

Being Thankful for Christ

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[0:00] Well, it's a pleasure, it's a blessing for us to gather like this tonight and eventually here in a moment we're going to be partaking of this supper, the Lord's supper we call it.

! And before we do that, though, I want to share just a little bit from the Word of God that comes to us from the passage that quite often I, other pastors like me, use in the taking of the supper.

And it's the passage found in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. So take your Bibles and turn to 1

Corinthians chapter 11. And I'm going to read starting with verse 23.

And finish with verse 26. 23 through 26. Then I want to share just a few thoughts from this passage.

And then we'll partake of this supper. 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 23. Paul is writing. And he writes, 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.

[1:33] And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, Take, take, eat. This is my body, which is broken for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. In the same manner, he also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

And this do, as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes.

Now, this passage is, you know, not detached from something that Paul is writing about in his letter.

And it's attached very clearly to an issue there at the Church of Corinth. An issue concerning fellowship, unity, concerning selfishness, concerning the coming together and ultimately the partaking of this supper in a way that is unworthy, an unworthy manner of taking it.

[2:46] And so, you know, it's okay to take this passage out of that context because he is, in a sense, quoting the Lord Jesus himself.

So we're not going to get into the issue of the problems at the Church of Corinth and so forth and how this fits into that text. But just take this by itself.

As Paul says, a direct, divine revelation that was given to him. Now, as we look at this text, and I was looking back over it again this past week and thinking about what I might say about it.

I thought about how in the Gospels, when we have there recorded Jesus instituting this supper. And Paul wasn't there.

That's why God had to give it to him directly. But when Jesus was instituting the supper, he, a couple of times, the Bible says that he gave thanks.

[3:53] Gave thanks. Broke the bread. Gave thanks. Broke the bread. And what I got to thinking about, though, though Paul doesn't mention that part of it, it caused me to consider that we need to thank God for this supper.

We need to thank him. Oftentimes, when we gather for the Lord's Supper, we spend some time, hopefully spend some time examining our hearts and hopefully, privately, dealing with maybe some unconfessed sin, unrepentant of sin.

And it's right every time we come to worship, not just for the Lord's Supper, but it's right every time we come to worship to do some business with God so that we can worship freely with a clear conscience.

And so we often approach the supper thinking in those terms. And we often approach the supper remembering what Jesus has done for us. But do we thank him?

Do we thank him as we should? And when I got to looking at the way Paul describes this, there were several things that just stood out to me, some specific things that we should thank God for.

[5:15] Some specific things that are attached to this, not only this text, but this supper. That we need to thank him for.

Let me give them to you real quickly. And I'll just kind of present them with one word. Each one, each of them one word. The first one is revelation.

In light of this text and all that Paul said, we should thank God for his revelation. And he said, I'm not sure I follow you.

Well, I've already mentioned it just a little bit or barely mentioned it. But in verse 23, Paul, very deliberate to say, to declare that what he is writing to them, what he is about to say to them, he had received it.

He received it. I mentioned a moment ago that Paul was not there when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. He was not there. He was not even saved. I'm not sure if he even knew who Jesus was at the time.

[6:27] He may have. So he was not there. He did not hear the words. Unlike the gospel writers and some of the other witnesses to the supper that passed it on to other gospel writers.

Unlike them, Paul had to get what he wrote here directly from Jesus. That's rather interesting.

That's why I think you see somewhat of some differences in the accounts.

Not that Matthew got it wrong and, you know, and John, well, John didn't write about it, but Mark and Luke misunderstood. Not that they did not give us correct information about what took place there in that upper room.

But that Paul had not only something a little different to say about it, but it was expanded from what they said. The point I'm trying to make is that what Paul writes to us here, God gave to him directly through divine revelation.

Now, I say that we should thank God for that. Now, obviously, I could expand that and should expand that to every portion of Scripture.

[7:40] Where would we be today? If it were not for God inspiring his Bible writers, divinely inspiring them, to write down his word, to give them revelation.

Many times the revelation came about because God moved in their lives and allowed them to see things and learn things and come to conclusions about things.

All of that being guided by the Holy Spirit. And so then, when they finally wrote it down, it was without error. It was correct. It was inspired. Sometimes God gave direct revelation and they wrote it down just like God said it.

A few cases of that in Scripture, and I think this is one. God gave him a direct revelation of what Jesus said in that upper room.

Thank God for his revelation. And every time you pick up the Word of God and read it devotionally or read it in preparation for teaching a Sunday school class or reading it because you're looking for an answer for your own life or maybe an answer for some member of your family or friend or co-worker.

[8:59] Every time you go to God's Word, realize, first of all, that every word is inspired. It is the divine, sacred, inerrant revelation of God himself realizing that you should thank him.

Thank him for his revelation. And what we know about this supper and the significance of this supper and some of that significance we know only really from Paul or at least it is strongly proclaimed by Paul and no one else.

All of that we have because God saw fit to give it to Paul so he could give it to us. Revelation.

Thank him for his revelation. Second, as we move on down through the text, need to thank him for his incarnation.

Incarnation. You know what incarnation means? It means God became a man. The Bible says here, as Paul has put down on paper, what God has given to him.

He says, and when he, speaking of Jesus, had given thanks, he broke it and he said, take, eat, this is what?

[10:28] My body. My body. The implication there, the inference there is the incarnation.

That Jesus had a real body. There are those who would have us believe that, yeah, Jesus did exist, but he was kind of a spirit being and he just looked like a man.

You know, just from appearance, he looked like a man, but he wasn't really flesh and blood. It's not possible because flesh and blood is wicked and evil and Jesus was not and so he must not have had a body.

But no, Jesus had a body. He said, this is my body. This bread that I have broken for you and have prayed over and I'm giving to you and in a moment you're going to eat is signifies, it's symbolic of,

it's a representation of my actual body.

Is the incarnation important? That truth, that doctrine, is it crucial? Or is it one of those kind of fringe doctrines that maybe you can believe in or not believe in and really doesn't have any eternal ramifications?

[11:52] No, it is absolutely crucial that we believe that Jesus, Son of God, set aside his glory, clothed himself in human flesh and came here as a real man and lived here as a man.

As much man and as much flesh and blood as you are and I am flesh and blood. He became a man and dwelt among us, the Bible says.

And he preached and he died. Is it important that a man, an actual man, a representative of us, died upon that cross?

Absolutely crucial. If he were not a man, he could not take our sin. He represented us on the cross. Now, since he was God also, all God, he could pay an eternal price for sin upon the cross. But it had to be a man, the incarnation.

[13:03] He said, this is my body, my body. Thank God for his incarnation. Thank God that he condescended and stepped out of heaven and came to this earth.

He came to us because we could not come to him. The third one is redemption. We sang quite a bit about that during our worship time.

Redemption. Our redeemer. And as we go on, in the same manner, he also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the covenant, the new covenant, in my blood.

A covenant of blood. This do as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. And so thank him for his redemption.

Redeeming us. Purchasing us. And the purchase price, of course, was his blood. His blood.

[14:13] His body was his sacrifice. It was broken for us. He went to the cross and died upon the cross. His blood is what redeems us.

Purchases us. Buys us for himself. Thank God for our redemption.

Our redemption in Christ. Thank him for his revelation. Thank him for his incarnation.

Thank him for his redemption. Our redemption in him. Fourth, thank him. You know, I skipped one. Let me go back one. Thank him for substitution. That comes before redemption.

[15:21] So if you're writing notes, just scratch out the numbers there and we'll get it right. So here, revelation, incarnation, substitution.

Now where do we have something here about substitution? Well, there in verse 24. Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you. Broken for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. You've heard this from me a number of times. At the prison the other night, I made quite a strong point about this.

This little word for. And having us understand that the idea here is that Jesus died upon the cross as a substitute for us.

He did it for us in the sense that he took our place. Thank him for his substitution. His substitution.

[16:24] And so he's saying to his disciples as he's instituting the Lord's Supper. This is my body. This bread that I have broken. And it's been broken for you.

It represents my body. It represents my body. My life. That was broken in behalf of you. For you. In your stead as a substitute for you. Jesus went through the cross for us.

Took our place there. Thank him. For his substitution. We've already talked about redemption. And then number five. Thank him for proclamation.

Proclamation. Verse 26. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death. You see, what Paul is sharing with us here, given to him by divine revelation, really also challenges us.

If he is saying here that as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming something, then the implication is we have the responsibility to proclaim the Lord's death.

[17:47] Now, that's just a simple way of putting it like this, to proclaim the gospel. The good news of Jesus, that he died for our sins, was raised from the dead.

The gospel, the good news of salvation in Christ Jesus. And so, the supper here is part of that proclamation. We're proclaiming it. We're proclaiming it.

But I say we ought to be thankful for proclamation for this reason. By the grace of God, we are all here today because somebody proclaimed it to us.

In God's design, in God's plan, God uses His people to proclaim the truth so that others will be saved.

And thus, here we are tonight. Thank Him for proclamation. And then one more, and these are all very logical.

[18:52] The last one is expectation. Has God given you an expectation about the future? Well, yeah. You say, about a lot of things.

You know, you're expecting this, maybe expecting a raise at your next evaluation at work, or expecting, you know, this or that or whatever, expecting to make a big purchase because you'll have enough money saved, or you're expecting a new granddaughter or whatever it may be. Well, what about your expectation for the future, the eternity? I don't know if we're thankful for a new granddaughter.

I didn't mean that. Sorry, Tony. They're all shaking their head like... Don't get the idea I'm making any connection there. Am I?

No. No. Better move on. In fact, I don't know where I am now. Now, our expectation is in the coming of Christ.

[20:03] And you know, we have or we're conscious of that expectation more at some times than at others. Sometimes, in fact, maybe the majority of the time, sadly, we don't think of that.

But the fact is, we, all of our lives, we have been living in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is, the at any moment He could come. We're not waiting for a set of things to happen. There are things happening that give us a clue that it may be close, but quite frankly, the Bible gives us nothing about this must happen first.

It's the imminent return. And just as imminent in that sense now as it was when Paul wrote these words. Only today, it's even closer.

And we ought to have an expectation about us. And we ought to be thankful that God gives us that expectation. It's a blessed hope.

[21:14] We know it's going to happen one day. Maybe in our lifetime. Maybe not. But we are to live constantly in the expectation of that.

Of Jesus' return. When He's going to make everything right. And so, Paul says here, You proclaim the Lord's death.

How long? Till He comes. Till He comes. So you just keep on doing it. We'll keep on taking of this supper. And proclaiming the death of Christ.

And we keep on proclaiming the cross in a host of other ways in our lives. And we just keep on doing that until Jesus comes. Till He comes. But what I want us to focus on is the promise here.

And that is He is coming. Paul is not going to tell us to do such and such if Jesus is not coming or if He's uncertain about it. The implication is He's coming.

[22:18] You can be sure about that. It's a promise. You know it's going to happen. It's going to come right on schedule. Not your schedule or mine. Contrary to what we often say, Jesus is not tarrying in His return.

He's going to come right on schedule. But He will come. And thank God for the expectation of that. And maybe it will be tonight while we're taking of this supper.

Wouldn't that be great?