

## Sunday June 25, 2023 | The Lord's Supper

We come today as a body to take the Lord's Supper. When we do this, we take the morning to study about it. This gives us a chance to focus on communion in a unique way. There are some common passages that get used for communion, but often we don't expand out to see the context. One of the most famous passages is in 1 Corinthians 11. Paul gives us detailed steps in how to take communion in verses 23-26. This section of scripture has a very interesting context.

In Chapter 10 Paul has been addressing various issues within the Corinthian church. He has been giving instructions about how life within the church should work. He has taught about how to view meat sacrificed to idols, and summarizes his thought at the end of Chapter 10.

### 1 Corinthians 10:24; 31-33 ESV

(24) Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.

(31) So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God.**

(32) Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God,

(33) just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, **not seeking my own advantage**, but that of many, that they may be saved.

He is encouraging the church to glorify God in everything they do. Part of glorifying God is to serve and love each other. They are not to fight about who is right or to push for their own agenda. Paul is trying to show the church how they can care and love for each other through their actions. He is encouraging them to show each other grace. **He wants them to serve each other instead of themselves.** Then he encourages them with how they are practicing some of the traditions that he taught them.

### 1 Corinthians 11:2 ESV

(2) Now I **commend you** because you remember me in everything and **maintain the traditions** even as I delivered them to you.

He works through, modesty and honor issues. The beginning section of Chapter 11 can be difficult to understand because what Paul talks about mixes timeless principals with culturally specific application. But the heart shows through, they are to focus on what is important and don't let little things cause divisions. We can see this in his summary statement.

### 1 Corinthians 11:16 ESV

(16) If anyone is **inclined to be contentious**, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.

So, Paul has been working through issues that are dividing the Corinthian church. They are fighting and debating about how to practice certain things. He is trying to encourage them to love and serve each other and glorify God instead of fighting. This is the context as he starts to talk about communion. It fits right in. The Corinthian Church had really missed the mark in how they were practicing communion. They weren't loving and serving each other or glorifying God in how they practiced communion.

### 1 Corinthians 11:17 ESV

(17) But in the following instructions **I do not commend you**, because when you come together **it is not for the better but for the worse**.

This is a serious critique. Paul says it would have been better for the Corinthian church not to show up and take communion then to keep doing it the way they were.

### 1 Corinthians 11:20-22 ESV

(20) When you come together, **it is not the Lord's supper that you eat**.

(21) For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. **One goes hungry, another gets drunk.**

(22) What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? **Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.**

They were having a large feast, and ignoring each other. One table was going hungry, not having anything to eat. Another table had a feast in front of them and were over indulging to the point of getting drunk. They were not loving or caring for each other. **They were not focusing on the body and blood of Christ.** This was an incredibly serious thing. Then in verses 23-26 Paul teaches them the correct way to take the elements, which we will read when we take the elements together at the end of the service. But listen to the warning he gives the Corinthian church. It gives us insight into how important the Lord's Supper actually is.

### 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 ESV

(27) Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an **unworthy manner** will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.

(28) Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

(29) For anyone who eats and drinks **without discerning the body eats and drinks** judgment on himself.

(30) That is why many of you are **weak and ill, and some have died**.

This is an extremely serious warning. Paul says that some of the Corinthians are sick, some are seriously sick and other have died because they have sinned to such a degree in how they are practicing communion. They have taken it in an unworthy manner. I want to be very careful with this passage. I know it has been used to scare many, some to such a degree that they never take communion out of a fear of being unworthy. We need to make sure to anchor into the truth of God's word and what Communion is actually about. Scripture is clear how sinful our hearts are, **none of us are worthy of partaking in the Lord's Supper**.

### Romans 3:9-12 ESV

(9) What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged **that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin,**

(10) as it is written: **"None is righteous, no, not one;**

(11) no one understands; no one seeks for God.

(12) All have turned aside; **together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."**

Our hearts are desperately wicked and sinful. We cannot be righteous enough by ourselves to be worthy of the table. **To think we must be worthy enough to partake in the Lord's Supper is to entirely miss the point of what we are celebrating.** We are remembering the perfect life of Christ in the bread and His sacrificial death and offering His blood in the cup. How can we be worthy of that. **This is the core thought of the gospel. You and I are not worthy! He is!**

### 2 Corinthians 3:5-6 ESV

(5) Not that we are sufficient in ourselves **to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God,**

(6) who has made us sufficient to be **ministers of a new covenant**, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

We are not sufficient, to claim anything as coming from us. This word sufficient means to be **qualified, adequate, capable, or fit for something.** We are aren't qualified, adequate, or capable of claiming anything comes from us. Our full sufficiency, is from God. He has done the work. Jesus lived a perfect life, and died on the cross. He made us sufficient to be ministers of the new covenant. We have the privilege of being a part of the new covenant and sharing with others about the new covenant. Communion is us celebrating this new covenant.

### Luke 22:20 ESV

(20) And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is **the new covenant in My blood.**

He accomplished it. The new covenant is based on the body (bread) and the blood (cup) of Jesus. How can we ever be worthy of such a thing? We can't! We simple trust in the amazing gift that we have been offered. This new covenant that we have been given access to, God's tremendous grace, is deserving of glory.

### 2 Corinthians 3:7-9 ESV

(7) Now if **the ministry of death**, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end,

(8) **will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?**

(9) For if there was glory in **the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory.**

Paul's point, is that the law came with such glory that the Israelites couldn't look at Moses' face. He was glowing so bright that they had him wear a veil. Then this new covenant, here it is called the ministry of the Spirit, the ministry of righteousness, will have even more glory. It will far exceed; it will superabound in glory.

### 2 Corinthians 3:10-12 ESV

(10) Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, **because of the glory that surpasses it.**

(11) For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, **much more will what is permanent have glory.** (12) Since we have such a hope, we are very bold,

When you compare the ministry of death, the law, to the ministry of righteousness there is no comparison between them. The new covenant in His blood is that incredible. We cannot earn salvation or ever be worthy of Jesus' body and blood. We are trusting in what He did and what He is offering to us. This is a glorious thing. Which is exactly the reason why the Lord's supper needs to be honored. The Corinthian church was not giving the body and blood of Christ the respect and focus it deserves. **We never fully will, it deserves so much glory**, but they weren't focused on it at all.

### 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 ESV

(27) Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an **unworthy manner** will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.

(28) Let a person **examine himself**, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

(29) For anyone who eats and drinks **without discerning the body eats and drinks** judgment on himself.

Unworthy means **careless or flippant**. They were having a big feast and getting drunk. How could they be focused on the life and death of Jesus? This was an unworthy manner. Listen to how this word is used by Paul, just not in the negative sense.

### 1 Corinthians 16:4 NASB

(4) and if it is **appropriate** for me to go also, they will go with me.

This hits the heart of the word unworthy. The Corinthian church was not taking the Lord's supper in an **appropriate manner**. They were not taking time to **discern the body**. The word discern means to **evaluate by paying careful attention to**. We are to pay careful attention to the body of Christ. When we come to the Lord's supper, we are to take time to evaluate and pay careful attention to what Christ sacrifice accomplished on our behalf.

**The unworthy manner is about not focusing and marveling at what Jesus has done.** You and I will never be worthy enough to come to the Lord's supper. That is entirely the point. We are to focus on what His life and His death accomplished for us. Each of us is called to examine ourselves. We have been called to discern, to spend careful attention to what Jesus has accomplished. His sacrifice is deserving of so much glory. **We will never be worthy, that is what makes the gift of His grace so incredible.** The prodigal son knows He is unworthy, watch how the gracious Father responds to him.

### Luke 15:18-21 ESV

(18) I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.

(19) **I am no longer worthy to be called your son.** Treat me as one of your hired servants."

(20) And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, **his father saw him and felt compassion**, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

(21) And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. **I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'**

**Luke 15:22-24 ESV**

(22) But the father said to his servants, **'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.**

(23) And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.

(24) **For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'** And they began to celebrate.

The prodigal son was not worthy, but the Father loved Him out of His goodness and grace. You and I are not worthy, but Jesus is. He lived a perfect sinless life. A life in a physical body completely obedient to the Father. Then He offered Himself on the cross and took our punishment for sin. He gave His blood as the ransom payment. His blood redeemed us. He is worthy. We come today to celebrate His great worthiness!

**Hebrews 10:19-25 ESV**

(19) Therefore, brothers, **since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,**

(20) by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, **that is, through His flesh,**

(21) and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

(22) let us draw near with a true heart **in full assurance of faith,** with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

(23) Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, **for He who promised is faithful.**

(24) **And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,**

(25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, **but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.**

We can have confidence in drawing near to God because of the blood and body of Jesus Christ. We can have assurance and confidence in Him. He is faithful. As we look to stir each other up to love and good works, we are not trying to make ourselves worthy of salvation so we can earn it. We are living out of a gratitude and amazement for His sacrifice. We live for Him because His body and His blood are that incredible.

**We believe in Open communion-** If you are a believer here today you are welcome to take communion with us.

**If you are not a believer,** meaning you have never trusted in Jesus for your salvation, this is not for you. Please believe in Him.

We are going to have a time of reflection

Take this time to confess any sins God convicts you of, and to meditate on Him, to discern, pay careful attention to His amazing sacrifice. To remember His body and His blood, and the redemption He secured.

After the time of reflection, I will lead us as will all partake of the elements together.