

Sermon Mark S. Aites  
**THE LORD'S SUPPER**  
(Special Thanks To David Pharr)

**TEXT: 1 COR. 11:23-29**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. It seems appropriate, with so many focusing upon the Lord's death, burial and glorious resurrection, to discuss the most sacred of feasts -- the Lord's Supper.
2. The text is Paul's recount of the establishment of the Lord's Supper, which was prompted by an abuse of the Lord's Supper in the church at Corinth.
3. Paul informs us that the problem was so bad that he said, *Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse (1 Cor. 11:17).*
4. As Paul continues in **vs 20**: *When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.*
5. We note from Paul's statement that this problem existed when the congregation met together.
  - 1) Paul says that *this is not to eat the Lord's Supper* -- not signifying that they met for another purpose, but that the Corinthian Christians had failed in taking the Lord's Supper in a manner which pleased God.
  - 2) Paul makes us aware of this in **vs 21**: *For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*
  - 3) We also know that other plain biblical teaching makes us aware that the early church met to partake of the Lord's Supper.  
**Acts 20:7** *And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*
6. The problem at Corinth stemmed from an attempt to intermingle a common meal with the sacred observance of the Lord's Supper.
7. Summers: **"The failure to make a distinction between the two meals caused the significance of the Lord's Supper to be downplayed, which defeated their purpose in coming together."**  
**1 Cor. 11:21-22** *For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*  
**11:22** *What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.*
8. The brethren at Corinth had forgotten the importance and significance of the Lord's Supper, and the sacred meaning behind it; i.e., to remember the One who had given His life in sacrifice on that cross of Calvary for them.

**DISCUSSION:**

**I. A PRINCIPLE.** (Taken from David Pharr's Lecture At The East Tennessee School Of Preaching)

- A. To the Woman of Samaria: *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).*
1. Inherent within that statement is the understanding that God has a pattern concerning worship that He wants to be followed.
  2. It was quite apparent that the Samaritans were not following the divine pattern, as He said to the woman: *Ye worship ye know not what (4:22).*
  3. The Samaritans had not been following the Old Testament instruction; and the Lord indicated that it did make a difference in the manner of worship as to what is acceptable to God.
  4. The old law specified the proper place as being the city of Jerusalem; however the Samaritans chose a different place -- one which was not according to the Divine pattern.
- B. But a change was coming soon: **John 4:23** *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*
1. Pharr notes: this is generally explained that a change is forthcoming.
  2. But bro. Pharr suggests an eternal principle is being referred to, that in that present dispensation of time, and in the one to follow, worshipping God in spirit and in truth always applies.
  3. Those that therefore worship God in an acceptable manner worship Him in spirit and in truth.
  4. Greek text: the preposition is not included twice -- actual reading is *in spirit and truth.*
  5. The point: it is impossible to separate one from the other.
  6. You cannot worship God acceptably in spirit but not in truth; neither can you worship God acceptably in truth but not in spirit.
- C. We therefore want to make sure that we do that in worship which is pleasing to God; and apply this most certainly to the Lord's Supper.

**II. PRINCIPLES FROM THE GREAT COMMISSION.** (This also from Pharr)

**Matt. 28:18-20** *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

**28:19** *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

**28:20** *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

A. Four important things are included in **verse 20**:

1. There are things that Jesus commanded - *Teaching them to observe*

*all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

2. The apostles were to teach the things which He commanded.
  3. The disciples were to observe the things which the apostles taught, which Jesus commanded.
  4. Jesus would be with them in this teaching even to the end of the world.
- B. Generally when we quote this text we state that the great commission is given to us.
1. It is given to us by way of application or extension, but we must remember that this was spoken directly to the apostles.
  2. Instruction is being given to them in this text, instruction which would be even to the end of the world.
  3. The authority given to them as His apostles continues even until this day, and until He comes again.
  4. Bro. James Meadows: **There are apostles today; not living among us;** but their authority vested in them by Christ continues, and will continue till the end of the world.
- C. Even though these men eventually died, the Lord remained with them in their teaching, and continues to have force today.
- D. Let's apply these four principles to the Lord's Supper.
1. **Luke 22:19** *And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*
  2. The latter portion of this verse is stated in the imperative: **this do in remembrance of me.**
  3. We note that it is not stated as an option; in other words Jesus stating: "If you choose to do this, do it in my memory"; but it is stated as a command.
  4. Tied in with the statement at the giving of the Great Commission; Jesus said, *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you* -- and here is something which He commanded.
  5. This is not a recommendation; it is not listed as an option; but something which the Lord expected His disciples to do.
- E. Now, as part of that commission, He told the apostles that they were to teach the things which He had commanded.
- Acts 2:42** *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*
1. The opening of that verse tells us that the early church *continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine* (or teaching).
  2. This teaching or doctrine was from the Lord.
- John 14:26** *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the*

*Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

**John 16:13** *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

- F. We note in the context of **Acts 2:42** that reference is being made to things in connection to worship -- and we note specifically the mentioning of *breaking of bread* -- or lit. as the Greek renders it, "the breaking of the bread."
1. **1 Cor. 10:16** *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?*
  2. He mentions *the bread which we break*, and in **Acts 2:42**, in the Greek, "the breaking of the bread."
  3. Now it is true that sometimes the expression of the breaking of bread is used in reference to an ordinary meal, such as in **Acts 2:46**, where reference is made to Christians having meals together.
  4. But in **vs 42**, in the clear context of worship, the definite article is used to designate the breaking of a particular bread -- and **1 Cor. 10:16** clearly specifies that as the communion or Lord's Supper.
- G. It is clear that the apostles taught the observance of that which Jesus commanded -- *this do in remembrance of me*.
- H. **1 Cor. 11:2** *Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.*
1. We must remember that Paul was an apostle; and as such he gave this instruction with apostolic authority.
  2. **Matt. 18:18** *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*
  3. Noting the verb tenses in the Greek: *Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall have already been bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall have already been loosed in heaven.*
  4. As an apostle, Paul instructs the Corinthians to keep the ordinances that he had given to them.
  5. Now note something special in **1 Cor. 11:23** *For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.*
  6. Now note: **Matt. 18:18** says that whatever the apostles bound was already bound in Heaven -- so the doctrine that they taught began in Heaven.
  7. **Psa. 119:89** *For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.*

8. The word originated in Heaven, it was given to the apostles, and in this text in **1 Cor. 11** it was delivered by Paul to the Corinthians as they were to keep the ordinances that he delivered to them.
9. And Paul makes it clear that the instruction he was giving concerning the Lord's Supper he had received from the Lord.
- I. Similar language is used by Paul in **1 Cor. 15:3-4** where he speaks of the Gospel message:  
*For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;  
15:4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.*
  1. Paul had delivered to the Corinthian brethren that which he also had received.
  2. We note then the same authority that is given for the fundamentals of the Gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, is also given in **chapt. 11** concerning the Lord's Supper.
- J. The apostles received their instruction from the Lord, and they in turn taught the disciples that this is what was commanded of the Lord.
- K. We then turn to the statement of **Acts 20:7** *And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*
  1. Note that in this text, by example, we have disciples observing what the apostles taught which Jesus commanded.
  2. The reason that the early church observed the Lord's Supper on a regular basis is because this is what they had been taught by the apostles which Jesus commanded.
- L. Now, Jesus said to the apostles, in the Great Commission *and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*
  1. This indicates that the things which they would teach would have force down through the centuries, even unto the end of the world.
  2. **1 Cor. 11:26** *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*
  3. This suggests, by implication, that the ordinance of the observance of the Lord's Supper was to continue even unto the end of the world.
  4. Therefore it still applies today as it did in New Testament times.
  5. We continue to observe what the early Christians observed, which the apostles taught that Jesus had commanded.

### **III. THE INSTITUTION (1 COR. 11:23-29).** (Portions From Tom Holland)

- A. Paul opens his discussion: *For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you...* (**1 Cor. 11:23a**).
1. What Paul is about to discuss with the Corinthians is from the Lord -- stresses the authority of the discussion.
  2. Paul--Galatians: *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ* (**Gal. 1:11-12**).
  3. Paul was an apostle of the Lord, and although he was not one of the twelve, he was still an apostle (**1 Cor. 9**). -- divinely guided into all truth (**John 16:13**).
- B. Paul tells us that the time the Lord's Supper was instituted - *the same night in which He was betrayed*. -- the night of the Jewish feast of the Passover.
1. Passover - special, sacred feast of the Jews; originated with the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage; blood--doorposts (**Exod. 12:13**).
  2. It was to be observed on the 14th day of Nisan in conjunction with the feast of Unleavened Bread, a feast which lasted for 7 days.
- C. Betrayal night: dark and eventful night.
1. Day began with contention among the disciples, followed by the washing of their feet, the revealing of the betrayer, warnings of desertion, a farewell message, prayer in the garden, capture, and trial before the Sanhedrin.
  2. Long night (no sleep); went into the morning, as He was taken before Pilate, Herod, Pilate again; and then mocked, scourged, and crucified.
- D. On this long, dark, eventful night, fully aware of His impending death, Jesus *took bread*.
1. The bread was unleavened, that is without leavening, as today we would use yeast or baking soda.
  2. During the Passover and feast of Unleavened Bread, the Jews were to put all leaven out of their homes (**Exod. 12:15,19**).
- E. Jesus said, *This is my body* (**Matt. 26:26; 1 Cor.11:24**).
1. It is important that we understand that the unleavened bread is symbolic of Jesus' body (not to be understood literally).
  2. Problems through years: charges of cannibalism, and the doctrine of transubstantiation.
  3. The bread may be better understood with this example: some remember the dead through observance of statues, monuments, or pictures.

4. These things help in the memorial of the honored dead; they help one to remember the price paid for this country.
  5. With the Lord's Supper: the Bread and Fruit of the Vine are reminders of the tremendous price that has been paid for man's sins (**1 John 2:2**).
  6. Jesus plainly said: *This do in remembrance of Me.*
- F. *After this same manner also He took the cup, when He supped saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me (1 Cor. 11:25).*
1. The emphasis here is not on the cup or container, but its contents - the fruit of the vine (**Matt. 26:29**).
  2. Reference to the product of the grape (**Lev. 25:5** *the grapes of thy vine*).
  3. Fruit of the vine is representative of the blood of Christ: *For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:28).*
- G. Blood is very important to Christians.
1. We recognize that it is necessary in the establishing of a covenant with God:  
*Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood (Heb. 9:18).*
  2. We also recognize that without Christ's blood, we would have no hope of having our sins remitted (**Heb. 9:22**).
  3. These elements are then important to us in our memorial of Jesus.
- H. Purpose: *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till He come (1 Cor. 11:26).*
1. Each of us should bear in mind that this was the Lord's dying request.
  2. It is a declaration of our belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
  3. It is a declaration of our belief that Jesus died for our sins; that He delivered us (like Passover).
  4. And it is an open declaration of our belief that He is coming again.
- I. Another purpose: *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 all are partakers of that one bread (1 Cor. 10:16-17).*
1. Here we see that one of the purposes in partaking is a communion; from the Greek word *koinonia* which means fellowship or participation.
  2. Together, as a body, we spiritually participate in His death, as we weekly envision His crucifixion, and praise God for His glorious

resurrection.

J. To summarize these matters relative to the institution of the Lord's Supper:

1. Two elements; bread--body; fruit of vine-- blood.
2. Memorial till He comes again.
3. It is a means of communion with those of like precious faith.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. The Lord's Supper is so precious, and wonderful; as it helps us to commune with one another and with Almighty God.
2. Our hearts overflow with gratitude for the price that has been paid for our sins.
3. We recognize just how heinous our sins really are, as it necessitated the death of God's dear Son.
4. He is the only means of redemption for us.