

Devotion: The Lord's Supper

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[0:00] All right, I'm glad that you're here this evening, and we are into 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Remember that 1 Corinthians can be divided into basically four categories.

The Corinthian church is shifting off the gospel, and because of that, they are having a problem with division, having a problem with depravity, having a problem with devotion, and having a problem with doctrine.

And we're in the section on devotion, and we've already talked about when the church gathers in terms of men and women, and the whole head covering thing. Now we're into chapter 11 and talking about the Lord's Supper.

And this begins in chapter 11, beginning of verse 17, and listen to what it says, because we've got to kind of get our footings here. It says this, it says, But in the following instructions, I do not commend you, because when you come together, it's not for the better, but for the worse.

For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and I believe it in part. For there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

[1:12] When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk.

What? What? Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you?

Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not. So, part of the issue is this problem of the Corinthians is that they're gathering together for the Lord's Supper.

They would have things. They would call it sometimes a love feast, sometimes agape meals. It was like a potluck, and they were all supposed to bring something and participate. But what was happening is that those who were wealthy would bring a lot, but they wouldn't wait on those who were poor and couldn't bring very much.

And so you have this issue of some people who are eating way too much, and some people are getting drunk. And it was really a faction in the church that was developing because they were not thinking about one another.

[2:18] They were not loving one another. And so the basic problem is this lack of unity and this togetherness. And so as we look at the Lord's Supper, the main teaching emphasis of chapter 11 on the Lord's Supper is that the Lord's Supper needs to be done from a place of unity where we're showing love for one another.

And I wanted to kind of take a few moments and just talk about the different kinds of unity we could have. Like, for example, we could have doctrinal unity. Doctrinal unity is where we agree doctrinally about things.

We have beliefs that are of like faith and order, if you've ever heard that terminology. But one of the things to understand about doctrine is that there is a triage of doctrine, okay?

A triage of doctrine. There is doctrine that is central and necessary. In other words, if you don't believe these things, you're not a Christian. If a church doesn't teach and believe these things, it's not a Christian church.

Let's just give maybe one or two examples. The deity of Jesus Christ. Was he human? Yes. Is he divine? Yes. 100% human, 100% divine, right?

[3:37] And that even gets us into the Trinity and speaking about that there's one God in three persons, not three manifestations. These are core doctrines that to say something different means that you're not talking about Christianity, okay?

Now, that doesn't mean that you've got to grasp those doctrines perfectly, right? And all the depth of those things. But it just means, yeah, no, I do believe that even if I don't understand it, right? Okay? So a doctrine that's central and necessary is a doctrine that separates us out from, say, like Jehovah's Witness or the Mormons, right?

Because they don't believe that Jesus is the same kind of divine that we do. The second set of doctrines would be called urgent and vital.

Urgent and vital. And what I mean by that is that these things are, these are things that you can believe differently, but they kind of make it so we can't really worship together, okay?

[4 : 44] Like, I believe you're a Christian even if you believe this is wrong. You know, even if you believe wrongly here. I still believe you're a Christian, but I just can't worship with you because what you're doing, I think, is a violation of God's Word.

I'll give you a couple examples. Presbyterians, Presbyterians, my Presbyterian brothers and sisters, they baptize their babies.

Now, I do not believe that the Scripture tells us to do that. I believe that it's a violation of Scripture, but I don't think they're going to hell because they baptize their babies, right?

But I would not be able to be a member of a church that does that because I think it's a violation of Scripture. A church that has a woman pastor, okay?

I don't think that they're, well, I'm sometimes close thinking that they might be going to hell. But by and large, they're not. But I could not worship there because I think it's a violation of Scripture, right?

[5 : 52] And it's not about, is a woman good enough? It's about, is a woman authorized? Does the Word of God authorize that, right? So you've got this core right here that if you're not a Christian, I mean, if you don't believe these things, you're not a Christian, you have the next set, like a bullseye maybe, right?

Where you can believe that and still be a Christian, but I can't worship with you, okay? I just can't do it. And then there's this last set where these are things that you would believe, I would believe, and they may be completely different, but you're still a Christian for believing it.

And you and I can still worship together. We just agree to disagree, okay? I'll give you an example. The end times. There's so many things about the end times and about how the end times flow out and how the end times would work.

I mean, I think that we're in the millennial reign. A lot of people would look at that and go like, oh, that sounds terrible. You know, and some people would be like, no, it's future. It's yet to come. It's like, you're still a Christian because you believe that.

You know, that doesn't make you not a Christian, and we can still worship in the same church. You know? I'll give you one more example, and then I'll get your question. Another example might be the idea of baptism in this way.

[7 : 10] There are some churches that it's immersion only, and then some churches will practice immersion and maybe sprinkling and maybe even pouring.

Now, I think that it should be immersion. But if you were to say, oh, I think it's sprinkling, I would not tell you, well, you can't be a member of this church. You can hold that view.

I mean, you've got to be sweetly submissive to the pastor and what the church is teaching, but that does not mean you can't be a member of this church. Does that make sense? Okay. Ms. Doty. Yes. Ah, that's a great question. Let me take that question for a second. The way to ask the question is not, does the Bible forbid something?

But the question should be is, does the Bible positively command it? If the Bible doesn't positively command it, we shouldn't do it.

[8 : 23] Because when we go that way, now that's an innocent, you had no idea, so I'm not trying to like beat on you here with this. But that question is a question that a lot of people will say, well, you know, God doesn't forbid it, and so they put clowns in the worship service, and they'll say there's no place that it says that a woman can't be a pastor, so they'll put a woman as a pastor.

I mean, there's so many things because it's the question of, well, where does God forbid it? It's like, well, that's the wrong question. The right question is, what does God positively command us to do? Because that's what we want to be doing. And some of the things that we might ask the questions of, like, you know, should our church, well, God doesn't forbid us from having our worship services on Saturday night.

Okay, but he has commanded us what we should do, right? And when we go that direction, we end up with things that are not necessarily evil and terrible, like having a worship service on a Saturday night is not evil and terrible.

It's just not what he's commanded. Let's just stick to what he's commanded. It's pretty simple. You know, it's pretty simple. And we're going to come back to that because that is the crux of this whole thing for me in teaching on this for you guys because, yeah, we'll get back to that.

[9 : 50] Okay. So there's some doctoral unity. Then we could talk about personal unity, right? And this is what I think is the core of what's going on in this particular passage. There's no personal unity among believers.

There's rifts between people. And so that means for us that as we approach the Lord's Supper, we need to look at ourselves and say, do I have a rift between me and another believer?

Do I have somebody who's upset with me? Do I have somebody that I haven't forgiven? Because if that's the case, then instead of taking the Lord's Supper, we should go make that right and then come back.

We should be practicing that proactive love. And this is primarily about people who are members of the congregation. I think it can have some extension past that.

Like if we're really close to some other Christians in another church or something like that, if it's affecting your life, you're really going to have to work on that. But does that make sense? We want to have not just doctoral unity.

[10 : 55] We want to have personal unity with people. And that was the problem for the Corinthians. And then I would say a third thing would be like church unity. And what I mean by this is that this is an ordinance of the church.

This is something given to the church to do. FCA is a great organization, but FCA has not been challenged and charged by God's word to partake of the Lord's Supper.

So when FCA does partake of the Lord's Supper, I don't know that they actually do. I'm just saying if they did, I would see that as a violation of Scripture. Because notice, I want you to look in your text. Look at verse 17. Look at verse 18. Look at verse 20, 33, and 34. Can you tell me what phrase appears in all five of those verses?

When you come together, when you come together, when you come together, when you come together, the Lord's Supper is to be done when you come together.

[12 : 16] so that's the church right and it's a local church because he's talking to the local church of the Corinthian church the expectation is that every single local church when they gather together one of the things that they should do is the Lord's Supper and so the idea that in some quarters I've had people ask me if I would go to a shut-ins home and take the Lord's Supper to them and I kind of go like well I mean I understand why that would be kind of an important thing and people would love that but like there's no command for me to do that so I'm always a little gun shy of doing that because there's no positive command doing that I would rather say you know what instead of me coming over there and they can't get out we'll get a we'll announce to the church and everybody who can come let's go to their house and let's do it because it's supposed to be something that we do when we come together because I can take it to a shut-in and they can participate in it but they're missing the vast bulk of why we're doing it it is the opportunity for us to be in unity together so that's the first half of this then 11 through 22 on this pursuing of unity do I have any questions on that before we dive into the yeah

God has commanded the Sunday service? Yes. It started in, wow, this is going to take us far afield. I'll see if I can keep it down. The first time it's commanded comes at creation, when God rests and blesses the seventh day.

Then in Israel, it's put into the old covenant as the Sabbath day, which is going to be Saturday. And then when Jesus rose from the dead, he rose on Sunday.

And every time he appeared to his disciples, he appeared to them on Sunday. Right? And then you see the example of the church, plus you see passages in Revelation and some other passages that talk about that it's the first day of the week now.

So what's happened is that this creation ordinance of a one in six, yeah, a one in six has moved from being this universal creation ordinance, like marriage and work, to the old covenant Saturday now has morphed into Sunday as a celebration of the resurrection.

[15 : 14] But we're still supposed to have this one in seven constantly. So that's, that's, and Jesus doesn't abolish the Sabbath from the old covenant, but because of his resurrection, it gets changed

into the first day of the week.

Now that's, that is so superficial and so light. And what I've said, there's mounds and mounds of things. The most important thing to me in all of that is that I think that Sunday is the Lord's day. It's the day that he rose from the dead. We should be under the preaching of the word on that Sunday. Now, whatever else we want to talk about, people talk about working or not working and all these other things. It's like, well, we're not going to deal with that.

We just, the primary thing is being under the preaching of the word on the Lord's day. Okay. Okay. You're welcome. All right. Well, let's go to the second one. And this is proclaiming Christ. And this is where the command for doing the Lord's Supper comes in. So if I could get somebody to read 23 through 34.

[16:26] Just go ahead and read the whole thing. Okay. Well, I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to me. That the Lord used to be on the same night as he was to pray to the rest.

And when he had given things, he broke it. And he said, hey, this is my body. This is broken. Do this in remembrance of me. And the same hand, he also took the call of the supper, saying, this supper's the new covenant in my blood.

This man has often been treated with him and the man has to eat. For it bothers me to eat this bread and drink this cup. And it's the plain Lord's death that he comes.

Therefore, whoever eats this bread and drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat up the bread and drink of the cup. For he eats and drinks in an unworthy manner, he eats and drinks judging himself, not to turn in the Lord's body.

[17:28] For this reason, many are weak and stupid men, and many are weak. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are hoping by the Lord that we may not be condemned with the Lord.

Therefore, my brethren, we turn together to eat and wait for one another. But if anyone is hungry, let it be with time, let's return together to judge him, and the rest of us shall be with him.

Okay. So the Lord gave a command to eat this bread and drink this cup. That comes from the Gospels. It's in the three synoptic Gospels.

And what Paul is doing is just bringing that back out. He says, for I receive from the Lord what I also deliver to you. And so here is this command that's given then, that the church ought to do this thing that is taking place that Jesus has commanded.

And I think this is fascinating. I think it's a good thing for us to talk about because a lot of people will look at that same night where Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, and there's a denomination called the Church of God, Church of God in Christ, Church of God, Missouri, Sinod, I don't know.

[18:43] Anyway, they are, how many of you know who Bill and Gloria Gaither are? Okay. You've heard that name. How many of you have ever heard the song, Because He Lives, I Can Face Tomorrow? They wrote that song.

So they're a part of the Church of God. And the Church of God has three ordinances, baptism, Lord's Supper, and feet washing. And the problem is, is that you don't see a lot of explanation at all about foot washing in any of the epistles.

But you see explanation about baptism and Lord's Supper. And so that gives us the idea that these are the ordinances. And so, then He explains what this is.

He starts talking about the bread and the cup. Now, y'all have been here long enough and heard me talk about it long enough. What are these elements? What is the bread? What does the bread represent?

His body. And specifically, what about His body? It's broken for us. Now, what does it mean that His body is broken for us? How did He take that punishment?

[19:50] Yeah, whips and the cross. Right. So when we eat the bread, we're thinking of the crucifixion and the death of Jesus. So we're eating that bread as we're eating and thinking about what it is that Christ did for us on the cross.

All right. What does the cup represent? The blood. Okay. And why is it significant about the blood? Didn't we just talk about the death?

Why do we got to repeat ourselves? What does He say here in 1 Corinthians about the cup?

The new covenant in my blood. Okay. What's the new covenant? What's the new covenant? covenant. So God has decided to interact with humans based upon a covenant. It's a particular structure. And covenant is always about somebody who's greater interacting with somebody who's lesser. Okay. The old covenant was God saying, I'm going to interact with Israel in this way through a tabernacle, through priests, through sacrifices.

[21 : 23] Right. That's the way we're going to interact. That's the relationship we're going to have. They're going to obey all my covenant. They're going to obey all my law and I will be their God and they will be my people.

If they obey, they will be blessed. If they disobey, they'll be cursed. And so the old covenant was conditional for the nation of Israel to stay in the land.

They had to obey the covenant of God and that was how, and then God was also using it as a prophecy to talk about what's to come. Well, when Jesus came, when he died upon the cross, his blood ratified a new covenant.

It's talked about in Jeremiah 31. It's talked about in Ezekiel 36. It's talked about in Hebrews 8. And this new covenant is another arrangement that God has and how he's going to interact with people. But this covenant is unconditional. This covenant, God makes promises such as, I will be their God and they will be my people.

[22 : 31] They will all know me from the least of them to the greatest. I will write my law upon their heart instead of a tablet of stone. I will remember their sins no more.

I will take out their heart of stone and put into them a heart of flesh so that they may walk in my statutes. And the blood of Jesus purchases all of those promises.

So when I become a Christian, it's as though, because the blood covers me, if you will, those promises are now mine because Jesus purchased them on the cross.

Now let me pause because that may be a new concept for some of you so I don't want to make you feel like you're drowning. So do you have questions about what I just said?

Do I need to make it more clear? Yeah. Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 36, and Hebrews 8.

[23 : 39] When the new covenant gets established, the old covenant becomes obsolete, Hebrews 8 tells us. And it doesn't mean that it's unimportant. It just means that you can't be saved by the promises of the old covenant because those aren't good promises in the sense like the new covenant, right?

Because they're conditional. They're built on you. Well, God in His grace comes and He saves us through this new covenant. So when we take the Lord's Supper and we drink the cup, we're reminding ourselves of those promises.

So think of it this way. Well, let's go on and talk about the reason for the command in verse 26. He says, For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

When you eat the bread, you are making a proclamation and it's as though you're preaching a sermon that says, Jesus came into this world, He took on flesh, He lived a perfect life, and He died on the cross for sinners.

And it's a reminder of what He did and you're nourishing your soul, you're taking in and tasting of that bread to be reminded of what He did with His body for you and it is a spiritual nourishment as you preach the gospel to yourself in that way.

[25 : 07] Then when you drink of the cup, you're refreshing your soul as you drink the juice to remind you of all of these promises that He's given to you that they're yours.

So when we take the Lord's Supper, we are proclaiming the Lord's death until He comes and we're proclaiming it to ourselves, right? You get the greatest benefit out of the Lord's Supper when you participate in the Lord's Supper in faith knowing what this all means and what it stands for because it helps to nourish your spiritual soul.

It's like sitting in here in Bible study or in a sermon, you know, when sometimes you'll listen to a sermon or Bible study and it really doesn't mean that much to you on that day because maybe it goes over your head or maybe it's something that you've studied a bunch, but then you have some days where you hear something and it's so challenging and it's so rich that you just go, wow, God is great.

That is the same thing as what should be taking place as we preach the gospel to ourselves in the Lord's Supper. I mean, maybe not feelings-wise, but the same spiritual realities happening.

God is doing good for you in that moment as you take in the Lord's Supper. I think it's one of the best things because there are times that whatever passage I'm preaching on is all about sin and it'll just rake us all over the coals and you just feel like I'm a dirty rock.

[26 : 44] I should just die now. And then here comes the Lord's Supper. He took your place and he's made promises and purchased those promises by his blood for you.

Rejoice. Be glad. Be of good cheer. Take it in. And nourish your soul upon this. It's a good thing to take the Lord's Supper.

He does give a threat, right? He gives a threat, verse 27 through 34, about people eating in an unworthy manner. So let's just talk about that for a second.

Based upon the context of 1 Corinthians 11, what do you think an unworthy manner is in Paul's estimation? Based upon chapter 11, what we've looked at so far.

Exactly. And here's why this is such an important point to me.

[27 : 51] I've had way many Christians who will show up on Lord's Supper Day and they have come by me and they've said, listen, I'm not going to take the Lord's Supper today because on the way to church today, my wife and I got into a huge argument and I just, I yelled and screamed at her and ripped at her and like, I'm just not worthy to take the Lord's Supper today.

And my thought in that moment is how sad that you're going to cut yourself off from the one thing that your soul needs the most in this moment. Because if, yes, you're a sinner, right?

But if we don't, if being unworthy means you've sinned, then nobody gets to eat. Right? And it's probably the most in this moment. That's right.

Because in that moment you need to be reminded that Jesus paid the price for your yelling at your wife. And he purchased these promises to forgive you, right? And so you need that truth over and over again.

So, an unworthy manner I think is primarily aimed at the idea of that disunity and the quarrels and those kinds of things. He goes on to say, let a person examine himself then and then so eat of the bread and drink the cup.

[29 : 06] Verse 29, for anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body. Now I think that right here discerning the body doesn't mean the body of Jesus in the physical sense but the body of Christ.

The Christians, the church. To recognize that this is about us. That we're here doing this together as a group and if we don't recognize the church as you're doing this you just think of yourself.

You're eating and drinking judgment upon yourself and that's why many are weak and ill and some have died. Now I can't really tell you exactly what he means by that except that there are some who suffered weakness and illness and death because of the way that they violated the Lord's Supper.

So it's a serious threat. It's a serious issue but it's all about do we love one another? Are we keeping grudges?

Are we keeping short accounts? He goes on to say and I think this is fascinating it's a play on words verse 31 but if we judged ourselves truly I examine myself and make sure where I am we would not be judged in kind of a negative way but when we are judged by the Lord that's a good thing we are disciplined or judged so that we may not be judged along with the world.

[30 : 42] A lot of judgment. In other words if God judges you or disciplines you he's doing that in order to change you so that you don't end up like the world falling under the final judgment.

Think about how parents discipline their children right? You spank this child or you put this child in time out or whatever it is you do in order to curb bad behavior so they don't end up doing something really terrible down the line.

That's what he's saying here is that when you judge yourself rightly you're under the Lord's judgment you know and that keeps you from this final judgment. So when you come together eat and wait for one another and if somebody's hungry let them eat at home let them eat at home so with that being said let's just do a couple of application thoughts and then we'll call it the Lord's Supper is to be something that we should do my apologies something that we should do something that we should be serious about but here's my question what kinds of things is Paul crystal clear about what we should do in the Lord's Supper and what are things that he gives no instructions about whatsoever you know that is exactly what I was thinking too because you've got some churches that will use a whole loaf some churches use the little crackers and I've

I've had some people go like well it's got to be unleavened bread and then you've got some that take the wine some that have the grape juice some that have both available some that have one cup and some will have a cup and you can either dip your cracker thing in the thing or you can eat the cracker and drink the wine I mean there's so many variations so here's the thing some of these variations I would just not go for but and I have reasons for that but here's my big point my big point is this imagine that here we are we've been doing the Lord's Supper a certain way and you've gotten used to the tradition of the way that I do it then all of a sudden somebody comes along and they do it differently now you've got a couple of options here let's chase out a couple of scenarios on one hand they just are doing it differently just to do it differently if you get bent out of shape because it's not the way that I did it you're going to be like wrong because none of that's commanded did they leave out the stuff that's commanded okay then that's a problem but there's so much that's not right now the other scenario would be what if somebody comes along and they say no actually we're going to do it every week and we're going to drink out of one cup and this is the bread you're going to use and if you don't like this then you need to repent right then you need to repent now here's what I want

I want you because of what we the question we asked a while ago the question is what does God positively command that's what we should do in the way that we carry out that command God gives us some freedom so someone can't come along and bind your conscience to one cup if that makes you sick at your stomach and if you sit there and you're like I'm not drinking out of one cup I just think that's a bad idea if you said I'm not going to participate in the Lord's supper you're not you have the freedom to do that because they're trying to bind your conscience to something that they have no business binding your conscience to now you can't be a jerk about it right you can't be a jerk about it but I do think that it's in this day and age I'll give you a good example for our church you know one of the things I've seen some churches do is that they'll have the elements laid out and they get people to stand up in the aisle and then come down forward and get the elements and go back to their seats there's nothing wrong with that but wisdom says that in our church having vast majority of people who are of a particular age it's probably not very kind to do such a thing so we just don't do that somebody were to come along and you know everybody say no that's what we want to do okay that's fine no skin off my nose the point is that we don't want to be bound to something except what

[35 : 59] God's word has told us to do and we want to do those things and so as we as we then take up the Lord's Supper knowing that's a serious thing it is a means of grace or preaching of the gospel to ourselves and we need to be careful with how we fence off the Lord's Supper and what I mean by that is I try to announce and say you need to be a Christian if you're going to participate in the Lord's Supper if you're not a Christian you shouldn't participate but I'm not going to go around and check everybody's hearts because I'm not even sure about some of you because I can't see your heart you can't see my heart but we need to give fair warning to non Christians to not participate we need to give the fair warning to examine yourself to be sure there's no disunity and I think it's good for parents to be sure that they work with their children right the worst thing in the world for me is that when church was over and the pull the cups out and

I was down in little cups up there because it was so cool that everybody gets to eat and drink in church you know and so I want to have a fine I know there's a fine line in here and we got to be careful with it because on one hand we want our children present we want them to see this we want them to hear the explanation of these things but I know some churches they immediately cover this over candles in order to pour out the remains you know like it's so sacred and magical and you know and so it gets this mystic kind of vibe to it I think it's okay bring the kids in the kitchen let them see this is just grape juice this is just a cracker but we think of it this way for these reasons so we just as we approach children we just need to be mindful if children are present how to help the parents how to think about ways to encourage them and for years we've tried to come up with things and I've never really come up with the solution but I think it's good for everybody in the church to be mindful listen if there are children present and you know we're going to have the Lord's Supper maybe it'd be a good thing for you to reach out to that parent and say hey we're going to be taking the Lord's Supper how can I help you with your son or because it is something we're commanded to do