

Daily Bible Study

“Basics of The Lord’s Supper”

1 Corinthians 11:23-32

January 30 – February 5, 2011

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY – This week we are going to again return to our ongoing study of the blessed topic of the Lord’s Table. We have looked at so many things over the years concerning this vast subject and I do realize there is no way that we could ever exhaust the glorious truths that we find when looking at Scriptural insights concerning and pertaining to this Sacrament of The Lord’s Supper. As we have studied this Sacrament we have touched on many various aspects of it including: What is the meaning of the table? Who should participate and who should not? How is it possible to make the table an idol and its practice a form of idolatry? What is the picture of “shared life” and “community” we find at the table? And many more... We will again return this week to the *Basics of The Lord’s Supper* as we give another **general overview** of this entire theme and as mentioned **not an exhaustive** look into any one particular aspect. My prayer is that this study will serve to be a blessing to us all and help us to see the significance of this blessed Sacrament given by Christ Jesus to His Church. Many things have been said through the years pertaining to the subject of The Lord’s Table, but this quote from **Charles Spurgeon** helps us to set our thinking for this weeks study: “Never mind that bread and wine, unless you can use them as folks often use their spectacles. What do they use them for? To look at? No, to look *through* them. So, use the bread and wine as a pair of spectacles. Look *through* them, and do not be satisfied until you can say, ‘Yes, yes, I can see the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’”. May we do just as **Spurgeon** has said and use this God given and commanded Sacrament to see beyond mere elements; but to what the elements signify, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself on the cross for the forgiveness of our sin. We could go on all day with great quotes and comments from men of God pertaining to the Communion Table, and we will for sure use some of these in our study, but let us now look to the only infallible source of instruction, wisdom, and divine truth, **The Holy Scriptures**. **1 Corinthians 11:23 - 32** *“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or 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 of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.”*

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Ask God to instruct you and teach you from His Word this week and to teach you the significance of the Table of the Lord. Thank Him for setting up the practice of the Lord's Table, and ask Him to help you worship and praise Him through it.

TUESDAY – In the verses of our main text we are given the instruction of the Lord through the Apostle Paul concerning the Lord's Supper. Most scholars agree that this book of **1 Corinthians** was written before the gospels were and therefore this instruction was the first Biblical record concerning The Lord's Supper. Note that Paul says it was "*received from the Lord*". Paul got this instruction directly from Jesus Christ, and not from his imagination, education or reading of anyone, including the other Apostles. This is why the Scripture is and always will be the final authority in all matters. We hear so many conflicting opinions and preferences concerning various issues including The Lord's Supper and other matters of practice in the Church. There are legitimate questions concerning things such as how (timing, method of practice etc...) we carry out the Sacrament and we also should continually ask ourselves why we practice the Sacrament in the first place and we need to be reminded over and over again of its meaning. We must always go to the Scripture for the answers, truth, and guidance in all matters. It was **J.C. Ryle (1816-1900)** who said this following quote concerning the Lord's Table and how there was some confusion and question toward its practice and why it is to be done. He said, "Some neglect it altogether; some completely misunderstand it; some exalt it to a position it was never meant to occupy, and turn it into an idol." With so much confusion on this issue we are lead to ask the question of "Why was the Lord's Table ordained in the first place?" **Ryle** continues with the answer, "It was ordained for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we thereby receive." This is exactly accurate, not because J.C. Ryle said it, but because it is precisely what the **Scripture** says. Noticing our text again, both in verse 24 and 25 we are told that it was Christ Himself who said the eating and drinking of The Lord's Table should be done, "*In remembrance of Me.*" The word "*remembrance*" is the word anamnesis which means a remembering, recollection. This word is from the family of words that we get our English "amnesia" from. The "continual remembrance of Christ's death" was the first and foremost reason for which the Lord's Supper was ordained. So what exactly is meant in the phrase "*do this is remembrance of Me*"? What are we actually remembering? When we come to The Table it is a time that as true believers we are brought face to face as it were with **the cross** and each one focuses solely on the death of Christ in his place and as his substitute. Furthermore, The Table is a **visible** proclamation of that grand act of grace and mercy put forth at Calvary. When a person eats these elements they are reminded in a most **vivid** way of the death and sacrifice of the torn body and shed blood of our Lord. We are also reminded of the benefits Christ has made possible for our soul; namely, forgiveness of sin, as our sin has been paid for by Christ, placed **on Him** and **His** righteousness has been imputed or **placed/given to us**. This visible, vivid demonstration of Christ's

death is seen both in the elements themselves and in the method of their distribution which we'll see tomorrow.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Thank Jesus today for the sacrifice of His body and shed blood. Praise Him that it is by His work alone we can be made right with God.

WEDNESDAY – The Scripture's say in **Mark 14:22** as well as the other Gospel accounts of The Lord's Supper, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." You also find these words here in our text in **verse 24**. Two words used here in the Greek language I would like to look at. "Blessed" is the word eucharisteo which means "give thanks". It is where the word some Christians use for The Lord's Supper as the "**Eucharist**". The other word is the word "broke" - klao which means exactly that, "to break". May I say here in relation to the speaking of Christ's body being "broken" in this **verse 24** that Greek word translated "broken" doesn't appear in the better Greek manuscripts. The reason is found in **John 19:33, 36**. There we are told that when soldiers came to break Jesus' legs (a Roman way of hastening the death of crucifixion victims), they saw Jesus was already dead and therefore didn't break His legs, thus fulfilling the Scripture from **Psalm 34:20**, "A bone of him shall not be broken". But concerning The Lord's Supper we see that even the actual physical suffering and death of Christ is through the elements portrayed before our eyes. We see the "bread" broken, torn to pieces; so Christ's body was torn to shreds to make us whole. As the fruit of the vine is poured into the cup, so Christ's blood was poured out that we might live. As **Augustine** said of the table and its practice, it is "a kind of visible word of God". These are visual aids if you will that reinforce to our eyes the Word of God we have with our ears heard preached. This is why when we distribute the elements each individual partaking will tear the bread for themselves as the Elders and Deacons serve the communion. Please understand, I don't want us to get caught up with solely on the actual "mechanics" of The Table, yet they also bear witness to the personal reality of Christ dying for the sins of His own people. The primary focus in partaking at The Table is for the purpose as given to us in Scripture, "*do this in remembrance of Me*". Our entire focus is to be on "*remembering*" our Lord's great sacrifice on the cross for our sin as we partake. When Jesus took the bread and wine in hand and said, "*This is my body*" and "*this cup is the new covenant in My blood*", it was obvious to His disciples they were not eating the physical body and blood of the Lord. We understand that Christ was using these as symbols. For instance, Jesus Himself taught that "I am the door" (John 10:9). He was not saying He was a literal wood door; rather He was the **ONLY** way or access that a person could come through to eternal life. So we are not eating the actual human flesh and blood of Christ at The Table.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, Thanks for a visible, touchable reminder of what Jesus did for me.

THURSDAY –Our text contains the final thing I want us to remember as we come to The Table. Jesus said in **verse 19**, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” Remember it was for **you** my beloved Christian brother and sister that this sacrifice was given. Christ went to the cross for **YOU**, so **YOU** would not have to face eternal punishment. “...as often as you eat the bread...you proclaim the **Lord’s death** till he come.” We “Proclaim” or your Bible may say “show”. In Greek it is kataggello (to announce, declare, promulgate, make known, to proclaim publicly, publish). At The Table we are “proclaiming” the Gospel; the physical incarnation of Christ, His sacrificial death, His resurrection, and His coming again when we will forever have perfect communion with Him in His presence with glorified bodies, totally free from sin. In the Lord’s Table we remember and proclaim in a continual fashion this beautiful reality. **Spurgeon** in his sermon “**Fencing the Table**” said this concerning the ordinances of the church, “The other ordinance is the Lord's Supper; and, as baptism sets forth, typifies, (mark you, nothing more than typifies,) and is the emblem of the new birth, so the Lord's Supper is the emblem of the spiritual feeding of that new life. Now, though a man is born only once, he eats a great many more times than once, and drinks a great many more times than once. Indeed, to eat and to drink often, are necessary to the maintenance of our life. If we neglected to do so, we should soon find ourselves in an ill case. Hence, the Supper of the Lord, representing, as it does, the spiritual feeding of the new-born life upon the body and blood of Christ, (and only representing it, mark you,—not really doing it in any carnal sense,) is oftentimes to be repeated. We find that the early Christians very frequently broke bread together; I think they did so almost every day.” Here Spurgeon speaks to the benefits of a continual remembering and proclaiming. The Lord’s Table is a visible proclamation of that blessed truth. Every time we come to The Table we announce publicly the Lord’s death.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Jesus, help me remember You and Your work as I eat at Your table.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – The final thing I would briefly mention is this most important warning and command to all who would come to The Table of the Lord; they are to examine themselves. This is so very important and today I can only touch upon it. Participation in The Lord’s Supper is serious business. At least it is to God. We however to our shame, often remember in **six minutes** what Christ did on Calvary in **six hours**. And furthermore we tack those six minutes on the end of a service. The seriousness of this ordinance is lost in much of the modern church partly because of

the tendency to relegate it to some ritual we observe in some ceremonially religious manner. Understanding the seriousness of what this Table is remembering and proclaiming, we are commanded here in the text to make proper preparations. We are told that an individual can eat in an “unworthy manner”. This thought alone ought to make every Christian pause when we approach the Lord’s Table. Eating in an “unworthy manner” makes one “guilty of the body and blood of the Lord”. One who does this horrific sin is the person who eats without properly regarding what the elements represent, and the purpose Christ calls us to remember His death. We must pause and consider the shameful death of Christ on the cross for our sins, and the great reality, necessity, and cost of our redemption. We also are to not come to the table with an unrepentant heart that is holding onto sin or with any bitterness or sinful attitudes. We read that there is chastisement (**verse 30**) to those who would come to the table clinging to sin or with indifference toward The Table for they are actually dishonoring the Lord Himself and treating lightly this most gracious sacrifice. The way we prevent that is to “examine” ourselves. Note we are not to “examine” our neighbor. **Verse 28** –“Let a man examine himself...” The Greek word is the word dokimazo. It means to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals, to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy. This is the command of God to examine and then to lay all sin before Him and confess it as not to mock the Lord’s death which was the very sacrifice for that sin. And as Scripture say’s after we have examined ourselves, let us “eat of the bread and drink of the cup”. Tomorrow we are going to come to The Lord’s Table so lets take the time even now to examine ourselves.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to examine myself in light of Your Scripture and by The Holy Spirit and be prepared to come to your table.