into the church.
6. After Paul left, some problems developed.
7. Paul then wrote to the Corinthians (without success).
8. The church then sent a delegation to Ephesus with a letter asking Paul for help.
9. Paul had learned from Chloe that there was a division in Corinth. (11:18)
10. I Corinthians is Paul’s response to the questions that were presented to him.

In Chapter 11

“How To Partake Of Communion In A Worthy Manner”

Question: Why the hallmark communion passage in chapter 11?

Answer: Because abuses had crept into the church **and**

What was intended by God to **strengthen** the body was **weakening** the body.

1. There was division occurring. (v. 18)
2. There were heresies (v. 19) the word heresies means error in “**conduct**” and “**behavior**”.
3. There was an improper motive for communion. (v. 20)
4. There were serious abuses to the Lord’s Table. (v. 21)
 - Cliques had developed where people ate with one group (excluding fellowship with all the believers).
 - Some brought food early to eat alone (not to be bothered with other people).
 - Some were hungry at the love feast because the rich ate the food and the poor went away hungry.
 - Some even got drunk before partaking of communion. (Sipping Saints) (v. 21)

In other words

- What God intended for **power**, turned into **pollution**.
- What God intended for **edification**, turned into **entertainment**.
- What God intended for **healing**, turned into **heresy**.

So much so that Paul says... “**What are you doing?**” (v. 22)

Question: What does it mean to “despise the church of God”? (v. 22)

Answer: It means the Corinthians were disgracing the Lord’s Table with their:

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Eating | 3. Reveling | 5. Familiarity | 7. Looseness |
| 2. Drinking | 4. Feasting | 6. Carelessness | 8. Worldliness |

Fact: The believers were mixing the love feasts along with Holy Communion.

Fact: They were feasting and reveling and then going right into the Lord's Supper.

Fact: The Corinthians had simply lost the sacredness of the Table of the Lord.

Paul lists the five communion killers.

1. **A Sour Spirit** - as division and ought among believers was noticeable. (v. 18)
2. **A Shallow Spirit** - as childlike behavior was present. (v. 19)
3. **A Selfish Spirit** - as some were full yet cared less about the hungry. (v. 21)
4. **A Silly Spirit** - as lightness and frivolity replaced the reverence at the Table. (v. 22)
The word "despise" means "to treat lightly"
5. **A Satanic Spirit** - as pride caused some to "shame" or look down upon others as less spiritual than themselves. (v. 22)

The danger is,

- ◆ To lose the conviction and awe and see the table degenerate into a carnival atmosphere.

Let's never shame the church.

1. By losing the sacredness of the Table!
2. By losing the reverence of the Table!
3. By losing the power of the Table!
4. By losing the meaning of the Table!

Questions With Answers

1. What should occur in a real communion service?
2. Why is communion so special?
3. What is the meaning of the elements we handle?
4. How can we partake in a worthy manner?
5. How am I to approach the "Table of the Lord"?
6. How can we obtain and maintain the sacredness of communion?
7. And, what difference does it make in your life and mine?

What is Communion?

I. Communion is a Time of "Remembrance: (v. 24, 25)

(v. 24) *"Take, eat: this is My body which is broken for you; this do in **remembrance of Me.**"*

(v. 25) *"This cup is the New Testament in My blood; this do ye as oft as ye drink it, **in remembrance of Me.**"*

Fact: Jesus would no longer be with His disciples.

Fact: He takes this last opportunity to remind them of all He would do for them.

Fact: He would use bread and a cup to symbolize His broken body and blood.

Fact: The key phrase is "**In remembrance of Me**"

In other words

- ◆ In order to know what communion means to us, we must go back to what it meant to Israel when God originated it for them.

What did communion mean to Israel?

1. Deliverance from bondage in Egypt, so they could enter Canaan.
2. A testimony to all nations of what God had done for them.

3. It was a type (that Jesus himself would fulfill). Every Old Testament lamb sacrificed was pointing to Christ's **once and for all sacrifice**.

So what does communion mean to us?

The same thing.

1. Deliverance from the bondage of sin's dominion and slavery.
2. A testimony to the world of what Jesus has done for us personally.
3. A looking ahead to the day when Jesus will join with us in the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

The key word is "remembrance".

Question: What does the word "remembrance" mean?

Answer: It's a word that means:

1. **"To strike deep into the heart."** And
2. **"To leave a vivid impression."**

So communion is a memorial,

A continual reminder:

- To recall in a deep and vivid manner the passion, sacrifice, cross, body, blood and cost involved to remove my own sin. (Repeat)

To remember means:

- To allow the Holy Spirit to strike deep into our heart and leave a vivid impression on our mind the event of Christ's death for sin.

What an awesome thought

- That if Christ's death means anything to you, then communion (when we celebrate it) should mean just as much. (Repeat)
- Communion means what Christ's death means:

1. **Freedom from sin's power.**
2. **Set apart for God's purpose.**
3. **Looking forward to an eternal reunion.**

So a communion service is to be:

1. An **awesome** service!
2. A **holy** service!
3. A **meaningful** service!
4. An **impressible** service!

II. Communion Is A time Of "Expectation" (v. 26)

"For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." (v. 26)

Fact: We not only look back (in remembrance) but we look ahead (in expectation).

Fact: We observe the Supper **"till He comes"**.

Fact: We allow the Spirit to impress it upon our minds **Jesus is coming again!**

What will soon take place?

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

1. There will be a "resurrection."

“The dead in Christ will rise first.” (v. 16)

Fact: The graves of the redeemed will open.

Fact: The saints will receive a glorified body.

2. There will be a “rapture”

“Shall be caught up together with them in the clouds.” (v. 17)

Fact: The words “caught up” mean three things:

1. “To catch away speedily.”
2. “To move to a new place”.
3. “To claim for one’s own self.”

3. There will be a “reunion”

“So shall we ever be with the Lord.” (v. 12)

Fact: Reunited with those gone on before us.

Fact: Reunited with all the saints in glory.

III. Communion Is A Time Of “Examination” (v. 27-32)

“Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” (v. 27)

“But let a man examine himself.” (v. 28)

Fact: Paul corrects the improper attitude in observance of the Table.

Fact: Paul lists the consequences of partaking in an improper manner.

Fact: The Corinthians were great at eating and indulgence (but they neglected to examine themselves).

Fact: They were experts in examining everybody else but not in searching themselves.

Question: What does it mean to “**examine ourselves**”?

Answer: It means three things:

1. To examine our own heart (personally).
2. To judge our own sin (personally).
3. To confess that sin to the Lord (personally).

The Lord’s Table is soul searching Why?

◆ For if we fail to judge our own sin, then God will judge us and chasten us until we turn from it.

Why so important?

1. Because self-examination will prepare us for true spiritual communion with the Lord.
2. Because failing here will lead to loss of the fear of God and result in carnality abounding everywhere.
3. Because whosoever comes to the Table with a nonchalant attitude (an unworthy manner) eats and drinks damnation to themselves!!!

Result of neglecting examination and cleansing?

1. Many are weak. (v. 30)

2. Many are sick. (v. 30)
3. Many are dying prematurely. (v. 30)

What is God saying here through Paul?

1. That every believer would serve God with a pure heart.
2. That you and I would avoid sin in every form.
3. That we never forget, God will expose us and judge us if we fail to examine and judge ourselves.

IV. Communion Is A Time Of "Respect" (v. 33, 34)

*"Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, **tarry one for another.**" (v. 33)*

Fact: Communion is also a time when we look beside us (not to criticize) but to discern the Lord's Body. (His church)

Fact: Paul says that communion should be a time to demonstrate unity within the church.

Fact: "*Tarry one for another.*" (v. 33) is powerful.

It means four things:

1. To give no preference of one over another.
2. To submit to God with respect for each other.
3. To be careful to never feel superior to another.
4. To be sure to express appreciation to God for those beside you today!!!

Conclusion:

◆ If we want the most out of communion and expect to be strengthened at the Table, then:

1. **Remember** and **look back** with awesome reverence.
2. **Expect** and **look ahead** to Jesus coming again.
3. **Examine** and **look within** in transparent honesty.
4. **Respect** and **look around** at the wonderful family of God.

Amen
Bill Kirk