

"THE LORD'S SUPPER"  
1 Cor. 11:17-34

Intro: When Paul wrote to Timothy about the Word of God, he said that it was profitable "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, . . ." (2 Tim. 3:16). All three of these apply to Paul's instruction concerning the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor. 11. Teaching sometimes is necessitated by a misuse of some aspect of truth. Such was the case here. In fact, the Lord had moved with judgment against some because of the way the Lord's Supper had been desecrated. See v. 30. And it is not surprising that in a church with so many problems, the Lord's Supper should be included. The factions mentioned in the first part of the Epistle were meeting together at the Lord's table, and this had been displeasing to God, and to the Apostle Paul also.

Accordingly Paul points out in this passage in dealing with this particular situation that there were four reasons for coming to the Lord's Supper.

I. OBEDIENCE TO THE LORD. Cf. 1 Cor. 11:23-25.

It was the Lord Who had said, "Take, eat, . . ." Therefore, no child of God can be completely obedient to the Lord and consistently stay away from the Lord's Supper. It is a vital part of all that is involved in our obedience to the Lord.

Think of what the Lord said about obedience in the Upper Room Discourse which immediately preceded His arrest and death, the time when these words were spoken.

II. REMEMBRANCE OF THE LORD.

Two times this is mentioned: in vv. 24, 25.

How amazing that there would even be the possibility that we could forget!

But this does not just mean to remember the Lord as a Person (although that is involved), but it means to remember what He has done, what He had to do, what He did completely -- all for us, a work which no other could do and which only He did!

Cf. some of the references to the Cross in this Epistle. Cf. 1:17, 18; 2:1, 2; 6:9-11; 8:11; 15:3, 4.

There is no more vital truth in all of Scripture, OT and NT, and to forget our Lord in this is to forget the Word of God.

This has been established because we need it.

III. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL. See 1 Cor. 11:26.

We proclaim that we believe it. We proclaim it for others to know about it. This is probably one place where 1 Pet. 3:15 applies. It contains all of the essential elements of the Gospel. See John 6:48-58. Note what followed.

And it is observed in anticipation of the coming of the Lord. That is when the object of the death of Christ will be fully realized. Remember what our Lord said in Matt. 26:29,

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Although no unconverted person should take the Lord's Supper, there is always the possibility that some may be present -- even our children -- and this will give us the opportunity to tell why we remember the Lord in this way: We are preaching the Gospel, not by what we say, nor by what we are, but by what we do.

IV. FOR EXAMINATION OF OURSELVES, OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE LORD AND OUR RELATIONSHIP TO OTHERS -- ESPECIALLY TO OTHER BELIEVERS. See 1 Cor. 11:27-32.

No child of God should ever come to the Lord's Supper without opening his heart to the Lord as David did in Psalm 139. Self-examination should be daily with us, but especially when we come to the Lord's Supper.

And notice that this examination is so that we may eat, not to keep us away. It is the very death which this Supper remembers by which you and I are prepared to do that which speaks of our salvation.

Concl: It should also be an occasion of great joy and of great thanksgiving to God. This is our only hope of heaven, and the ground of our assurance that we are saved, forgiven of our sins.