

Application

As we labor to discover what it means to be the church, the body of Christ, we will continue to focus on two things: our current understanding, baggage and history and then a proper Biblical understanding and application.

What has been your past experience with the Lord's Supper/Communion?

How would you describe or explain the Supper to a non-Christian?

What does the Supper mean to you personally?

What elements of the Supper do you not understand?

How can a simple meal of bread and wine be an act of worship?

What are the images and symbols that Paul and the apostles used to describe and explain the Supper?

What images of Jesus do these recall?

How could someone celebrate the Supper in an "unworthy manner" today?

How does the Bible describe the proper heart attitude of celebration of the Lord's Supper?

How does your heart line up?

Some Practical Steps:

We encourage you to continue on in the goal of reading your Bible every day. The Book of Acts would be a great companion to this series. It is never too late to start.

Take some time this week and meditate on the following passages as they pertain to the Lord's Supper. Ask what they teach *about Jesus' work on the cross*, what they teach *about the Lord's Supper* and what they teach *about you*. Read, reread, think, read again. Enjoy hearing from God in the Word.

John 6:1-14, 26-58

Matthew 26:20-46

Luke 24:13-53

Acts 2:1-47

1 Corinthians 10:1-33

Church(ology)
a biblical study of God's design for the body of Christ

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Why A Meal?

1 Corinthians 11:17-34



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For Further Study

How can a simple meal become the most meaningful food and drink in history? Answer: the Creator of the universe sacrificially redeems the universe from its brokenness and injects the full beauty and horror of that redemption into simple bread and wine. It is not the bread and wine that are special, but bread and wine attached to the work and Word of God.

As we can see from **1 Corinthians**, the young church in Corinth had several critical problems within their church family. Paul addresses these each in turn (see **1:11; 5:1; 7:1; 7:25; 8:1; 11:17; 12:1; 16:1**). One of them was a proper understanding and celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Previously in his letter, Paul prepares the church for this discussion about divisions and "heresies" during the Supper: **1 Cor 1:10ff; 3:1ff; 10:17ff**.

Notice the issues that this church family is facing:

- Divisions exist, in opposition to the *unity* of the Meal—**11:18-19**
- Worship has become an opportunity for selfishness—**11:20-21, 34**
- The Meal has become defiled and treated as common—**11:27-29**
- This "unworthy" worship has resulted in consequences—**11:30**
- True worship must be reinstated with dignity and holiness—**11:31-34**

Do any of these issues sound familiar in your experience of the Supper?

11:23-26—The center of Paul's admonition regarding the Supper is a beautiful slice of what Jesus showed him. Remember, Paul was not at the last supper with Jesus and the twelve disciples (see **Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 13**). Paul did not become a believer until much later.

We understand several central and crucial points about the Lord's Supper from Paul's words in this text. See other key passages in *Application*.

- ◆ The Lord's Supper is primarily a *corporate* celebration of Christ's provision of salvation—**Acts 2:42-47; 1 Cor 5:1-8; 1 Cor 10:17; 11:29**.
- ◆ The Lord's Supper is therefore a celebration *for believers*—**Acts 2:42ff; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 10:16, 20-21; Jude 12**.
- ◆ The Supper pictures the unity of salvation in Christ in the unity of believers at the table—**1 Cor 10:17; 11:29; Eph 3:6; 4:3-7; Heb 10:12ff**.
- ◆ The elements of the Lord's Supper are a powerful and important image of Christ's broken body and spilt blood, the ineffable cost of redemption from sin—**1 Cor 10:16; 11:23-26**; based on **John 6** and **Matthew 26**.
- ◆ Pauline emphasis on examination in the Supper is not a warning against sinfulness in general or a requirement for perfection. It is specifically related to social selfishness and lack of love and honor for *the body of the church*—**Matt 5:23-24; 1 Cor 5:1ff; 8:12; 10:17f; 11:17-34**.
- ◆ The Supper is a regular memorial celebration applicable for the church until Jesus returns—**1 Cor 11:24-26**.