

Come to the Table; Part 2

1 Corinthians 11

Introduction

- Going to a restaurant that has a regular menu (adult menu) and a kid's menu
 - Kid friendly food
 - Small portion
 - Less expensive (side note: the bowl of Mac and cheese costs \$5.00, but it is still cheaper than ordering an adult meal)
- What is the purpose?
 - To separate the needs of adults from kids
 - Provides options
- Experience at Cheddar's last week
 - Kids got their own table away from the adults
 - Adult conversations could be had
- There comes a point when kids grow out of the kid's menu and the kid's table
 - They want to be treated like everyone else
 - The distinction isn't cool anymore
 - We as parents have to make adjustments (and the restaurant bill increases!)
- Sermon Series- "All In: The Family of God"
 - Return to the table and discover that there were distinctions that were being made and they were creating divisions among the congregation
 - Purpose of the series: Develop God's story as the foundation of your family
 - Passover to Communion
 - Covers the theme of the entire Bible
 - Participate and observe today
 - **1 Corinthians 11**
 - The Apostle Paul address several concerns with the church in Corinth
 - Chapter 11 deals mainly with concerns regarding worship
 - **1 Corinthians 11:17 (ESV), "But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse."**
 - Instead of creating unity, Communion, was creating divisions within the church
 - That's a big problem!
 - Accomplish 3 things with today's message
 - Bring together the story bookends of Passover and Communion
 - How the story informs the way we practice our faith
 - How we put into practice our approach to Communion

Bookends: Passover to Communion

- Snapshot of the Bible-understand Passover and Communion as bookends
 - Passover (Exodus 12)

- Israel enslaved in Egypt
 - Cry out to God
 - God delivers by passing over the Israelite homes that have spread the blood of the lamb over the doorposts of their homes
 - God judges the rest of Egypt
 - Israel escapes Egypt as God parts the Red Sea
 - Story is retold throughout Israel's history
 - Communion
 - **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**
 - Last Supper
 - Enslaved to sin
 - Deliverance comes through Jesus' death on the cross
 - Jesus' blood is referred to as "the blood of the lamb"
 - Jesus' blood covers our heart from the sin in our lives
 - Therefore we are delivered from judgement
 - The Apostle Paul is passing on a story that has been told throughout Israel's history.
 - This story is one of the most important stories of our faith
 - It directs what we believe about Jesus and how we put into practice the faith we have in Jesus
 - In the same way, God's story must be the foundation of your family story in order for it to shape the way your family puts into practice the faith that we share.
 - The value of Paul's letters is that they are not intended to tell a story, but to encourage, teach, and correct the early church. In other words, they are a direct application of the story!
 - **1 Corinthians 11:17-19**
 - Communion should bring us together; not separate us
 - This isn't Adult table vs Kid's table or Deserving vs. Undeserving
 - Communion represents the grace of God, which we all need!
 - **1 Corinthians 11:20-21**
 - The extremes: Hungry to Drunk!
 - The purpose has been lost
 - No longer the Lord's Supper
- Two things that we gather from this
 - When we forget why we do what we do it loses its meaning
 - "Do this in remembrance of me."
 - The story matters
 - Bookends of our faith-it reminds of what God has done and the hope we have in God.
 - We all need to come to this table, because we are all in need of God's grace
 - This meal represents the grace that God offers

- We find commonality at this table, not because of our righteousness, but because of our sin!
 - The moment that we forget, “fall all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23, ESV)” the meal ceases to be the Lord’s Supper!
- Passover and Communion are bookends of the Bible

Informs What We Practice

- Appetizer, Main Meal, Dessert
 - “Don’t eat too much of the appetizer, or you will spoil your meal.”
 - “Did you save enough room for dessert?”
 - The main dish is at the center of the entire meal.
 - If we aren’t careful we can miss the meal!
- **1 Corinthians 11:23**
 - The Apostle Paul speaks from personal experience
 - Encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus
 - Teaching and tradition-storytelling
 - **1 Corinthians 15:3 (ESV), “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures.”**
 - Paul had authority to speak, because he knew what he was talking about
 - Knowing the story informs what we practice
 - Communion is an affirmation of our faith
 - Partaking in Communion doesn’t save you
 - Faith is what saves you. Instead communion is an affirmation of the faith that you already practice.
- **1 Corinthians 11:24-26**
 - Jesus is at the center of the meal! He is the main course!
 - Unfortunately, some in the church at Corinth had spoiled their meal!
 - N.T. Wright, “The Eucharist (Communion) is the moment at which the past event comes forward to live again in the present and the future moment of the Lord’s return comes backward in time to challenge us in the present.”¹
 - The story informs what we practice
 - Jesus’ death 2000 years ago is relevant in this moment because it reminds us that Jesus gave us all of himself.
 - It also enables us to look ahead, when Jesus will return and the hope of our salvation will be fulfilled as he makes all things new!
- Knowing the story informs what we practice
 - The more you know the story, the more this practice becomes relevant to your life!
 - Grace, mercy, surrender, love are all elements at the Table

¹ N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004. Pg. 150.

- When we forget this part, we miss the main meal-in fact as Paul says, “it is (no longer) the Lord’s supper that you eat (1 Corinthians 11:20, ESV).”

The Appropriate Approach

- Communion experience at grandpa’s church
 - Different tradition than I was accustomed to
 - Used to sitting at pew and being served
 - Methodist church go up to be served through a line
 - Intinction-break off a piece of the bread and dip it into the cup of juice
 - I could see people dipping their hands into the cup, but I didn’t know they were dipping the bread
 - When I got up I tore of a piece of the bread, dipped my finger into the cup, and then stuck my fingers into mouth, and finally I ate the bread!
 - It was kind of embarrassing because I was in front of the entire church that I didn’t know.
 - Here is where knowing the story of tradition would have come in handy so that I could have known the appropriate approach.
- The Apostle Paul provides instructions for the appropriate approach to the communion, however it is not focused on the physical steps as much as how one approaches with the heart.
 - **1 Corinthians 11:27-29**
 - Paul writes that judgement comes upon someone who does not come with the appropriate approach to communion
 - The problem that the church in Corinth had was that they were judging others as they were taking communion.
 - What they didn’t realize is that they were actually pronouncing judgment upon themselves because their hearts were not in the right place.
 - So what is the appropriate approach that we should have?
 - Examine yourself- not everyone else!
 - Communion is a moment to not only reflect upon what Jesus has done, but on where we need God’s grace in our life.
 - This is what the “Response Time” is for
 - If we never respond to God’s story, how then can we apply it?
 - **1 Corinthians 11:32**
 - A proper approach to communion allows for us to be open to God’s correction
 - What separates us is how we allow God to work in our heart as we approach communion
 - Notice it is a separation from the world; not fellow believers!
- Without the appropriate approach to communion, we will miss the main meal!

Conclusion

- Knowing the story informs how we practice our faith. When we know the story we can come with the appropriate approach.

- **Show Pictures** “Come to the Table” experience
 - Unity and Fellowship-which always teaches us a lesson
 - Often times, I have no idea what it is going to look like
 - Many of you have not known what to expect, but you have come with an open heart
 - It has been really neat to see what God has done!
 - Provides us with a picture of what it truly means to come to the table before the presence of God!
 - Remember the past
 - Look toward the future
 - Respond in the present