

6 Purposes Of The Observance Of The Lord's Supper

Sermon Notes
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1 Corinthians 11:17-34

17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.

18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.

20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper:

21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk.

22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken

for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

33 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

34 But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

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In the Paul's teaching and the teaching of the Gospels on the institution of the Lord's Supper as an act of faith and worship, we discover that there are 6 clear purposes given for why we should be obedient

to observe the Communion publicly and often.

Often when I give a lesson from this portion I focus our attention on one or two aspects of the meaning and purpose of the observance of the Lord's Supper. This morning I want to us to get a bird's eye view of the 6 clear purposes of why we should worship God with this act of faith known as the Communion or as the Lord's Supper.

As we consider these 6 purposes for observing the Lord's Supper, notice that they are also a good summary of what the Christian faith and practice is.

What does it mean to be a believer in Jesus Christ? What does it mean to live like a Christian? What are the responsibilities, goals, occupation, hopes and blessings of being a Christian?

Those questions are all answered and summarized in the teaching on the purposes of the observance of the Lord's Supper.

6 Purposes –

- 1) To remember the purpose of Jesus' death
- 2) To demonstrate our unity in Christ
- 3) To remember the covenant of Grace that we enjoy because of the Lord's shed blood
- 4) To proclaim the significance of Christ death to the world
- 5) To remind us of His coming
- 6) To give us opportunity to examine ourselves that we might live in a manner worthy of who we are

1) To remember the purpose of Jesus' death

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

The first purpose of the Communion is to give us physical and visible reminder to take time to stop and contemplate why Jesus died on the cross.

When I have a meeting or an appointment, I set an alarm on my phone to go off prior to the appointment to remind me to be where I need to be and to do what I need to do. The alarm is not the appointment. It going off doesn't fulfill my obligations. It simply reminds me of what I need to do.

The observance of the Lord's Supper is like that alarm. The observance itself is not the fulfillment of our obligations of worship. It simply reminds us to take time to stop and remember why Jesus died and the impact that truth should have on our every thought, word and action.

If I don't set an alarm on my phone for my upcoming appointments, it is so easy for me to get involved in whatever I'm involved in at the moment and forget my appointment until it's too late.

We get so busy with the things of life, family, school, work, just the hustle and bustle of living that we often forget that life has no meaning or significance apart from knowing God and His love that was manifested to us through the death of His Son on the cross.

I've also set my alarm, heard it go off and then continue on with what I was doing, thinking that I would go after just a little while and before I know it, time has slipped away and I missed my appointment.

May we not take Communion this morning and then leave here forgetting what it means to be a follower of Christ or what are our blessings as well as our responsibilities.

Contemplating what Jesus did for me on the cross is what has set and continually sets the direction of my life and what gives it purpose.

Romans 5:6-8

6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

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Sin separated me from my Creator. My sin made me an enemy of God and His righteousness and worthy of His just wrath. Yet, the One that I had offended loved me so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross to pay the debt of my sin and impart to me His righteousness so that I might have an eternal, living relationship God.

Isaiah 53:4-6

*4 Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.*

*5 But He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.*

*6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us*

all.

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Taking time to remember what Jesus did for me when He died on the cross has often caused me to make corrections in the direction of my life and to refocus my attention and energies on things that have eternal value.

I've often shared that as a teenager, when I was tempted to live a life of self-indulgence and abandon the way of faith especially when I saw so much hypocrisy among so many Christians the Holy Spirit

was faithful to point me back to the cross and say, “but Jesus died for you because He loves you.” “Jesus has never failed you.” “Jesus has never lied to you.” “He gave Himself for you.”

That revelation of the love of Jesus for me, manifested on the cross, has conquered my heart over and over. How can I not love Him? How can I not serve Him and live my life for His glory? His love conquers me and constrains me and fills my heart with joy and praise for the Lamb of God that took away the burden of the guilt of my sin.

If you don’t take time to contemplate why Jesus died on the cross, His love cannot continually conquer you and give your life direction.

2) To demonstrate our unity in Christ

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

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We observe the Lord’s Supper publicly in the worship service because it is a demonstration that all believers have been made members of the mystical body of Christ. We have been made one with Christ and one with each other.

As fellow members of the Body of Christ we are recognizing our mutual responsibility to care for one another and to encourage and strengthen one another in our walk with the Lord. It is beneficial for all that every member of the Body be healthy and strong.

This is why Paul's words to the Corinthians were so stern when he wrote them to correct their practice of the Lord's Supper. They were using the Lord's Supper as a time of exclusion and neglect of some of the members of the Body of Christ.

May we use this time this morning to remember that there are no unimportant members of the Body of Christ. May we remember the importance of gathering together in Jesus' name in the local assembly to encourage one another.

Hebrews 10:23-25

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,

25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

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Ephesians 4:15-16

15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ —

16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

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The observance of the Lord's Supper this morning should serve to remind us that we are not to live to ourselves or for ourselves. We have been made part of something that is bigger than ourselves. We need each other and we honor our Head when we love and care for one another.

3) To remember the covenant of Grace that we enjoy because of the Lord's shed blood

25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

The covenant of the Law only brought cursing and death. The new covenant of grace, sealed and established by the shed blood of Jesus Christ brings life and blessing.

We should spend the rest of our life here on earth seeking to know and experience all that Christ died to give us for time and eternity.

Ephesians 1:15-23

15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,

16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,

23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

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May we take time to search out and to constantly remember the blessings that are ours because of Jesus did for us on the cross. May we truly show ourselves to be a workman that does not need to be ashamed because we know how to rightly divide the word of truth.

The blessings of the New Covenant in the shed blood of Jesus Christ includes all spiritual blessings

in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Forgiveness of Sins, Eternal Life, Home in heaven. Answered prayer. Guidance. Protection. Joy unspeakable, Peace that passes understanding. Hope of the resurrection. Glorified Body and to sit with Jesus Christ as His eternal partner.

If we are faithful to take time to remember the benefits that are ours because of this New Covenant of Grace, how can we not take time to worship and glorify the grace of God? How can we not present our lives as a living sacrifice of praise to God and His Son for so great a salvation?

We should dedicate whatever time God gives us in this life to studying the benefits of this Covenant of Grace and to walking in these benefits to the glory of His grace.

4) To proclaim the significance of Christ death to the world

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

The Lord's Supper is also a time for us to remember our responsibility to proclaim the gospel message to others.

1 Corinthians 1:18

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

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1 Corinthians 1:21

21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

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The symbols of the body and blood of Jesus' death on the cross remind us of the focus of our message. It is simple. It is clear.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,

2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

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1 Timothy 2:3-6

3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,

4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be

testified in due time,
NKJV

5) To remind us of His coming

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

Matthew 26:29

29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

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The doctrine of the 2nd coming of Christ is central to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is why Jesus died on the cross so that we might be with Him in eternity.

As the hour of the suffering on the cross approached Jesus prayed the prayer found in John 17.

John 17:1-5

1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,

2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.

3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with

Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

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John 17:24

24 "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

NKJV

As we look back at the cross, may we also look forward to the coming of the Lord and know that it is certain and it is soon. May we live each day with eternity in mind.

6) To give us opportunity to examine ourselves that we might live in a manner worthy of who we are

Last, but not least, may we take time to examine our lives to see if we are truly living in a way that brings glory and honor to this One that loves us with an everlasting love and Who laid down His life for us.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;

15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

NKJV

Titus 2:11-15

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

NKJV

Are we such a people, zealous of good works? Are our lives purified from the practice of sin through the teachings of the grace of God? This morning we have an opportunity to examine ourselves and apply the grace of God that will make any necessary corrections in our lives so that we may truly be equipped to be used of Him to do His good work.

We celebrate the Lord's Supper this morning with these 6 truths in mind. These 6 purposes of the observance of the Communion summarize the Christian faith and practice. We are to be a people of purpose.

