

**How To Destroy The Lord's Supper – Part 2**  
**(1 Corinthians 11:23-26      July 12, 2020)**

# How To Destroy The Lord's Supper Part 2

— 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 —



What is the battle cry of the church?

In many ways it is:

**Remember!**

*Remember Christ. Remember the cross. Remember who you once were. Remember who you now are. Remember your God-given task. Remember His certain return.*

**Remember!**

When the Bible uses the term *remember* – it does not only mean – think about something from the past – it means let the great deeds of God done in history reside in you deeply such that it spurs you to action today.

These truths we are called to remember are the core of our faith and must be ever before our hearts.

And it is these truths we remember and spur us to fresh commitment every time we eat the bread and drink the cup.

This morning we come to the second sermon in a series of three on the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper and baptism are the two ordinances given to the church by Christ.

These are visible signs whereby we proclaim the gospel and commit ourselves to Christ and His church.

Last week I gave you a definition of the Lord's Supper which is actually the overarching point for all three sermons in this series.

**The Lord's Supper is a ceremony through which the church regularly proclaims the gospel and reaffirms our commitment to Christ and each other.**

Communion brings the gospel to our hearts in a tangible way.

What I want to suggest is that in regard to the Lord's Supper – while there are a wide variety of ways to practice this ordinance – there are a number of things that are crucial and you have to get them right – or whatever it is you are doing – it is **not** the Lord's Supper.

Anything else and you destroy God's Supper and you can even incur God's judgment.

This is what Paul speaks to in our passage. Last week we saw that:

**We can destroy the Lord's Supper and even incur God's judgment if we – Fail to fight our divisions 17-22.**

Basically, the Corinthians partook of a ceremony that was designed to declare our unity while allowing the innate divisions among them to remain. They made no real attempt to fight to declare their unity in Christ.

This morning, we will see that:

The Lord's Supper is a ceremony through which the church regularly proclaims the gospel and reaffirms our commitment to Christ and each other.

But, we can destroy the Lord's Supper and even incur God's judgment if we:

Fail to fight our divisions 17-22

Fail to remember our salvation 23-26



**We can destroy the Lord's Supper and even incur God's judgment if we – Fail to remember our salvation 23-26.**

Look with me at these verses:

1 Corinthians 11:23–26:

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, 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, and said, “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.

You may not be aware that these verses have caused a great deal of disagreement in the church.

What is fascinating is that the two ordinances – baptism and the Lord’s Supper – signs that in part are meant to picture our unity became one of the greatest sources of disunity among the Reformers.

Much of the disagreement regarding the Lord’s Supper focussed on two words – IS and REMEMBER.

It would be fair to say that there are many views about what the Lord’s Supper is and what happens when you partake – but *four views* have come to typify the main ways this passage is understood.

Those are the views of the *Catholic church, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli*.

In particular, these views understand the words – *this **is** My body* – quite differently.

In the Upper Room – on the last night of His life – what did Jesus mean when He took a piece of bread and said to His disciples – this **is** My Body?

The *first* view is:

## Catholic – Transubstantiation

This is My body means

This bread becomes My body



### **Catholic – Transubstantiation**

**This is My body means**

**This bread becomes My body**

When the priest utters the words of the mass – the Holy Spirit performs a miracle and transforms the bread and the cup into the literal body and blood of Christ. Communicants actually eat His body and drink His blood.

That is why in Catholic, high Anglican and some other traditions – all the bread and wine left over must be consumed by the priest and officials – because you don't just throw out the literal body and blood of Christ.

Logically makes little sense. When Jesus stood before His disciples at the Last Supper and said – this is My body – He was still in His earthly body. In what way could that bit of bread be His literal body – or even a part of His body?

Would they understand Jesus to be saying you have to eat His body and drink His blood?

No. Jesus used metaphors often. When He said – I am the door – it did not mean He became a literal door – something made of wood with hinges.

And theologically it made no sense. Today, Christ's resurrected body is in heaven – not on earth. Hebrews 10 is clear – Jesus gave His body once and now there no longer needs to be an offering for sin. His body does not have to leave heaven – return to earth and be offered for us again at every mass.

The *second* view is:

## Luther – Consubstantiation

This is My body means

This bread is surrounded by My body



### **Luther – Consubstantiation**

**This is My body means**

**This bread is surrounded by My body**

Luther's problem with transubstantiation – the Catholic view – was *not* that Christ's literal body and blood were present – but that in the Catholic view – the bread and wine were gone.

When Jesus held the bread and said – this is My body – to Luther that implied the bread was still bread.

So he taught that while the bread and cup did not transform into the literal body and blood of Christ – the literal body and blood of Christ has to be there surrounding the elements.

The body and blood of Christ is *in, with and under* the bread and wine.

This was important to Luther – because the Lord's Supper links us with the incarnate Christ – Christ become flesh.

The incarnate Christ is the link between man a creature of flesh and blood – and God a being of Spirit.

The problem is that this view has all the same failings as the Catholic position and today is only adopted by a few more traditional branches of the Lutheran church.

The *third* view is:

## Calvin – Instrumentalism

This is My body means

This bread spiritually links you with My body



### Calvin – Instrumentalism

This is My body means

This bread spiritually links you with My body

Calvin was clear – the resurrected body of Christ is in heaven. But he understood that eating and drinking was the physical instrument that spiritually connects believers on earth with the body and blood of Christ in heaven.

There is no real presence of the *physical* body of Christ in the elements – but he taught there is a certainly a real presence of Christ *spiritually* in the bread and wine.

Calvin based his view on 1 Corinthians 10:16:

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a **sharing** in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a **sharing** in the body of Christ?

He argued that a fellowship, a sharing, a true communion with Christ required union with the power of His resurrected body and blood.

He said Christ is present spiritually and the act of eating in faith connects us to the risen Christ in the heavens in such a way that we are spiritually fed and nourished by the power of the body and blood of Christ.

The Westminster Confession Of Faith adopts Calvin's view. They put it like this:

Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death: the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with,

or under the bread and wine; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.

Let's be frank – it is not a view that springs readily from the text and it is not the easiest view to get your head around.

While this is a good view and held by many solid Christians – I do not find it the best way to understand this passage.

If you just had the gospel accounts of the Last Supper or 1 Corinthians 11 – I don't see how you could come to this view. Nothing in these passages seems to speak of the bread linking us spiritually with Christ's body.

It seems to rely heavily on one particular understanding of 1 Corinthians 10:16.

It makes the spiritual union come from the actual act of eating and drinking – rather than fellowship and association.

When you read chapter 10 – Paul's argument seems to be you show your allegiance by whose table you join in with. It is not specifically the eating and drinking that links you with the demons or with Christ – it is who you give your allegiance to.

Calvin seems to argue that it is eating *and* faith that links you spiritually.

Paul's argument seems much more that it is just faith that links you.

And it seems to downplay the importance of Jesus' words ***which is for you*** and especially ***do this in remembrance of Me***.

The *final* view is probably the view that has come to be the most commonly accepted view. Even in Presbyterian and other Reformed churches – this has become an increasingly common view:

## Zwingli – Symbolism

This is My body means

This bread signifies My body



### **Zwingli – Symbolism**

**This is My body means**

**This bread signifies My body**

The bread is a picture, a reminder of Christ's body given as a sacrifice.

The cup is a picture, a reminder of Christ's blood that initiates the new covenant.

They are aids to remembrance.

They are means by which the church calls to mind the truths of the gospel.

You see Jesus did not just say – this is My body – He said – this is My body *which is for you and do this in remembrance of Me.*

A body given on behalf of someone – would evoke centuries of sacrifice. When they heard these words, the disciples were well aware that the forgiveness of sin meant someone had to die. They knew Jesus was saying – that someone is Me.

The fact that this was said in a Passover meal – a memorial meal where the various elements pointed to the redemptive plan of God – would connect the bread to the sacrifices for sin.

The disciples were Jews – they understood symbolism and memorial. They would have understood that Jesus was saying this bread represents a new sacrifice – His body – given for them.

They understood that the bread remains bread. The wine remains wine.

They would not have thought Jesus was saying the bread and wine become, surround or link you with the actual body of Christ – *except* through faith.

What links you with Christ's death is faith.

Personally, I find the Zwinglian view theologically and expositionally to be easily the strongest view.

I find the other views can downplay the real significance of thinking deeply about the atonement and the work of Christ and what it means to be under the new covenant.

I also believe this is the only view that deals with the cup properly. The other views seem to treat Jesus as saying – this cup is My blood. Catholics and Luther would say it is the literal blood. Calvin would say the cup links us with the blood of Christ.

But as we will see – Jesus actually said – this cup is the New Covenant in My blood. It is a call to remember the covenant.

The reason Calvin and those who follow him objected to this is they see this view as more of a bare memorial – that it takes fellowship with the risen Christ out of the ordinance.

What I want to say is that Zwingli and those like me who follow his view would *never* see the Lord's Supper as a bare memorial. **May it never be!**

We see a deep communion with Christ and the church in this time – but what links us in this communion is faith and the Holy Spirit – not bread and wine.

This is not just a time to remember something that happened long ago.

What Christ did is meant to spur us to action today.

Faith requires action. Faith without works is dead.

Having said this – wherever you land on this issue – be careful.

Let us not be unaware how divisive Christians can be on an issue like this. In 1529 Reformers from across Europe met in Marburg to discuss many issues – but primarily the Lord's Supper.

The two leading theologians were Luther and Zwingli.

Luther began by taking chalk and writing on the table in Latin – *hoc est corpus meum* – THIS **IS** MY BODY.

When you read the transcript of the debate – Zwingli made a number of devastating arguments including pointing to John 6:33 – it is the Spirit who gives life not the flesh of Christ and that Jesus's body ascended to heaven so cannot be in the Supper. That Jesus told us what the significance was – do this in *remembrance* of Me.

But at each point Luther kept unveiling what he had written and pointing to it – *hoc est corpus meum* – THIS **IS** MY BODY.

Luther then wrote 15 articles regarding the Lord's Supper. All could agree on 14 of the articles – but the 15<sup>th</sup> – on whether Christ was really present in the Supper or not – there was no agreement.

It split the church in the early days of the Reformation and hindered the spread of the gospel.

So, let me be clear. This is not an unimportant argument.

There are crucial theological issues at stake. Some views seem to require a re-sacrifice of Christ and must be opposed.

But in all the good views – views like Calvin and Zwingli – you find the gospel – and you find commitment to the church.

So – be Bereans – know what you believe – practice what you believe – but unless a particular view undermines the gospel – don't let our differences divide the true body of Christ.

That brings us to the other main word. **Remember**.

What does this mean?

It is true that remembrance can be done as a mere memorial. You can visit your grandma's grave on her birthday and remember how awesome she was to you as a child.

But, remembrance can also be a call to action.

When Mexican Texas decided to revolt and join the United States, one of the pivotal battles was the battle of the Alamo.

General Santa Anna overwhelmed the Alamo and killed the defenders. But the cry that inspired the Texans to fight and win the Mexican-American war was – **Remember the Alamo**.

The idea was not – think kindly about the brave men who lost their lives in the Alamo.

The idea was – do not let their lives be in vain. The torch has passed to you. It is now you who must stand up and fight. *Remember the Alamo*.

**Remember** is a powerful biblical word – and it is never a bare memorial. Biblically it is always a call to action.

Throughout the Old Testament there are calls to remember linked to a sign or a ceremony that then becomes a call to obedience – a call to action – today.

Many of these calls to remember are related to the Exodus event.

Psalm 105:5:

Remember the wondrous works he has done, his wonders, and the judgments he has pronounced.

The Psalmist then recounts all the deeds of God associated with the Exodus but then He ends with this. Psalm 105:45:

All this happened so that they might keep his statutes and obey his instructions. Hallelujah!

Remembrance of God's salvation is meant to lead to action, to obedience in us today.

As Moses stood on the edge of the Promised Land, he gave a call to remember.

Deuteronomy 5:6:

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery.

Then comes a call to obedience – the Ten Commandments – but right in the middle of the Ten Commandments comes a second call to remember their deliverance.

But then the Ten Commandments end with a call to obedience. Deuteronomy 5:32:

Be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you are not to turn aside to the right or the left.

Remembrance of what God has done in delivering you, saving you leads to you committing yourself to His commands today.

And perhaps the most significant regular call to remembrance in the Old Testament was the Passover.

Exodus 12:14:

This day is to be a memorial for you ... You are to celebrate it throughout your generations as a permanent statute.

It is a memorial – a time to remember the deliverance of God.

Exodus 12:26–27:

When your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' you are to reply, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when he struck the Egyptians, and he spared our homes.' " So the people knelt low and worshiped.

Every Passover the people were to remember the salvation of God and recommit themselves to live in obedience by following the commands given to them in the Old Covenant.

In Jewish thought – remembrance – hearing the Word – is *always* linked with obedience and action.

Now, on the night in which He was betrayed Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples. But He reoriented the remembrance. He showed the Passover pointed to Him and to the final great deliverance – the deliverance from sin at the cross.

The sacrifice and the blood pointed to Him. It was *His* blood that would save.

Instead of the Law of the Old Covenant – His death initiates the New Covenant.

Now what you remember is *His* death – *His* new covenant – and it is that which changes the way you live today.

We need these times to remembrance.

I have been married for 30 years. Since then I have attended hundreds of weddings.

Every time I hear the vows made – I think of my vows – and I recommit myself to those vows. I strive to be a better husband.

In a sense this is what happens when you partake of the Lord's Supper.

So please look with me at Paul's words. We begin in verses 23 and 24:

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks.

It is possible that Paul received this as a direct revelation from the Lord. More likely this was the teaching of the Apostles passed on – but in Paul's understanding this is just as reliable as if Jesus had spoken them to him.

When you read the words of Scripture they are just as authoritative as if Jesus spoke them directly to you.

This teaching about the Lord's Supper is what Paul passed on to Corinth and indeed to every church.

The words he uses to set the scene for this teaching are remarkable.

*On the night when He was betrayed.*

He could have said – On the night of Jesus' final Passover. On the night before His death. On His last night on earth.

He said – *on the night when He was betrayed.*

Why introduce this teaching this way?

Listen to the words of Luke 22:19–22:

And he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he also took the cup after supper and said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. But look, the hand of the one betraying me is at the table with me. For the Son of Man will go away as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!”

Jesus made it clear He was One who was going to die in order to save His people.

And yet one of those sitting there – one of the disciples – one partaking of the bread and cup would betray Him.

Judas heard Jesus’ words – I am going to offer My body and blood to save those who desire to become united to My death. But he also had 30 pieces of silver on offer.

Judas weighed this up – eternal life – 30 pieces of silver – and he decided to go with the money. But notice – he still ate the bread.

In John’s Gospel – Jesus says:

“Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” ... Simon Peter ... leaned back against Jesus and asked him, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus replied, “He’s the one I give the piece of bread to after I have dipped it.” When he had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son. John 13:21–26

Judas is put on the spot – Jesus says – this one is the betrayer.

Judas didn’t deny it. Nor did he just get up and leave.

John says Judas ate the bread and *then* left. He ate the bread Jesus said was to be eaten by followers wanting to be united to His death.

So why did Judas eat? We can’t be sure. Did he think he could have the money and the eternal life?

It is hard to say – but you want to talk about partaking in an unworthy manner – that is what Judas did.

I think the reason Paul introduced this section in the way he did was to remind us that we too can partake without any intention of keeping our side of the ceremony – walking in obedience to the Lordship of Christ.

We can eat and drink – telling yourself – glad I’m saved by grace not my works – my works are pretty ordinary – knowing you are going to walk out the door of the church and sin – and that is an unworthy partaking.

Notice something else remarkable here. Jesus knows He is going to be betrayed and crucified – and yet – He gives thanks. Don't think He was saying grace – thank you for this bread and cup – amen – dig in.

No – This was in the midst of the meal. He was giving thanks that He could give His body – lay down His life for His people – become the atoning sacrifice.

He gave thanks that He could die for us.

Jesus was *not* a victim of circumstance. Jesus was not some cosmic pawn sacrificed by a callous Father. The Good Shepherd laid down His life willingly.

Jesus then gave them bread and a cup.

The next question is – is there a difference between the bread and the cup – or do they both point to the same thing?

All too often the Lord's Supper is celebrated as if there is no difference.

It is as if we are told the bread is a reminder of Christ's body – which represents His death *and* the cup is a reminder of Christ's blood – which well ... it also represents His death.

All too often it is as if they both picture the death of Christ.

This led to a practice known as intinction. Since they represent the same thing – you dip the bread in the cup and eat them together – remembering His death.

But the Scriptures indicate that there is a difference between them.

The Gospels tell us that Jesus gave them the bread during the Passover Supper and the Cup was given after the Supper.

I want to suggest that the body and blood do both reflect the death of Christ – but they link to different aspects of our salvation.

The Lord's Supper is a ceremony through which the church regularly proclaims the gospel and reaffirms our commitment to Christ and each other.

But, we can destroy the Lord's Supper and even incur God's judgment if we:

Fail to fight our divisions 17-22

Fail to remember our salvation 23-26

Bread: We remember His body – an atoning sacrifice

Cup: We remember His blood – a new covenant



**Bread: We remember His body – an atoning sacrifice**

**Cup: We remember His blood – a new covenant**

Look at verse 24 regarding the bread:

And when he had given thanks, broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

With these words, in the context of a Passover meal, Jesus evoked centuries of sacrifice.

The bodies of animals – sacrificed for sin. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin.

They merely covered sin and pointed to the final once for all sacrifice – the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

It clearly evoked Isaiah 53 – we are saved by His sacrifice for us.

**This is My body, which is for you** – is perhaps the most succinct statement we have in Scripture of the great and foundational doctrine of **penal substitutionary atonement**.

We are called to think deeply and remember the very heart of the gospel.

We have sinned against a holy God. Nothing we can do can atone for even one of the countless sins we have committed. We are lost.

But God is not just holy and righteous – He is also love. When we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

Christ is the sinless Lamb. He deserves no punishment. But He chose to die in our place. He received the penalty due us. The wrath of God that we deserve is poured on Him. We receive His righteousness – which we do not and can never deserve.

This is the gospel.

1 Corinthians 15:3:

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

1 Peter 3:18:

Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God.

Romans 5:6:

For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.

Galatians 3:13:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

2 Corinthians 5:21:

He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

He died the death we deserve.

This is how a perfectly just, holy and loving God can save sinners. Only the cross allows us to understand the justice of God and the love of God and the plan of God to save us.

Every time you eat the bread – you are to remember Christ's death for you.

It is a declaration – I believe I am a sinner who can do nothing to save myself. But Christ can. He willingly gave His life for me. By faith I receive the benefit of the cross. He takes my unrighteousness and the wrath of God falls on Him. He imputes me with His righteousness – His perfect life.

Hallelujah! I am saved.

We remember that if it took the death of God's Son to atone for our sin then a massive evil must reside in us.

We remember that the scouring, the degradation, the impaling, the nails, the suffering He went through should have been ours.

We remember that the life that was poured out should have been ours.

We remember the wrath poured out on Him that should have been poured on me.

We remember that we are not saved on the basis of our puny, flawed works – but on the basis of His perfect life.

As we partake – we thank God for Christ, for the cross, for salvation. We remember our life depends on the torn flesh and bloody sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Eating the bread says – this is my gospel – this the heart of the Christian life for me.

If you don't believe and love this doctrine – which is the gospel – don't partake.

If you do believe it – then it has to warm every fibre of your being and you rejoice to partake.

### **Remember!**

Then Paul turns to address the cup.

1 Corinthians 11:25:

In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

To understand this, we need to think about covenant and in particular the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

What is a covenant?

John Murray gives this definition:

Covenant in Scripture denotes the oath-bound confirmation of promise.<sup>1</sup>

The covenants of Scripture have a definite form.

(1) the *preamble*, ... (2) the *historical prologue*, ... (3) the *stipulations* or requirements [to] obey ... (4) a *cursings* section that outlines the penalties ... if they break the covenant; (5) a *blessings* section that promises rewards ... if they keep the covenant.<sup>2</sup>

The Old Covenant in Scripture specifically refers to the covenant made on mount Sinai – the covenant of Law (Jeremiah 31:32).

This covenant required death and the shedding of blood.

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Thomas McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise* (Nottingham: IVP, 1985) p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> Carl B. Hoch Jr., *All Things New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995) pp. 75-76.

The writer of Hebrews said this in Hebrews 9:15–19:

Because a death has taken place for redemption from the transgressions committed under the first covenant [the Old Covenant]. ... That is why even the first covenant was inaugurated with blood.

It took the shedding of blood – the blood of animals – to inaugurate the Old Covenant.

The Old Covenant dealt with salvation by keeping the Law. Keep the Law perfectly and you will live.

But no one could do that.

So Jeremiah said – a **New** Covenant was needed (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

A covenant whereby God will forgive our iniquity and never again remember our sin.

But this one also required blood to initiate it.

Jesus said – it is My blood, My death that will begin the New Covenant.

Under this covenant you are not saved by your works – but by the perfect works of Christ.

The Law said DO and we failed. The New Covenant said DONE and it was finished.

It is the blood of Christ – the death of Christ that applied the benefits of this covenant to us.

We often only think of what Christ does under the New Covenant. But crucially, and we will see this more in next week's sermon – the New covenant like all covenants has *stipulations* we must obey – *cursings* penalties if we break the covenant; – and *blessings* if we keep the covenant.

While we are saved only and completely by Christ's work on the cross – entering into this covenant means we agree to keep the New Covenant stipulations of striving for repentance, obedience, doing good – accepting His lordship over our lives.

We agree to work out our sanctification in fear and trembling. To strive to put off sin and put on Christ.

We do this *not* to earn salvation – because we can't – but out of love for Christ who gave us salvation at the cost of His blood. Our obedience is the fruit of salvation.

In one sense much of Hebrews is a warning to Christians not to violate the covenant with Christ they entered into.

Warnings if we:

(1) Neglect so great a salvation (2:1–4)

- (2) Harden our hearts (3:5–4:13)
- (3) Fall away (6:4–12)
- (4) Sin willfully (10:26–31)
- (5) Refuse to hear (12:14–29).

Hebrews emphatically warns that there are consequences if we fail to keep our oath of loyalty to Christ. And these warnings are linked to casually disregarding the oath made in the blood of Christ.

Hebrews 10:26–30:

For if we deliberately go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment .... How much worse punishment do you think one will deserve who has trampled on the Son of God, who has regarded as profane the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified.

Profane the blood of the covenant and God will judge.

Hebrews 12:22–25:

Instead, you have come to ... Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, .... See to it that you do not reject the one who speaks.

What does this mean?

When you drink the cup – you remember the covenant initiated by the shedding of Jesus' blood *and* you affirm your participation under the terms of the New Covenant.

You accept Christ's lordship and you commit yourself to striving to live by the law of Christ.

We are all very good at rejoicing in one side of the covenant – what Christ has done for us – saving us by His death.

But, we must not forget the other side of the covenant – we agree to strive for holiness – unity – Christlikeness.

So, when you eat and drink at the Supper of the Lord – you do *not* just think fondly of Jesus and His death.

It is a call to action. Jesus called me to be holy. Jesus called me to make disciples. Jesus called me proclaim His truth.

We are not just saying – thank you for the cross – but I will live for the cross.

You need to know – this is what you are doing when you eat and drink.

Verse 26:

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

What does this verse teach us about the frequency of the Lord's Supper?

Some read this verse like this:

For as often as you gather together you should eat this bread and drink the cup.

No, it says – however often you eat the bread and cup – you proclaim His death. You declare the glory of the cross and reorient your whole life under it.

So how often should we celebrate it?

Different traditions have landed in different places.

In the days after the church was formed we read:

Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. Acts 2:46.

Breaking bread may refer to the Lord's Supper. It is hotly debated. But it may mean the early church celebrated the Lord's Supper every single day.

Years later it may well be that the pattern of the church moved to a weekly celebration.

Acts 20:7 says this:

On the first day of the week, we assembled to break bread.

They broke bread on the first day of the week. Again there is debate about this phrase.

But even if it means communion, this doesn't necessarily imply that they broke bread every first day of the week – although they may well have.

By the time Paul wrote 1 Corinthians it is unclear exactly how regularly the Lord's Supper was celebrated.

Some traditions – in particular the Brethren and Church of Christ have chosen to celebrate this weekly.

In some ways I would love to celebrate this weekly – even daily.

But experience has shown that a weekly celebration can make this too routine and familiar. It can diminish the sense of occasion.

When you have to have singing, prayer, preaching, baptisms, other events – *and* the Lord's Table – it can get squeezed – one more thing to fit in. The Lord's Table can miss out on its rightful prominence. It takes time to explain it properly, give a warning, proclaim the gospel and conduct the Supper.

It doesn't have to be this way. I think you can do it well weekly but it takes a lot more work to avoid this tendency.

Some traditions have said – the Passover was yearly – so we should celebrate the Lord's Table yearly – usually at Easter.

They make this a major focus of the service.

Most churches are somewhere in between.

Monthly to three monthly.

We have chosen to celebrate it once a month.

We believe that allows it to be a significant enough event not to be too routine or fall into ritual – but frequent enough to regularly remember Christ, proclaim His death and remember our obligations to Him.

What is the right frequency? It will vary from church to church.

But, however often you do it – you are to proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

There should be a proclamation – a preaching – a putting forth of the gospel.

The Lord's Supper contains every element of the gospel. Our sin, His righteousness, His atoning death, our commitment to His Lordship and His certain return.

Christians need to hear the gospel regularly.

Any unbeliever attending church needs to hear it.

We proclaim these precious truths to ourselves, to each other and to the world.

And we do this until He comes again.

As Jesus began the Passover meal where He introduced the Lord's Supper He said this:

I have fervently desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. ... For I tell you, from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. Luke 22:15–18.

When we eat and drink we remember – Jesus is not done with us.

His death does not make us perfect – yet.

His atoning death paid the penalty for our sin – but we still sin.

His blood initiated the new covenant – but we fail to fully keep our commitments.

But, part of what this time does is remind us that a day is coming when Jesus will return.

On that day won't celebrate Passover or the Lord's Supper – we will celebrate the marriage Supper of the Lamb – the consummation of all things.

We will be done with sin. We will never again fail to honour the lordship of Christ. We will enjoy Him perfectly for all eternity.

Christ will finish what He began.

Partaking of the Lord's Supper is not a bare memorial whereby we thank Jesus for the cross.

There is so much more going on. It reminds us of every major truth in the gospel.

It is a call to:

*Remember Christ. Remember the cross. Remember who you once were. Remember who you now are. Remember your God-given task. Remember His certain return.*

**Remember!**

And let these truths change how you live today.

The Lord's Supper is a call to  
remember the sacrifice of Christ and  
our obligations to His covenant



**The Lord's Supper is a call to remember the sacrifice of Christ and our obligations to His covenant**

**The Lord's Supper is a call to remember the sacrifice of Christ and our obligations to His covenant**

When we remember these truths – and commit ourselves to these truths – then we partake of the Lord's Supper worthily.

## How To Destroy The Lord's Supper – Part 2 (1 Corinthians 11:23-26      July 12, 2020)

**Main Point:** The Lord's Supper is a call to remember the sacrifice of Christ and our obligations to His covenant.

### General Questions:

1. Read 1 Cor 11:23-26.

Can you summarise the four main views of – *this is My body*. The views of the *Catholic church, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli*.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?

2. Is it significant that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper in the midst of a Passover celebration? If so why?
3. What is the significance of the call to remember? In what ways is remembrance a call to action?
4. Why are regular times of remembrance essential?
5. Why do you think Paul mentioned that the Last Supper was on the night Jesus was betrayed?
6. Why is it significant that Jesus gave thanks?
7. Do you agree that there is a difference between what we associate and remember with the bread and the cup or not?
8. What should we remember regarding the bread?

Do you agree that the words – **This is My body, which is for you** – is perhaps the most succinct statement we have in Scripture of the great and foundational doctrine of **penal substitutionary atonement**?

What is **penal substitutionary atonement**? Is it central to the gospel message?

9. What should we remember regarding the cup?

What is the New Covenant? What are our obligations under the New Covenant?

What are we committing to when we drink the cup?

10. Do you believe Scripture sets a frequency on the Lord's Supper or not? Why?

11. What are the dangers of too frequent and too seldom?

12. How does the Table point to the Second Coming and the eternal Kingdom? What should we think about and celebrate in regard to this?

**Application Questions:**

1. Where do you draw the line between biblical and non-biblical celebrations of the Table? eg. Is a re-sacrifice of Christ biblical?
2. When you eat the bread – what do you remember?
3. When you eat the bread – what is the call to obedience for you?
4. When you drink the cup – what do you remember?
5. When you drink the cup – what is the call to obedience for you?
6. How do you not partake like Judas – eating while knowing you will disobey?
7. What would your ideal frequency of observance be? Why?
8. What would make this time more significant for you?
9. What thrills your soul about the Lord's Supper?