

What Does The Lord's Table Really Mean For Christians Today?

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[0:00] We're going to go to the Lord's table where we think of his love to consider the truth of partaking worthily. So we'll read the familiar verses 1 Corinthians 11.

After the same manner also he took the cup.

And when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood. This do ye as often as ye drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.

Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep.

[1:09] For if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged. Some thoughts about this time together as we come to partake. How can we partake worthily?

And really two things. Examine yourself and discern the body. Firstly, examine yourself. Verse 28. But let a man examine himself.

And so only then let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. Firstly, the first thing to do is to examine. And when we come to fellowship time and the Lord's table time, we don't examine our neighbours.

We examine ourselves. That's where it starts, isn't it? And this word examine, it means prove, test, look into your heart. Paul's saying make this the starting point.

Examine yourself. Be sure you do this first. Number one. Examine yourself. Next, he goes on to say discern the Lord's body. Discern.

[2:07] Verse 29. It's a sense of examine yourself but further discern the Lord's body. Discern. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, this is verse 29, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

An important point here, examine yourself, number one, but then don't forget to discern the Lord's body. What does that all mean? It's pointing out here, really, it is possible to not discern the Lord's body.

Because where is his body? We know for sure it's not back in Jerusalem. It's not down there at the grave. Because the angel said, he's no longer in the grave.

He's not here. He's risen. Amen. We serve a risen saviour. He died on the cross for our sin. He's risen. Where is his body? The body is pictured right here in that picture of the bread.

And Paul's saying don't miss this. Discern. In other words, recognize the Lord's body. Now, of course, his body, his actual body, as he was glorified and risen, and then he ascended into heaven, his tangible body is in heaven.

[3:15] But there's a truth even deeper that we can know as the body of Christ, which is what the Word of God calls the church. And we can miss this truth that communion is something, it's more than a meeting, it's deeper.

What's happening now, it's not just a meeting. Oh, you've all remembered and set your alarm clock and got up early enough to come for the 10 a.m. service. It's not just a meeting, but we're meeting with God.

We're meeting with one another, but we're meeting with our Lord. And it's communion with God. In other words, a ministry to God. And we're not just having church. We actually, we are the body of Christ.

This is the wonderful truth of it that is unpacked in this context. For example, 1 Corinthians 10, 17 says, For we, being many, lots of people, are one.

One bread and one body. Look at this picture here. One bread, one loaf. Of course, to picture it, truthfully, it's actually got the sense of one loaf. It's the sense, but we're one loaf.

[4:17] And of course, these individual pieces of bread that are prepared for you came from one loaf. One loaf. And the body of Christ is the church as well.

So, one bread, one body. It's all a picture of the church of God. The body of Christ today, it's not in the grave. It is in heaven, but it's also us.

Us as God's people, the body of Christ. You and me that believe, we are the body of Christ. And that's a beautiful truth. You can just contemplate that.

How can we fathom it? But that each one of us is safe people. We're all interconnected and composed together as the body, comprising the body. And what a picture it is.

Both of these things are a picture. We see the bread or the loaf, and we see the body. It's a picture of unity. Both of them are. And the partaking just now is for, you could say, we could have a sign on the door saying, for members only.

[5:21] For members of the body of Christ. Of course, we do have a formal membership as a local church body. But aside from that, if you're a believer, you're a member of the body of Christ. And everyone who knows Christ is welcome to partake this morning.

And the picture is of the unity of the body. Partaking for members only. In other words, members of the body of Christ. And if you have trusted Christ, you're a member in the truth of that biblical membership.

Paul talks of one bread, one body. And here's a picture of combination. When you think about it, as a loaf of bread, what is it comprised of? Lots and lots of grains.

I know, I heard a preacher one time, and he says, how is bread made? He says, you shake it, you break it, and you make it. You get that grain, and you pull it all together.

You shake it all about, and you break it all up, and mash it all together, the grain. You ladies, and maybe some of you men that might make bread, know how to make the bread from lots of different parts.

[6:23] There's a combination, a loaf-pictures combination. Think how God's combined us together. From all different countries, and cultures, and backgrounds. From all across Adelaide, we're combined together today.

It's like kind of ingredients that make up the one bread, the one loaf. And then the other picture here is the body. Think about the body analogy. Speaks of connection. In 1 Corinthians 12, it talks about how God has tempered the body together.

And this word tempered, it means combined, or mixed. It's the same word that our Bible translates, Hebrews 4, 2, about mixing faith and the word together. It's a mixing together.

God's mixed us together. He's combined us together. Such as is seen in a human body, all the various systems of the body. They all have to work together.

Think about the connection that happens. And that's what's happening here this morning. Even though we're all coming from different quarters and different histories, we're connected. How does the old song go?

[7:24] The leg bone's connected to the thigh bone. And we can make a big story, a big song about that one. You think about the leg bone's connected to the thigh bone.

And we're all connected. Amen? That's the truth of it, isn't it? Just like a body's connected together. Imagine if your body wasn't connected together. It'd be in all kinds of trouble. But the good news is God's people were connected together.

Closely joined like parts of a body to each other. And it's pictured there in Romans 12. It talks about, again, members one of another. It's saying here that the members, the parts of the body, are connected, interconnected, interdependent, every part, to help the body function effectively.

So it's got that truth as well when we think about the church, that we need one another. As Paul relates in 1 Corinthians 12, the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

It's this truth here that we all need each other to work effectively. And when we think about 2025, we're heading into a new year. Let's be that body. Amen? Let's be that bread, that one loaf.

[8:34] Let's be that body, that one body. And so we can have that sense of combination, of connection. And it helps us to work together. Another truth that's pictured here in the context too is of compassion.

So you see these three things, the combination, the grains that make up the one bread. We see the connection that makes up the one body, all the parts connected. And then we see the compassion too.

When we see that related here in 1 Corinthians 12, it says there should be no schism in the body. So in other words, no fracturing or division. But that the members should have the same care, one for another.

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. Or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. So it's telling us here about the church, that we're together, and there's a sharing of care, and of concern for one another.

So when we hear that one of our number is suffering something, hey, we feel for them. And we want to do something to help and assist them and intervene and support one another.

[9:40] There's a care and concern. That's a good godly thing. That's how the church should function, isn't it? And this mutual care. And we're sharing together in the joys and in the sorrows. Now, oh, have you ever had that moment?

Oh, I stubbed my toe. And there's a shockwave just goes through, doesn't it? From the big toe to the top of your head, and your whole body gets the sensation, the shockwave that surges through the body.

The whole body gets affected. Here's the picture here. If one member suffered, if one part of your body's not well, I know my wife's had some particular ailment, and it's making her feel lousy because just one part is not working like it should.

And it's the same in the church, isn't it? When there's one member that's hurting, let's rally around. Let's encourage one another. There's lots of hurting people. There's lots of heartache, loneliness, grief, loss.

But God wants this unity, this joining together. You're not alone is the truth of it, isn't it? That's why we need one another. That's why the church matters, because we need one another.

[10:43] And there's important truths here. The Lord urges us today, again, to examine ourselves. Hey, am I right? Take that heart check and say, hey, Lord, there's some things I need to sort with you today.

Examine yourself, number one. And then secondly, discern. Discern the Lord's body. See the combination, the connection, the compassion. Paul gives a warning in verse 13. He says, For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

So Paul's saying here that some people are missing out. They're asleep, may spiritually dead. A body can get dysfunction. And it sounds, if you look at these words here, weak, sickly, sleeping, in the sense spiritually dead, it sounds like it's not very healthy, isn't it, over this side here.

Weak, sickly, asleep, spiritually dead. God wants us rather, as the body, to be strong, healthy, wakeful, alive, spiritually alive.

God wants us to be a healthy body, to know that well-being. He wants his church to be strong. Let a man examine himself, and discern the Lord's body. How can we function better as a church body?

[11:58] How can we be that healthy body? Can I urge you this morning to know that you're embraced by a loving God and a compassionate Saviour.

To know Jesus today. To know Jesus Christ. To know Him. And to know that He was the one crucified. There's a song that goes, standing somewhere in the shadows, you'll find Jesus.

He's the one who always cares and understands. And it says, standing somewhere in the shadows, you'll find Him, and you'll know Him by the nail prints in His hand.

We realise this love for us. The scars that Jesus bears, He still bears them. And these scars led Thomas to fall at His feet and say in John 20, 28, My Lord and my God, as He beheld the scars, as

He beheld the nail prints, as He beheld the pierced side.

And can we be like Thomas this morning and acknowledge the scars of His love? To be thankful for how ugly and horrible it all was that yet it took such grace and love of our Lord to give Himself for us.

[13:09] Friends, but He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him. And with His stripes, we are healed.

There's an old church that has the words on a cornerstone, but we preach Christ crucified. And over time, the vines grew up on that church corner and hid some of the inscriptions so that only the words but we preach were visible.

So it took out the word crucified. You know, that's... And that's a sad thing. And ironically, it pictures that church's ministry that the pastor got focused on all kinds of other issues, about all kinds of social issues, but he neglected to preach about the crucified Lord, the crucified and risen Saviour. And we don't want to make that mistake, do we? We want to preach Christ and Him crucified. We want to know Him. Him to know His life eternally. Let's be encouraged this morning to remember the love of our Lord, His grace, the very scars of His sacrifice. And be encouraged in that this morning.