

1 Corinthians 11:17-34: The Ultimate Thanksgiving Meal

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Introduction

- Why do we eat Turkey? Apparently, we have books to blame... <https://www.britannica.com/story/why-do-we-eat-turkey-on-thanksgiving#:~:text=There%20were%20a%20few%20reasons,almost%20always%20available%20for%20slaughter.>
- Someone needs to write a new book for the holidays. Maybe Thanksgiving was your favorite meal of the year. Maybe it wasn't. For followers of Jesus, our favorite meal is a piece of bread and a cup of wine/juice.
- Easy to think of the Lord's Supper as a ritual that we do from time to time. However, it's far more than a ritual. The Lord's Supper is a visual reminder of the essence of our faith.
- The Lord's Supper is the ultimate thanksgiving meal. We gather around the communion table to give thanks to God that because of the death of Jesus, our sins are completely forgiven and we are no longer under the punishment for our sins that we deserve.
- We gather around the Lord's table to celebrate who we are as the people of God.
- This morning, two ways we need to approach the Lord's Supper so that we might be a people full of thanksgiving for what Jesus has done for us.

We need to remember what Jesus has done for us.

- vs. 17-22 - [1 Corinthians 11-14](#) = Paul's teaching about how the church should gather for worship. The church gathers to remember the work of Jesus by celebrating two ordinances. While Paul doesn't address baptism, we know the significance of baptism. It celebrates how Jesus has given someone new life and brought them into the family of God.
- We are baptized one time, but we celebrate Lord's Supper over and over again. Just as baptism is a visual reminder of the new life that God has given us, the Lord's Supper is also a visual reminder of a Gospel reality: that Jesus died for our sins. The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the church. We take the Lord's Supper together because it communicates what Christ has done for us and our oneness as the people of Christ. It's not a meal you observe apart from the faith family because of what it communicates about who we are as the people of God.
- The church at Corinth celebrated both baptism and Lord's Supper often, but Paul not happy about the way they celebrated the Lord's Supper.
- Believers gathered in a home - probably the large home of a wealthy believer. As part of the gathering, people would bring food and eat a meal together. Everyone bringing their own meal and own wine. As the hours go on, they devour their food and get drunk. As the hours went on, others would come to worship - those who were probably poor and had been working all day long. They arrive, and no one has any food to share with them. And, they're likely looked down on by the wealthy members of the church.
- It's a church divided into classes - the have's and the have nots. The Lord's Supper is supposed to unite them, but instead it's divided them.

- Paul angry (Vs. 20-22) - “You should have stayed at home to eat!” Paul has nothing good to say about how they are gathering. They shouldn’t come to worship to stuff their faces and get drunk - that’s what pagans do. Instead, they should come to remember what Jesus has done.
- vs. 23-26 - A simple reminder of the significance of the Lord’s Supper. “For I received... what I also passed on...” Paul wasn’t at the first Lord’s Supper, but the other apostles surely often told him what happened on that night.
- On the night before Jesus’ death, He celebrated a Passover Meal with the twelve, and Jesus forever changed the meaning of Passover ([Exodus 12-13](#)). Every time the disciples ate the bread and cup - they were to no longer remember what happened in Exodus but instead what happened at the cross. Their redemption wasn’t in the crossing of the Red Sea, their redemption was in the shed blood of Jesus Christ.
- vs. 24 - On that night in the Upper Room, Jesus gave thanks - for the redemptive work of the Father - setting an example for us. We come to the Table with thanksgiving.
- Broke the bread - “This is my body” - a reminder of Jesus’ life lived for us. The Son of God, who has eternally existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit - came to this earth to live as a man. Jesus is fully God/fully man for us. For us to be saved, we needed someone like us, fully human, who could do what we could not do - live in perfect obedience to the Father.
- He took the cup - “This cup is the new covenant in my blood.” [Jeremiah 31:31](#) - Jeremiah prophesied of a new covenant - The New Covenant is the fulfillment of all the promises of the Old Testament - that there would come a day when a Messiah would come and deliver His people.
- Jesus delivered us from sin and death through the shedding of His blood.

- Twice - “Do this in remembrance of me.” Remember what has been done for you. When we come to the Lord’s Table and remember we should breathe a sigh of relief because it’s all good. There may be days that are hard, but the Lord’s Table reminds us that we are good with God because of the shed blood of Jesus.
- We don’t come to remember what we have to do to gain God’s favor - “I have to read my Bible, I have to pray, I have to be nice to people, I have to...” We don’t come to remember a long list of requirements that it takes to enter God’s family because there’s not a long list of requirements. The only requirement is faith in the finished work of Jesus. We come to remember what Jesus has done. We don’t even come to remember our failure - the Lord’s Supper doesn’t induce guilt, it induces joy, peace, and satisfaction in God.
- At the Lord’s Table we remember:
- **We all have the same problem.** We’re all the same - apart from Jesus, we’re all guilty. We all deserve punishment. It doesn’t matter if you’re rich or poor. It doesn’t matter the color of skin, where you grew up, what kind of family you came from, or how educated you are. We all have a sin problem.
- **We all need the same Savior.** Only Jesus can forgive us and bring us into a relationship with the Father. You can’t buy your way into heaven. You can’t work your way. You can’t be born into the right family. Everyone of us come to the Father through faith in Jesus.
- vs. 26 - When we take the Lord’s Supper together we are proclaiming the Lord’s death. We are saying something about what we believe about Jesus and what we believe about the work He has done in our lives. The Lord’s Supper is a visual sermon. The question becomes, are you living your life in a way that is consistent with the message that you are proclaiming when you take the Lord’s Supper: that you have been

brought with a price, that you are forgiven, and that you are called to live for Jesus?

- The Lord's table is a reminder that we are all in need of what Jesus has done for us.

We need to repent of what we have done.

- Paul calls us to remember what Jesus has done, and Paul also calls us to repent of what we have done.
- There's a serious warning in this passage - to not take the bread or drink in an unworthy manner. Paul goes so far as to tell the Corinthians that if they eat the bread and drink the cup in an unworthy manner they would bring judgment upon themselves. Therefore, they need to examine themselves before they partake of the Lord's Supper.
- Apparently, there are some who are sick and have even died because of their irreverent observance of the Lord's Supper.
- When we take the Lord's Supper it is far more than ritual. It is an act of worship as we remember the sacrifice of our Lord. It is a holy moment that we can't take lightly.
- Remember, we worship God on His terms. He is serious about the way we approach Him. (Think Ananias and Sapphira.)
- God is serious about His worship, and He will discipline those who do not take serious His glory and holiness (vs. 32). His discipline is intended to wake us up and bring us back into alignment with His will. If we never respond to His discipline, it could be an indicator that we don't know Him and we will be condemned with the world.
- Paul's final instruction is for the church at Corinth to not make the gathering of believers into a social time but a time of worship - where everyone is welcomed and where everyone has the opportunity to come before God together.

- What does it mean to take the Lord's Supper in a way that is unworthy? Facts: none of us are worthy. We're all sinners in need of grace. We all continue to struggle with sin throughout our lives. I think this text has something to do with the attitude in which we take the Lord's Supper.
- If one is afflicted by sin the Supper is a comfort. If one is comfortable with sin, the Supper is an affliction.
- Two questions to ask:
- **What is your attitude towards God?**
 - Do you take your sin lightly? Everyone struggles with sin, but some of us don't care about our sin. We are fine with staying in our sin rather than going to battle with our sin. If that's the case, then you are living inconsistently with what you are proclaiming when you take the Lord's Supper. Don't take the Lord's Supper until you repent.
 - Do you take God's holiness lightly? Maybe you come to the table and you just don't think highly of God. You are not in awe of His glory and His holiness. You think a lot of you and little of God. Don't take the Lord's Supper until you repent of your attitude towards God.
- **What is your attitude towards other believers?** This is the issue in Corinth - divisions over social classes, who their favorite leader was, etc. vs. 29 - "For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body..." The Lord's Supper is a meal that we take together to remind us that we are one with Christ and one with each other. We take the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner when we take the Lord's Supper while we have bitterness, anger, unforgiveness, a grudge with someone else. God is serious about us living in right relationships with each other. God is serious about our unity because the world needs to see a unified people. We live in a world that is divided, but not the church. We might be different. We might have different opinions. We might like different football teams. BUT... we rally around Jesus, His Gospel, and His mission for our lives. Jesus unifies us. If you are in relational conflict with

another believer, be careful. When you take the Lord's Supper you are proclaiming that you are one with Jesus and His church. Are you living in unity with your brothers and sisters? If not, repent, and ask God to help you forgive and make relational conflict right. (In your marriage, parenting, etc.)

- This morning, the Lord's Supper is for baptized believers. Are you a believer? Are you a child of God? If not, hear the message the Lord's Supper proclaims - Jesus died for you. "This is my body, which is for YOU..." Embrace Jesus. Believe that He died and rose again for you. Turn from your sin and turn to Him by faith.