

Men's Sunday Night
The Book of 1 Corinthians
Christian Conduct
Lesson 10 - 1 Corinthians 11:23-34
"The Lord's Supper"

Evangelical churches recognize two ordinances established by Jesus Christ for His people to observe: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Jesus Christ took the cup and the bread, the ingredients of a common meal in that day, and transformed them into a meaningful spiritual experience for believers. However, the value of the experience depends on the condition of the hearts of those who participate, and this was the problem at Corinth.

It is a serious thing to come to Communion with an unprepared heart. It is also a serious thing to receive the Supper in a careless manner. Because the Corinthians had been sinning in their observing of the Lord's Supper, God had disciplined them. *"For this cause, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."*

The Lord's Supper gives us an opportunity for spiritual growth and blessing if we approach it in the right attitude. What then must we do, if the Supper is to bring blessing and not chastening?

We should look back: The broken bread reminds us of Christ's body, given for us; and the cup reminds us of His shed blood. It is a remarkable thing that Jesus wants His followers to remember His death. Most of us try to forget how those we love died, but Jesus wants us to remember how He died. Why? Because everything we have as Christians centers on that death.

We should look ahead: We observe the Supper *"till He comes."* The return of Jesus Christ is the blessed hope of the church and the individual Christian. Jesus not only died for us, but He arose again and ascended to heaven; and one day He shall return to take us to heaven. Today, we are not all that we should be; but when we see Him, *"we shall be like Him"* 1 John 3:2.

We should look within: Paul did not say that we had to be worthy to partake of the Supper, but only that we should partake in a worthy manner. If we are to participate in a worthy manner, we must examine our own hearts, judge our sins, and confess them to the Lord. To come to the table with unconfessed sin in our lives is to be guilty of Christ's body and blood, for it was sin that nailed Him to the cross. If we will not judge our own sins, then God will judge us and chasten us until we do confess and forsake our sins.

We should look around: The Lord's Supper is a family meal, and the Lord of the family desires that His children love one another and care for one another. It is impossible for a true Christian to get closer to his Lord while at the same time he is separated from his fellow believers. How can we remember the Lord's death and not love one another? *"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."*

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Pray and answer the following questions:

1. Describe in your own words the meaning of the bread and the cup in verses 23-25.
2. Why should Christians celebrate Communion?
3. Why is the Lord's Supper an important part of our responsibility to spread the gospel message to the lost?
4. Why is the Lord's Supper important in your life?

Read 1 Corinthians 11:27-29. Pray and answer the following questions:

5. In what ways were the Corinthians corrupting the celebration of the Lord's Supper?
6. What instructions did Paul give the Corinthian Christians for preparing to participate in the Lord's Supper?

7. What is the consequence of not partaking communion according to 11:29?

8. Paul speaks of communion as being a remembrance. What sort of things should Christians remember when partaking of the Lord's Supper?

Read 1 Corinthians 11:30-34. Pray and answer the following questions:

The Lord's Supper should be a celebration of unity; instead, divisions among the church members were magnified. Because they were participating in Christ's body and blood, to participate in an unworthy manner profaned the Supper and invited judgment. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to examine their motives, methods, and manners when they gathered to worship the Lord at His Supper.

9. What are the consequences of eating the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner?

10. What did the illness and death suffered by the Corinthians reveal about God's attitude toward Communion?

11. Why does the Lord discipline His children?

12. Why should we be grateful for the Lord's discipline?

Summing Up this Week's Study:

Every time he comes to the Lord's Supper a person should examine himself. Before we partake we are to give ourselves a thorough self-examination, looking honestly at our hearts for anything that should not be there and sifting out all evil. Our motive, our attitudes toward the Lord and His Word, toward His people, and toward the Communion service itself should all come under private scrutiny before the Lord. This table thus becomes a special place for the purifying of the church. That is a vital use of communion.

John MacArthur

Life Application

Compare your notes and daily Scripture references. Take some time to pray and meditate on what God showed you in a practical way this week and how you can apply it to your Christian walk. Write your insights down for review and group discussion