
COMMUNION SUNDAY

EXAMINATION & REMEMBRANCE (PART 1)

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on August 26, 2018

INTRODUCTION

The Lord's Supper is a communal act, whereby Christians memorialize God's covenant with sinners in Christ and together reaffirm their membership in it. In this two-part message series, we shall consider the rebukes and commands in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 to better understand what it means and what it should look like for Christians to partake of the Lord's Supper. We both examine and remember, and we do both of these with our eyes upon Christ in His glory as Savior and Lord.

MESSAGE MADE SIMPLE

"as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes... Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (Jn. 16:22-24).

Have you ever really thought about the Christian ceremony of the Lord's Supper or Communion or the Eucharist? In ancient days, Christians were accused of cannibalism by the pagan Greeks and Romans precisely because of their practice of the Lord's Supper. Christians claim, in some way or another, that the elements of bread and wine or juice are representative of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. In short, Christians claim to consume (at least in symbolic form) the body and blood of a human person.

Such a strange ceremony is worth our deep consideration. If we are honest, this blood-focused ceremony can indeed sound similar to false religious practices of animal and even human sacrifice. In fact, we do well to understand that the Lord's Supper is a memorialization of a bloody covenant.

The God of the Bible is a covenant-making God, and He has always included the spilling of blood in the cutting of His covenant with humans. Ultimately, His perfect Covenant was made with sinful humans through the bloody sacrifice of His own Son upon a first-century Roman cross outside of Jerusalem. In the ordained practice of the Lord's Supper, Christians remember what God has promised, celebrate the grace of God in Christ, and reaffirm their union with one another under the covering of Christ as head and King.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-29 (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.

18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, 19 for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

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.

23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when 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 also he took the cup, 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 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.

THE POINT I'M AIMING AT TODAY

The Lord's Supper is a communal act, whereby Christians memorialize God's covenant with sinners in Christ and together reaffirm their membership in it.

PART 1: PERSONAL EXAMINATION

PART 2: COMMUNAL REMEMBRANCE

MESSAGE OUTLINE

(1) WHAT IS THE CURSE IN THE LORD'S SUPPER?

(2) HOW DOES ONE INVITE THE CURSE OF GOD IN THE LORD'S SUPPER?

(3) HOW DOES ONE AVOID THE CURSE OF GOD IN THE LORD'S SUPPER?

(4) HOW MAY WE ENJOY THE BLESSING OF GOD IN THE LORD'S SUPPER?

(5) SOME APPLICATION QUESTIONS?

MESSAGE

PART 1: PERSONAL EXAMINATION

The Lord's Supper is a communal act, whereby **Christians memorialize God's covenant with sinners in Christ and together reaffirm their membership in it.**

Especially focusing on v27-29 – “**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.**”

(1) WHAT IS THE CURSE IN THE LORD'S SUPPER?

What does it mean to be “guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord” (v27)?

- The Lord's Supper is a **memorial of God's covenant with sinners in Christ.**
 - The Jewish Passover was a covenantal meal and ceremony.
 - God re-centered the Jewish calendar on Passover (Ex. 12:1).
 - This was the meal/ceremony which marked God's rescue of His people from captivity as slaves and exiles (Ex. 12:51).
 - Everyone, in uniformity, was to eat the same meal in the same way at the same time (Ex. 12:3-11); and this because it is “**the LORD's [Yahweh's] Passover**” (Ex. 12:11).
 - The sacrifice of an animal and the sign of blood would cause God's judgment (i.e. death) to “**Passover**” (Ex. 12:13).

- This ceremony was to be continued on forever, in order that God’s covenantal promise to rescue His people from the midst of His judgment would be remembered (Ex. 12:14).
 - “When **your children** say to you, ‘**What do you mean by this service?**’ you shall say, ‘**It is the sacrifice of the LORD’s Passover**, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses...’” (Ex. 12:26-27).
- It was at the Jewish Passover meal that Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper... thereby showing Himself to be the true Passover Lamb!
 - “And when the hour came, he [Jesus] reclined at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, “**I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.** For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “**This is my body, which is given for you.** Do this in remembrance of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “**This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.**” (Luke 22:14–20, ESV)
- **Therefore**, to be “*guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord*” is to in some way **blaspheme the object to which these elements point** – namely, Jesus Christ.
 - It is to blatantly sin against the gracious host of this uniquely holy and merciful and sacred table.
 - The dreadful nature of such a curse is beyond expression.
 - Friends, do you take the Lord’s Supper seriously?
 - Have you considered the reality behind these elements?
 - Do you know that the **Lord God** of all creation... the **Ancient of Days**... the **Lamb of God** who is also the **King of Glory**... Do you know that **He is the master and host of this table**?

(2) HOW DOES ONE INVITE THE CURSE OF GOD IN THE LORD'S SUPPER?

What does it mean to “eat” or “drink” in an “unworthy” manner (v27)?

- **The context of the rebukes** we find in 1 Corinthians 11 tells us that:
 - The church members were dividing into “**factions**” (v19).
 - Some church members were expecting preferential treatment over others (v21).
 - Some church member were being humiliated because of their socio-economic status (v22).
 - In short, **the church family was acting just like the world!**
 - They were being selfish and divisive, and they were aligning themselves in the church just as the worldly people align themselves outside.

- **The context of the commands** we find in 1 Corinthians 11 tells us that:
 - The church members should “**wait for one another**” (v33), indicating a concern for the well-being of fellow church members.
 - This is very similar to the command we read elsewhere, “**Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others**” (Philippians 2:3–4).
 - The church members should care for one another outside of Sunday mornings.
 - Paul said, “**if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home...**” (v34).
 - But how can a poor hungry man eat at home? He’s hungry because he has no means to acquire food!
 - It seems that the “**wait for one another**” command includes a call to address the material needs of fellow church members.

- **Therefore**, eating and drinking the Lord’s Supper in an “**unworthy**” manner is defined by **participating in this covenantal sign** while **simultaneously living a life** that is **signaling disbelief and disobedience**.
 - “Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as **he** [God the Father] is righteous. Whoever **makes a practice of sinning** is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. **By this it is evident who are the children of God**, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not **practice righteousness** is not of God, nor is the one who does not **love his brother**” (1 John 3:7–10).
 - The **Scripture** assumes that **faith/believe** and **practice/actions** are **inseparable**.
 - Friends, do you really think someone has to **ask you what you truly believe** about God, the world, your neighbor, or your fellow church members...
 - Don’t you know **we can all observe what you truly believe** about these things by **what you do with them**?

(3) HOW DOES ONE AVOID THE CURSE OF GOD IN THE LORD’S SUPPER?

What does it mean to “**examine**” yourself (v28) and “**discern the body**” (v29)?

- To **examine yourself** must be to **ask** at least the following **questions**:
 - **Are you part of the body of Christ?**
 - In other words, **are you believing in the substance** of this sacred covenantal sign – the Lord’s Supper?
 - Do you believe that Jesus Christ is **God’s sacrifice for you**?
 - Do you believe that Jesus **suffered** and **died** under God’s wrath **in your place**?
 - Do you trust in Christ’s **shed blood** and **broken body**... in **Christ alone to justify you** before God?

- **Are you living as though Christ is your head... Lord... King?**
 - In other words, **are you living in keeping with the sign of the covenant?**
 - Or, are you actively and persistently disobeying the object to which the sign points – Christ? For example:
 - Do you know that **Christ commands** His followers to **identify with Him through water baptism**, and yet you (for whatever reason) have **neglected to obey**?
 - Do you know that **Christ commands** His followers to be **sexually faithful in marriage**, but you are persistently **indulging in sexual activities** outside of the God-ordained covenant of marriage (pornography, co-habitation, sexual promiscuity)?
 - Do you know that **Christ commands** His followers to **love one another**, but you are **holding a grudge** against a fellow church member or **refusing to show grace and love**?
 - **Listen to this admonition carefully**, for I have worded it precisely.

If you are (1) actively and persistently disobeying Christ's commands, (2) with no real intent to change this pattern, **then you should not partake** of the Lord's Supper today... for you would be eating and drinking judgment upon yourself.
- **Are you treating fellow church members as the body of Christ?**
 - In other words, **are you** (as consistently as you are able) **joining in covenant with your church family?**
 - Does your life show a consistent testimony of unity, as signified by the simultaneous sharing of "one bread" together.

Summary: **If we are meant to be warned of a curse in the Lord's Supper...**

Segue: **...then how may we enjoy the blessing of God in it?**

(4) HOW MAY WE ENJOY THE BLESSING OF GOD IN THE LORD'S SUPPER?

What does it mean to “proclaim the Lord's death until he comes” (v26)?

- The Lord's Supper is a **memorial of God's covenant with sinners in Christ...** and a **reaffirmation of membership in it.**
 - We remember **Christ's substitutionary death and resurrection** (else, how could He “come” again).

O theme with love and mercy fraught, Salvation full and free,
That Christ upon the cross has wrought... For me, for me...
This shall be my only plea, This shall be my only plea,
That Christ was crucified for me, For me, for me...
When dreadful sin my soul assails, And death shall compass me,
That Christ o'er sin and death prevails... For me, for me.¹
 - We remember that **Christ is coming for His bride** – the Church.
 - We **proclaim this gospel** and **our participation** in it, **looking ahead** to that day when the Eastern sky shall break open and **the King of Glory shall appear!**
 - We proclaim the good news of **this King** who shall return for all **those who look to Him...** and **we prepare ourselves** (lovingly, humbly, actively, obediently) **for that day.**
 - We **use the occasion to speak** (proclaim) **of these things to our children and others** who do not yet understand.
 - When we partake today, and our children or our unbelieving family or friends ask us, “**What do you mean by this service?**” (Ex. 12:26)
 - We shall heartily and joyfully say, “**It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover (Ex. 12:27)...** for He has provided for Himself a Lamb who was slain!”

¹ This hymn cited from <http://www.hymntime.com/tch/htm/m/y/o/myonlypl.htm>

Main point:

The Lord's Supper is a communal act, whereby Christians memorialize God's covenant with sinners in Christ and together reaffirm their membership in it.

(5) SOME APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. *Are you taking the Lord's Supper seriously today?*

a. Do you understand the meaning and significance of these elements?

2. *Will you examine yourself, searching your own mind and heart about what you believe and how you live?*

a. Will you honestly examine your own thoughts, words, and deeds?

b. Will you repent of the sin you find in your personal examination today?

c. Will you run from individualistic ideas of personal religion?

d. Will you embrace the covenantal-sign which binds you to Christ and with one another?

3. *Are you partaking of the Christ to which these elements point?*

a. Will you trust that Christ alone makes you acceptable and welcome at this table?

b. Will you join with brothers and sisters in Christ and celebrate the marvelous gospel that beckons us here?

c. Will you eagerly await... live in anticipation of the coming of the King?

Main point:

The Lord's Supper is a communal act, whereby Christians memorialize God's covenant with sinners in Christ and together reaffirm their membership in it.

- **Distribution of Communion Elements by Deacons**

- Receive the elements, but hold them until we all partake.
- The Lord's Supper, is only for baptized members in good standing in this church or another that believes and preaches the gospel of Christ.
- Take these moments to examine yourselves, confess sin, pray for one another, and fix your mind upon the grace of God in Christ.
- Distribution Scripture reading: Heb 10:19-25 – “**Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us... and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 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. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 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.**”

- **Prayer of Confession and Absolution**

Oh, holy and righteous God, **I have** sinned more times than I can count, **and I have** been guilty of pride and even unbelief... **I fail** to search Your word for Your truth, **and I neglect** to seek You in my daily life.

My transgressions and short-comings present me with a list of accusations, **but I rejoice** and thank You that these will not stand against me, **for they** have all been laid upon Christ.

Oh, God, please subdue those corruptions that remain in me, and **grant me grace** to live above them... **Let no** passions nor lust nor sinful desires of any kind bring my spirit into subjection, **but You**, oh God, **rule** over me in liberty and power.

I thank You for Your wisdom and love... **for all** the acts of discipline to which You subject me... **for sometimes** putting me into the furnace in order that I may be refined by Your loving wounds.

Grant to me, oh God, that I never lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin... **the** exceeding righteousness offered in salvation... **the** exceeding glory of Christ... **the** exceeding beauty of holiness... **and the** exceeding wonder of grace.

We ask these things in the name of Christ and for His glory... **Amen.**

- **Partaking of the Elements**

- With these elements of bread and juice in our hands, let us recall the words of Christ, and partake together of this Supper which He has prepared for us.
 - “For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 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” (1 Cor. 11:23-24).
 - Let us eat the bread.
 - “In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me” (1 Cor. 11:25).
 - Let us drink the cup.

- **Prayer of Thanks and Praise**

Heavenly Father, we have observed and enjoyed the feast you have prepared for us at Christ’s table. **We praise and thank** You for such a marvelous banquet.

Though we all are unworthy to join You here, **we rejoice** that You have welcomed sinners as sons by the person and work of Christ.

And even as these small elements have been insufficient to fill our bellies, **we look forward** to that day when we shall hunger and thirst no more... **when we shall sit** with Jesus at the heavenly feast prepared for those who love and follow Him.

We offer this prayer in Jesus’ name... Amen.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

How We've Misunderstood "Do This In Remembrance Of Me" by Adriel Sanchez

<https://corechristianity.com/resource-library/articles/how-weve-misunderstood-do-this-in-remembrance-of-me>

Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper by A.A. Hodge

<https://www.monergism.com/order-administration-lords-supper>

The Partakers of the Lord's Supper by Stephen Charnock

<https://purelypresbyterian.com/2016/06/05/the-partakers-of-the-lords-supper-stephen-charnock/>

Stop Excommunicating Yourself from the Lord's Supper by Josh Buice

<http://www.deliveredbygrace.com/stop-excommunicating-yourself-from-the-lords-supper/>

Teaching Children about the Lord's Supper by Don Bailey

<https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2017/12/teaching-children-lords-supper/>