

A Supper with No Rules?? -- 11/1/2020

I Corinthians 11: 17— 22 [23-29] (NRSV)

Introduction — what makes a meal— a meal??? One thing is— the rules. I found out about rules at dinner when i was a kid. “Sit up straight.” “Use the spoon in your right hand.” “Brush the butter on your bread gently with the knife— don’t be so messy!!” “Wipe your face with the napkin, not your shirt sleeve!!!” My dad was a little frustrated when i read a book at age ten, and started using my fork in my left hand all the time, and my spoon or knife in my right hand, all the time, like people do in Europe.

What makes a meal— a “holy meal”?? The “holy meal” that many Christians are familiar with, besides “the Lord’s Supper” or communion, is the Jewish Passover. If you have ever attended a Jewish Passover, or a Christian Passover based on the Old Testament story of the Passover, you know that it is a rather complicated, very regimented and carefully scripted supper — near the beginning, a child asks: “why is this night different than all other nights?” And “why is this meal different than all other meals?” ----> which prompts the rabbi or parent leading the meal to re— tell the story of the Exodus. There are certain foods served at certain times during the meal...

It is important for Christians to know that, in some ways, the Lord’s Supper, or Holy Communion, or the Eucharist, is based on the Hebrew Passover meal. It was while Jesus was leading a Passover meal with his disciples, that he defined the meaning of the bread and the cup. So, the apostle wanted to explain to the Corinthian Christians what the bread and the cup mean for believers together . . . . He told them what Holy Communion was, and was not.

I. What communion is NOT !!!

A. The setting of i Corinthians 11— v. 17— 22 1. The Lord’s supper was celebrated in most early churches, as here, at the end of a love feast , what we think of as a covered dish or fellowship meal. However . . . . .

2. The wealthier believers there might bring a lot of food; the poor and the slaves couldn’t bring much, if any— the slaves, in fact, probably had to feed their masters, and so came late to the love feast— may have had nothing...

B. Problems of the love feast — get this picture:

1. Some wealthy believers ate theirs, and did not share!!!

2. Everyone ate what they brought— and did not share with others.

3. And the slaves— who came late— had nothing!!!!

C. Purpose of Paul's statements: ( read vv. 23— 26 )

1. V. 23-26 — this means that communion is serious!! It is not just a piece of bread and a cup of wine— it represents Jesus Christ our savior, who shed his blood and died for each one of us!!

2. V. 27-32 — (read v. 27-28 again) this means that we should not break up the fellowship with any divisions— we are one in Christ— whatever differences we might have among us — let nothing interfere with our unity, love, and fellowship.

li. What communion is !!

1st —>a. It is a meal —

1. Think about what a meal is— the time for feeding our body, for giving us what we need to physically survive!

2. In ancient times, the meal was also a time of showing acceptance, experiencing fellowship, sharing the time that is very important for our survival— meal time!!

3. And so it is today!! Sharing a meal is still a vital time.

2nd —>b. It is a remembering — “do this in remembrance of me” (11:24)

1. We all know what a “day of remembering” is—

2. We celebrate the birthdays of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln— we remember two of our greatest presidents. We celebrate thanksgiving to remember some of the earliest settlers of our nation.

3. In the Lord's supper—

We remember: — Christ's death— that he

----->> died on the cross . . . . .we remember: — Christ's death was a

----->> sacrifice for us— he died for our sins, as

----->> the prophet Isaiah said: (Isa. 53:5) “he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him...”

We remember: — our need for Christ's ----->> sacrifice for our sins.... And — we all need the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our salvation !!! We all need Christ for our salvation, and we sermon all need the bread and cup of Christ, equally — the old saying i have used before, is also true of the Lord's supper — “the ground at the cross is level” — we are all equals.

3rd —>c. Communion is a celebration — “you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes....” (11:26)

1. Early Christians looked on the Lord's Supper as sort of the first course of the great banquet in the kingdom of God! (Matt. 22 )

2. Those of you in college— or who remember coming home for the first time— remember that first meal at home?!?

3. Soldiers— first time home from war— that first meal???

4. That's what the great banquet in the kingdom of God will be like—

----->>> only far greater!!!!!!

Conclusion — so let us celebrate this morning, in the “spirit” of true Christian love, harmony, and fellowship, and share together in the body and blood of the savior who died on the cross to save us from our sins ....“pray for the peace of Jerusalem!!!!!!”