

Good Friday 2020 – The Lord’s Supper

1 Cor 11:23-32

Good Friday is uncomfortable, isn’t it? And it should be. Because death is uncomfortable. Especially when we’re the reason for it.

And every year on Good Friday, we share in The Lord’s Supper. Communion. The Lord’s Table.

We eat the bread and drink the cup, and don’t think much more about it.

Like why. *Why* we combine The Lord’s Supper and Good Friday. And how they relate to one another.

So I want to talk about that. I want to lay out the purpose of each, and how they relate to each other.

And when I’m done, I want to *share* in The Lord’s Supper together. Even though we’re apart. You there and me here. Because God’s Spirit still connects us. All of us.

That means you’ll need something to drink and something to eat.

Obviously *grape* juice is preferable, because it reinforces the symbolism of blood, but if you don’t have that, anything will do. Even water. Because it’s symbolic.

For something to eat, bread or crackers work great.

So you’ll need those things, and I’ll give you a few minutes to gather them later on.

For now, let’s start with the Scripture, and go from there. 1 Cor 11:23-32.

- The Apostle Paul has just rebuked the Corinthian church for observing the Lord’s Supper in a shameful way. Basically saying, “You know better.”
- [23] *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed [and the day before he was crucified] 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.*

I’m going to lay out several thoughts for you, hoping to connect some dots, fill in some blanks, and make this all the more meaningful and memorable for you.

Starting with this:

1. Good Friday recalls and honors the day Jesus died.

Good Friday was the day Jesus died on the cross. Probably April 7, AD30. The day he died to pay the price for our sins.

The day he died to suffer the *consequences* of our sins, *for* us. For you. For me.

Which makes Good Friday an important commemoration and remembrance.

Because without the death of Jesus, we got nothin’. No forgiveness, no assurance, and no hope.

So Good Friday is exceedingly important, and it’s all about the cross.

All about recalling and honoring the day Jesus died.

2. The Lord’s Supper recalls and proclaims the death of Jesus for our sins.

Which connects it to Good Friday about as close as possible.

That’s why we *observe* them at the same time. Because they’re both intended to remember Christ’s death.

Good Friday marking the day, and The Lord’s Supper marking the man.

Like Paul says in v24 and 25, quoting Jesus – “*Do this* [he said] *in remembrance of me.*” *In remembrance.* The Lord’s Supper is a ceremony of remembrance. A ceremony that *recalls* the man who died. The God-man. “*Do this in remembrance of me* [he said].”

- But v26 adds another dimension. A proclamation.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Proclaim means to preach, announce, or make public.

In this case, *the Lord’s death*. His death for the sins of the world. The Gospel.

It’s a silent drama, The Lord’s Supper, where we are acting out the Gospel, for others to see. Acting out the Good News that Jesus died for the forgiveness of sin.

Our sin. “*This is my body* [Jesus said], *which is for you.* Your sin. My sin. Our sin.

So the primary purpose of The Lord’s Supper, is to silently recall and proclaim the death of Jesus for our sins, by eating the bread and drinking the cup.

3. The Lord’s Supper is based on the Passover meal.

Because it’s the very meal Jesus and the Disciples were eating in the upper room the night before he was crucified.

The very meal that Jesus reinterpreted, and infused with new meaning.

You see, Passover was the annual feast, or meal, when God-fearing Jews would celebrate and remember God’s liberation of the ancient Israelites from slavery.

Remember that?

- The Israelites lived among the Egyptians for 400 years; the last part in brutal slavery around 1500BC.

Until God raised up Moses to lead his people *out* of Egypt with 10 different plagues; the last of which was the Passover.

Where every firstborn in the land of Egypt, man or animal, was killed.

Unless, a spotless lamb was sacrificed, and its blood was placed on the doorposts of their house.

In which case, when the Lord came by, he would pass *over* their home, and *spare* their firstborn.

In other words, they were saved by the blood of the lamb.

And on the *evening* of the Passover, they were to take unleavened bread, symbolizing their separation from the sinful culture around them . . .

And combine it with bitter herbs, symbolizing their time in slavery; and eat it with the lamb’s meat that they had sacrificed. It was a meal.

Subsequent to which, God instructed them to observe that meal every year. (Ex 12:24-27)

Why? To *remember* their salvation.

God wanted to make sure that his people never forgot their miraculous release from bondage, and their salvation from death.

And that's the very meal that Jesus and the 12 were eating in the upper room, the night before his crucifixion.

Only this time, he reinterpreted it, infused it with new meaning, and instituted what we now call The Lord's Supper.

- Instead of the bread representing separation from others and sustenance for our bodies, it now represents the sacrificial separation of Christ, and sustenance for our soul. After breaking the bread, portraying sacrificial separation, like he would endure on the cross; he said, "*This is my body, which is for you.*" Sustenance for you. He gave the bread new meaning.

And the cup that represented the blood of the lamb, now represents *his* blood. The blood of the Lamb. "*This cup is the new covenant in my blood* [he said]." He changed the meaning.

So the Passover meal, that was the last supper for Christ, became The Lord's Supper for us.

4. On Good Friday Jesus became the Passover Lamb that was slain.

No longer do we focus on the lamb small "l"; but the Lamb, capital "L".

The Lamb of God [in John the Baptist's words], *who takes away the sin of the world.* (Jn 1:29)

The Lamb in heaven, who's worthy *to receive honor and glory and blessing* (Rev 5:12) And the *Passover Lamb* as Paul calls Jesus, who was sacrificed for us. True. **1 Cor 5:7.**

- Paul is writing to the church, and says – *Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened.* As in, purge the household of God of sin, so you can *be* the people you are – unleavened and untainted for God's own possession. *For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*

Our Lamb – our perfect, spotless, blameless Savior – shed his blood as our substitute. And applies it to the doorposts of our heart through faith and repentance. So that we might be saved from death and the bondage of sin, and made alive in him. Just like the people of old were saved from death and bondage in slavery, with *their* small "l" Passover lamb.*****

Just as the blood of the lamb was applied to the doorposts of their homes, protecting them from *physical* death due to the *plague* . . .

So too, the blood of Christ is applied to our *hearts*, protecting us from *spiritual* death due to *sin*.

And just as the blood of the lamb was their means to freedom from the bondage of *slavery*, the blood of Christ is *our* means to freedom from the bondage of *sin*.

On Good Friday, Jesus became the Passover Lamb that was slain for the sins of the world.

5. At The Lord's Supper, the bread symbolizes the death of Jesus.

Because that's the most natural sense of the statement.

Holding the bread, he said, "*This is my body.*"

Literally? No. Because his body is holding the bread. And he didn't say, "This is also my body."

It would be like me holding a picture of myself, my license, and saying, "This is me."

Do I mean that this picture is *literally* me? Not at all. That would be absurd.

I mean that this picture *represents* me. *Symbolizes* me.

Same for Jesus and the bread.

Only in this case, it represents his *death*.

Because he said these words the night before he died. Foreshadowing his death, and connecting it with the bread, for all time.

And since we're commemorating the very *same* supper with the very same *meaning*, the broken piece of bread *we* eat symbolizes his death.

6. The cup symbolizes the salvation of Jesus.

V25 – *He took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood."*

This cup and what it contains, is symbolic of God's *New Covenant* – his new promise of salvation. His new assurance of forgiveness and eternal life.

His new way of relating to us and providing for us.

The blood he shed and the death he died, offers and guarantees a new way to be *right* with God and *live* for him. A new way of being reconciled and alive.

Symbolized by the cup at The Lord's Supper.

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood."

- And you need to know, that this phrase would have made bells and whistles go off in their minds. Because it's the very language Jeremiah used 600 years earlier . . . When God first *promised* a new covenant. **Jer 31:31-34.** [31] "*Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel . . . I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. . . . For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*" That's the New Covenant.

And here was Jesus, on the verge of instituting it and guaranteeing it, with his blood; his death. And says that the cup symbolizes it.*****

The juice, representing his blood, symbolizes God's new promise of salvation.

A promise for which God-fearing people yearned, for 6 centuries.

May we never take it for granted again.

The cup symbolizes the salvation of Jesus. Bought, offered, and guaranteed by his blood.

Which means, #7, that . . .

7. The Lord's Supper should be observed only by believers.

And believers who are right with the Lord.

Otherwise, you're saying something outwardly that's not true inwardly. And misrepresenting Jesus. V27-32. After reminding us *how* to participate, Paul says . . .

[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.*

Guilty of treating his death and salvation as common or trivial when it's anything but.

Guilty of portraying the Gospel as operative in your life, when it's not.

Guilty of saying one thing, and thinking another.

[28] *Let a person examine himself, then* [as in, assess the purity of his heart; measure the godliness of her life], *and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.* [29] *For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body* [without searching their heart and assessing their lives for sin] *eats and drinks judgment on himself* [discipline].

[30] *That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.* [31] *But if we judged ourselves truly* [if we *honestly* evaluated our lives for sin, repenting and committing to turn from it], *we would not be judged* [we wouldn't be disciplined]. [32] *But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.* [There's grace even in God's discipline.]

The Lord's Supper is for believers, and believers who are right with him.

Which means if you're harboring unconfessed sin in your heart, it's a problem.

You'd be participating in an *unworthy manner* (27), and subject to judgment. Including sickness or death. **(Summary)**

➤ Don't go there.

You don't have to come *perfect* to supper, but you do have to come clean.

You do have to get right with God.

So *confess* your sin to him. Ask for his forgiveness.

And if you've never done so, receive him into your life as Lord and Savior.

And then rest in his grace as you eat and drink.

Take a few minutes to reflect on all this; a few minutes to examine your life.

Then, when you're ready, gather your elements.

So that when the time comes, we can eat and drink together.

The Lord's Supper

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. (1 Cor 11:23)

Representing the life he gave and the sustenance he offers – *Do this* [he said] *in remembrance of me.* (Eat)

[25] *In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood.*

This cup and what it contains, is symbolic of God's promise of salvation, the New Covenant, and the blood of Jesus that guarantees it.

Do this [he said], *as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."* (Drink)

Pray – Lord, we ache at the thought of what you endured, and we're sorry. We hate it. But we also love it. And love you. Grateful for the sacrifice, grateful for the forgiveness, and grateful for the salvation. Thank you. Thank you for saving our souls and making us whole.

Close – May God bless you as you remember the death of Jesus for your sins, and The Lord's Supper to proclaim it, on this *Good Friday*.