

The Lord's Supper

Praise the Lord! It is always good to be at His table with my brothers and sisters, the Lord's big family. We are going to be sharing on the Lord's supper, so let's begin with a word of prayer.

Lord, it is on my heart this morning that you open our eyes to see this table, this supper as You see it, that we might appreciate it and desire it as you appreciate it and desire it. May we by the Spirit through faith experience the reality of it. Lord, open our eyes that we might be delivered from taking it as a tradition or ritual or in an unworthy manner. Lord, we want You to be pleased, satisfied and refreshed as we take this table each week. Once again we ask that You would bless the words through the power of the Holy Spirit that our eyes might be opened to see. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Lord's Table is Primary on Sunday Morning

First of all, I want us to really see how important this is to the Lord, how precious it is to Him. We will begin by making a little statement. The Lord's table is always primary as we come together on Sundays. Not only is it primary, it is important and preparation is needed.

We gather on Sunday which is the first day of the week. A lot of people think Monday is the first day, but Sunday is the first day of the week. It is the day we prepare for the week ahead, and thank God He has given us this table to help us prepare.

We celebrate the Lord's supper at His table, and it is always important to remember that as we gather in such a way that He is in our midst. I think sometimes we forget that and do not realize He is actually present with us as we share together. He has called us together as His family for this supper.

In the life of the early church it says in Acts 2:42 that they continued steadfastly in fellowship and in the apostles' doctrine, and it was manifested in the breaking of bread and prayers. It was not a list that they came up with and then said: "These are the things we need to do." It just came out of their life together around the Lord. In the beginning they actually broke bread daily from house to house (see Acts 2:46). But later on we find that they broke bread once a week on Sunday as it says in Acts 20:7: "And the first day of the week, we being assembled to break bread ..." It makes it very plain. And we read that Paul was speaking, so we know they had teaching also. It was a powerful ministry of the Word, because a young man fell out of the window and was dead, but through the prayers he was raised from the dead (see Acts 20:7b-11). Nevertheless, the Lord has made it very clear to us that we gather for His supper. The Lord's supper is primary.

It happens fairly often in our midst when we come together that people will say we have a time of worship and then we have the table. This is not totally accurate. When we come in on Sunday morning, the table actually begins when you see the cup and the loaf displayed, and it immediately reminds us of the Lord. The cup and the loaf are separate; the blood and the body are separate. It reminds us of the death of the Lord, so our hearts should be drawn to the Lord as we come into the room. Therefore, the Lord's table begins at the very beginning of the meeting.

Here in Richmond we also have a little opening in the beginning of the meeting. We have been doing that for quite a number of years. I say this with all love in my heart that if we were all truly prepared as we come before the Lord it would not be necessary. On the other hand, when we come, we often find ourselves unready and distracted, but the opening really helps us to center ourselves upon the Lord. We all enter into that together, and we have

found that to be very helpful. It is actually good for the brothers who decide this on the Saturday which is their work day because they are exercised to be before the Lord as to what He would have for that Sunday. And that is good! But we should not depend only on those brothers being prepared; we should be prepared as well. This is just a reminder that preparation is important and expected. We should prepare our hearts even though there is an opening.

The Lord's Supper

I have used two terms: the Lord's supper and the Lord's table, and they are both scriptural. In I Corinthians 11 Paul calls it the Lord's supper. The Lord blesses the loaf and the cup, and the loaf is served first and then the cup.

I Corinthians 11:23-32—For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whoever shall eat the bread or drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

But in I Corinthians 10 Paul refers to it as the Lord's table. And he says: "We bless the cup and the loaf. The cup is mentioned first and then the loaf.

I Corinthians 10:16-17—The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

You will remember that Paul was not at the Lord's supper when it was originated. It was later that Paul was met on the Damascus road by the Lord, but at some point the Lord spoke to Paul about the importance of this table and what it meant so that he could share it with the church—which he did. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how important this is to the Lord because He gave Paul special revelation. And may the Lord give us revelation of its importance.

The Lord's supper and the Lord's table are the same celebrations. They are taken from two different viewpoints or two different aspects of the same meal. In I Corinthians 11 it is called the supper which is from the Lord's viewpoint. It is a supper because He is calling His whole family to gather together.

The Lord is ministering this table to us. It says that He blesses it, He prays over it giving thanks, He consecrates the table before God, and the table becomes a blessing to us as we take it. The bread is served first because in the Lord's life His body came first. He was incarnate and the flesh was made manifest among us. He took on the form of a man, even that of a bond-servant. He walked this earth as you and I do. He ministered for thirty-three years in that body, and at Calvary His body was put on the cross. He took our place on

Calvary's cross. His physical body came first, then He shed His blood as a penalty for our sins. The blood was the second part of the redeeming work of the cross. So the Lord's physical body on earth was first. This is the Lord's supper.

The Lord's Table

In I Corinthians 10 it says we come to the Table; we have a supper, we are called to supper, but what do we do? We sit around the Table; it is the time of fellowship. The emphasis in I Corinthians 10 is fellowship. We are fellowshiping with the Head of the body, our Lord Jesus Christ, and with one another.

In the King James Version it says: "We commune with the blood and the body of Christ." What they are trying to emphasize is that there is a real transaction that is taking place. In fact, the Greek word for this time is *koinonia*; it means "fellowship, sharing together." We do not come and share as individuals; we share together. It is an experience; we are experiencing what we are fellowshiping in. It is not just a mental interaction but a spiritual interaction. Another word for *koinonia* is "joint participation." We jointly participate. The whole family participates—not just a few.

The focus in I Corinthians 10 is on our response, therefore it says: *We* bless the table; *we* consecrate it with our prayers; *we* enter into fellowship, and it becomes a blessing to the Lord.

I want to try to get the impact from the Lord's side. He is at the head of this table when we come.

Last week I had an experience that was very rare. My middle grandchild is not the affectionate one of the three and never has been. They had come over to install a new television which only my son can do because I cannot figure out the electronics. As they were getting ready to leave, the middle one, the unaffectionate one, came up to me and said: "Pepaw, I need to hug you." I was startled! I said: "Certainly," and he gave me a big hug. That really touched my heart, and I appreciated that little hug.

That is what the Lord's table is about! It is embracing the Lord with our heart, with heartfelt adoration! How much that blesses the Lord! I think some of us express our affection more than others, and that is okay. And you need to know that when we gather together we are here to bless the Lord as well as to be blessed. We are here to show our affection to the Lord, and in our affection we give that hug. It is an important time for the Lord and for us. It is a time of fellowship one with the other. And it is an experience just as that little incident with my grandson was an experience. As we come we have an opportunity to experience His love and to show our love. That is important to the Lord because He has bought us with His blood. He paid the price with His body.

In I Corinthians 10 it mentions the blood first. That is because from our perspective we first accept the Lord Jesus Christ through His blood that pays the penalty for our sin. He purchased us with His blood, and then we partake of that broken body. In other words, we feast on the Lord, and we continue to get life from the Lord as we feast on Him. The blood comes first in our experience, and that is why in I Corinthians 10 the blood is mentioned first.

We need to know it in a living experience. It is not a ritual, nor a tradition, but a spiritual experience. And it can only be experienced in the Spirit. A nonbeliever really should not take the table. How can they enter into the experience of it? It is spiritual in nature. It takes the Spirit to enable us to enter in the table—your spirit and the Holy Spirit. It is an interaction, a joint participation with the Lord and the brothers and sisters. It is a time of remembering and expressing love out of the experience of His love for us and what He has accomplished on Calvary's cross for us.

Worship in Spirit and Truth

The Lord said he was looking for those who would worship Him in spirit and in truth. So it needs to be in spirit as well as in truth, and that is why we are learning about the Lord's table this morning. How do we enter into this truth and this experience?

We enter into it spiritually by exercising our faith. It is by faith through our spirit that we behold Him; He is in our midst. We remember Him and rejoice in the value of His blood and broken body on our behalf. The Word is very clear. It says that we can enter in the throne room by the new and living way, which is His shed blood and broken body.

You will remember on Calvary when the Lord Jesus died that the veil in the temple was rent. The Lord's physical body was the veil that hid the glory of God. If He had not had that physical body we would have been blinded when we saw Him in His glory. It is like a shade on a lamp; you are able to look at the light because of the shade. So His glory was veiled in that way. When He died on Calvary's cross, the veil was rent from top to bottom, and only God could have done that. For us it means that through His broken body the veil has been taken away and the way has been made for us to enter into the throne room, into the Holy of Holies. It is not a tradition nor a ritual nor just a symbol. If that is the way in which we take it, then it is meaningless. It is without spiritual impact, and it hurts the Lord's heart. In fact, it is harmful to us as we will see later. It dishonors the Lord to take it as a tradition or as a ritual or just see it as a symbol with not much importance.

This is the Lord's supper which the Lord has graciously provided to us. He calls His family to gather. It is a precious time to the Lord. And He desires to fellowship with His family.

He told his disciples at that last Passover meal: "With desire I have desired to eat this meal with you" (see Luke 22:15). In the Greek it says: "*With intense desire I desire to eat this meal with you.*"—*with intense desire*. I could not help but think: "Lord, there is an intense desire in Your heart every Sunday morning. May there be an intense desire within my own heart."

We Need the Manna from Heaven

Not only is the Lord's table precious to Him, it is vital to our spiritual health. We need healthy nourishment for our physical bodies, as we have learned in this age in which organic and super-healthy food have been brought to our attention. We have become very health conscious. But just as our bodies need healthy nourishment, so also our spirit and soul need spiritual nourishment. The table is vital to our health.

The Lord said that He was the manna from heaven. You will remember the story of the manna in the Old Testament, and how the Israelites came out of Egypt into the desert where there was not much food. They cried out to the Lord and He provided manna from heaven for their physical health. It came from His hand, and it sustained them all those forty years. The sad thing is that after a while they began to despise the manna, which meant they began to think little of it; it was not satisfying to them. So they complained and said, "We need more; we need meat." And the Lord said, "Okay, you can have your meat." But the fact that they thought so little of that bread from heaven that He had supplied, His discipline came upon them. He gave them quail in abundance, but the discipline began, and it was very severe. He sent a plague upon them and they began to perish.

I say that to remind us that the Lord Jesus is our manna from heaven. That is what we are partaking of when we take the Lord's table. We should not despise it or take it lightly. Not only does it break the Lord's heart, but in this case it angered God. So it is a serious thing.

It is not just something to be taken lightly or just to be entered into because you are at the meeting. It is to be entered into with a real heart of love for the Lord Jesus and the reality of what we are doing. We are partaking of the Bread of life, the Manna from heaven, and that is what nourishes us.

We also take the cup as nourishment. It is the cup of the new covenant, and it reminds us that the blood is what has paid the price for our souls. We have been redeemed by that blood. The blood today is still effective in our lives. If it were not we would be crushed. The Bible says that if we sin we can go to the Lord with repentance and forgiveness and He will forgive us of our sins because He sees the blood that has been shed. The blood also speaks of the covenant that the Lord has made with us. He will remember our sins no more and has put them away as far as the east is from the west.

I have a hard time forgetting my sins, and forgetting sins that ones have committed against me. But it seems as if the Lord, who is the most intelligent Being, is able to forget. Only God can do that! He puts away our sins, and we have that guarantee. So if we are right with the Lord, we have that guarantee that His blood has covered us. He also guarantees that He who began a good work in us will complete it because that is His covenant with us. It is the blood of the new covenant. This contract He has made with you and me to complete us has been signed with His blood and His life backs it up. It can never fail, and it can never be made null and void! Isn't that marvelous?!

We continue to be a problem to the Lord, don't we? We continue to sin, but He says: "I will not make my covenant null and void. You still need the blood. You need to confess that sin, but My covenant still stands with you. I am going to complete you and bring you into maturity." That is what the cup does for us. When we consider the Manna from heaven, that Bread from heaven, when we consider the value of the blood and that blood covenant that has been made with us, doesn't that strengthen your spirit?

Isn't your spirit in the inner man strengthened on Sunday mornings? I certainly hope it is. When we come and partake of the table, it strengthens our spirit and we begin to rest in the Lord. It brings us peace. We get refreshed and it makes us ready for the week ahead. We go through the week still eating the Manna and partaking of the blood all week long.

Remembrance is Key

In the Scriptures that we read He said: "As often as you do this, do it in remembrance of me."

Remembrance is the key to this table. It tells us how we are to enter into the spirit of the Lord's supper, and it is beautiful in its simplicity. The Lord gives us one instruction: "Remember Me. Just remember Me. As often as you do it, remember Me." It is profound in its simplicity. Remembrance is so important. I could not help but think the older I get the more important my memories are. Of course, we remember some bad things, but mostly we try to remember the good things in our lives that really count. Remembrance is important. The Lord said: "If you really want to enter into the spirit of this table just begin by remembering Me."

I have heard testimonies of many soldiers over the years, particularly those of World War II. Many, many times they would be asked: "How did you make it through such a terrible ordeal? They will say: "I remembered my wife. I had this picture of my wife. I remembered my family." It was those remembrances that they testified of that got them through. So the Lord knows how important remembering is. That is what His simple request is: "*Remember Me.*"

As we come in on Sunday we begin with a visual reminder that has already been mentioned. The loaf and the cup are here on the table. When we see them, it should

automatically trigger something in our hearts. The death of the Lord Jesus on my behalf has occurred, and the blood and the body are here. Therefore, even as we enter the room, our spirits should begin to be touched. That is why we have that visual representation. That is why it is displayed on the table when you get here. It is the first thing we see that we can focus on—the Lord Jesus Himself. That is why it is so important to be prepared. So often when we come, our hearts are not prepared, and we do not take notice of the table before us, but it is there, and that is the reason.

As we begin to worship the Lord and remember His death on our behalf—His broken body and His poured out blood—our hearts are touched and we begin to melt. He is in our midst, and we begin to thank Him and worship Him together.

God has Set Us Free to Become a Love Slave to Him

However, I think we often hold back. How can we hold back? If the Lord has really gripped our heart from the very beginning we cannot hold back our worship. When we remember His work on Calvary's cross and His great salvation, how we were slaves to the enemy, slaves to sin, slaves to this world, slaves to our own flesh, slaves to the law, to self, and the fear of death—BUT God set us free!

He set us free from the consequences of sin! He set us free from the power of sin! He set us free from the world! He set us free from the law! He set us free from the flesh! He set us free from self! He set us free from the fear of death! And we are here on Sunday mornings to declare: "Lord, You have set me free! And now I want to give myself back to You as a love-slave. You have set me free, not to live life as I want to, but to be able to walk in the Spirit and worship You and live for You and serve You." That is what we have been set free for, and we need to remember that.

The word *jubilee* always touches my heart because my mother-in-law, who was my spiritual mother, was the one that really awakened my heart to the Lord Jesus in a very personal way after having been saved earlier. She died in her fiftieth year, the year of jubilee. She went to be with the Lord, and what a jubilee she had! She was a young person as I see it now, but she was a real blessing to me, and I am glad that she had her jubilee.

He is our jubilee. He is the one that has set us free from slavery and brought us into His kingdom, into His house, to His banqueting table, and His banner over us is love. That is what Sunday morning is about. "Do this in remembrance of Me." We are told also in the Scriptures in I Corinthians 11:26: "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you show forth the Lord's death."

A Testimony to the World

As we take this table, it is a testimony to the world that the Lord has died for me, that the Lord has given Himself for me. It is a testimony to what the death of the Lord Jesus has done for me, to me and in me. It is a testimony.

I know there are mostly Christians here, but you are really testifying before the world as well as to your brothers and sisters. We are testifying to the value of His death and what it has accomplished in our lives. We are not ashamed, nor should we be ashamed to announce it openly and proclaim it.

A Testimony to the Unseen World

It is also a testimony to the unseen world. Think about it—the good angels marvel when they see what the death of the Lord has done in our testimony. They have never experienced

God's grace and are amazed at His grace towards us sinners who are just specs of dust. They are amazed at this little creation of His! It is a testimony to the angels of the great love and mercy and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But it is also a testimony to the demons and satanic powers of darkness as we show forth His death. Don't ever think they are not looking on. Don't ever think they do not hate this time. They hate it with a passion because it is a testimony of His death and His triumph over death and over them. It reminds them that they have been defeated, and that should be a comfort in our personal lives.

They have been defeated. That is what the Lord Jesus' death means. *He has triumphed over them!* And they are also reminded that God has judged them. The execution of that judgment is coming very soon. They tremble at the testimony of what the death of our Lord Jesus has done to them. And that is what we do on Sunday mornings—we testify to the death of our Lord Jesus.

Taking the Table in an Unworthy Manner

In I Corinthians 11:27-29: *Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."*

There are a few key words here to take note of: "unworthily," "examine himself," "eat and drink damnation to himself," "not discerning the Lord's body."

This is a serious time. The Lord reveres this time, honors this time, and He expects us to also. What does it mean to discern or distinguish the body? In the Corinthian church some of them were getting drunk at the Lord's table. It was horrible, and Paul had to admonish them for this. That is not what we are doing, for which we are thankful. But we are to honor the Lord and discern the body. What does that mean? We need to know what we are doing; we need to know what it is to distinguish the body.

When we take the table, the body is represented in two ways. First, as we begin, we see the loaf before us which represents the body of His incarnation. It was the body that He used for thirty-three and a half years. It was the body which was put upon the cross when He was crucified. It was the body that took on the sins of the whole world. It was the body that suffered the hatred of men, the whips on His back and the stripes. It was the body that was judged and received the wrath of God as He was crushed on Calvary's cross. That is the loaf, His physical body. How can we dare take it lightly when we know what the Lord experienced in His body on this earth? It is very serious. He is the Manna from heaven.

The Table Testifies to the One Body

Secondly, after the loaf is broken and passed around, if you look up you will see that the loaf is completely gone. It is not there anymore; it is gone. But is it gone? What has happened is that we have each taken a piece of the life of our Lord Jesus and now that loaf is in us. Each one of us has a part of that loaf, and within it is a life, the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In I Corinthians 10 it says, "We being many are one loaf, are one body." This one body of many is the church. The loaf represents Christ in His personal body while He was on earth, but it also represents His corporate body, the body He received at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the one hundred and twenty. So when we take the table, we are in fellowship with the body of Christ that He offered on Calvary's cross, and we are in

fellowship with all of our brothers and sisters because they are receiving the same life we are. The loaf, once again, becomes one loaf, even though it is in many.

Therefore, we should not partake of this loaf if we are at odds with our Lord Jesus. If there is a controversy between us and the Lord, it is better to let it go by. It is better to get it settled, to repent before the Lord and let His blood cleanse us.

Also, if we have an offense with a brother or sister, an unforgiving spirit, it is better not to take it. We need to recognize not only the body of our Lord Jesus Himself but His corporate body as well. It is an offense to the corporate body if we have an unforgiving spirit in our hearts. Thus we should not take it. We should get it straight with the Lord first. We need to distinguish the body that we not be an offense to the Lord or to one another.

Prove Yourself

The next word was “prove yourself.” And to prove yourself you need to examine yourself before you take the table. How this examination occurs is extremely critical and you will see what I mean in a moment. Before we take the table we are exhorted to prove ourselves.

How is it done? I can tell you emphatically, it is not done by looking inwardly. Because all you are going to see is a mess. You are not going to see anything good if you truly look inward. All these bad things that you have done will start coming up. That is called *introspection*, considering yourself. That is actually pretty dangerous because when you look inwardly, you will get a false reading.

You are either going to think you are better than you are or in most cases you will think you are far worse than you really are. You cannot accurately discern through self-examination. If self-examination is unreliable how are you to examine yourself, to prove yourself? It is pretty simple. You do not look inwardly; you look outwardly. You look at Christ; you look to Him and put yourself in His light and the light of His Word. Reading His Word may speak to you, “You need to get this straight.” Or He might just speak to you through the Holy Spirit and point out something. That is conviction, and that is good because conviction will set you free. However, if you look inwardly you will not be convicted; you will be condemned, and condemnation actually imprisons your spirit. When you come under condemnation, you see no way out. You pray but it just keeps coming on and the weight gets heavier and heavier. That is condemnation. The Holy Spirit convicts us to set us free. He says: “This is it.” And you say: “Lord, I am wrong; I need your forgiveness,” and the blood covers you and you are free. That is conviction. The Word says, “In Thy light we see light.” That is the only reliable light to put yourself under, the light of the Lord Jesus. So actually, it is very simple.

Psalms 139:23-24 says, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: (Notice he is asking God to search Him.) Try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me.” That is our prayer. That is the way we examine ourselves in the light of the Lord.

The Passover Feast and the Feast of Unleavened Bread

When our Lord instituted the Lord’s supper, the disciples were actually celebrating the Passover Feast which was also the beginning of the feast of Unleavened Bread which lasted seven days. The Passover was participated in for one day, but the Feast of Unleavened bread went on for seven days. These two feasts are joined together because actually on the day before Passover the Israelites would clean their houses of all leaven which speaks of sin, defilement and uncleanness in the Bible.

The sisters probably know what leaven is, but I only know it because I have read about

it in the Word. I have never used it or tried to cook with it, but interestingly enough, leaven is not easy to get rid of. The leaven that the Israelites used is one tenth the size of pollen. So when they tried to use leaven, it would get in the air. So they could not just take the leavened bread they had in their houses and put it out to get rid of it. They actually swept and washed down their houses on the inside to make sure they got rid of all the leaven.

The Lord instituted the Lord's supper that we celebrate during the time of the Passover Feast. We take it as a memorial to the true Passover. The Israelites were remembering when they were in Egypt in bondage and how the Lord delivered them. He said: "I am going to kill all of the first born of the Egyptians, but you can save yourselves by putting the blood of the lamb over the doorpost. And when the angel of judgment comes, he will pass over you." That is what they were celebrating, but the Lord was really saying to them: "I am the true Passover. From now on that is what you need to memorialize. That is what you need to remember. You can remember your deliverance out of Egypt, but I am the Passover. I am the fulfillment of what Passover means." When you have the blood of the Lamb in your life, the angel of judgment passes over you because He sees the blood. We celebrate the true Passover, and we celebrate the fulfillment of the Passover as it was fulfilled in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Not only that, the Lord was the fulfillment of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. He lived a sinless life. There was no leaven in His life whatsoever. He was the fulfillment of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Passover was celebrated for only one day. That is because the sacrifice that our Lord Jesus made as the spotless Lamb of God was made once and forever. It never has to be repeated. But the Feast of Unleavened Bread went on continuously for another seven days. What does that mean to us? That means as we take the table we are memorializing that as well and the fact that we should celebrate unleavened bread in our lives continuously.

As the church we celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread until the Lord comes back. We do not want leaven in our lives, and if we discover it we get rid of it by the blood of the Lamb. When we take the table, it is a memorial to the true Passover, to the true Feast of Unleavened Bread, and that is our Lord Jesus Christ who is the fulfillment.

Christ is the True Passover

In I Corinthians 5:7-8 Paul says: "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." That is what we are celebrating. He was sacrificed for us.

Then it says: "Therefore, let us keep the feast not with old leaven of malice and wickedness but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

We celebrate this table in the spirit of sincerity and truth—sincere love for our Lord Jesus Christ, and we memorialize the true Passover and the true Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Israelites were told that if they violated the Feast of Unleavened Bread, if they had leaven in their house or ate leavened bread during that time, they were cut off from the nation of Israel and from the promises of God.

In I Corinthians 11 it says: "If we partake of the table in an unworthy manner we eat and drink judgment to ourselves."

What does that mean? It means the Lord is going to have to discipline us if we take it in an unworthy manner. In I Corinthians it says that some had suffered sickness and even death because they thought so little of the table and were taking it in an unworthy manner. I am not saying this to frighten anybody or to keep you from taking the table. We need the table! But we should take it in a way that honors the Lord Jesus. It is a serious matter to the Lord. It is precious to the Lord. It is a precious time and He wants us to keep it precious. So we see the Lord's discipline.

We come to celebrate the true Passover and the true Feast of Unleavened Bread, the One who lived without sin and offered His sinless body on Calvary's cross. That is what we memorialize.

We do not come lightly, casually, mindlessly or take the table as a ritual. If we do, then we do not have a sincere heart. The Lord is very gracious with us; however, there can be serious consequences if we take the table in an unworthy manner, because He will have to discipline us; He cannot let it go on.

It is true with our children when we see them doing something wrong. I have told you before that my Mother hated lying, and when she caught me in one she let me know it! One time it went on for three or four times and finally she addressed me and said, "Jerry, if you do not get straight with the Lord you are going to hell." So I got straight with the Lord. She gave me that little nudge, that little reminder.

The Table Reminds Us to Look Forward to His Coming

The Word says: "We proclaim His death until He comes." We not only look back in remembrance at the table, we look forward in remembrance.

And as we remember Him, looking back, our hearts begin to be moved to look forward to seeing Him face to face. This should happen as we take the table. It should begin to work in our hearts until we say: "Lord, I need to see You face to face. I need for You to come, Lord Jesus." So we are looking for that day when He will come and we will see Him face to face.

At the same time we need to remember that the Lord's heart is moved as well! He is longing for His bride and saying: "Yes, I know you want Me to come, but you are not ready. I want to come. I long to come. I long to have My bride. But you are not ready yet. Nevertheless, you will be." He is looking forward to the bride and to the wedding feast. And you need to know that when we take the table, it is a feast, the Lord's feast that He has provided for us. But it is also looking forward to His complete fulfillment at the wedding supper of the Lamb, and that is what He is looking forward to.

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

In Luke 22:15 He told His disciples as He was sharing His heart with them: "With desire I have an intense desire to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. I will not eat anymore thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." This feast of the Lord's supper that we celebrate is real and it is marvelous, but it is looking forward to the marriage feast of the Lamb.

In John 2 it tells us of a wedding feast in Cana, and His mother attended along with the Lord and His disciples, and they ran out of wine. And we know from the Scriptures that the Lord turned the water into wine. The servants took the wine to the headwaiter and he made a comment that caught my heart when I read it. It says, "Most people put forth the good wine first and later on the poorer wine, but you saved the good wine till last" (see John 2:3-10). You saved the good wine till last!

The wine in the Word speaks not only of the blood covenant we have, but it speaks of joy, happiness and pleasure. In the Song of Solomon the maiden says: "Thy love is better than wine" (1:2b). As we take the table it is good wine; it is excellent wine. He has saved the best for last at the marriage supper of the Lamb. That is why He encourages us to overcome because it is those who overcome that are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. It says: "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:9a) Oh! He is saving the good wine for last!

Lord, we just come to You this morning. We thank You for Your great love for us and this table that You instituted. A lot of people fall back at that word 'instituted,' but it was something that You directed, something You desired, something You instituted on our behalf. This memorial feast to the true Passover, the true celebration of Unleavened Bread, we desire to share with You. Lord, we thank You that You desire to share this feast with us. May it become the great desire in our lives. Lord, open our eyes to see how much this table means to You and may it become precious to us. May we be prepared and come in a worthy manner that You might be refreshed. Lord, work in our lives. The best wine You have saved for last. Oh Lord, we do want to find its fulfillment in the kingdom age. As Your Word has said, "You would not drink of the wine again until it has been fulfilled in the kingdom." Lord, we thank You. In Jesus' name. Amen.