

The “What” and “Why” of the Lord’s Supper (part 2)

1 Corinthians 10: 12-22; 11: 27-34

What is the Lord's Supper ?

- A gathering of God's children to
 - eat bread and drink "wine"
 - remember all that Jesus' death on the cross accomplished for us
 - proclaim (announce) the good news of Jesus' death & resurrection
 - anticipate Jesus' return & the Wedding Feast of the Lamb (Rev. 16: 6-9)
 - examine ourselves before the Lord & renew our commitment to Him

Time of self-examination

²⁷ So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. ²⁹ For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. (11: 27-29)

How do we “examine ourselves” such that we come in a “worthy manner” ?

➤ “unworthy manner” refers to the manner by which we approach the Lord’s Supper

“Worthy manner” means ...

- I come prepared and fully aware of what I’m about to celebrate
- I come in a spirit of humility, repentance, contrition, & willing to change
- I don’t treat Holy Communion like “magic” – “I’m here to get a blessing ... that’s all”
- “I’m here to confess my sins, repent and renew my commitment to the Lord”
- “I’m here to be renewed by God’s Holy Spirit”

All New Testament letters are ...

- *occasional documents*
- “arising out of and intended for a specific occasion”
- *from first century AD*

Interpreting them properly can be difficult

- *ad hoc* documents
- Latin: “for this situation”
- something for a special/immediate purpose, without previous planning

- Introduction section of Study Bible has:
 - Purpose, Occasion, and Background
 - Purpose; Author; Recipients;
Date Written; Setting

Introduction to 1 Corinthians – ESV Study Bible

➤ Purpose, Occasion, and Background:

... Paul received an oral report indicating that the Corinthians ... were plagued with serious problems of division, sexual immorality, and social snobbery. Around the same time, a letter arrived from the Corinthians that displayed considerable theological confusion about marriage, divorce, participation in pagan religions, order within corporate worship, and the bodily resurrection of Christians.

In response to these troubling developments, Paul felt compelled to write a ... letter to Corinth, making the case that much of their conduct was out of step with the gospel.

Introduction to 1 Corinthians

➤ Purpose, Occasion, and Background: (cont'd)

At the root of their disunity lay an arrogance that was incompatible with God's free gifts to them in Christ: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. In addition, a self-centered insistence on their own rights at the expense of the weak and marginalized revealed that their own social advancement rather than the gospel's advancement was their top priority.

At the root of the immorality and idolatry in Corinth, moreover, lay a lack of appreciation for the holiness that God requires of his people.

Introduction to 1 Corinthians

➤ Purpose, Occasion, and Background: (cont'd)

... Despite the often stern tone of the letter, Paul was thankful to God for the Corinthians and felt a deep personal affection for them. Because of this love, and for the purpose of God's glory, Paul wanted the Corinthians to become a well-constructed dwelling place for God's Spirit and to be "guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ".

Purpose, Occasion & Background of 1 Corinthians

- Disunity revealed their arrogance
- Self-centered insistence on rights at expense of the weak & marginalized revealed they were pursuing own social advancement rather than the gospel's
- Immorality and idolatry revealed lack of appreciation for holiness that God requires of His people
- Despite letter's harsh tone, Paul was thankful to God for them and loved them

As we examine ourselves before the Lord, ask ...

- *Lord, have I been arrogant?*
- *Lord, do I care more about my own social advancement in your church than Your gospel's advancement?*
- *Lord, do I have a lack of appreciation for the holiness that You require of me?*
- Thank You, Lord for revealing these things to me through Your Word. It proves that You really love me and care very much for me.

Issues tackled by Paul in 1 Corinthians from standpoint of Gospel of Jesus Christ

- fascination with Greek rhetoric (1:10 – 2:16)
- toleration of incest (5:1-13)
- lawsuits among members (6:1-8)
- sexual sin (6:12-20)
- food offered to idols (8:1 – 11: 1) **10:14-22**
- lack of love at Lord's Supper (11:1-34)
(11:27-34)
- rejection of bodily resurrection (15:1-58)

Easy letter for Corinthians to read?

Easy letter for Paul to write?

- fascination with Greek rhetoric (1:10 – 2:16)
- toleration of incest (5:1-13)
- lawsuits among members (6:1-8)
- sexual sin (6:12-20)
- food offered to idols (8:1 – 11: 1) **10:14-22**
- lack of love at Lord's Supper (11:1-34)
(11:27-34)
- rejection of bodily resurrection (15:1-58)

First issue we'll look at ...

- fascination with Greek rhetoric (1:10 – 2:16)
- toleration of incest (5:1-13) 5:6-8
- lawsuits among members (6:1-8)
- sexual sin (6:12-20)
- food offered to idols (8:1 – 11: 1) **10:14-22**
- lack of love at Lord's Supper (11:1-34)
(11:27-34)
- rejection of bodily resurrection (15:1-58)

Food offered to idols (chs. 8 – 10)

- Since idol is not a “god”, no real problem eating food previously offered to idols
- But ... for the sake of a brother/sister with “weaker conscience” (accustomed to thinking of idols as being real), don’t eat it before them

Food offered to idols – 1 Cor. 8

8 ... we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

9 Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol's temple, won't that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols?

(1 Cor. 8: 8-10)

Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper

– 1 Cor. 10: 14ff

¹⁴ Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵ I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶ Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf. (1 Cor. 10: 14-17)

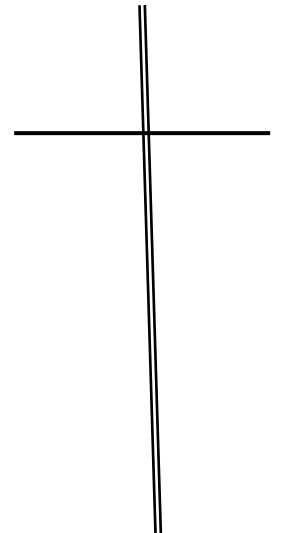
Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper

14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.

16 Is not the **cup** of thanksgiving for which we give thanks **a participation in the blood of Christ?** And

is not the **bread** that we break **a participation in the body of Christ?**

17 Because there is **one loaf**, we, who are many, are **one body**, for we all **share the one loaf.**



***Koinonia*: participation in; a communion of; partaking in the blessings of the cross of Jesus**

14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.

15 I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.

16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks

a **participation in** the blood of Christ?

And is not the bread that we break

a **participation in** the body of Christ?

17 Because there is one loaf,

we, who are many, are one body,

for we all **share** the one loaf.

Participation in =

koinonia

communion of

Share =

metachomen

partake

OT altar and the Lord's Supper

¹⁴ Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵ I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶ Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf. ¹⁸ Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? (1 Cor. 10:14-18)

What is Paul telling them ?

- At the Lord's Supper, believers partake of the benefits of Christ's death for them (10:16-17)
- Those who participated in the OT sacrifices also benefited from what was sacrificed (10:18)
- A portion of OT sacrifices often eaten by priests (Lev. 7:1, 6-9) or person making the sacrifice (Lev. 7:11, 15-16; Deut. 14:22-27)
- They enjoyed fellowship with God and benefited from what was offered

Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper

18 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? 19 Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. 22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

(1 Cor. 10:14-22; NLT)

Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper

18 Consider the people of Israel:

Do not those who **eat the sacrifices**

participate in the altar? 19 Do I mean then that

food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol

is anything? 20 No, but the **sacrifices of pagans**

are **offered to demons**, not to God, and I do not

want you to be **participants with demons**. 21 You

cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup

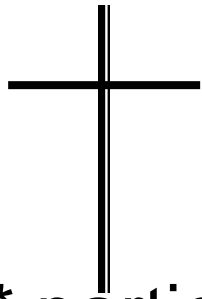
of demons too; you **cannot have a part in both**

the **Lord's table** and the **table of demons**. 22 Are

we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we

stronger than he?

(1 Cor. 10: 14-22; NLT)



OT Meal in God's Temple

* sacrificed animal; then ate together
[God present among His people]

* participated/shared in the worship of the LORD

Meal in pagan temples

- sacrifice; then eat together
- worship demons
- Idol ≠ god
- [demons present]
- participate/share benefits of demons
- vertical/horizontal bond

The Lord's Supper

* Christ's sacrifice
"once-for-all"

* Worship the Lord Jesus
[Jesus Christ present]

* participate / share benefits
through cup & bread

*vertical/horizontal bond

Self-examination. Ask ...

- Have I been participating in both the Lord's table and the table of demons?
- What idolatry have I been practicing that provokes the Lord's jealousy?
- From which idol(s) do I need to flee?

Second issue we'll look at ...

- fascination with Greek rhetoric (1:10 – 2:16)
- toleration of incest (5:1-13)
- lawsuits among members (6:1-8)
- sexual sin (6:12-20)
- food offered to idols (8:1 – 11: 1) 10:14-22
- lack of love at Lord's Supper (11:1-34)
(11:27-34)
- rejection of bodily resurrection (15:1-58)

Corinthian believers celebrated the Lord's Supper in unworthy manner

For it sounds as if more harm than good is done when you meet together. ¹⁸ First, I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church, ... ²⁰ When you meet together, you are not really interested in the Lord's Supper. ²¹ For some of you hurry to eat your own meal without sharing with others. As a result, some go hungry while others get drunk. ²² What? Don't you have your own homes for eating and drinking? Or do you really want to disgrace God's church and shame the poor? (1 Cor. 11: 17b-18, 20-22; NLT)

What does “unworthy manner” mean ?

- “ ... whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty ...” (11: 27)
- an adverb; the “manner” by which we approach the Lord’s Supper
- At Corinth: divisions; rushed to eat their own meal without sharing; some got drunk (11:17-22)
- “disgraced God’s church & shamed the poor”
- Not “whoever is unworthy will be guilty ...”
- For ... who is “worthy” to come before the Lord’s table?

The Lord's judgment fell on them (v. 30)

²⁷ So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. ²⁹ For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself. ³⁰ That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died. (1 Cor. 11: 27-30; NLT)

The Lord's Supper can be dangerous

²⁷ So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. ²⁹ For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself. ³⁰ That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died.(1 Cor. 11: 27-30; NLT)

But ... there's mercy and grace in God's judgment

31 But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way. 32 Yet when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

33 So, my dear brothers and sisters, when you gather for the Lord's Supper, wait for each other. 34 If you are really hungry, eat at home so you won't bring judgment upon yourselves when you meet together. (1 Cor. 11:31-34a; NLT)

Not a threat, but an opportunity for God's blessing

³¹ But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way. ³² Yet when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

³³ So, my dear brothers and sisters, when you gather for the Lord's Supper, wait for each other. ³⁴ If you are really hungry, eat at home so you won't bring judgment upon yourselves when you meet together. (1 Cor. 11:31-34a; NLT)

Does God judge believers in this manner today ?

➤ ??

➤ Believers are coming before the Lord's table in a worthy manner?

➤ Not necessarily so

➤ Physical & immediate judgment from God often happened during times of great renewal and blessing

➤ Infant church growing exponentially; Ananias and Sapphira struck dead for lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11)

➤ “severe” blessing/judgment vs. God abandoning his people (cf. Romans 1:18-32)?

What is the Lord's Supper

- A gathering of God's children to
 - Eat bread and drink "wine"
 - Return to the cross on which Jesus died
 - Recall all that Jesus' death accomplished for us
 - Proclaim (announce) good news of Jesus' death
 - Anticipate Jesus' return & Wedding Feast of the Lamb (Rev. 16: 6-9)
 - **Examine ourselves before the Lord & renew our commitment to Him**