

WHY WE DO COMMUNION

I Corinthians 11:23-29

March 2, 2008 Sunday pm

INTRODUCTION

- A. Why do we do the things we do?
 - 1. In 1903 the Russian Czar noticed a sentry posted for no apparent reason on the Kremlin grounds. After an investigation it was discovered that in 1776 Catherine the Great posted a sentry there to protect a flower she saw coming up.
 - 2. We've all heard the story of why a family cut the end of the ham off before cooking it.
- B. Here's another "Why?" question. Why do we observe or celebrate the Lord's Supper or Communion?
 - 1. Obviously Jesus set the example for us when He instituted the practice of the Lord's Supper the night before He was crucified.
 - 2. The first century Christians understood it was to be repeated because we have record of it in First Corinthians 11.
 - 3. But what does it mean and why should we continue to practice it today? Why do we use these tasteless little crackers and tiny glasses of grape juice?
 - 4. The Apostle Paul gives us four reasons in First Corinthians 11:23-29. What are they?

I. THE FIRST REASON FOR OBSERVING THE LORD'S SUPPER IS TO REMEMBER.

- A. September 11 has forever taken on new meaning for all Americans today. Like when John F. Kennedy was shot, we will always remember where we were on Tuesday morning of September 11. Every time we see that date on a calendar or see an image of the World Trade Towers in a movie or magazine we will remember.
- B. Similarly, the purpose of the Lord's Supper is to remember another day when someone died. It reminds us of Jesus' death (11:23-25).

²³ ***For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night 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, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."***

- 1. Let's never forget the nearly 3,000 who died on September 11.
- 2. Let us also never forget Jesus' death either. The Lord's Supper will help us to remember (Ephesians 1:7).

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

II. THE SECOND REASON FOR OBSERVING THE LORD'S SUPPER IS TO REJOICE.

- A. Paul says it in 11:26.

²⁶ ***For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.***

- B. What do we have to rejoice about?

- 1. First, because Jesus is not dead but alive - I Corinthians 15:3-4.

³ ***For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,***

⁴ ***that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,***

- 2. Second, because Jesus is coming again someday. Too little is said today about the Second Coming of our Lord. We may not know the day or hour but we must live as though it could be today. That's something to rejoice about!

3. Biblical prophesy provides some of the greatest encouragement and hope available to us today. Just as the Old Testament is saturated with prophecies concerning Christ's first advent, so both testaments are filled with references to the second coming of Christ. One scholar has estimated that there are 1,845 references to Christ's second coming in the Old Testament, where 17 books give it prominence. In the 260 chapters of the New Testament, there are 318 references to the second advent of Christ, an amazing 1 out of every 30 verses. Twenty-three of the New Testament books refer to this great event. For every prophecy in the Bible concerning Christ's first advent, there are 8 which look forward to His second! *Today in the Word*, April, 1989, p. 27.

III. THE THIRD REASON FOR OBSERVING THE LORD'S SUPPER IS TO REPENT.

- A. Paul says this in 11:27-28.

²⁷ ***Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.***

²⁸ ***A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.***

- B. In his book, *I Surrender*, Patrick Morley writes that the church's integrity problem is in the misconception "that we can add Christ to our lives, but not subtract sin. It is a change in belief without a change in behavior." He goes on to say, "***It is revival without reformation, without repentance.***" Quoted by C. Swindoll, *John The Baptizer, Bible Study Guide*, p. 16.
- C. The Lord's Supper gives us an opportunity to personally examine our lives and if we see something unworthy we have the chance to repent and be cleansed from our sins (I John 1:8-9).

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

⁹ ***If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.***

IV. THE FOURTH REASON FOR OBSERVING THE LORD'S SUPPER IS TO RECONCILE.

- A. Listen to Paul's warning in 11:29.

²⁹ ***For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.***

- B. William Barclay suggests two possible meanings and proposes that both are intended.
 1. First, according to Barclay it may mean having no reverence and no sense of importance or obligation to the observance of the Lord's Supper. In other words, it becomes routine or meaningless.
 2. Second, Barclay says the phrase "the body of Christ" again and again stands for the church. So it may mean observing the Lord's Supper while being at variance or alienated from a fellow Christian. Barclay goes on to say, "***Every man in whose heart there is hatred, bitterness, contempt against his brother as he comes to the Table of our Lord, eats and drinks unworthily.***"
 3. Therefore, we should use this symbol of the Lord's Supper to be reconciled to God and to each other, otherwise the symbol is meaningless (Matthew 5:23-24).

²³ ***Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,***

²⁴ ***leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.***

CONCLUSION

- A. This is why we swallow these crackers and slurp this grape juice...
 1. To Remember.
 2. To Rejoice.
 3. To Repent.
 4. To Reconcile.
- B. Why do you do it?