

# 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you are looking in a pew Bible, page 958, 1 Corinthians 11, 17 to 34, Paul's teaching on the Lord's Supper.

Let us read together.

But in the following instructions, I do not commend you, because when you come together, it is 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. 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? Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?

[ 1 : 12 ] 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.

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night when 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. In the same way also, He took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.

Let a person examine himself then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

[ 2 : 19 ] That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for judgment. About the other things, I will give directions when I come.

Well, this morning we're considering the Lord's Supper. On the surface, it may seem like a fairly straightforward church topic, not quite as controversial as last week's passage on head coverings, or the next three chapters on spiritual gifts, including prophecy and speaking in tongues.

But at many points in church history, the Lord's Supper has been a matter of intense controversy. Churches have debated and divided over such questions as these.

How often should we celebrate the Lord's Supper? Daily? Weekly? Monthly? Quarterly? Once a year? How should we understand the relationship between the bread and wine, or grape juice, and the body and blood of Christ?

[ 3 : 32 ] Do they actually become the body and blood of Christ? Are they just symbolic reminders, or is it something in between? Who should receive the Lord's Supper?

Another question. Only the members of a particular church, all baptized believers, only those who've confessed their sins. What about believers who keep on sinning? Some of you may know that Jonathan Edwards was thrown out of his church where he had been the pastor because of a controversy over who should and who shouldn't receive communion.

Now, despite the many controversies surrounding the Lord's Supper in church history, it's still one of the most distinctive and universal Christian practices, along with baptism.

Every Christian church, except for the Quakers and the Salvation Army, celebrates the Lord's Supper in one form or other. And if you think about it, it's sort of unusual.

If you're not a Christian, or if you weren't raised going to church, can you remember the first time that you observed a communion service or encountered a group of Christians who are eating bread and drinking wine or juice that represented for them the body and blood of Jesus, who was crucified 2,000 years ago?

[ 4 : 50 ] You might have... I mean, maybe you thought, that seems really weird. It's almost grotesque. In the ancient Roman Empire, when Christianity was spreading and Christians were persecuted and the church had to meet in secret, some people started spreading rumors completely with no factual basis that Christians were cannibals, eating human flesh and drinking human blood.

The rumors were completely false, but you might understand how when Christians couldn't publicly defend themselves, the rumors kept on spreading. And yet, despite the rumors and the weirdness on the outside, and despite the controversies on the inside, Christians have continued to gather and celebrate and even treasure and eagerly anticipate the Lord's Supper, week by week, month by month, year by year.

So, this morning we want to look at the Lord's Supper. What's it all about? Why does it matter so much? How can we approach it rightly? This is the longest passage in the New Testament that gives teaching on this topic, and I want to look at it under three headings.

First, the problem in Corinth, verse 17 to 22. Second, the pattern from Christ, verse 23 to 26. And third, practical applications. Now, unlike my last sermon, the third point is not the shortest, and the first point is not the longest.

Anyway, all right, going on. First, we're just going to plow ahead. The problem in Corinth, verse 17 to 22. Now, in Paul's mind, this was a pretty serious problem that was going on. If you look back at verse 2 of this chapter, Paul said, I commend you or I praise you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you.

[ 6 : 33 ] Verse 17, he says, though, in the following instructions, I do not commend you. Verse 22, shall I commend you in this? No, I will not commend you.

Paul wasn't happy. He said, when you get together, it's not for the better, it's for the worse. So, what was going on? Well, verse 18 says, when you come together, there were divisions.

Paul already expressed his dismay over divisions in the church. Chapters 1 through 4, some divisions focus around specific leaders. Here, the divisions seem to focus around class and social status.

We'll see that in a minute. Now, verse 19 might seem a bit confusing. What does Paul mean by that? I think he means the divisions aren't good in themselves, but they're also part of God's plan to show who truly belongs to him, who is genuine and who's not.

But verses 20 and 21 actually show us some of what was going on. Paul says, when you come together, it's not the Lord's Supper that you eat. Each one goes ahead with his own meal.

[ 7 : 43 ] One goes hungry. Another gets drunk. Now, how does that make any sense? What was going on? Four things, context, that will help us understand. First, the early church normally met in the homes of believers.

There were no dedicated church buildings for at least two or three hundred years. And mostly in the houses of wealthier believers who had larger houses so they could accommodate more people.

Second, when the early church gathered, they regularly shared meals together. We see this in Acts, where it says the believers gathered to break bread together.

This was also typical of religious societies and social clubs in the ancient world. You'd often gather in the evening at somebody's house, eat a meal, perhaps sing a hymn or share a toast in honor of the God you are worshiping, perhaps listen to a speaker and engage in conversation long into the night.

Early Christian church meetings weren't far from that. But when Christians gathered together, they shared what we know as what we call the Lord's Supper, eating bread and drinking from a cup, remembering Jesus' body and blood and His death on the cross as part...but it was part of a larger fellowship meal.

[ 9 : 01 ] So, that's part of what's going on here. So, third factor, the dining room of a typical Roman house was too small to fit everyone.

Normally, they would have three couches on three walls. It was called a triclinium, a room with three walls, and there would be about nine people who could fit in there, maybe 15 or 20 in a big, big house could fit in the dining room.

Most people would be out in what they called the atrium or the courtyard. That could fit maybe 30 to 50 people. It was, you know, not as comfortable. There weren't all these comfortable couches to recline on, but that's where most people would be.

And now, here is the most important factor. At a typical dinner party in the ancient world, the host would treat people differently based on their social status and their relationship to the host.

So, typically, if you were a well-to-do host in Corinth, public official in town perhaps, you might invite your other friends from City Hall who also happen to be Christians, and you'd seat them in the dining room on the nice couches.

[10:12] And the other people, the day laborers, the slaves, the freedmen, would stand outside in the courtyard. Maybe people who you didn't know so well think, well, okay, I don't know who they are.

It was sort of like most airplanes today. There was first class where you get a full gourmet meal, a comfortable seat, and you're weighted on hand and foot, and there's coach, where you're stuffed in there, and you get peanuts or pretzels, and one cup of soda on the three-hour flight.

One Roman writer described a dinner party as follows. The best dishes were set in front of the host and a select few, and cheap scraps of food before the rest of the company. He had even put the wine into tiny little flasks divided into three categories.

One lot was intended for himself and for us. He was one of the privileged folks. Another for his lesser friends, and the third for his and our freedmen, that is, former slaves.

And this was very common. It was the expected pattern in that society. As a host, you would treat people differently based on their relationship to you and their status in society. And when the Corinthian church gathered together, it seems a similar pattern prevailed.

[11:31] Perhaps the privileged ones were invited into the dining room. The poor Christians were kept outside in the courtyard. Perhaps the privileged folks who had more flexible schedules arrived earlier, ate the best food first, and by the time the poor people got off work at the end of the day, because they had longer work hours, there was hardly any food left over for them.

And that would make sense of why Paul says in verse 21, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and why he tells them in verse 33, wait for each other. Although that verse could also mean simply share with one another.

Now, Paul was absolutely outraged. As you can see in verse 22, do you despise the church of God and humiliate or dishonor those who have nothing?

What shall I say to you? So, this was the problem in the Corinthian church. When they gathered to share meals and the Lord's Supper, the privileged Christians were somehow dishonoring the poor Christians.

Now, before we go on to the second section, let me make two brief asides. Number one, Paul assumes that the church is called to be distinct from the surrounding world, the culture in which we live in.

[12:51] The behavior that ticked Paul off was not unusual. It was normal in broader Corinthian society. But Paul's assumption is the church is called to live by a different standard.

It's countable to reflect the values of God's kingdom and not the values of this present age. Second, notice that in this chapter, Paul speaks differently to issues of gender and class.

Now, our society tends to put gender, race, class, and sexuality as all in sort of one big category.

And some people think either you're a traditionalist and you want to affirm distinctions in all those areas and you end up privileging some people over others, or you're progressive and open-minded and you want to break down those categories.

But the Bible's view is far more nuanced. In last week's passage, Paul reminded the Corinthians that their new freedom in Christ shouldn't erase all gender distinctions.

God made us in His image as male and female. No one is superior or inferior. But we are distinct and different. And that's part of God's good design.

[14:10] It's a reflection of His glory. It will last into eternity. So, in the church, Paul says we should honor one another by celebrating both our gender distinctions and our interdependence.

But Paul's attitude towards social class is very different. And the Bible's attitude is also very different. If you go back to Genesis 1 and 2, God made human beings in His image. Male and female, God did not make human beings with the rich and the middle class and the poor. It's just not in the creation narrative.

And in the Old Testament, there are not some laws that apply in a certain way to rich people and other laws that, you know, if you... In the Old Testament, if you commit the same crime, it doesn't matter what status you have, you have the same punishment, which was not the case in any other ancient society outside of Israel.

If anything, what you see is that God has a particular concern for the poor and vulnerable and protecting people who otherwise wouldn't be protected. Now, obviously in this world, some people will have more money or more education or more social power than others.

[15:21] That's simply a fact. But what Paul is saying here, according to Paul and according to Jesus, that's not part of your core identity. And that should make no difference, absolutely no difference, in how you are treated in the church.

If you're a CEO of a company, if you're a graduate of Yale, if you're earning six figures, you shouldn't be treated any differently than someone who has an eighth grade education and works as a janitor or works in retail or who's disabled.

Jesus chose fishermen with no formal education to be His disciples, some of His disciples. And Paul says, don't despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing in this world. world. Don't ignore them. Don't marginalize them. Don't push them to the side. In chapter 1, Paul said, God chose people who are low and despised in this world, even things that are not. People who are nobodies in the eyes of the world to bring to nothing things that are so that no one might boast in the presence of God. Paul says, God intentionally chose all kinds of people, including people who have nothing in this world to belong to Him and be eternally rich and show the riches of His glory.

[16:43] Paul says, how would you dishonor people whom God has chosen? So that's the Corinthian problem. Second, Paul shows us the pattern from Christ, verse 23 to 26.

Now, in order to address this Corinthian problem, Paul takes them all the way back to the pattern of Christ, the words of Jesus Himself. This is the longest recounting of any episode from the Gospels in all of Paul's epistles, so it's pretty significant.

It indicates that, excuse me, Paul considered the Lord's Supper to be quite important. It was one of the teachings or traditions that he had delivered to them when he taught them in person and founded the church.

It was also a regular pattern when Christians gathered together, recorded in three of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Now, the main point Paul wants to drive home in this middle section is that when we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we remember and proclaim Jesus' self-giving death on our behalf.

Verse 23, Paul says, The Lord Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper on the night He was betrayed. And that word betrayed can also be translated handed over.

[18:04] It's actually the same word that's translated delivered earlier in that sentence. Now, we know that Jesus was handed over or that He was betrayed by Judas, who was present at the Last Supper, received the bread.

From Jesus' hand. And then went out and handed Him over to His enemies. But Paul also uses the same word in Romans chapter 8, verse 32.

He says, God did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up, handed Him over in love for us all. And the same Greek word is used in the Greek version of Isaiah 53, where it says, The Lord gave Him up for our sins.

So, you see, it's not just that Judas handed Jesus over, but it was also the plan of God the Father to give up His Son.

Not in betrayal, as Judas did. Not in hatred and in darkness, but in love for us and in faithfulness to His plan. But what Paul wants to point out is that Jesus wasn't just betrayed by Judas, or He wasn't just the instrument of God the Father's will.

[19:27] He willingly gave His own life. Jesus freely gave His own life in love for us. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and freely gave it to His disciples.

Now, when Jesus did that, He was acting as the host of a Passover meal. And that was what the host was expected to do at the beginning of the meal. The host would take bread, unleavened bread, give thanks to God who had provided it, break it, and give it to those who were present. But then Jesus said, This bread signifies my body, which I will offer willingly up to God in thanksgiving, and give on your behalf when I die on the cross tomorrow. You see, during Passover, they ate only unleavened bread. It was called the bread of affliction, the bread of suffering, because the people of Israel had left Egypt in haste. In other words, their salvation had come only through suffering. That's what they remembered by taking that bread. And Jesus was saying, Your salvation will come only through My suffering, through My body, which is for you.

[ 20 : 53 ] Offered in your place and on your behalf. And in the same way, Jesus took the cup after supper and freely gave it to His disciples, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood.

Again, at Passover, the Jewish people remembered, not just how they had left Egypt, but they remembered how God in His covenant faithfulness had spared them from His judgment. Each family was instructed to kill a lamb and put some of the blood over the front door of their house. And God had promised, When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall befall you to destroy you. And when Jesus gave that cup to His disciples, He's saying, It's My blood that will cover you.

It's My blood that will rescue you from the judgment of God. It's My blood that I will shed that will bring you into the new covenant that Jeremiah had promised. One day, I will make a new covenant, the Lord says.

I will be your God, and you will be My people. You will all know Me, from the least to the greatest, for I will forgive your iniquity and remember your sin no more.

[ 22 : 16 ] And back in chapter 5 of 1 Corinthians, Paul wrote, Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival.

See, the Passover festival was an annual remembrance of what God had done for Israel, and Jesus said, Just as the people have eaten the Passover in remembrance of God saving them from slavery in Egypt, eat this bread, and drink this cup in remembrance of Me.

Now, when the Bible talks about remembering, it doesn't just mean thinking in our minds about something that happened in the past. Remembering biblically means identifying with what happened in the past.

It's saying, that's part of my story too. I wouldn't be here today without it. That's how the Israelites were supposed to treat the Passover.

Exodus 13, Moses says, When you come into the promised land, and everything's going great for you, every year when you celebrate the Passover, you shall tell your child, It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.

[ 23 : 33 ] Now, this is the people, generations later, who are living in the promised land. They didn't physically come out of Egypt. Right? Except, I guess, in the body of their ancestors. You want to use that line of reasoning.

Right? Which is an ancient form of thinking. But the point is, when we look back at what Christ did on the cross, when we eat the bread and drink the cup, in remembrance of Him, we're saying, He did it for me.

He saved me by what He did way back then. And I wouldn't be here today without it. And I can come to the table of the Lord because He rescued me.

And I now belong to God's family because of what He did on the cross. But the Lord's Supper isn't just where we receive assurance of Jesus' love for us individually.

It's also where we celebrate our unity with one another in the body of Christ. Back in chapter 10, Paul said, because there's one bread, we who are many are one body.

[ 24 : 34 ] Because we all eat of the one bread. We eat together from a common table in honor of our common Lord, who is both our host and our feast. That's what the Lord's Supper is about.

Remembering and identifying with Jesus self-giving love and His sacrifice for us. See, Paul wanted the Corinthians to see that the way they were celebrating their Lord's Supper was far out of line with the pattern that Christ had given.

Paul says, if you're celebrating the Lord's Supper, even if it's being held in your home, you're not the host. Jesus Christ is the host. You are the servants in His household.

So you have no authority to decide who gets first-class treatment and who gets second-class treatment and who gets ignored based on who your little clique of friends is and who you want to please and who has power and wealth and status in this world.

Jesus Christ doesn't consider any of those things when He looks at people and welcomes them into His family. He welcomes all who come to Him in repentance and faith.

[ 25 : 58 ] He willingly gave His body and blood on the cross completely for all who had come to Him. And He graciously invites them to feast at His table and Paul says, that's how you should treat one another.

According to Christ, remembering that He is the host, that when we gather together as a church, whether we're celebrating the Lord's Supper in the more formal way that we do it, or whether we're having a meal together down in the Fellowship Hall, or whether we one day combine the two like the Corinthians did, who knows, we can think about it.

Paul says, treat one another as Christ has treated you. So that's the pattern from Christ.

How does that apply to us today? This is our third and final section. Verse 27 to 34. Now, there are two paragraphs. Verse 27 to 33.

27 to 32. And 33 to 34. They both begin with the same word. Translated, therefore, in verse 27, and so then in verse 33.

[ 27 : 13 ] And within each of these paragraphs, there's one central command. Verse 28 and verse 33. Examine yourselves and wait for each other, or share with each other.

So let's focus on these two commands as we consider some practical implications for our community. So I'm going to shift a little bit from focusing on ancient Corinth to focusing on us as a church today.

So first, examine yourself, verse 28. Now, that command is sandwiched between two warnings. Verse 27 warns against eating and drinking in an unworthy manner.

Verse 29 warns against eating and drinking without discerning the body. Now, in the context, the meaning of Paul's warning was clear. Some people were eating and drinking in a manner unworthy of the Lord, gorging themselves while others in the body of Christ, even those in their local church, were going hungry.

They were eating and drinking without discerning the body, that is, without recognizing rightly their brothers and sisters in the body of Christ and treating them as such. Paul says, examine yourselves.

[ 28 : 24 ] And he warns that the consequences of not doing so are very serious. Verse 27, you will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Verse 29, you are eating and drinking judgment on yourself.

Verse 30, that is why many of you are weak and ill and some have died. Yikes. We need to figure out what's going on here. Now, verse 30, let me try to explain this a little bit.

There are two errors that we can fall into regarding sickness and sin. Okay? Some people have said that all sickness is caused by some kind of sin or lack of faith.

This teaching can be particularly confusing and devastating to people who are sick and don't get well. It also doesn't make sense of many Bible passages. For example, why would Paul tell Timothy, stop drinking only water and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses if his illnesses were due to sin or a lack of faith?

Other people react against this view and say there is no connection between sickness and sin in the New Testament. And I think most of us at Trinity would probably tend to say something like this.

[ 29 : 49 ] If you get sick, right, that's, right, we don't immediately think of a connection with sin. But then we have trouble with passages like this because it's pretty clear Paul discerned whether it was a prophetic insight or whether he just knew more information than we do.

he discerned a connection between the unhealthy divisions in the Corinthian church and the physical illnesses and even premature death that some of the believers had experienced.

Now, how do we understand this? I think we need to understand it in light of Hebrews 12. Hebrews 12 says God disciplines His children for our good. And sometimes that discipline takes the form of painful correction.

Now, we should not assume the Bible does not teach that every sickness is caused by some kind of sin or lack of faith. But, I think physical sickness should cause us to examine ourselves.

Isn't it true that sometimes God uses sickness to humble us in our pride or to make workaholics like me take a Sabbath rest? or to call us back to Himself when we've become distracted by the riches and worries and cares of this life?

[ 31 : 16 ] Or to reconnect us to the body of Christ and let other people help us when we've isolated ourselves and wouldn't want to ask for help on our own? Paul says we should examine ourselves and see that sometimes that's what God might be doing but not assume that that's what's going on all the time.

So, Paul's warning is examine yourselves so that your community won't be judged by the Lord. That means sort of disciplined by the Lord but remember when the Lord judges us in the way the word is used here He's disciplining us.

He's not condemning us. He's not ultimately destroying us if we belong to Christ but that's but He's warning us and correcting us even through a painful process.

Paul says if you would examine yourselves you would avoid the pain. You'd avoid some pain if you would examine yourselves. Now, so that's sort of the warning.

Let's go back to the command examine yourself and let me give a few practical applications. Two do's and two don'ts.

[ 32 : 33 ] First, when we come to the Lord's table do examine your relationship with the Lord and your relationship with others in the body of Christ.

Now, if you're here if you're not a Christian if you don't identify with Christ at all then please don't take the bread and the cup when they're passed around. We're not trying we're not meaning to exclude you.

We're glad that you've come to join us. It simply wouldn't be authentic. It simply wouldn't be a right it's an act that has a spiritual meaning. It means I'm trusting in Christ and I want to be loyal to Him.

If you've been but use the time when we pass out the bread and pass out the cup to consider the message of Christianity to ask yourself what's holding me back? why don't I identify with Christ?

What's hindering me from doing that? Take the time for to ask yourself those questions. But maybe you have previously identified as a Christian perhaps you grew up in the church but you may but you're living in what the Bible calls unrepentant sin.

[ 33 : 51 ] Now that means there's some area of your life where you are refusing to confess your sin and ask for God's help to move forward in a godly way.

Or maybe there's someone in the body of Christ with whom you have an unresolved conflict and you're refusing to do your part to seek reconciliation. Maybe you've hurt someone in the past and you know it but you haven't asked forgiveness.

Maybe you've been wronged and hurt and maybe you need to either overlook and forgive or lovingly confront. Paul says examine yourselves.

If that's you when you come to the Lord's table Jesus invites you to come to Him as you are and open your hands and receive from Him the grace you need to do what He's calling you to do.

But there is a warning. If you have every intention of continuing in unrepentant sin and don't want God's help to turn away from it. If you are refusing to deal with a conflict and you're continuing in strife and discord with your neighbors Paul says don't eat the Lord's Supper.

[ 35 : 10 ] That would be hypocritical. Paul says examine yourselves. Take a second look. Take an honest look. So we should examine ourselves as to our relationship with the Lord and with others in the body of Christ.

But second don't fall into morbid and despairing introspection. Some of you may be keenly aware of your own sins and failures from the past.

Maybe you're struggling with sinful desires and habits in the present. when you look at verse 27 and verse 28 you might think I should never receive communion because I will never be worthy and when I take an honest look and examine myself I only see how great my sin is.

Well if that's you listen to the words of John Calvin. He says if you are serious in your intention to aspire to the righteousness of God to seek to live a holy life and if humbled by the knowledge of your own wretchedness you fall back upon the grace of Christ and rest upon it be assured that you are a guest worthy of approaching this table for faith even if imperfect makes the unworthy worthy.

Jesus said anyone who comes to me I will never drive away. Come to me all who are weary and burdened not just by our burdens but also by our sins come to him he says I'll give you rest to come take and eat receive his grace ask him for the help that you need.

[ 37 : 04 ] You know maybe you've fallen into serious sin maybe you've had a terrible week the solution to that is don't stay in the dark come into the light confess your sin to the Lord repent and receive his promise of forgiveness find a mature brother or sister in the Lord and confess your sin to them and ask them to pray for you so that you can be healed and made whole according to James 5 16 ask the mature Christians for accountability and wisdom and support as you're seeking to follow Christ and fighting against temptation don't try to fight the battle alone so first do examine ourselves second don't fall into despair third do let the body of Christ play its proper role in the self-examination process now verse 28 Paul says let a person examine himself he's talking about an individual believer here but in other passages such as 1 Corinthians 5 and 2 Corinthians 2

Paul teaches that the church as a whole and its leaders in particular have a responsibility to discern as far as we can tell who belongs to Christ and therefore should take the bread and the cup and who doesn't and shouldn't and the normal way that the church publicly proclaims that you belong to Jesus Christ is by baptizing them that person and receiving them into what we call church membership so if for some reason you normally take communion but you haven't been baptized in any way shape or form you should be baptized because it doesn't make sense to take one and not the other now I know baptism seems a lot more intimidating than just taking communion when the trays are passed around you can take the bread and the cup and nobody will notice but if you get up here and get all wet in front of everybody everybody's going to see you and some of you are anxious because you see people who stand up here and give eloquent testimonies of the Lord's work in their lives that speech is optional let me make that clear what's essential is to obey the command of Jesus to be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and when you're standing up here it's you're

God's affirming his promise to you in front of everyone else you don't have to just sort of hide in the corner of the church and always sit behind a pillar right he welcomes you as a child whom he loves he's cleansed you from your sins that's what baptism proclaims and represents and celebrates so baptism is a wonderful thing don't miss out if you haven't been baptized but you believe in Christ come and talk to one of the elders we'd love to help you prepare for baptism if you're in the youth group talk to Pastor Nick on the other end if for some reason you're a baptized believer in Jesus Christ but for some reason you have stopped taking communion please come and talk with one of the elders again whatever the reason is we want to help you work through that and pursue Christ in whatever way you need to so don't just don't just work through that alone we want to help you so do examine yourself don't despair do let the body of Christ have its proper role fourth don't miss Paul's main point by fixating on later church controversies over the Lord's Supper now two of the main concerns that have divided churches over the centuries are these one how often should we do it and two how do we understand Christ's presence in the elements Paul here and the New Testament generally does not seem particularly concerned to define a precise answer to either of those questions as to the question of frequency there's simply no explicit command in the New Testament Paul says as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup the principle seems to be regularly some churches do it weekly some churches do it monthly should we celebrate it more often at Trinity maybe we are today maybe we'll continue doing it a little more often than once a month we'll see we certainly won't do it less if you're concerned about that I think if anything our general tendency is to undervalue the Lord's Supper rather than overvalue it there are problems on both sides but Paul is also not particularly concerned to define how Christ is present in the Lord's Supper now if you want an answer here's a brief answer is the bread the physical body of Jesus Christ no

Jesus bodily ascended into heaven and he is seated at the right hand of God the Father but is Jesus Christ really present when we eat the bread and drink the cup you bet he is he promised to be by his Holy Spirit's power and he's here to nourish and strengthen and gladden and unite our hearts so that we can love him and worship him with joy and live for him with abandon if you want a good explanation excuse me if you want a good explanation of how it all works read the chapter in Calvin's Institutes Calvin's right on almost everything not quite okay but you don't have to understand exactly how the Lord's Supper works it's like medicine you don't have to understand all the chemical mechanics for the medicine to make a difference you do have to take it and follow the doctor's orders Jesus said take the medicine receive it with repentance and faith and it'll help you grow in love but don't miss

[ 43 : 13 ] Paul's main point by focusing on such controversies Paul's main point is a point that has been neglected through much of church history Paul says taking the Lord's Supper together should push us should shape our relationships with each other in the body of Christ in particular it should push us towards embodying the self-giving generosity that Jesus has displayed and given to us when we take the bread and take the cup we celebrate Christ gave himself for us and we had nothing to commend ourselves to him and Paul says be careful make sure you honor the people who are your brothers and sisters in Christ who have nothing to commend themselves to you who have little status in the eyes of this world who aren't your close friends who you think might be a little weird but they're your brother or sister in Christ honor and welcome them because Christ is the host here and we live by his rules and the only distinction that is made is based on your relationship to him and Christ says we're one in the body of Christ

John Christ Christ the fourth century preacher said this he said do you wish to honor the body of Christ he lived in a society where there was sort of a high church view of the Lord's supper he says do you wish to honor the body of Christ don't ignore him when he is cold and naked do not pay him homage in the church building only to neglect him outside he who said this is my body take and eat in remembrance of me is the same one who said whatever you did to the least of my brothers and sisters you did also to me so honor him with this honor which he himself has ordained spending your wealth on the poor honor your brothers and sisters let us honor one another by sharing with one another by being generous as Christ has been generous to us may the Lord's supper shape us as we reflect on Christ generosity to us may it reflect may that be the outcome for us let me close with a challenge from a modern commentator on 1 Corinthians

Richard Hayes he says as long as some Christians go hungry the Lord's supper should call us to share our bread with those in need somehow we have made the Lord's supper into a tidy right disconnected from real eating and drinking consequently it is hard for many economically comfortable Christians to envision the connection between the Lord's table and the needs of the poor to discern the body means to perceive the connection between ourselves and our brothers and sisters in Christ if we discern the body rightly we will express our oneness in Christ by sharing what God has given us to eat and drink with joy let us pray Lord we thank you that by your grace you welcome us to come to your table we pray that we would receive the bread and the cup with joy as we proceed to take it now in Christ's name we pray amen well now since you've heard about the Lord's supper now we get to take it and receive it with strength