

The Lord's Table

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[0 : 00] How many of you need reminders? Do you work off of reminders?! I remember the other day I had something that I wanted to be very sure that I took home with me.

! And so in order to be certain that it went home with me, what I did was I took my keys out of my pocket and I laid it on top of what I needed to take home.

Does anybody else stoop to things of that fundamental nature to help them kind of remember things? It was like, okay, I can't. Well, but then the story is I have on occasion walked out to the parking lot.

The door shuts behind me and my keys are inside and I am stuck. So there, you know, some things work most of the time but not all things work all the time.

We need reminders. And we are here together this morning to partake of a reminder that is something that for some of you have a long history.

[1 : 08] You have been a member of the body of Christ. You've known the Lord Jesus Christ for many years. And one of the dangers of doing something on a repetitious basis is that it has a tendency to kind of, without thought, it has a tendency to kind of slip into a place of just functional indifference.

We do it, but we really don't mean anything. We don't think much about it. And so what I'm going to do is I'm going to take a minute and I'm going to pray for the Holy Spirit to help me in preaching. And I'm going to ask that while I am praying for the Holy Spirit to help me in preaching, that you multitask. You pray that the Holy Spirit helps me in preaching as well.

But you also pray that the Holy Spirit helps you in listening. And that as a result of our attention to the Word of God through the enabling of the Spirit of God, that we walk out of here, we who know the Lord Jesus Christ, with an increased affection for Christ and also an increased affection for one another and a passion to see people come to know the Lord that we delight in and we worship. Let's pray. Let's pray. This morning, Heavenly Father, we are thankful for the privilege of prayer, to be able to come boldly before the throne of grace and to do so in a time of need.

[2 : 49] And there is no moment in the believer's life that is not marked by dependence upon your sufficiency and your power. And that is certainly true at such a time as this, as when we come to the Lord's table to take these elements, the bread and the cup, and to do so according to your instruction, obedient to you, and also to do so to remind ourselves of your death and your covenant and your return.

And I pray, Lord, that you would help me, that your Spirit would enable me to preach with clarity and passion for the Lord Jesus, and that your people would hear your words and have them make a difference in their lives and their conduct.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, later this morning, I want you to know that we are going to celebrate the Lord's table, and we are going to have our deacons come forward, and they are going to pass the bread and the cup.

And I want to welcome all of you who are here that know Christ to come to this table. I do want to begin this morning by coming with a couple words of caution, if I may.

And in saying what I will at the very outset, it's not intending or my intention is not to be off-putting, but to be clear about what we do when we come to the Lord's table and to appeal to your conscience.

[4 : 33] This fellowship, and I remember when I candidated here many years ago, one of the questions that I was actually asked in that pastoral search process was, all right, do you believe that the Lord's table is to be fenced?

And that is a terminology that has come through church history to refer to the fact that in some churches, if you are not a member of that particular church, or you're not a member in good standing of churches of the same flavor, when they have the Lord's table, you are disinvented. You're said, don't take the elements. And I explained that I believe on the basis of what we read in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, that the Lord's table is not to be fenced other than by the conscience of the individuals that come to this table and are at that service.

And so I want you to take some time and turn in your Bible, if you would, to 1 Corinthians chapter 11, and we're going to take just a couple moments to speak to a couple words of caution in relationship to these elements.

For one, I want you to understand that celebrating the Lord's table and taking the bread and the cup is actually meant to be a visible expression of faith, as well as a testimony to all who see what you are doing, that you are a believer and you have confidence in the finished work of Christ.

[6 : 01] There is a sense in which taking the bread and taking the cup is like saying, I believe Jesus died for my sins and he is my Lord and Savior. In fact, actually, if you were to take the Greek and kind of open it up, and I'm not going to delabor the issue this morning, but in verse 26, where you see that word proclaim, it says you do proclaim the Lord's death till he comes.

The Greek word there is communicating the idea that actually when you take the bread and when you take the cup, you are involved in saying publicly, verbally, with your mouth, I believe Jesus is my Savior and I trust him for my salvation.

Now, I would not be put off at all. In fact, I'm wondering if anybody has the nerve to do it, but I wouldn't be put off at all if, as you take the bread, you can say softly to yourself, I believe Jesus is my Savior and I thank you for dying for me, Lord Jesus.

I am blessed. I don't know that there is anything indicated in Scripture as to exactly what was said, but we have the idea here that it is a time where people give public testimony to their faith.

And so, if you are here, and you have never come to faith in Christ, to take that bread and take that cup and to actually, in the process, make a public announcement of your genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it's a little contradictory or it's a little dishonest, isn't it?

[7 : 35] It's like saying, yes, I know Christ, when the truth of the matter is, is you really haven't come to know him. Now, I want to make a distinction here and clarify something.

There's a difference between knowing Jesus as a historical person that at one point was here on earth and he did, you know, he was a nice guy, but that's not the same as coming to personal faith in Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Do you know what's hard about believing in Jesus in that context? It is that you cannot come to faith in Christ without, first of all, believing what Christ has to say about you as a broken, ruined, despised sinner who deserves the judgment of God for the darkness and the blackness of your heart.

Remember what Jesus said when he was dealing with the Pharisees and they were a little put out that he was celebrating, he was having dinner with sinners. And remember Jesus said, hey, listen, it's not those who are healthy that need the physician, it's those who are sick.

And until you come to realize that you're not going to get to heaven on the basis of where you grew up or how many years you went to Sunday school or the fact that you're a pretty good person, until you come to realize that you're a sinner justly condemned before a holy God, you are not going to be led by the grace of God to come and cry out and say, I need Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and I trust him because he died in my place and his blood has satisfied the judgment of God and I claim what he has done by faith for myself.

[9 : 23] And so when we come and we take the bread and we take the cup, if you're sitting out there and you've never really come to faith in Christ, I would encourage you just probably let the bread and the cup go by because to take the bread, take the cup, and not really believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is to do something that is fundamentally dishonest.

Now nobody in this congregation is ever going to say, hold it, stop. But I trust the prompting of the Spirit of God cautions you if you don't know Christ.

And before you take the bread and cup, and by the way, does anybody know how long it takes to come to faith in Christ? A heartbeat? Do you follow that? I tell you, one of the joys that I have is hearing the various testimonies of people.

By the way, in order to become a member of this congregation, one of the things you have to do is you have to actually share your testimony. And so many of God's people have different testimonies.

But at the heart of it is the reality that God, by his grace, brought you to the point of seeing your sin, and you cried out and asked Christ to be your Savior, and he heard you and has given you new life. [10:40] And so this morning, if you are here and you do not know Christ, I would appeal to you, before you take the bread and the cup, there you sit, convicted of your sin, cry out and ask Christ to save you, and knowing him as your Savior, you're welcome to the table.

There are others that are cautioned in relationship to the table. And as we look at the passage, if you would, it says there in verse 27, whoever therefore eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.

And as we look at that context, I want you to understand that actually the reason that 1 Corinthians 11 is in the Bible is because the church at Corinth was going through the motions of communion, and they were not actually doing what they thought they were doing.

In fact, Paul, earlier in the chapter, he says, hey, what you're doing is not the Lord's table. You see, part of gathering together in this love feast is having the right attitudes towards one another.

How many of you heard me say that? Everybody stop. Look over here. Over here. How many of you realize that getting along together is actually harder than you might think? I mean, here's the truth.

[12:00] The longer you're together and the more you know each other, the more challenging it is because you get to know what other people are like, and heaven help you, they get to know you.

And here's what was happening in the church at Corinth. Instead of allowing this reminder of the love of Christ to be the magnet that helped people in their attitudes towards one another, they were just going ahead and doing their own selfish, self-centered, argumentative, little belligerent attitude thing.

And Paul says, what you're doing doesn't cut it. And then, here in this verse 27 and on, he says, listen, by the way, you can be taking communion in an unworthy manner.

And so, if you're here this morning, and really you are honest with yourself, and you are sitting there with some really negative, ungodly, unkind, unforgiving attitudes towards other believers, then before you take the elements, what I would appeal to you is that you take some time to quietly confess the hardness and stubbornness of your heart and ask him to cleanse you of that.

And by the way, after communion, after you've said, I'm committed to Christ, I'm going to do what's right, probably one of the things that you should do is as you're walking out, you should say, nobody has a problem with anybody, but I'm just kind of using this as a reference.

[13:25] You follow me? So, you ought to say to someone, hey, can we talk just a little bit? Would you forgive me for having such a bad attitude towards you? And by the way, if we are together long enough, we do know when attitudes are out there.

Am I right? Everybody, we're right? Deal with it. So, we find here that the Lord intends for us to take these elements, but he also intends for us who are believers to come to grips with attitudes and to confess and forsake them and make things right.

So, as we read on in this passage in 1 Corinthians, we see that it's really Christ's intention that the believer is to examine his heart and attitude and repent and then take the elements.

As a side note, I must confess that there was a time in my life where I thought that I kind of had attained to this righteous state where I was in a superior spiritual place, at least because I didn't take communion.

Do you follow that? I have a problem with, you know, Pastor Saul Green, who is my dear, dear friend, and he knows I'm just using this as an illustration. And because I have a problem with Pastor Saul Green, and it's really all his problem, instead of confessing and forsaking it, I'm going to be righteous and not take communion.

[14:54] How many of you understand that? Stupid. No, I'm sorry. That's not spiritual. Okay. Ungodly, Tim.

That's a little better. Confess and forsake and stop being that way, full of yourself. And so, if you're sitting here, and as you are praying and saying, all right, Lord, I need you to be talking to me about the heart that I have, and you are convicted that you have a wrong attitude, confess and forsake it. So, you can take the elements. Well, there's another piece that I want us to pay attention to this morning, and you're there in 1 Corinthians 11, verse 24 through 26.

Let me just kind of touch on it. It says, And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body, which is for you. And then in 25, after the same manner, he also took the cup after

supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. In 26, For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

[16:04] I want to say another thing that I want you to recognize, that when we take the Lord's table, we understand this to be true. The Lord's table declares the gospel.

The Lord's table declares the gospel. And as you take these elements, one of the things that I want to have happen is that the sweetness of the gospel just kind of resonates in your heart.

It makes a difference. By the way, when you are struck by the wonder and the undeserved blessing of Christ loving you unconditionally as he has and is doing and will forever, can that control the way you think and behave?

And what's the answer? Yes. In fact, if your behavior does not reflect the sweetness of the gospel, the truth of the matter is, is A, follow me, you're not saved, or B, you've taken your eyes off of the blessing of what he has done in saving you.

And so when we take the elements, I want you to understand that the Lord's table is a summary of the essential truths of the gospel. Let me touch on a couple of those as we think about what we mean when we say that the Lord's table declares the gospel.

[17:31] For one, as we take the bread and the cup, one of the things that we remind ourselves of is the fact that sin brings death. Sin brings death. As we take the bread, and you look at that passage in verse 24, Paul wrote this, he says he broke it, talking about the bread, and he said, this is my body, which is for you.

And as we take the elements, one of the things that we're doing is reminding ourselves that Jesus died, and we understand that Jesus did not die for his own sins.

Why did Jesus die? Why did Jesus die? Over in Romans 6, verse 23, it says that the wages of sin are death.

But then in that same very verse, it says this, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. And we understand that Jesus died in our place, he died our death, and he satisfied God's judgment against our sins.

And beloved, for you to consciously and deliberately ponder that and not have your heart affected by that is to indict yourself as having become a little cold to what Christ has done for you.

[18:57] Does that make sense? I have to confess that I was out having breakfast with an individual, and I happened to look over in a booth, and here is a husband with his wife eating breakfast.

Now, that's a nice thing, isn't it? I mean, husbands and wives have breakfast together. But I noticed that the entire time that I was sitting there, guess what he was doing? He had purchased a newspaper.

And what was he doing with the newspaper? He had it up. I mean, you know, how many of you understand? I mean, some of you are electronically inclined, and it's a long time since you actually read a newspaper, but a newspaper is a big honking piece of paper, and when you open it up, it covers pretty much the whole table, and she couldn't see him, and he couldn't see her, and the sweetness of them having breakfast together was lost in the news.

You follow that? And I thought to myself, a lot of love there. And so, for you, to take that bread and to take that cup and not consciously and deliberately stop and realize, Jesus did this for me, and not have that make a difference, tells me there's a disconnect in your heart.

And what is the cure for a disconnect? Does anybody have an idea? The cure is, A, go ahead and thumb your nose at the Holy Spirit and tell him to bring it on.

[20:31] Or to say, I have to confess that my heart is not where it needs to be. Would you graciously and kindly deal with my heart to renew and rekindle my affections for you?

Of those two, which makes better sense? Help me. A or B? Okay? And I would appeal to you that this morning, if you're sitting there and you say, well, well, communion again, yeah.

I mean, I thought it was going to be in John. You know, hey, Lord, truth of the matter is there's something wrong with my first love and I need you to do something for me.

The Bible tells me that he lived a sinless life and he died and he died for me. The Bible also tells me that God sent his son actually to be our substitute. As we were singing this morning and I don't know about you, but I'm always tracking the words and kind of cross-referencing them.

Do you follow what I'm saying? I'm thinking about different Bible passages that connect with the songs that we are singing. And I thought about the father sending his son down here to the earth to die in my place.

[22 : 02] And it tells us that Jesus came to be our substitute. The penalty for sin had to be paid and God sent his son to pay it for you.

Well, there's another thing that I want you to recognize and look if you will there in verse 25. I want you to understand that not only does he pay the price for our sins, but also he saves to the uttermost.

There in verse 25 it says, in the same manner he took the cup after supper saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink and in remembrance of me.

This is a very interesting reference because the new covenant is a promise about the certainty of my salvation. So, how many of you sometimes, you know, when you really think about it, I mean, are you kind of overwhelmed with the fact that you don't deserve to be loved by an absolutely sinless God who is completely holy?

I mean, how many of you think, yeah, I got it. I deserve it. No, no, no. Anytime we think about the reality of the holiness of God, we are absolutely humbled and struck by His glory and His supremacy and we say, and why would you love me?

[23 : 27] No good reason. But the new covenant speaks to the unchangeable nature of the love of Christ for us.

In order to think about the new covenant, I'm just going to refer to it in broad terms, I'll remind you that when God made a covenant with the nation of Israel on Mount Sinai, it was a conditional covenant.

He said, you do this, you do this, you do this, you do this, and I'll do that. It's a little bit like car payments. How many of you understand that when you sign a car payment, it's like, you can drive this car so long as you make the payments, right?

Or you can live in that address so long as you make your payments. And what happens when you stop making payments on the car or the home? What happens? You wake up in the morning and your car's not there.

Or your dog is barking at three o'clock and you look out the window and somebody is hooking it up to take it away. Why? Because you didn't keep your part of the bargain. the covenant on Mount Sinai was conditional.

[24 : 37] You do your part, I'll do my part, and God says that you never succeeded. And then he made the unconditional covenant that was referred to in Jeremiah and also in Ezekiel, and he makes it clear that he alone is the only one engaged in satisfying the new covenant.

I will love you freely. I will love you independent of your behavior and your performance. One of the things that I love about that book, Gospel, by Platt, help me, Greer, he says, you know, there's nothing you can do that will ever cause Jesus to love you anymore.

and there's nothing you can do that will ever cause Jesus to love you any less. And as we look at this little statement there, it says that you remember this is the cup of the new covenant.

It reminds me of the unconditional, unchangeable love of Christ for me, not dependent upon what I have ever done or will ever do, but dependent upon his promise and his character.

I want you to recognize something else stands out as we look at this passage and it's worthy of our attention. As you follow along in verse 27 through 32, there is a clear call to live in the light of his salvation.

[26 : 05] You see, we who know Christ have been saved actually to be kind of demonstrators of his unbelievable ability to transform human life.

last week, I was in a situation where I was listening to some people share kind of in broad terms their testimony. And they were talking about the fact that the thing that had led them to Christ was seeing what God had done in someone else's life.

Do you follow that? The truth of the matter is that if you have been saved, one of the reasons you've been saved is so that that life-transforming power would be manifested to other people and it would end up being something that is magnetic to draw people and say, you know what, I'm not sure what happened in his life or in her life, but I need that to happen for me.

How many of you remember the story of the demoniac? I mean, here was a guy whose life was messed up big time, remember? He was in the tombs cutting himself with stones and by the way,

he was not appreciated by his immediate context and culture.

Nobody liked him. Not only that, but everybody was terrified of him. and after he was healed, the demons cast out and he was saved, remember?

[27 : 33] He kind of remembered that nobody liked him and so he said, Jesus, can I come with you? And Jesus said, no, no, no, go back to town and let them see what I've done for you. And as a result of this ex-demoniac whose life was absolutely previously trashed, when Jesus came back around, people were standing all over the place saying, hey, we need you, we want to hear who you are and what you have to do because we want you to do for us, in essence, what you have done for the demoniac.

And so we who have been saved are called to live in the light of his salvation and I want you to understand that this morning. You see, it wasn't just for fire insurance that he saved Tim Kenoyer or saved you, he saved me also to be an illustration of his grace.

And so I want to encourage you this morning as you think about when you take these elements, number one, I remind myself that Jesus died for me and he died as my substitute and he died to help me be different and he died to help me be an example to other people and he's coming back. He's coming back. I have a little dog about this big, well, whatever, 12 pounds and I don't understand doggies, I mean, I'm not into dog but you know what, that dog knows when I drive in, just the tires on the driveway and the dog races to the door and then goes ballistic.

You know? And my wife opens the door and that dog just comes zipping out there and you know, all excited. So what are you like at the thought of Jesus coming back?

[29 : 32] Huh? Does it make a difference to you or not? I'm thinking about it. I'm looking forward to it and by the way, I'm not just looking forward to it when things are real bad.

I'm looking forward to it because it will be the best that I've ever had. It will be the joy of my eternity. It will be the fulfillment of my longings.

It will be the thing that is the capstone of my ambition and my affections. It will be the day when I see him face to face and as the psalmist says and I will be satisfied.

So beloved, this morning and I ask the deacons to come at this time. As we come to this table, I want you who know the Lord Jesus to think with me about what you are doing and to consciously and deliberately appeal to the Holy Spirit to help you take these elements in such a fashion that Christ Jesus is honored, that the Holy Spirit is pleased with your worship.

and before we actually come to the elements, we're going to do two things. For one, I'm going to pray and you join me asking that the Spirit of God would prompt your heart to think clearly and humbly if there's sin you need to confess and forsake.

[31 : 10] And then number two, we are going to sing together as we sing our way through the elements. How's that? Did you hear me say that? Sing our way through the elements.

Let's pray. Our gracious Father, this morning we are thankful that you in your infinite mercy and kindness planned for our salvation before the foundation of the world and you set your affection upon us and you willingly sent your Son to be the sacrifice for our sin.

And this morning as we gather at this table and we look forward to sharing in the bread and the cup, we ask for your Spirit's help that we may do so in a manner that honorably and affectionately reflects favorably upon the name and the work of Christ.

We confess how easy it is for our hearts to be cold and indifferent, to become calloused by the repetitious nature of our sin. And we would plead with you that this morning by your grace you would convict us and draw us to a place of humility and genuine brokenness that sin would not have dominion in us and that we would take these elements with a clear conscience that Christ would be adored and worshipped here among us as He is in heaven.

And that's our prayer. Amen. Amen. Sing together.

[33 : 16] Amen. Behold the Lamb who bears our sins away slain for us Thank you for the reminder.

And we remember the promised day that all who come in Did I forget? Go ahead.

I see. So we share in this bread of life and we drink of His sacrifice as a sign of our bond and peace under the table of the King.

Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[35 : 23] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Savior Jesus Christ, torn for you, eat and remember the wounds that heal the death that brings us life, paid the price for like us one.

Amen. Amen. And when he'd given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[37 : 55] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.

[41 : 35] Amen. Amen. Amen. A blood that cleanses every stain of sin shed for you.

Drink and remember He drank that cup that all may enter in to receive the light of God.

The same man also he took the cup after supper, saying, Amen. This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

And so with thankfulness and faith we rise to respond And to remember our call to follow in the steps of Christ As his body here on earth As we share in his suffering And reclaim Christ will come again And will join in the feast of heaven

Around the table of the King Join me as we pray And then we will sing once more Gracious God and Father Our hearts rejoice when we stop and realize In a small way The significance of your love and your mercy We're overwhelmed when we stop and think that You who are the creator Sovereign Lord of this universe Would willingly send your son to die in our place And to grant us salvation Not on the basis of our merit or our works But on the basis of your grace

[44 : 36] And the richness of your heart We are debtors Justly and righteously You have reason to expect Holiness and godliness from us And as we have taken the bread and the cup And we've reminded ourselves Of the sacrifice Of Christ We pray that these things would Stir our resolve to live holy lives Humble Generous Kind Forgiving That the unbelieving world Seeing Genuine difference in us Would be drawn to ask us a reason For the hope we have in Christ And we glory in you Amen Amen

Amen Thank you.