

Strength Through The Storms #12

The Lord's Supper

1 Corinthians 11

April 14, 2024

If I were to ask you to share with me your top 3 memories, what would they be? If I did not qualify that statement with best or worst, what would they be? You might describe one of your worst memories as a “nightmare.”

We like to focus on good memories, which is much more productive. Do you have something that helps bring those good memories to mind? Most of you probably have photos that serve the purpose. Digital photography has really been a game changer. Facebook has a feature that automatically sends you memories of things you posted, which really helps.

Maybe you have reminders of those memories that are not photos. This ring on my finger reminds me of the second-best day of my life. I have a bottle of water from the Jordan River in my office. The fishing boat I now use regularly reminds me of good times with my dad.

As we continue our series of messages from 1 Corinthians, Paul refers to a practice Jesus gave to Christians to help them remember what Jesus did for them. Some call it communion, blessed sacrament, or eucharist. Some call it the Lord's Supper, which is the title of the message today after which we will observe this sacred practice.

As we have seen, the letter to the Corinthians is primarily corrective. Such is the case with their practice of the Lord's Supper. God has a message for us today. The Lord's Supper is extremely important – we need to know what it is about and do it right, which is

something the Corinthians were not doing. As we read the text the first point of this message will be the focus.

I. THE PROBLEM

Read 1 Cor. 11.17-22

1. The Church had become more of a social club, and less what the church was meant to be.
2. Research tells us that the number one reason a person joins a church is because of the social factor. It is primarily about relationships and friends.
3. It is good that you have friends in church. All of us are much better off if we hang out with and do life with fellow Christians.
4. The church is to be a place to be encouraged and to be an encourager. The social aspect of

church is important as long as it is as God meant for it to be.

5. In the case of the Corinthian church, they had become “**cliquish**” to the point that “**factions**” had developed. Notice how Webster defines the word...

Faction: “A party or group (as within a government) that is often contentious or self-seeking.”

6. In the case of the Corinthian church, it had become a group of several “**social clubs**.”

There are often factions between Social clubs due to the feelings of superiority of each group...

Also, church feuds are not uncommon, especially among cliques in the congregation, and sometimes it happens in the leadership.

Pastor and Choir Director Feud

When the pastor and choir director get into it, stand aside. One week, the preacher preached on commitment, and how you should dedicate yourselves to service.

The director then led the choir in singing, 'I Shall Not Be Moved.'

The next Sunday, the preacher preached on giving and tithing and how we should gladly give to the work of the Lord.

The choir director then led the song, 'Jesus Paid It All.'

The next Sunday, the preacher preached on gossiping and how we should watch our tongues.

The hymn was 'I Love to Tell The Story.'

The preacher became disgusted over the situation, and the next Sunday he told the congregation he was considering resigning and asked for their prayers as he waited on the answer.

The choir then got up and sang 'Oh, Why Not Tonight.'

When the preacher resigned the next week, he told the church that Jesus had led him there and Jesus was taking him away.

The choir then sang, 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus.'

7. What is the difference between a church and a social club? A church is a body where every member is equally important. A church is a place where Jesus is the focus. A church is a place to serve, not be served. A church is a place of worship over entertainment. A church is a place to be taught and practice the principles of Scripture.
8. **The word “church” is “ekklesia” in Greek, meaning “the called-out ones.** The church is a place where the “**called out ones**” live the life of their calling.

The church is the only cooperative society in the world that exists for the benefit of its non-members.

William Temple

9. So, what were they doing that was so bad?

[Read 1 Cor. 11.20-22](#)

10. Although we use the term “**Lord’s Supper,**” and are familiar with a brief ceremonial time together in church, the early church sometimes called the event the “**Love Feast,**” which may have gone on for an entire day or more. Originally, it was a meaningful spiritual time of mutual love for each other as people reflected on the great love and sacrifice of Jesus.
11. The celebration may have been similar to what we call a “**pot luck,**” but the wealthy group got the best food, and the poor people got none. The focus was far from what was originally intended and ended up being quite the opposite.

The wealthy felt they deserved the best food because they were snobs.

SNOB

When Oxford and Cambridge Universities decided to admit commoners as students in the 1600s, the unprecedented flood of new innovative thought had a tremendous impact on British society. Each student was listed on the record by name and title. The commoners' names were listed with the Latin inscription, Sine Nobilitate, meaning Without Nobility. The abbreviation was S. Nob., which within the rigid class systems of the time had both positive and negative connotations. The word "snob" is still in use today.

Bits & Pieces, June 25, 1992. Sermonillustrations.com

12. Paul rebukes them, and then goes on to remind them of where the Lord's Supper came from, and what it was to be about. That leads us to consider secondly...

II. THE PROCESS

1. The Lord's Supper began as a Passover celebration, where the Exodus would be remembered. Jesus changed it to be a remembrance of Him, and how He was the unleavened bread, and His blood was what was remembered about the blood above the doors which kept the death angel away and ultimately got the attention of Pharaoh.
2. The Lord's Supper was the last Passover Jesus shared with His disciples – the original 12. It foreshadowed His coming death on the cross.
3. The apostle Paul was not with Jesus when that Passover took place, BUT he had firsthand information about what it was about from Jesus Himself.

Read 1 Cor. 11.23-26

4. Originally, one cup was passed and one loaf of bread with people tearing off a piece.

5. It was all about symbolism, and the truth is that we likely understand more about its meaning now than those who were originally there did.
6. Just as the bread was broken, so would Jesus' body be. The flesh was torn from His body as He was beaten.
7. The juice symbolized the blood that He would and did shed. Jesus really was the fulfillment of the Passover lamb.
8. Love Feast? Yes! Greater love nobody ever has had than the love that took Jesus to the cross. But it wasn't to be about the food, but rather what it symbolized. – Remember what we said about memories? Memories are reminders. The Lord' Supper is a reminder of Christ and His sacrifice. It was not a time for cliques, but a time for unity.

9. The Lord's Supper was and is to be a memorial observed regularly so people would remember, but it was something else. Look at verse 26 again:

1 Cor. 11.26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

10. Not only does the Lord's Supper look back in remembrance but looks forward to the day He comes again! Jesus rose from the dead, and is coming back for His bride, the church!
11. Do you understand THE PROBLEM, and THE PROCESS? Finally, and very importantly – especially now that we are about to observe the Lord's Supper, it is vital for us to understand...

III. THE PROHIBITION

Read 1 Cor. 11.27-30

1. **“Unworthy” is the same word used in most translations. The Greek can mean “unfit” or “irreverently.”**
2. To profane the Lord’s Supper is to become guilty of profaning the sacrifice of Jesus’ blood and body. How can that be prevented?

1 Cor. 11.28 But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

3. To **“examine”** is to test or discern. What is the test? It is the test question each individual must ask themselves: **“Am I right with God?”**
4. The question goes beyond salvation to an evaluation of your relationship with God, and the confession and repentance of sin.

5. When you fail to examine yourself and get things right, and take the Lord's Supper, you are bringing judgment on yourself.
6. How serious is this?

1 Cor. 11.30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.

7. Sin can make you sick, and sin can cause your death. **“There is a sin unto death.”**

Conclusion

So, today in a few moments we will remember what Jesus did for us and look forward to His coming again.

Now is the time for examination. Now is the time to get right with God. The Lord's Supper is for Christians only. If you have

never truly given your life to Christ, you are not a Christian and should observe, but not partake.

If you are a Christian, either get right with God or don't partake. Our invitation is for your examination and response to what God wants you to do.

Prayer