

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

## **Introduction**

Two weeks ago we began examining the two ordinances the Lord Jesus has commanded His Church, those whom He has saved, to continue until His return. The first is baptism by which a new believer demonstrates they have begun a new life in Christ. They are symbolically buried and die to the world by the immersing in water and being raised up again as a new creation, a new life, as a believer in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Baptism is to be done once by a believer as a public declaration that they belong to Christ. The second ordinance is the Lord's Supper, which we repeat and continue to celebrate until we die or Jesus returns. This blessed Lord's Supper is what we began to delve into and continue to give our attention to this Lord's Day.

It is my desire that by spending time focused on the Lord's Supper and exploring different aspects of its make up and language, we will grow in our appreciation and reverence for this ordinance given to us by Christ.

Language is important for the meanings it conveys. I want to take a moment to talk about language associated with the Lord's Supper. I call the Lord's Supper an "ordinance" instead of "sacrament." The early church used the word sacrament and made the Lord's Supper into something that it is not. The word "sacrament" tends to imply you receive faith through taking the bread and cup. The word "ordinance" however, implies that Jesus commanded we participate in the Lord's Supper because of our faith. Also we should understand that we do not receive

additional grace by the partaking of the Lord's Supper as was taught before the Protestant Reformation. Jesus gave us His grace when He called us, saved us and indwelled us with His Holy Spirit. The word "sacrament" has tendency a to imply that the bread and cup become something more when blessed by a priest, giving you more grace than you already had through Jesus Christ. We saw in our previous study that this is not correct.

Prior I gave three Biblical meanings for Jesus' words, "**This is my body,**" and "**The new covenant in my blood**" from 1 Corinthians 11:24 and 25. I will briefly review these three this morning and give you three more. However, of these new three I will only clarify one and save the last two for next week.

### **Proclaiming**

Let's begin with proclaiming the gospel. According to 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:26, the Lord's Supper is a proclamation of the Gospel. Verse 26 reads, "**For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.**" Every time we partake of the Lord's Supper we proclaim the Lord's death and resurrection until He returns in power and glory. By our faith we proclaim this and partaking bolsters our faith. The Lord's Supper encourages us to take time to recognize our sins, confess them before Christ and repent. At the same time the Lord's Supper proclaims Christ to unbelievers who observe us partaking. This can open dialog concerning the life, death and resurrection of Christ. In fact, this indeed happened in our worship service just a few weeks ago.

The resurrection of Jesus, which is the foundation of the gospel, is found in the Lord's Supper. I believe you will see this in verses 23 and 24 of our passage in 1

Corinthians chapter 11. Let me read these verses, “For I received from the **Lord** that which I also delivered to you, that the **Lord** Jesus in the night in which 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.**’” Within these two verses there are a few key words that when their meaning is understood will add depth to what we just read.

The first word is “**Lord**” in verse 23. “For I received from the **Lord** that which I also delivered to you, that the **Lord** Jesus in the night in which He was **betrayed** took bread.” When Paul uses the title “Lord” for Jesus it implies Jesus’ deity and absolute authority. We see this also in Romans where Paul sees a connection to the Old Testament Yahweh, the LORD, as a reference to Jesus as the same LORD. Paul wrote, “**everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**” (Romans 10:13) This is exactly what the prophet Joel had written in chapter 2, verse 32. Joel uses the Hebrew word LORD for Yahweh and Paul uses this word “Lord” as a title to show Jesus is Yahweh. Here we find two persons of the Trinity.

Admittedly the concept of the Trinity is difficult one God with three personalities. So when we refer to Jesus as the Son of God, we must understand that we are referring to Yahweh. Since both the prophet Joel and the apostle Paul state that Yahweh, The LORD, is the Creator of all life, then we also know death could not defeat Him and death holds no power over Him. Thus, this enabled His resurrection. By faith in Jesus our LORD death cannot defeat us either.

The second word is “**betrayed**”, “...the night in which He was **betrayed** took bread.” Only God knows the future and directs history. Jesus knew from before He came to the earth that He would be betrayed and also knew who would betray

Him. He chose Judas and knew what Judas would do, and yet, Jesus treated him with love as He did the other disciples. Jesus knew the plan of God the Father, for it was His plan also. Judas did not know the plan of God for Judas was just a man and gave into his selfish desires and greed. Remember that in the Gospel of John chapter 13 during the Last Supper John asked Jesus who would betray Him. Jesus replied, **“It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.”** (John 13:26) Jesus knew His Father’s plan was unfolding exactly as it was suppose to. Contrary to what some would have us believe. The opposite is true, for everything was coming together. Mark tells us that the Father had never planned on Jesus staying dead. As recorded in Mark, Jesus **“began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.”** (Mark 8:31) During the Last Supper Jesus knew Judas would dip the bread and begin the process of betrayal and He showed love until Judas this final decision. After Judas left to betray Him, Jesus provided the blessing and prophecy of the Last Supper to the remaining eleven. We know from the Bible that the Last Supper led to the crucifixion. The crucifixion led to the resurrection. The Last Supper led to the Lord’s Supper. We too, enjoy the shared grace of Jesus when we join Him in the Lord’s Supper.

This brings us to the third word **“thanks.”** Look at the end of verse 23 through 24, **“He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it.”** Jesus was able to give thanks because He trusted the Father who had planned all events from the birth to the death of Jesus. The Triune God had planned Jesus’ life as a mortal, God incarnate, from before creation began. Jesus gave thanks for the broken bread in His hand for it’s physical nourishment, but more than this He

gave thanks for the spiritual nourishment it symbolized. His body was broken but He rose from the dead and He would spiritually nourish the souls of those the Father had chosen to become spiritually alive. How could someone praise God for His own pending brutal death? Jesus could because He was not merely a man but the incarnate God. Jesus could because He saw the big picture and that by His death sin would be conquered and people would be able to have a relationship with God. He also had complete trust in the Father. Even though Jesus was separated from the Father while He remained in human form He knew the Father would raise Him from the dead.

“This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” Judas did not break the bread. Nor did Peter, nor did John break it. The Romans soldiers did not knock down the door during the Last Supper and break it. Jesus broke the bread. He was showing them just as He broke the bread to serve them, so too He would break His body on the morrow that they might live. Jesus had told His disciples earlier, “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” (John 10:17-18) If Jesus is able to “lay down ~~my~~ His life that ~~I~~ He may take it up again,” surely He will also be able to mend it. By what Jesus taught and the historical events of His death and resurrection it is implicitly clear that Jesus is teaching of His resurrection in the Lord’s Supper. So when Paul wrote in verse 26, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.” It is clear Paul what is saying this based on Jesus’ teaching and more specifically His words given at the Last Supper concerning His death and His resurrection.

## Remembering

The Lord's Supper is built upon the foundation of Jesus' resurrection. By this we are to remember Jesus' sacrifice. Jesus said, "...do this in remembrance of Me." The Lord's Supper proclaims Jesus as Lord and by so doing it becomes the Lord's Supper of recollection. He is saying, to his disciples remember all that I taught you, remember all that I foretold you. It will come to pass and will continue to be proven true until I return again. Jesus is saying, "Remember My Father planned all of this for your sake. It is symbolized in the breaking of bread and the cup. The Lord's Supper symbolizes the breaking of My body and pouring out of My blood – it is by these that the New Covenant, predicted of in the Old Testament, has come. There is so much to remember – this Supper will help you." Today this helps us remember all God is teaching us through His Word, to remember all Jesus taught as found in the Word of God. As we remember we come to this table to feast in remembrance.

## Feasting

As we come to the Lord's Supper we feast upon Christ spiritually as John so well recorded Jesus' words, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." (John 6:35) As you prepare to come to the Lord's Supper, prepare to feast your soul on all that God is in Christ. Nourish yourself on the blessings of God, paid so dearly, by Jesus' body and blood! Let your soul be filled with gratefulness for what Jesus accomplished as the last and final sacrifice!

In review, the Lord's Supper proclaims the gospel, brings remembrance of Jesus

and all that He did to secure our salvation, and we are to spiritually feast upon Christ at the Lord's Supper.

Next week we will explore the Lord's Supper as a call to love the church and the Lord's Supper as a call for self-examination. This Lord's Day we will explore the Lord's Supper as savoring the New Covenant of Christ.

### **Savoring the New Covenant**

In consideration of the Lord's Supper as savoring the New Covenant, we read in 1 Corinthians 11:25, “*In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’*” Jesus did not say to do this out of historical tradition or out of routine. Jesus said He wants us to taste the sweetness of His new covenant when we eat and drink. He wants us to savor and to remember the pardoning and purifying power of His new covenant. Jesus fulfilled the old covenant and now begins the new covenant as foretold in the Old Testament.

The writing of the prophet Jeremiah helps in our understanding of Christ's fulfillment of four promises of the new covenant.

Please turn to Jeremiah chapter 31. Jeremiah prophesied in Judah from 640 to 586 B.C. for 54 years during the reign of Judah's last kings. The kingdom of Judah ended with the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar's invasions and the exile of most of its people to Babylon beginning in 605 through 597 B.C. The Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel a century before the prophet Jeremiah began his ministry. The northern kingdom of Israel and now the southern kingdom of Judah are no more.

Lets read from verse 31. “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, **32** not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. **33** For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. **34** And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31-34) We need to understand the “house of Israel” spoken of in verse 33 no longer exists because of their broken covenant. The true spiritual Israel is **the church of Christ** that exists today. Jesus established the true church with His resurrection. Remember, the Assyrians and Babylonians had conquered Israel and there would not be a political nation of Israel until after World War II. Also note that Jeremiah wrote these promises over 600 years before the birth of the Messiah.

The first promise the prophet Jeremiah writes of is God forgives our sins in verse 34, Jeremiah writes the words given him by God, the words of God, “**I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.**” This is why Jesus said as recorded in 1 Corinthians, “**This cup is the new covenant in My blood**” for Jesus is the atonement for our sins. In Matthew’s gospel account we read Jesus’ words, “**Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**” (Matthew 26:28) It is the blood of Jesus, which was shed and poured out, that is the basis of the forgiveness of our sins.



This is the blood of the new covenant. As Jeremiah wrote, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

The second promise of the new covenant we learn from verse 33 in Jeremiah is that God “will write it (this new covenant) on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” In the first covenant, the old covenant, the Law of Moses was written on stone and it could not justify or sanctify. Paul explained this to the believers in Rome, writing, “For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” (Romans 8:3-4) The Law of the old covenant was external and powerless to save. God ordained that it would be replaced by a new covenant. The new covenant would **not** be written on stone tablets but would be placed within believer’s hearts by the indwelling of God’s Spirit. The Spirit of God within us makes the will of God our delight and no longer just our duty. Paul outlined his whole ministry and that of his team by what he wrote to the Corinthians, “... our sufficiency is from God, 6 who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant (written upon their hearts, not stone, the law is now within us, not outside of us), not of the letter but of the Spirit (God is working within us by His Spirit). For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (2 Corinthians 3:5b-6) So we understand we are to savor the Lord’s Supper when we eat the bread and drink the cup, for it is by the body and blood of Jesus that we were given not a new law, but a new life in Him. By the blood of Christ, the blood of the new covenant has bought our forgiveness, but beyond this it transforms who we are; we have become children of the living God. The blood of Christ did not

just pardon our sins, but it has made us holy before God. Christ's blood did not just give us favor with God, but it infuses a believer with faith, saving faith by the indwelling of the Spirit. The new covenant of Christ is holistic grace, complete grace. When you eat the bread and drink the cup one tastes the sweetness and essence of Jesus for His Spirit lives within. We not only taste the sweetness of Christ, but we live in His grace and by His grace we are a new creation.

The third promise found in Jeremiah's writing is that ["they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD."](#) (Jeremiah 31:34) Every single person of the new covenant knows God. The church, the true Israel, is the assembly of those who personally know the God through Christ. We come together because we share in a relationship with the God. We, by faith, trust God in all aspects of our lives. This is why the first sign of being a new believer, of belonging to Christ, is baptism. This is why baptism is not given to children, but to those who have given evidence and profession of knowing the Lord Jesus as their Savior. They trust God; they submit to God through Christ and have given their lives over to Him. The other sign one believes and trusts in Jesus is found in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. It is the savoring of the truth, that by the broken body and shed blood of Jesus, our sins are forgiven and we have a personal relationship with the risen Christ, who is God. When we partake of the Lord's Supper we savor God's grace in our lives and the lives of fellow believers and Christ's church to which we belong.

The fourth promise from God as recorded by Jeremiah, says, ["I will be their God, and they shall be my people."](#) When through Christ our sins are forgiven, the will of God becomes our delight. God is no longer some distance Creator that we

know about, as is the case with other religions, but we know Him personally, we belong to Him and He is our God, our Father and we are His children. God who has unlimited wisdom and power; works in His children and through them. God's greatness, His beauty and His love are for us to enjoy. He is no longer distant, but He is within and all satisfying and fills us with new life.

In conclusion, we are to live the gospel of Christ, the new covenant of truth, of Christ, all the time and the Lord's Supper should also be lived all the time in our minds and hearts. The Lord's Supper helps refresh what we know and are to live; by faith our sins are forgiven through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, the will of God is our delight by His Spirit that lives within, we have come to personally know God, He is our God and we are truly His people, His children. It is all of this that enables us to deeply love each other and be His church.

Let us now come to the table and feast upon our Lord and Savior as His children and as His church. Phil prays over the elements. Oversees their distribution. Administers the Lord's Supper.