

Theme: Jesus commanded His followers to remember Him by celebrating the Lord's Supper, and the church has done this regularly since its earliest days because God vitally works through the Supper to teach, nourish, and strengthen His people.

I. Intro - The Return To Ancient Practices

- A. My generation tended to throw out older practices - hymns, liturgy, and creeds as meaningless rituals
- B. This has shifted in recent years, with many longing for deep rootedness in ancient hymns, liturgy, and creeds
- C. Many churches have returned to the practice of coming to the Lord's Table each week - including BRCC!
- D. Some worry this will cause the Table to lose its meaning from overuse - but I certainly don't worry about kissing Linda too much
- E. But to avoid it being ritual, we must know why we do this! Why do we come to the Lord's Table?

II. From the Last Supper to the Lord's Supper

- A. This critical moment in the earthly life of Jesus
While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." ²³ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴ "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. ²⁵ "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God." Mark 14:22-25
 - 1. This was the last passover, the end of the old covenant era, and the initiation of the new covenant!
 - 2. But in Mark, we are not told to repeat it! Why do we?

B. Jesus told us to repeat this meal

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 Corinthians 11:23-25

- 1. Paul gives us a fuller account of the words of Jesus
- 2. Luke's account is very similar to Paul's wording
- 3. This is another instance where Mark is briefer
 - a. One could infer from the fact that this meal is replacing the Passover that it would be repeated like the Passover was.
 - b. But Mark's focus was intensely on the betrayal of the disciples and the forgiveness that the meal reminds us of, not necessarily the command that we relate it.
- 4. From Luke and Paul, we know that Jesus actually commanded this meal to be repeated by His followers in remembrance of Him.

C. The early church regularly included the Lord's Supper as part of their worship

When you come together, it is not **the Lord's Supper** you eat, ²¹ for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. 1 Corinthians 11:20-21

- 1. Paul discusses public worship in 1 Corinthians 11-14, and one of the first topics is the Lord's Supper! This is where we get the title from!
- 2. As with so many things, the Corinthians were making a mess of things!

3. But they were clearly regularly partaking in the Lord's Supper together, and Paul is instructing them regarding how to do it properly.
4. The book of Acts shows that the early church did this regularly
 - a. Luke describes the worship pattern of the early church and includes the Lord's Supper (the breaking of bread)

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to **the breaking of bread** and to prayer. Acts 2:42

 1. "Breaking of bread" is one of Luke's favorite titles for the Lord's Supper (from Luke 24:30)
 2. This is a description of the liturgy of the worship of the early church - teaching the Word, fellowship, the Table of the Lord, and prayer!
 - b. Luke describes it as a key part of worship

On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. Acts 20:7

 1. This is a church gathering - first day of the week, Paul is teaching.
 2. Luke says, "we came together to break bread". This is described as the central part of worship!
5. It is also clear from other early church writings (the Didache, the Letters of Ignatius, Justin Martyr) that the Lord's Supper was a regular part of Christian worship.

III. Why the Lord's Supper Is Essential

A. Jesus commanded it!

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 Corinthians 11:23-25

1. This is always the best reason to do something!
2. Jesus told His followers to celebrate the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him - and they did from the earliest days of the Church!

B. The Lord's Supper visibly proclaims the Gospel!

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." ²⁶ **For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death** until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

1. This meal is a visible proclamation of the Gospel!
2. We visibly enact Jesus' Body being broken, His Blood being shed, for those who have sinned and betrayed Him.
3. This New Covenant sacraments of water baptism and the Lord's Supper visibly enact the Gospel - Jesus put to death for our sin and raised to save us.
4. This is why Paul says our observance of and participation in this meal is a "proclamation" of Jesus' death.
5. Each week, we proclaim Jesus' work for us in the Gospel through the verbal proclamation of the Word and the visible proclamation of the Table.

C. The Lord's Supper is a chance for us to examine ourselves, to confess, and to repent of sin.

A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. 1 Corinthians 11:28

1. The Corinthians were coming to the Table flippantly, and Paul said this invalidated what they were doing!
2. The Table is a specific chance each week to examine myself for sin, to confess it, and to repent.
3. We should do this all the time, but God gives us special times and ways to do the things that are essential for our spiritual health and flourishing.
 - a. God calls us to rest, but He gives the Sabbath as a weekly reminder and space for rest
 - b. All we have belongs to God, but we are called to give to His work as a reminder of this fact.
 - c. All of our life is to be offered as worship to God, but God calls us to gather for worship each week to remind us of this.
 - d. In the same way, I am called to regularly examine myself, confess and repent of my sin, but the Lord's Table is given to help me do this each week.

D. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament that unites me to Christ and spiritually nourishes me.

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 1 Corinthians 10:16

1. The bread and cup are a participation (konionia) in the Body and Blood of Christ Himself.

2. There is a mystery here that can not be fully explained or probed, but the Table is not merely a memorial where we mentally remember Christ's death for us - it is the way the Spirit actually unites us to Christ to spiritually nourish us.
3. This is why we call the Lord's Supper a sacrament.
4. A sacrament is a special type of symbol that unites us to the reality it signifies - the bread and the cup are a "participation" with the Body & Blood of Christ.
5. At this Table our spirit is nourished by Christ in a way analogous to how our body is nourished when we eat physical food.
6. This is not because something happens to the bread or wine, but rather because the Spirit works to join us to Christ through these sacramental symbols.

E. The Lord's Supper unites me with other believers in the Church, the Body of Christ.

Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. 1 Cor. 10:17

1. The Table not only unites me with Christ; it also unites me with my brothers and sisters in Christ!
2. This Table is not only communion with Jesus; it is essentially also communion with other believers.
3. 'Solo communion' is an oxymoron. I can't take communion by myself. It is a community meal.
4. If you are homebound, we will bring it to you!

F. The Lord's Supper points me to the return of Christ.

"I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until **that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.**" Mark 14:25

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death **until he comes.** 1 Corinthians 11:26

1. The Table looks forward to the Wedding Supper of the Lamb! In fact, it is a foretaste of that meal!
2. The Table sustains us on our journey through this life, fanning the flames of our hope for the day we will see and eat with Jesus face to face!
3. The Table looks back to Jesus' death for us, receives strength for the present, and spurs us on with hope for the future when faith will be sight!

IV. Applying the Word

A. Understanding why the Lord's Table is essential

1. It is commanded by Jesus!
2. It visibly proclaims the Gospel!
3. It is a chance for me to examine myself, to confess, and to repent of sin.
4. It is a sacrament that unites me to Christ and spiritually nourishes me.
5. It unites me with other believers in the Church, the Body of Christ.
6. It is a foretaste of the Wedding Supper of the Lamb that sustains my faith through this life.

B. The Sacramental Table of the Lord

1. This Table anchors us in the faith once for all given, imparts grace for the present, and orients us to our eternal hope!
2. Jesu, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts reading
3. Give me Jesus!

From the Last Supper To the Lord's Supper

Mark 14:22-26; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

February 9, 2025

Communion

2 Corinthians 13:14

Teaching keywords: Lord's Supper; sacrament; worship; confession and repentance; unity

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2 Corinthians 13:14

²² While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."²³ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it.²⁴ "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.²⁵ "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."²⁶ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Mark 14:22-26

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."²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26