

Rev. Lex DeLong / General Adult

Baptism and Communion / Baptism; The Lord's Supper

Joint Baptism and Communion Service with Cornerstone Bible Church

Sermonette: **Are We Worthy?** (Approx. 10 Minutes)

Primary Text: 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

Main Idea: "Worthy" describes *how* we approach the table (with reverence and unity), not our personal perfection; from performance to posture.

Introduction: The Weight of the Word "Unworthy"

(2 mins)

- The beautiful picture of unity today—Washington Baptist and Cornerstone Community gathered as one Body.

1 Corinthians 11:23–29 "23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. 28 But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly."

Almost all of these instructions seem simple and straightforward, easy to follow.

But when we hear the word 'unworthy' in verse 27, our natural instinct is to look inward, which we should do. However, when we do, most of us begin to replay the tape of our week—the patience we lost, the pride we harbored, the private struggles we try to hide—and we immediately feel disqualified to be here — to do this. We think, '***I have no business sitting at Christ's table today.***'

That would all be true if it wasn't for the grace of God.

That would all be true if it wasn't for sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

That all would be true if it wasn't for the faith God used to draw us to Himself.

Yet, often as we gather around this communion table, we feel the weight of what would otherwise disqualify us. But by grace through faith, if we have placed our faith in Jesus Christ and received God's forgiveness through faith, this passage carries a different message. This morning, I want you to look very closely at this text with me.

Paul is not building a fence around the communion table to keep broken people out; he is opening the gate to invite us all in, by giving us the exact instructions on how we are meant to come to him, "in a worthy manner."

We will see together in this text that first, Paul is simply asking us to...

I. Let Go of Our Failures, enter Christ's gate, and rest at His table

(3 mins)

- Paul does not say, "If you are an unworthy person," (v. 27). He says, "If you take it in an unworthy manner."
- If personal worthiness were the requirement for communion, no one in the room—including the pastors, deacons, or any others—could approach the table.
- We do not come to the table because we are worthy; we come because Christ is worthy.
- The table is not a reward for our righteousness; it is a celebration of Christ's righteousness and God's grace that redeems the broken.
- We are the broken.
- God has redeemed us through Jesus Christ.
- Because we are redeemed, we now belong at the Lord's table.

When we realize that we don't need to clean ourselves up to come to this table—that we are simply invited to come in surrender and rest entirely on Christ's perfect righteousness—it changes our posture from fear to profound gratitude.

Are you open right now to rest in the Sovereign, the Creator, the Father who sent His Son for you so that you might belong in His family through Christ's righteousness?

But Paul doesn't stop there. He doesn't just want us looking up at our Savior; he wants us looking across the aisle at our brothers and sisters.

This table isn't just about my private, individual relationship with Jesus. It is a family meal.

Are you willing, not only to surrender to your relationship with God, but to surrender to a right relationship with those around you, with God's church?

We cannot properly honor the grace we've received from God if we are harboring division toward His people.

At this point, we understand what Paul is not saying "unworthy" means.

He is not saying that we are unworthy. He is reminding us that we are now robed in God's righteousness through Jesus Christ, which makes us worthy.

Now that we know what "worthy" is not, let's consider then what Paul is instructing the Corinthians is a "worthy" way of taking communion.

God is moving Paul to instruct the Corinthians to...

II. Look to Jesus, Honor His broken body, and embrace His united church

(3 mins)

- Paul was actually correcting the church in Corinth. It was divided. The wealthy were eating the communion meal and getting drunk, while the poor were left hungry and humiliated.
- There is a Two-Fold Meaning of "The Body":
 - a. **Christ's Physical Body:**

Taking communion in a worthy manner means remembering the severe cost of our salvation—Christ's body broken for us.

This table is not a common snack; it is a sacred memorial.

- b. **Christ's Spiritual Body (The Church):**

Taking communion in a worthy manner means looking around the room and recognizing our brothers and sisters.

This table is not an elite gathering; it is a corporate belonging.

- We cannot celebrate peace with God while harboring bitterness toward His people.
- Today we are not gathered here as two separate churches, we are one church in Jesus Christ.
- Taking communion today "in a worthy fashion" means celebrating our absolute unity in the Gospel, despite being two different congregations, we are absolutely one in Jesus Christ.

- What a beautiful picture of the Triune God Himself, 3 distinct persons, yet one Lord.

Ephesians 4:4–6 "4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all."

Conclusion: A Call to Joyful Examination

(2 mins)

Paul tells us in verse 28 that we must examine ourselves before we eat.

But please know this. This is not a morbid search for perfection so you can disqualify yourself. It is a quiet moment to confess your sins, to realign your heart with God, and extend forgiveness to anyone you may be harboring bitterness against.

Today, as we sit together—Washington Baptist and Cornerstone Community—we are a living picture of Ephesians 4: we share 'one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.' Though we are two congregations, we stand today as one united church.

As the men come forward to pass the bread, take these next few moments to quietly talk with your Heavenly Father and drop your failures at Christ's gate.

Let this bread remind you of His broken body and this cup, the New Covenant in His blood that was shed for you.

Let us right now prepare our hearts to eat together, resting entirely on the worthiness of Jesus Christ.