

Bible Truths About Communion

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[0:00] After that, after we've taken the Lord's table, we are also going to enjoy the privilege of watching three people who by their confession of faith have desired also to be baptized in obedience to the scriptures.

! And we are going to sing in between that. So this is different. For some of you who remember that service orders are always supposed to be exactly the same and any variance has to be approved by someone other than Pastor Knoyer.

Trust me, it's going to be different. And so if I get marginally lost somewhere in the midst, just bump me back on stage and say, you ain't done yet. But we'll get it all done. And we are going to enjoy the privilege of studying the scriptures and then seeing people practically expressing their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want you to turn your Bibles this morning to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. And as you look at this text, I want you to understand that what we are engaged in here this morning is something that flows directly out of the scriptures.

One of the characteristics of our faith is that it rests upon the Word of God. Nothing more, nothing less. There are other things that may influence other faiths and religions, but we believe principally in the authority of the Word of God to instruct us and direct us.

[1:16] So, when we say, here's what communion is, or here's what baptism is, the undeniable truth is you should be able to track it back to the scriptures and say, oh, I see why we do that, and it's in the Bible.

It's no accident that in the process of preaching, I will recite various passages of scripture. And as we look at a text, and we are trying to understand, so how does this fit or how does this apply, the best comment on scripture is, guess what?

Other scripture. And so, you are going to find that on occasion we are going to look at a particular passage, but then to gain understanding, we'll move to others and use those cross-references, that's the way we would title them, those cross-references to add some understanding to us.

Now, I want you to look at this passage, and we're going to study what we engage in today. Let me read, if I may, for you. There in verse 23, we're going to carry from 23 down to 26, and it says, For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night that he was betrayed, took bread.

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. And I would encourage you, if you don't have this underlined in your Bible, you may want to just kind of jot a little note underneath and use it as one of those little reference points so that when any question comes up about what communion is, you can go to the passage over in 1 Corinthians 11.

[2:49] He says here, You do this in remembrance of me. And verse 25, Let me back up and remind you again, when we think about what we believe, the principal source, the exclusive source of final authority is what?

It is the Word of God. And so we can look here in the Bible and see explicitly what it means to come to the Lord's table. Let me deal with a couple principles that I want you to recognize from this passage.

First of all, what we engage in today is a memorial. It is not a sacrifice. It is a memorial. It is not a sacrifice. If you look at the recurring word that is used in verse 24 and again in 25, you'll remind yourself that Paul says this, and he says it on the basis of what Jesus had instituted in the Last Supper in the upper room.

He says this. He says, Do this in remembrance of me. And when we take communion, I want you to understand that we are not reenacting Christ's death. We are not engaging in a fresh sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are simply reminding ourselves of what he did for us when he died in our place on Calvary some 2,000 years ago. We're remembering his death.

[4:24] We're remembering his sacrifice. We are not reliving it. We are not recreating it. And in no way are we reengaging or reenacting what took place at a specific point in history and was at that point satisfactory in the eyes of a holy God.

In the same way, you can think back in the Old Testament and recognize that from year to year, when the nation of Israel practiced Passover, they were not going back through the Exodus. What were they doing? They were remembering what God had done on that particular night. And if you were to go back in your Bible, don't need to at this point, but if you go back in your Bible, you'll remember that in that very same context of explaining what the Passover was going to be specifically, Moses is giving instruction by God, and he says, Listen, later on in a further time when your children are going through this process of taking the Passover with you, they're going to say, what does this mean?

And then you will get an opportunity to instruct them in what God did in that day when he delivered you from the iron furnace from Egypt and the captivity that you were involved in.

The Passover was a one-time event that the nation of Israel was reminded about on a regular basis, annually in particular, and when they practiced the Passover, they were just remembering what God had done.

[5:57] They weren't reliving the incident. And so I want you to understand that as we look at this passage, we are remembering the fact of Christ's death and recognize that it was a once-for-all event at a moment in time.

The idea that Jesus would need to die again and again and again for our various sins that we've continued to practice does not match up with Scripture.

And I understand the thought process behind that. I mean, so I sinned today. And if I were to ask you, how many of you have struggled with sin in the last week, there would be none of us here that would be exempt.

We all have sinned. Over in 1 John 1, it says, if any man says he has no sin, what? He's messing with himself. We're deceiving ourselves at what the Scripture says.

All of us struggle with ongoing sin. So what happens to all that ongoing sin? Does Jesus have to die in a fresh way to accommodate those sins that I've committed, that you've committed, that everybody else has committed?

[7:02] I want you to understand that such teaching flies in the face of the Scriptures. Number one, because of Christ's own testimony. When Jesus died on the cross, the very last thing he said before he passed away was, does anybody know?

Tetelestai, or it is finished. What was he talking about? He was talking about the fact that the plan of redemption and his sacrifice as substitution for all mankind's sins had been accomplished and the work was done.

Think just for a moment back there to the context, and you recognize that he says, this is my body, this is my blood, which is for you.

Now, I want you to recognize, number one, Christ's testimony, but secondly, the logic of the Scriptures. If Christ is infinitely holy because he is divine, it makes sense that he would satisfy the infinite penalty that all of our sins create for all of time, right?

One person dies and covers the consequences of one person's sins. How many of you understand you have two choices for how you deal with sin in your life? I want you to think with me about this.

[8:21] You may accept the finished work of Christ who paid the penalty for your sins, or you may opt for plan B, which is the infinite penalty of your sin can be accommodated by your infinite suffering in hell forever to pay and satisfy the debt against God's holiness.

Choices are there to be made. What is the consequence of refusing Christ's choice? What is it? It is eternal condemnation. Christ, infinitely God and infinitely man, completely man, died for us, and his death satisfied the entire weight of all of our sins.

Furthermore, I want you to recognize that the idea that Christ has to be freshly sacrificed flies in the face of the biblical evidence. And let me have you look, if you will. You're in 1 Corinthians. Just turn towards the back of the book.

Go to Hebrews, and we're going to look at Hebrews chapter 9. Hebrews chapter 9, beginning in verse 12.

Follow with me if you will. He entered once for all, and mark that little once. He entered once for all into the holy place, not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

[9:48] How many times did he plan or did he make sacrifice for my sins or your sins, or the sins of the apostles or the sins of the New Testament church? How many times did he do it? One single time.

Look, if you will, also at verse 26 and 28 in chapter 9. 26 says this, verse 25, if I may.

Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly as the high priest enters the holy place every year with the blood not his own. And what the author of this passage is referring to is the fact that in the Old Testament, the high priest made atonement for the sins of the people, and he did it how often? Year after year after year after year. He would go in, and on an annual basis, he would first of all make sacrifice for his own sins, and then he would make atonement for the sins of the people. Jesus did not have to make atonement for his own sins, and he atoned once for all for the sins of every one of us for all of time. It says there in verse 26, For then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world.

[10:59] But as it is, he has appeared, and again, we see that little word how often? Once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

And then look at verse 28. So Christ, having been offered once for all to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. Now, by the way, when you see a particular word over and over again in Scripture, what is it a signal of? Now, most of us here have been students. Some of us have been better students than others, but we've been students.

And when the teacher repeats a particular part over and over again, what does even the half-baked student do? That was me.

You circle it. You underline it. You grab your highlighter, and you draw little notes to it. Am I right? Why do you do that? You think it has significance, and it will appear on the test.

[12:03] Now, we're not going to have a test, but I want you to get this clear in your mind. The Scriptures itself make it clear that Christ's sacrifice was a once-for-all event, and His death on the cross satisfied the infinite penalty of all of our sins for all of time.

I want you to look also, if you would, at Hebrews 10, verse 10, and then we're going to mark verse 12. And by that will, talking about the plan of God, et cetera, in salvation, by that will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.

Now, underline it again. Let's hear it said, how many times? Once for all. And then in verse 12. But when Christ had offered for all time a, what's the word now?

Single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Father. Hey, when you sit down, what's the deal? The job's done. How many of you have been helping your wife with dishes and walked out early and went in and watched TV?

It's not a good career choice. Okay? You sit down when everything's done. And so, what I want you to understand as we work our way through this passage this morning is that what we engage in, when we come to this table and we take that bread and we take that cup, we are reminding ourselves of what Jesus has done.

[13:29] We are not giving Jesus an opportunity to do it again for us. Because He has finished His work and the debt has been paid.

Whether you believe it or not, it's a fact. And by the way, the reason the Bible says it over and over and over again is because our natural mind kind of struggles with believing it to be true.

God knowing our frailty, He makes it clear. Well, we recognize it's a memorial, not a sacrifice. I want you to understand, going back to 1 Corinthians chapter 11, that it's a testimony of gospel salvation. When we take the bread and when we take the cup, one of the things that we're doing is we're reminding ourselves of the core truths of our conversion, our salvation. Every time that we engage in the Lord's table, there is a sense in which we are going over the basic truths of the gospel. Do you understand that? Now, I want you to recognize that because when we come to this table, it's a reminder to us of what Jesus has done for us and the absolute necessity we had for Him dying on the cross for us.

[14:39] Let's look at a couple things in relationship to that. Looking at the text itself, it says, What was He talking about?

Was He actually talking about the bread becoming His body? No. No. He was talking symbolically of the fact that He was going to die in place of us.

One of the privileges that I have when I do the funeral of a believer is I have the privilege of sharing the gospel, and in the context of a believer going to be with the Lord Jesus, I have the joy of saying, Jesus died this person's death.

Now, what does that mean? It means that while this person has died in a physical sense, Jesus died in their place and satisfied the judgment of a holy God against their sins, and Jesus suffered and paid the price.

This person is not dying the kind of death that they would have died had they died without faith and not believing in Christ. So as you look at the passage here, I want you to recognize that we are reminding ourselves that Jesus died, and that we are sinners and justly condemned to die for our sins.

[16:08] So when we take the bread and we take the cup, one of the things that we should be reminding ourselves of is that, hey, listen, I did deserve to die. I do deserve to die for my sins. And yet, the sweetness of Scripture tells us Christ died in our place and for our sins.

Turn over just for a moment to 2 Corinthians chapter 5, and mark what it says in verse 21. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21. For our sakes He made Him sin who knew no sin, that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

What's that saying? Is that saying that Christ Jesus became a sinner? That is not what it's saying. What it is saying is that Christ was treated as a sinner in my place and in your place, and God has treated me as righteous because of what Christ Jesus did for me.

Third thing that I want us to see here in the passage here is that our coming to this table is a public witness of salvation. Look at verse 26.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. You proclaim. In the King James, I think it says, you show forth.

[17:33] And if you were to kind of work your way back into the Greek, one of the things that you would find out is that it talks about actually verbalizing your faith and your confidence in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

There is a sense in which, and I would not discourage you ever from doing this, as you take the bread and as you take the cup, it would be entirely appropriate for you as you hold those elements and as you're ready to say it, I believe Jesus died for me.

This bread reminds me Jesus died for me. This cup reminds me Jesus died for me. Now, I don't want to suggest that those who are getting extra points in heaven should do that.

You know, there's not five extra points for verbalizing this Sunday morning, yes, Jesus died for me. But what would keep us from saying Jesus died for me? Here's what I would guess.

A, our heart just really doesn't connect with that truth and we're marginally indifferent to it. That's one. Or another thing would be, we're a little concerned that somebody else might think we're a little over the top in being so verbal about it.

[18:44] Agreed? No. There's nothing wrong with saying, I believe Jesus died for me and saying it out loud and making it part of your public testimony as you take the elements.

So when you look at that little statement, I want you to understand that when we take the bread and we take the cup, we are making a personal announcement of our faith in the finished work of Christ.

We're bearing public testimony to the fact that Jesus died in our place and we have complete confidence in His finished work. We believe that He has satisfied the judgment of a holy God against us and we recognize what it says in Romans chapter 8 verse 1.

And I love reciting this. It says, There is now therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. Have you gotten tired of thinking about the fact that you are no longer condemned before a holy God?

I trust not. Back in 1970, June 27th, I got married. And I can tell you, I was thinking about this earlier in this week and I was thinking about the moment when the doors of that church, the back doors, a little bit like ours here, they swung open and I saw Judith in her white gown standing, actually standing to the side because her father was there with her, but that's all I saw was my wife.

[20:09] She wasn't my wife yet. And she started walking that stately stride, you know, brides are supposed to not kind of hobble down. They walk with that kind of, you know how it is. And I was, oh, come on.

And the closer she got, I began to tear up. And Judith will tell you that that's the first time she'd ever seen me cry and she was a little unnerved by that. She thought, what have I gotten myself into? Well, she survived. But you know what? On an annual basis, Judith and I like to remember the blessing of our marriage. But that's not all.

We enjoy reminding one another of the blessing. I say to her on a regular basis, thank you so much for marrying me. Ask her. I say it regularly. And the last thing, I've told you this many times, when we get ready to shut it down for the night and we go into the lie down in our bed and the lights are off and she goes to sleep like this.

I've got to get right on top of the task. And so, you know, she gets settled in. And Judith, I love you because if I let it go a little longer than four or five breaths, I began hearing these soft noises from over there.

[21:18] And I'm pretty much about getting this job done. And so I kind of nudged. I was sleeping. I said, well, you can't go to sleep without saying, I love you too. We remind each other of the blessing of our relationship.

Agreed? And to come to this table and not come with thanksgiving, to come to this table with a lack of affection and passion for the Lord Jesus is either a signal that you don't know him or you've lost your first love.

This is an opportunity to have your affections for the Lord Jesus refreshed and encouraged. to say, Jesus, thank you for loving me.

Jesus, thank you for dying for me. Jesus, thank you for never giving up on me. Jesus, thank you that someday when I slip from this veil of sorrow and heartache, I am going to see you face to face. And when you take that bread and you take that cup, your heart should just kind of warm up within you and you should be moved with affection at the thought that God would send his son to die for you.

[22:44] And he has finished the work of salvation. And that's what we celebrate this morning. So let me say practically, as I close, that if you're here this morning as a believer, I want to encourage you to come to this table.

Now, the Scriptures say that we should not come carelessly, and if there's unconfessed sin, and by the way, Tim Kenoyer is not the one who takes your confession. Do you understand that? It says if we confess our sins, he, and it's not little subtext, Tim, he is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

So who do we confess our sins to if as you sit there this morning, the Spirit of God says, there's something you need to deal with? You talk to God. I've got some sins I need to confess, and I want to come to this table with a clear conscience.

And so let's take a little bit of time here in just a moment to pray and say, God, give me a right heart. I want to confess the issues you've brought to my mind. If you're here today and do not know Christ, let me encourage you that since taking these elements is in some ways a public testimony, it's like saying, yeah, I'm a Christian.

Don't say it if it's not true. Let the elements pass. On the other hand, one of the things that you may do as you're sitting right where you are, you might be saying right now, I recognize that I need Christ as my personal Savior.

[24:08] You don't have to come to the front of this church to have salvation. What it says in the Scriptures is, whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord, what? Shall be saved. You can be saved right where you are and take the elements as a new believer trusting in Him alone for your salvation.

Before the men come, let's just spend a moment quietly before the Lord in prayer, asking that what we do at this time is come with a clear conscience and a delight in the Lord Jesus Christ as we take these elements in worship.