

# The Lord's Supper



## 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Who has been to Patty's restaurant since it reopened after burning? I love Patty's! If you're like me, you probably love Patty's too. It's one of the jewels in our area. I love the two inch pork chop, but even before that, I loved those cheese logs. They're just incredible. At the end, you can get a big Boat Sinker, and you can barely walk out of the place, but I love the food at Patty's. Even more so than the food, I love the atmosphere and I really love the fellowship of Patty's. Usually, when we go to Patty's there is an occasion. We are celebrating something. We were supposed to go for my birthday in March, but Corona killed that. But we got to go in June for my wife's birthday. It was my first time back, but this past weekend, Mom and Dad took the whole family to Patty's because they were celebrating their fortieth wedding anniversary. That's pretty amazing, forty years of marriage! So, we go to Patty's and have a meal, but it's not just about cheese logs, pork chops, and chocolate pie. There is more to this meal. It's actually a meal that points to something, a meal of celebration, a meal

about them. It was a meal to honor and celebrate them to remember forty years of faithful marriage. What a testimony! So, we had a meal, but it wasn't just about food, it was about something bigger. That meal pointed to a bigger reality, forty years of marriage.

This morning, we come to also have a meal together. It's not just about some food that we find in a cup; instead, it's about something even bigger. It's pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ. We call it the Lord's Supper. That's one of the reasons we come and gather during this time. We're going to celebrate the Lord's Supper, a meal to remember, but also to proclaim. It's a meal of declaration, a meal that reminds us about the gospel, of who Jesus is and what He has done for us.

If you think about the Scripture, there are a lot of meals. Adam and Eve were in the garden, and they ate in the presence of God. God gave the children of Israel that covenant on the mountain, and He brought the leaders and they had a meal in God's presence. Jesus came on earth, and He ate and drank with us. He had meals around tables with people. God fellowshiped with us through meals. When Jesus left His disciples, the last thing He did with them was the Lord's Supper. He gave them a meal where they would remember Him. They would remember His cross, and He promised not to do it again until the day in His new Kingdom. In that new Kingdom reality, we're going to have a meal with Jesus called the marriage supper of the Lamb. We're going to forever fellowship with God, eating and drinking in His presence.

In just a few moments, we're going to get to do the Lord's Supper, one of those meals as we wait for the coming presence of God. We get to have a meal at His table in His presence. I want to look at what the Lord's Supper is, exactly. We're going to look at 1 Corinthians 11. We're going to see a church that really abused the Lord's Supper. They're taking it, but they're taking it in a wrong way. Paul is going to rebuke them, then he is going to teach them, then he's going to warn them, and then he's going to encourage them. We're going to walk through these scriptures because I want us to make sure we look at the Lord's Supper in a correct way, that we would not take it in an unworthy manner. Have you ever seen someone get in trouble? You watch somebody getting on to them, and you didn't

know you weren't supposed to do that, so you make sure you don't do the same thing. We're going to see a church get in trouble, a church do it wrong, so we, as a church, will make sure we do it right.

## **Scripture**

***"But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not."***

In this first section, Paul is rebuking these people who are gathering for the Lord's Supper. So, they have been doing the things Paul told them to do, gathering, hearing the Word of God, doing the Lord's Supper, but then they get this letter from Paul, who founded that church. He said I'm writing, not to condemn you, but I'm saying you're coming together for the worse. Imagine if you got a letter from Bro. Ricky this week that said, "I want to say thanks for joining us in person, but your presence actually made things worse." Man! How would you like to get that letter? That would be really humiliating! 'What? How did I make it worse by coming?' Paul said you're coming together, which is what you're supposed to do, but in coming together, you're actually making things worse.

How could they make things worse by coming together? It was because there were divisions among the people. We're going to see those divisions were really the rich against the poor. The poor were being mistreated, and the rich were using their power and status to get, and to keep the poor from getting. Paul said when you come together it's not the Lord's Supper that you eat. I imagine people were confused; I mean that's the reason we

came. When you walk through the doors, you grab the cup thinking I'm going to take the Lord's Supper. Paul is saying to this early church in Corinth, which had a lot of problems, a lot of issues, you're coming together, holding the bread, taking the cup, and you're assuming you're doing the Lord's Supper, but you're not. You're actually not taking the Lord's Supper; you're actually doing something different. How could that be? What could they be doing different? Notice then, he says, "For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal." In other words, they're coming thinking they're taking the Lord's Supper, but actually, they were doing their own supper. He says you've made the Lord's Supper to be about you. In other words, you've taken a meal that's supposed to be about Him, and you've made it about you. They were a people who were supposed to be taking a meal about Jesus, and they made it a meal about themselves. It was about their stomachs. It was about getting full. Paul rebukes them and says one goes hungry and one gets drunk.

This was sort of a common problem in the Greco-Roman society because the rich didn't have to work as long as the poor. The rich could come early to the church gathering, which would either happen in a big space or in houses. A lot of the rich had bigger homes, so the church would meet in their homes and they would do the Lord's Supper in their homes. In this setting, the rich could come early, but the poor worked long hours and got off late. By the time the poor got there, the rich had already done the Lord's Supper and were partying and celebrating. They were full, and some were even getting drunk, and when the poor got there, they were actually hungry because there was no food left to eat. The poor was despised, and the rich separated themselves and abused the Lord's Supper. A meal that started with Jesus washing the disciple's feet turned into the rich basically turning the poor away so they could just have a social gathering that was all about them, so Paul rebukes them. The Lord's Supper is supposed to be about 'He' and 'we'. It's supposed to be about the Church gathered together, putting down our preferences, and serving one another. Instead, they are doing the opposite. He's not commending them; he's rebuking them.

Then Paul starts to teach them:

***"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you..."***

That was either direct revelation from Jesus, or probably, Paul means that Peter and the other apostles taught me what Jesus said in that room. I've heard, and I'm delivering to you what you're supposed to do, what you're supposed to take the Lord's Supper. He's the one that delivered it to them.

Notice what he delivered:

***"...that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread..."***

Here that word, betrayed; whose name comes to mind? Judas, right? Here is a whole group of people taking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner making it all about themselves. He pulls in this, 'hey remember that night? Jesus was betrayed by someone.' It's kind of a hint to like, are you being Judas in the moment you're taking the Lord's Supper? Are you making it about you rather than about Jesus? What did Jesus do the night He was betrayed? He took bread:

***"...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."***

He's taking them back to that meal with the disciples, that Passover meal they had together, the Passover which pointed back to Israel's escape from slavery in Egypt and how God delivered them. Paul is now saying remember what happened. Jesus took bread in the midst of that meal, but He said something different. He didn't say here is the Passover bread; He said, "This is My body." He said it after breaking it. That little statement has caused a lot of division and controversy among the Church.

There are differences of opinions on what Jesus meant when He said this is My body. For example, the Catholic Church takes it in a very literal sense. Transubstantiation is what it is called. When the priest does the Lord's Supper, the bread actually turns into the essence of Jesus. It becomes the body of Jesus. The cup becomes the blood of Jesus. It is a re-sacrifice every Mass of Jesus on the cross for your sins. Of course, we see that Hebrews would be very against that sort of thinking. I think even in the

context, Jesus is not saying this is actually My body because He says things like this all the time. "I am the vine." "I am the door." He is not an actual door; He's using the door to show something. So, He is saying this is My body, this piece of bread that I just broke. It's broken. That's the illustration. This bread is pointing to what is about to happen to My body; it's going to be broken also. Luther would have a different view than us. He would have consubstantiation, where he believed physical presence was somehow in, above, and around the elements of the Lord's Supper. Somehow, Jesus was actually physically there when we take the Lord's Supper. We would take more of a Zwingli approach who would say the Lord's Supper is a memorial interpretation. Jesus is saying the bread is to remember. It's pointing to something. Calvin would believe there is a spiritual presence of Christ among us as we take the Lord's Supper, not in a physical sense, but a spiritual sense, we are gathering at His table in His presence. I would love to share a quote from Wayne Grudem, "The Lord's Supper is not simply an ordinary meal among human beings. It is a fellowship with Christ in His presence at His table." We're going to sit at the Lord's Table in a moment. We're going to be in His presence as we celebrate the Lord's Supper.

Why does Jesus say this is My body? What is He trying to do? He's trying to show the disciples that in the same way that this bread is broken His body is going to be broken for them. He's showing them the gospel. You deserve death, but I am going to die for you. Paul is going to remind us that Jesus told them in that moment, as Luke's Gospel records, that He wants them to do this, ongoing, in remembrance of Him. In other words, it's not a onetime taking bread and remembering what Jesus said, this is My body, broken for you; we are supposed to do it ongoing as we come together and celebrate the Lord's Supper. We again hold the bread in our hands and we remember what Jesus said, this is My body, broken for you. We remember the broken body of Jesus. We don't have to experience the judgment and wrath of God because Jesus endured it for us. That's the good news. We get to hold this in an ongoing remembrance of what Jesus Christ did on the cross for us.

Notice, this is My body "for you." In other words, Jesus said I'm doing this, and it's for you. It's to your benefit. It's to your advantage. The reason I'm dying is not just because people don't like Me. The reason I'm dying is because it's God's plan. I am the substitute. As Paul would say in 1 Corinthians 5, Jesus is the Passover Lamb. He is the one who is going to die so that we can live. Jesus lives that out before the disciples. He gives them a meal to teach that and remember that.

Notice what He says next:

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

After shocking the disciples by saying this bread isn't about Egypt anymore, Jesus breaks it and says My body is going to be broken on a cross, and then He holds up a cup. He says "this cup." That would have been a cup that reminded them of the blood on the doorpost. It would have been a reminder of Egypt, a reminder of what happened them. Jesus said this is now My blood. Again, not actually His blood because Jesus is standing there with His blood still in Him. He said this meaning as you drink this, you're going to remember, and you're going to be pointing to the fact that I shed My blood on a cross for your sins.

Notice what He says about His blood; I love this. He said, "This is My blood of a new covenant." Jesus, through the gospel, gives us a new covenant. I love what the Pillar Commentary says, "During this moment when Jesus says this, He is fusing two Old Testament passages together." He is fusing on the one and Jeremiah 31 where there is a promise that a new covenant is coming. Why does a new covenant need to come? It is because the people of Israel couldn't keep the old covenant. The old covenant was if you do this, I will bless; they never did, so they got cursed rather than blessed. They constantly disobeyed what they were supposed to obey. He's taking that promise, there's a new covenant that's coming, the people knew, they're longing for, there's a covenant coming in the future, and it's going to be a new covenant. It's going to be different, not like the old

covenant. It's going to be a new covenant, but they could not imagine that this covenant would actually be in the Messiah's blood, and they couldn't imagine the Messiah would also be God. These are categories that they didn't quite have in their thinking, but now Jesus, fully God, is saying I'm the Messiah and I am bringing a new covenant, not an animal's blood, but in My own blood.

The other passage He is fusing together is Exodus 24. If you remember, it was the giving of the first covenant when they walked up on Mount Sinai and had a meal with God and the covenant was read. All the people said we will obey all of the laws. We will obey this covenant, and then they were sprinkled with animal blood, signifying that if you don't you will die. Their promise was absolutely we will do it. We will obey. The old covenant, ratified in blood, and God says this is the blood of the covenant. It's a binding agreement. There's blood on it, but it's animal's blood and we were the ones obligated to keep it. The problem was Israel failed. Israel disobeyed. They didn't keep their end of the bargain, so they were to be done like this animal was done. They could be killed just like that. They were under the judgment and wrath of God. We, too, not under a covenant sense of Israel, have sinned, and we deserve death. But Jesus says there is a new covenant, not made in animal's blood, but made in My blood.

What's going to be the promise underneath it? It's My own blood. In other words, what's different about the new covenant is the old covenant says 'if you, then God will,' and Jesus comes along and says 'I will for you, and you will get the blessing in Me.' That is why it's new. It's better. It's not based on our performance or ability to keep it; it's based on the performance and perfection of Jesus. He's the one who keeps the new covenant. It's in His blood. It's His promise. He is the one backing it up, and He's holding a cup to say you're about to see the redemption of God on the cross.

Notice what Jesus says about it, "Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of Me." So, it's not a onetime meal for the disciples. It's an ongoing meal for the bride of Christ. It's an ongoing meal for the Church. We are supposed to gather together and continue in remembrance of Him

to hold the bread and hold the cup. Remember that reality that we are in a new covenant relationship with God, not one based on our goodness and our merit, but based on Jesus and what He has done for us and what He is doing for us right now. What is really cool about the Lord's Supper is it's an ongoing reality.

We talked about baptism last Sunday, now we have the Lord's Supper, the two ordinances of the Church. Baptism is a onetime thing believers do to show their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's a onetime act. You go under and you come up. Your friends and family cheer and they know you're now marked out to follow Jesus, but you don't do it over and over again. So how do we continually publicly profess our faith that not only when I was baptized, but right now currently in this moment, I still believe. I'm still clinging to the cross. I'm still saying Jesus is my only hope. We do that through the Lord's Supper. When we hold the cup in our hand, we say this is my hope. What this points to, the broken body and the shed blood of Jesus, this is my hope of eternal life, not how good I did this week, not how many songs I sang, not how many people I led to Christ; this is my hope...the broken body and the spilled blood of Jesus Christ for me on the cross. This is my hope...His death and His resurrection. When I get to Heaven and God says why should I let you in, I'm going to point to Jesus.

Because of Him, all of Him, that's what the Lord's Supper is proclaiming. Verse 26 says, "For as often as you eat it and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." There are three things we do in this meal. We remember Christ, we think about Christ, and we meditate on Christ, on His goodness, His love, and on what He did through the gospel. We remember Christ by the bread and the cup. It's a meal of remembrance. It's also a meal of proclamation. We proclaim the death of Jesus. That seems like a weird thing to proclaim. We're proclaiming somebody's death over and over again. How does that make sense? It only makes sense if the Church knew when Paul said the death he also implied the resurrection. We're not just talking about remembering that Jesus is buried somewhere in a tomb in Israel. That's not what we're celebrating this morning. We're celebrating the fact that Jesus died, but He rose again. It's even in that verse we read because we proclaim His death while also

anticipating His return. We do this until He comes back, which means He can't be dead in a tomb somewhere. He has to be risen and ascended and seated at the right hand of the Father. So, during the Lord's Supper, the Church gathers to do three things. We remember Christ, what He did. We remember that it's only by Jesus that we are in relationship with the Father. Secondly, we proclaim the gospel. What is the gospel? It's the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. That is the good news of salvation. Jesus is salvation. Jesus is the gospel. It's not at one time I did something and now I'm doing something, now I'm working really hard and trying really hard. No, the gospel is Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. It's His death that saved us. That's our merit. That's our boast. Our boast is in the cross of Christ and nothing more. As we boast that, as we proclaim that to our neighbors and friends, if you want to be made right with God, it's about the cross. Believe in the cross. Repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We also anticipate that He's coming back. We have hope that this life is not the only life. There is a Kingdom to come. It started already, but it's also not yet, and there is a fullness coming. Right now, we are saved, but we are also being saved, and one day we will truly be saved forevermore at the return of Jesus Christ.

We find this summary of what the Lord's Supper is. It's not a me meal; it's not something we come to do for just our benefit. It's a He and we meal. It's something we do together as the Church, waiting on one another without divisions among one another. We do it together for Him. It's a He meal. It's showing His goodness and His glory. It's remembering Him and getting excited about His return. It's the Church coming around a table and anticipating when the Head of the table is going to sit down at the table with His people. That is going to be a glorious day.

So Paul rebukes the Church, teaches the Church, but then he's still going to have to straighten them out a little bit, so he's now going to warn the Church:

***"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."***

That is a serious thing. We've got to figure out what it means to eat in an unworthy manner:

***"Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world."***

So Paul is giving them some warning. When you come together, don't take the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. I think in the context of what Paul is talking about, an unworthy manner is how they were taking it. They were making it a me meal. There were divisions. They weren't waiting. It was just about their hunger pangs. It was just about a free meal with free wine they could get drunk with. That's how the church was abusing the Lord's Supper. They weren't even taking the Lord's Supper; they were doing their own meal. I think one of the places it really shines is in verse 29 when it says "anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself." What does the body mean? The Baker Commentary, the Pillar Commentary, Grudem, and I all agree that when it says body here, it is not meaning your body, but the body of Christ. When you eat, you're not discerning the body of Christ. The reason I think it fits with the context is because there is no mention of the blood. It's not body and blood of Jesus; it's the body. What's the problem? They're not concerned with the body, with the brothers and sisters in Christ. They're not concerned about the poor. They're only concerned with their own body, not the body of Christ. He says that's an unworthy manner to eat the Lord's Supper. You should be concerned about the people around you. You should be concerned to know this is not just a He meal; this is a we meal. We do this together as the body of Christ. As we take it, we look around. As we take it, we don't do it selfishly. We put the needs of others before ourselves. We make sure we are right with our brothers and sisters in Christ. We acknowledge that the gospel is not just about me; it's about we, and we are concerned with the we because He is concerned

with the we. So an unworthy manner is making it a me meal instead of a He meal and a we meal.

Here is the encouragement:

***"So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—"***

That was the issue. They weren't waiting. They were only in it for themselves. They weren't in it for the body. They weren't in it for Christ. They were in it for me.

Here is the encouragement when you come together, wait on one another:

***"...if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come."***

We see a church that got a lot of it wrong. He says you're not even doing the Lord's Supper; you're doing something different. You're doing your own supper. As we come into this place to take the Lord's Supper, we want to make sure we're doing it with the right motives. This is a He meal. It is about Jesus. It is about remembering, proclaiming, and anticipating His return. It is a we meal; we do it together as the body of Christ making sure that we're in good relationship with one another. This gospel thing is not just me; it's about us. That's how we take the Lord's Supper in a proper way. We're going to be fellowshiping and dining together as the Church, as God's people forevermore in the new Kingdom, so we need to do it right now in the dress rehearsal of what the marriage supper is going to be in this thing we call the Lord's Supper.

I love meals. I love going to Patty's. I love the food. Do you know what I really love? I love the fellowship. I love what great meals represent and point to. Here, we are at a meal that points to something great. It points to the cross of Jesus Christ.