

The Lord's Supper

We have the Lord's Supper here on a regular basis as a special part of worship

--I am going to be setting aside our entire time together to focus on this special occasion and celebration that was inaugurated by Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, to be observed by believers thereafter.

The subject of the Lord's supper comes up several times in the New Testament but none as thorough as Paul's handling of it in

I Corinthians 11.

--The occasion of Paul's teaching here on the Lord's Supper is not a good one actually

--The Corinthian church would hold a fellowship banquet as in a lot of occasions in the New Testament.

--A part of their meal would be the Lord's Supper.

--The wealthier members who didn't have to work or who didn't have as many obligations would show up early to the meal and would not wait for the rest of the members before they began eating.

--By the time everyone got there, there wasn't much food left, and some were even drunk on too much wine.

--So, the Lord's Supper which was to be a celebration of their unity became an example and reminder of their division and sinfulness.

1. This gives us the background for Paul's dealing with the Lord's Supper VV. 23-26

V. 23 – Received it from Who? Paul maintains that both his calling and theology he was not taught by humans but by Jesus Himself.

V. 24 –Let's first off deal with a few misunderstandings about this Supper.

1. One of the biggest being that the bread and the juice are Jesus' literal body and blood.

--The first question I would have for those who say that they are literal would be: "was it so in this first celebration?", "You say that the elements are literal now, so were they then?"

--As Jesus made this statement, where was His literal Body and Blood?

--If He had inaugurated this after His death and resurrection, there might be a good reason for some confusion.

--Since He offers it before His body is broken and His blood is shed, then these elements cannot be intended to be taken as anything other than symbolic.

--The disciples would have not taken it any other way.

2. This brings up and essentially eliminates another misunderstanding about these elements: if they are literal (which they aren't!) then they can be a means by which God cleanses us from sin.

--Sin is a spiritual problem, right?

--How is it that physical things like bread and juice could fix spiritual problems?

--Spiritual problems need spiritual solutions.

--Salvation is by faith alone (a spiritual act) in Christ alone.

--Spiritual stains cannot be washed away by physical means.

--It's the same wrong thinking that says that baptism washes away sins.

Having said that let me also say:

--Although bread was only bread and the wine was only wine, they were symbols of things very real.

--The wine represents Jesus' blood which alone cleanses us from our sins—our hope is completely in His shed blood.

The bread is a symbol of Jesus' very real Body.

--With that in mind, Who's hands broke it? We absolutely have to get the picture here.

--The work of the sacrifice of God's own Son bringing about salvation was a work of God alone.

--Isaiah 53:10a, John 10: 17-18.

--Technically it wasn't Pontius Pilate or the Sanhedrin or Romans or the crowd yelling "crucify Him" who put Him to death.

--**Think about it: can anyone kill God?**

V. 25 --Both bread and cup are to be taken "in remembrance of Him"

--But what about Him are we supposed to remember? Obviously, His death, but is that all?

V. 26 -- **"until" is a very important word**

--"until" is key to understanding what we are to be reminded of in the Lord's Supper

"Until" = Is a waiting word "Wait here till I get back"

--It reminds us that we are a waiting people. "We are waiting on you, Lord." is the heart of this Supper.

--We are in a holding pattern waiting for Jesus.

--If someone asks you what you did in a day you can say, "I waited for Jesus" – that should be the attitude of every single one of us.

"Until" = Is a working word.

--This is a note that is struck with regularity in Jesus' parables:

Parables of the talents and minas--the king was leaving his possessions to his servants and they were to work with what he gave them till His return.

--So, it is for us, God has left us with His time, gifts and abilities, His money and resources---we are to work with that **until He comes.**

"Until" = Is a wonderful word.

--He doesn't say "If He comes" or "In case He comes" or "in the chance that He might come"

--We are not sure about the time but we are sure about the event!

VV. 27-28 -- Finally, to prepare ourselves to observe this Supper, we need to make sure our hands are clean.

--This is true for any meal and so much more for this one.

--We need to come clean before our Heavenly Father.

--Making sure we have a good appetite.

--Filling ourselves with things of the world that will not satisfy...we need to empty ourselves so we can be spiritually filled by Him.