

## INTRODUCTION

I pray that we have already begun to better understand and appreciate the ordinances of the gospel and their importance. Perhaps the key word is “gospel.” Each of the three ordinances symbolizes various aspects of the gospel. It is my opinion, as we better comprehend the depth of the gospel that we will come to better appreciate the meanings of the ordinances. Therefore we can approach them more meaningfully. That is certainly my prayer for the Harrison Church Family.

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This brings us to the final sermon on *The Lord's Supper and the Questions We Should Ask*. Last week we concluded by looking at the words of the apostle Paul from 1 Corinthians 11:25, where he actually quotes the words of Christ: “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

Last week we were reminded that through Christ's death at Calvary and His shed blood, believers have entered into a New Covenant (Testament) relationship with God. Through faith in Christ we become heirs to His Last Will and Testament.

It is also quite interesting to note the “cup” which Jesus refers to. During the Passover meal four different cups are drunk at four different intervals. These four cups stand for the four “I wills” found in Exodus 6:6-7.

1. The Cup of Sanctification
2. The Cup of Judgment
3. The Cup of Redemption
4. The Cup of Praise

What is quite significant is when Jesus came to the third cup, “The Cup of Redemption,” “He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins’” (Matt. 26:26, 27).

- The Remembrance (vv. 24, 25)

“The concept of remembering to the Hebrew mind meant more than simply recalling something that happened in the past. It meant recapturing as much of the reality and significance of a person or situation as possible in one's conscious mind. Jesus was requesting that Christians ponder the meaning of His life and death on their behalf. A person can participate in Communion, but if his mind is a million miles away, he hasn't truly remembered the Lord” (John MacArthur, The Lord's Supper, Moody Press, 62).

- Its Comprehensive Meaning
  1. We *commemorate* our Lord's death
  2. We *commune* with Him
  3. We *commit* our lives to Him anew and afresh
  4. We *convey* the gospel
  5. We *contemplate* His return

## WHAT ARE MY MOTIVES?

As we partake of the Lord's Supper we should always be . . .

### CORRECT IN OUR MOTIVES (v. 27)

- Unworthy Participation (v. 27)

Note that the phrase, "in an unworthy manner" is an adverbial phrase. Paul is not describing the participant, but rather the manner and motive of partaking. As believers, all of us are unworthy, undeserving sinners, who have been saved by grace. Because of that, we should partake of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner and with worthy motives.

Since the Corinthians partook of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, so can we:

1. If we deliberately refuse to partake—We disobey and dishonor Christ
2. When we fail to approach it reverently and meaningfully
3. If we simply go through the motions, rather than it being a meaningful spiritual experience
4. If we approach it as a means of salvation—Only true believers should receive the Lord's Supper. It is a family meal; God's family.
5. When we refuse to confess and repent of sin
6. If we have any unresolved bitterness and unforgiveness towards a fellow believer—Not only does communion remind of us of our oneness in Christ, it also serves as a reminder of our oneness with one another (cf. 1Cor. 10:16, 17). The Corinthians had taken two beautiful and Christ-honoring events: The love feast (a fellowship meal) and the Lord's Supper and turned them into something ugly, divisive, and perverted. They weren't honoring Christ at all! (1 Cor. 11:17-22).

- The Consequences of Unworthy Participation

1. "Guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (v. 27)

We dishonor the body and the blood of Christ, treating His life and death as something irrelevant and unimportant.

## 2. The chastening of the Lord (vv. 29-30)

Sickness and death are not *always* a sign of God's judgment upon sin, but let us not once think that God *never* uses sickness or death as a sign of His judgment. The Scriptures are clear that sickness and death *can be* and *will be* used by God (when necessary), to carry out divine discipline.

- a) James 5:13-16
- b) Psalm 32:3-4 (cf. Ps. 38:3-8). Some scholars believe that after his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah, David may have contracted some type of venereal disease. Through such judgment and through the message of Nathan the prophet (2 Sam. 12), David finally repented of his sin and returned to the Lord (Ps. 51; 32).

**IS THERE ANY UNCONFESED SIN IN MY LIFE?**

**IS THERE ANY BITTERNESS OR UNFORGIVENESS TOWARDS A FELLOW BELIEVER?**

Before we partake of the Lord's Supper there should always be a . . .

CONFESSION OF ANY MALICE (v. 28, 31)

- Examine Ourselves (v. 28)

We should thoroughly examine "ourselves," instead of trying to examine someone else. I believe when we prayerfully and honestly answer these questions, they will assist us in partaking of the Lord's Supper with worthy motives and in a worthy manner. This will bring glory and honor to Christ.

Before the Jews partake of the Passover, there is a thorough search throughout their house for any leaven. During the eight-day feast of Unleavened Bread, no leaven is to be found in the house. The New Testament counterpart is found in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8. Not only will unconfessed sin greatly impact the life of the individual believer, but just like leaven, it can and will permeate the whole church. We are holy in position; we are to be holy in practice (corporately and individually). Throughout the history of the church, the time preceding Communion has always been a time for the church to deal with any and all sin (toward God and man), so that the church always remains pure individually and collectively.

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## CONCLUSION

I would like to share just an excerpt taken from Warren Wiersbe's book, Be Wise. He gives a personal experience of how, when God's people come to Communion with prepared hearts, having dealt with their sins or grievances, God is glorified!

"I recall one church member who approached me and shared with me a personal defeat that had not only hurt him spiritually, but had been 'advertised' by others and was about to bring reproach on him and the church.

"'What can I do to make this right?' he asked, convincing me that he had indeed judged the sin and confessed it. I reminded him that next week we were going to observe the Lord's Supper, and I suggested that he ask the Lord for direction. The evening of the Supper, I opened the service in a way I had not done before. 'Is there anyone here who has anything to share with the church?' I asked, and my repentant friend stood to his feet and walked forward, meeting me at the table. In quiet, concise manner, he admitted that he had sinned, and he asked the church's forgiveness. We felt a wave of Spirit-given love Sweep over the congregation and people began to weep openly. At that observance of the Supper, we truly discerned the Lord's body" (Warren W. Wiersbe, Be Wise, Victor Books, 119-120).