

Remembering Christ

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[0:00] I want to talk a little bit about this table that's set up behind us here.

! And of course, we're going to observe the Lord's Supper here in just a little bit. And I called it that, didn't I? The Lord's Supper. And I think, generally, that's what most of us think of when we think of what we're going to do here tonight.

We call it the Lord's Supper, and rightly so, because that's what Paul called it in 1 Corinthians 11, 20. It's the Lord's Supper. But it does go by some other names that maybe we ought to consider. And maybe some of these terms or names are confusing. So let me just kind of throw these out to you as we prepare for the Supper tonight.

Luke called it the breaking of bread in Acts and referring to the Lord's Supper. So it was the breaking of bread. And it's very easy to see the connection between the breaking of bread or that terminology and the Supper itself, because that's exactly what the Bible says Jesus did.

[1:21] He broke the bread, and then he gave it to them. And he said, Eat, this is my body, which is broken, broken for you. So there's the breaking of bread.

We don't always call it that, but we could, and we would be very scriptural. A number of places in the Bible, Paul, I think, primarily refers to it as communion. And sometimes we call it that, don't we? This is communion. We take communion. There are other denominations that use that term maybe more often than Baptists do. And obviously some of them mean something a little bit different than what we mean when we refer to the Lord's Supper.

But communion is a term that's used. Lord's Supper, breaking of bread. And sometimes, and maybe you have heard the term Eucharist, that we take the Eucharist.

And you probably have thought, well, that's not Baptist there, you know. And yet you don't really know possibly what the term means. And actually, the term comes from Scripture as well.

[2:26] It comes from 1 Corinthians 11, 24, which is the passage we're going to be in here in a little bit. But it comes from the word that Paul used there.

The word is Eucharistia. And what does it mean? Anybody know? Give thanks. It means to give thanks or the giving of thanks.

And it's a reference to what the Bible says Jesus did when he broke the bread. He gave thanks and broke the bread and gave it to them. And so that's all in the world. That means Eucharist.

It means the giving of thanks. And really this is an opportunity, a time, a very special time in the life of the believer, in the life of the church specifically, for us to give thanks.

To offer up our thanks to the Lord. And what are we thanking him for? Of course, his sacrifice for us. His atonement. His shedding of blood at the cross.

[3:27] All right, so the Eucharist. And then you might have also heard someone refer to this supper as a sacrament. And you're thinking, that's not Baptist either, is it?

And it actually comes from Augustine. And he was the one who called the Lord's Supper a sacrament. And the word just simply means a pledge.

Or a bond. We could even use the word promise. Now, the problem with referring to this as a sacrament is that there are those who believe in a number of different sacraments.

And they attach to sacraments a power to give grace. And so if the Lord's Supper is a sacrament, there are those who refer to it in that sense.

In the sense that it is going to give you grace. So that when we take the bread and the wine or the grape juice, then there's this idea that God is imparting some special grace to us through the taking of this, quote, sacrament.

[4:40] But the word sacrament doesn't have to mean that. It means a pledge. And so the Lord's Supper is not a sacrament in the sense of saving grace. But rather, it is a sacrament in the sense of

a promise.

Or maybe better put, a pledge of allegiance. To whom? To Christ. And it's an opportunity for us to do that in this supper.

We're not only thinking thoughts about Christ. And about what He has done for us. And we'll get into that here in just a moment. But we are also renewing, hopefully, personally.

Renewing our commitment to Him. Our promise. Our pledge of allegiance to Him. All right. So there are some of the various ways that some refer to what we call, and I guess prefer to call, the Lord's Supper.

And I might add another one that is very Baptist. And it really focuses on what we believe about this supper. And so sometimes we call it a memorial.

[5:47] Memorial Supper. And it is a memorial, first and foremost. It is remembering Christ. And that will be our subject as we get into the text.

So that's what we call it. Or some call it. And what we call it. Various names for it. And I want to throw that out to you. Just so that we maybe could be better informed.

When we hear some of these terms. But now, the real question is, what should we do when we take it? Not what we call it.

And I suppose we could spend time about why we do it. And I think all of us know why we take this supper on a regular basis. You know, for Baptists, very Baptists, to do it once a quarter.

But we really could take it more frequently if we wanted to. And it would be fine. It does tend to lose some of its significance to us when we take it, say, every Sunday.

[6:53] But even that would be okay. We could talk about that. But really the question is, what should we do while we take it? Have you thought about that?

In the past, when you have participated in the Lord's Supper? And, you know, and the pastor usually will call upon you to have a personal time of prayer.

And then when you get that bread, and even before you eat it, and in your thoughts, as you contemplate it, is there something you should be doing at that moment?

Yes. The answer is yes. In fact, I'm going to suggest to you from Paul's account of the Lord's Supper, I'm going to suggest to you that there are three things we should do.

And none of this is going to be brand new stuff for you. That's the other thing about the Lord's Supper. There isn't any new information out there about it. It's all been there for a long time.

[7:59] And if you've been a Christian very long, and a Baptist very long, then you have had many opportunities to take of the Lord's Supper. And every time we take it, there's some comment about it.

And so, this is not new. But let's renew our thoughts about this. And let's do three things here tonight.

Here's the first one. Well, let me read the text first. And it's familiar. And I'm not going to read the entire portion of Scripture that relates to the Lord's Supper. Everything that Paul says before it and after it.

Because Paul is including this account of the Lord's Supper in his letter to the Corinthians for a purpose. A very important purpose for the church at Corinth.

And though it is very good for us to know what that is and study that, that's not going to be my focus tonight. We'll do that some other time. But let me start with verse 23 of 1 Corinthians chapter 11.

[9:01] And read down to, oh, verse 28. And then we'll get in the three major things I want you to see here.

Paul wrote, For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you. That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread.

And when he had given thanks, he break it and said, Take, eat. This is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup. When he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament, the new covenant in my blood.

This do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.

[10:04] Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

But let a man examine himself. And so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. All right, there's a lot just in the portion of the passage that I read that we could talk about tonight. I'm just going to pull out of this passage three things. Three things concerning what we need to do here tonight, here in a moment, when we take of this supper.

And they're really easy to remember. The first thing we need to do is to look back and remember. That's the first thing. The supper, the Lord's Supper, the Communion Supper, this Memorial Supper, this Eucharist.

It calls upon us to look back and remember something. If we know anything about the Supper, we know that, don't we? That it calls upon us to look back and remember.

[11 : 18] In fact, Jesus tells us to do it twice. He doesn't tell us to do it twice. He tells us twice to do it. Okay? What does He say? Do this in remembrance of Me.

Do this to remember Me. Why eat this bread? He's saying to His disciples or their thinking, possibly, because it's something new. This is something different than the Passover.

Jesus is instituting something brand new. And He breaks the bread and He gives it to them. And He says, eat it. This is My body.

And every time you eat it in this way, in this manner, you're to do it remembering Me. In remembrance of Me. And then when He passed around the cup, He said, likewise.

Drink this cup. And as often as you drink of this, remember Me. Remember Me. And so we look back, don't we?

[12 : 22] And we remember. And we are remembering when we eat the bread and drink this juice. We are remembering, first of all, Christ's body that was broken for us.

Isn't that what we are remembering? And I should use this word. The cross. That's what we are remembering. Because it was there that Jesus' body was broken.

Broken upon the cross. Not bone broken. Because the Bible says not a bone was broken. But His body was broken in that He died there. Hanging upon that cross.

This supper looks to the cross. Now, this is not the only time, obviously, that we ought to be looking to the cross. We ought to be remembering, looking back and remembering the cross.

Many times throughout our lives, we're to look to the cross. Remember the cross. And remember what Christ has done for us there. But this supper, specifically, calls upon us to look back to the cross.

[13 : 30] And remember what happened there. And it was there that Jesus' body was broken for us. And this is what our focus ought to be here tonight.

You know, the cross is central to the life of the Christian. Isn't it? In fact, I would take it a step further and have us realize that the cross is central to history itself.

Did you know that there are words in our English language that believers and non-believers use in a secular sense that reveal to us that though we, many do not know this and do not recognize this or acknowledge this, but the cross is central to all of history.

There are a couple of words in our English language. Like, for example, the word crucial. Have you ever used the word crucial? Have you ever heard anybody use the word crucial who was not a believer?

Did you know that they are making a reference to the cross? The word crucial in the Latin is the Latin word or comes from the Latin that means pertaining to the cross.

[14 : 46] Isn't that interesting? Let me give you a second word and I'll put these together and make the point. The other word is crux. Now, maybe you don't use that word as often, but haven't you used that or heard that word use?

The crux of the matter. Did you know the word crux is Latin for cross? It's Latin for cross.

And so when a person says the crux of the matter is this, or they say this is the crucial point to my argument.

When they say those words, what they're really saying is just as the cross is central to Christianity, my point, the point I'm making is crucial or central to my argument.

And so next time you hear someone who's an unbeliever use the word, this is crucial or say crucial, you'll say, yeah, say, amen, you're right. And so what you're saying here is the point you're making is just as central to what you're saying is just as central to your point as the cross is central to all of history.

[16:03] It's crucial. So remember that Christ's body was broken for us. We remember also that Christ's blood was shed for us.

The two go together, don't they? When Jesus' body was broken upon that cross, he shed his blood. You say, well, people, when they die, if they get nailed to a cross or get spears in their side or crown thorns on the head, they're going to bleed. And so what's the big deal? Well, there are a lot of people who, men and women, who were crucified in Jesus' day, before his day and during his day and after his day.

Thousands of people were crucified and shed their blood, but there was a difference with Jesus. Jesus was the fulfillment of the plan of redemption.

It was the fulfillment, the accomplishment of atonement for our sin so that our sin could be forgiven.

[17:19] All of the Old Testament sacrifices were simply types of the atonement of Christ upon the cross. All those sacrifices, way back, matter of fact, you want to go all the way back to the Garden of Eden.

The first glimpse, the first gospel message, the first type of the cross, of the supreme sacrifice for sin, was there in the Garden of Eden when God took those animals and slaughtered them, shed their blood, so that Adam and Eve could have a covering for their sin.

The first sacrifice was made there and it was made by God. And he did so as an example to them, but he also was teaching them and us that without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sin.

The first blood atonement was done there in the Garden of Eden. And then you can fast forward to Isaac and Abraham was going to sacrifice Isaac because God had commanded that he do so. And here's Abraham and Isaac walking up the side of Mount Moriah. And Abraham is going to obey God and sacrifice his only son. But then you know the story.

[18:37] God provided a substitute for Isaac. And that substitute was a ram. And it was the blood of that innocent animal that made an atonement, a substitute.

Again, a type pointing to the atonement of Christ. And you can go all throughout the Old Testament. You can go to the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. And all the lambs that were slain there and their blood, of course, splashed upon the doorposts of the homes of the Israelites so that they would go out under the blood.

And when the destroyer came, God said, when I see the blood, I will pass over you. Atonement. Atonement.

Atonement. Types of the supreme atonement that would be made by Christ upon the cross when he shed his blood. And all the Old Testament sacrificial system was just simply a type of Christ. Type of the cross. So this is what we're to remember. We're to look back and remember. We look back to the cross and remember that Jesus' body was broken there for us.

[19:57] And that his blood was shed for us there. Without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sin. So look back and remember. The second thing that we need to do.

And this is not in order of the text. Take this a little out of the order. The second thing is to look within and repent.

Repent. This is what we should do. Every day of our lives. And every, not just once a day, but throughout the day.

We're to have times of self-examination. To look within. And to repent. But this supper here calls upon us to do that.

And we understand that from something that Paul said here in verse 28. He said, but a man must examine himself.

[20:55] Examine. Self-examination. And in so doing, self-examining himself or herself. In so doing, he or I can add she is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

Now in the strict sense. Strict meaning. Of what Paul has written here. He's talking about a matter that is not the case here.

He's talking about a problem within the body there at Corinth. Where the people of Corinth were taking of the supper in an unworthy manner. Unworthily.

And we could spend a lot of time talking about what that was about. But there was selfishness and self-centeredness. And they had made the Lord's Supper a mockery. And so they were actually taking of the supper in an unworthy manner.

And so Paul was calling upon them to examine themselves. Not just simply a self-examination. But to examine what was going on in the body.

[22:04] And come to grips with this sin that was there to deal with it. So explicitly he's referring to something a little different here. But it is implied though.

That every time we come and gather to take of this supper. We too should have a time of self-examination. And why should we do that?

Self-examination in the first place reveals something. Doesn't it? What does it reveal? Sin.

Sadly, that's the case. And we need to do that. We need to be introspective. And to look into our own hearts and our own lives.

And have a time of self-examination. Again, not just when we take the supper. But many times. Every day. Especially tonight. Before we take of this supper.

[23:05] Have that time of self-examination. Because it reveals something. It reveals sin. But it also. The self-examination results in something.

Or should. And that's repentance. And thirdly, self-examination reinforces something.

And that is our need for God's grace. Now think about self-examination in those three senses. It reveals something.

It reveals our sin. Every time. If you're honest. Open. If there's true self-examination. If there's true self-examination. If you're looking into your life.

And you're hard. And looking deep into the nooks and cranny. Crannies of your life. Not shrinking back from it. Not trying to hide any of it.

[24:04] Not making alibis for it. Being open and honest. And self-examining your life. Then every time. God will. And He's gracious. To reveal sin.

Because He wants that to be dealt with. And He knows that our communion. With Him. Can never be. As rich as it should be. So long as there is unconfessed.

Undealt with sin. In our lives. You say. Well I don't know of any right now. Well. Spend some time. In self-examination. I don't know about you.

But. I'm pretty good at hiding things. Covering it up. Kind of tucking it away. Until. Hopefully I've forgotten about it. And if you're honest.

In your self-examination. God will lead you there. And say. What about this? It reveals something. It results in something. Repentance. And it reinforces something.

[25:02] Our absolute utter. Dependence. And need. For God's grace. It's an interesting thing. That I noticed the other day.

When I was looking through. Some of the accounts. The gospel accounts. Of the last supper. The Lord's supper. In Matthew. Chapter 26. You might just turn to it very quickly.

I'm reading tonight. From the King James. You might have noticed. That's because Brother Ralph. Was reading from the King James. This morning. And I thought. It's good for him. It's good for me. And.

No. I have a great love. For the King James. But the. Absolute. Honest. Answer. Is. My. New. King James. Bible. Is at home. I left it in my computer.

Case. And so. I've pulled out. My King James. Is that okay? Well. It just. Will have to be. If you look at. Matthew 26. And.

[25:58] Starting with. Verse 22. And. By the way. Matthew. Mark. And Luke. All start. Pretty much. The same way. They're. They're. Parallel. They. They're. The synoptics.

They're seeing through the same eye. And so. This is what. What it says. And as they did eat. He said. Jesus said. Verily I say unto you. That one of you. Shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful. And began.

Every one of them. To say. Unto him. Lord. Is it I? I. Now. We're familiar with that. That part of the. Of the story. Of the account. Aren't we? In fact. Some of us have seen some dramatic presentations of it. And I think very powerful. You know. Living last supper. And.

[26:55] And each one. You know. Is saying. Is it I? Is it I? Is it I? And it seems to be a natural response. I mean. There isn't anything. You know. Unusual about this.

You were there. You might be asking the same question. Lord. Is it me? Me? But what we ought to understand from this. Is that each one. Was engaging in self-examination.

It was a question. A question that they apparently. Could not answer. And so. The implication is. That each one thought. Well maybe it could be me. Maybe I will betray him.

Is it in me to do that? And I. I think. My answer. Is. Yes.
 It's in every one of us to do that. In fact. There are times. When we come pretty close. To out and out. Betraying our Lord. Savior. And so the point of this.
 [28:02] Is there. Ought to be. A self-examination. The disciples were doing that. Examining themselves. Is it me? Is it me? Is it me? And every one of them. Set it around the table. And then. Matthew. And he's the only one who does this. Tells us what Judas. Said. In verse 25.
 Then Judas. Which betrayed him. Answered and said. Master. Is it I? Now he asked the same thing. That all the rest of them did. And so I think the idea is.
 That all around the table. Each one. Saying. Is it I? Is it I? Is it I? They said. Lord. Is it I? Lord. Is it I? Lord. Is it I? Matthew. There's Peter.
 There's John. And all of the disciples. Lord. Is it I? And we don't have each one. Accounted for here. They're kind of lumped together. But Matthew separates out.
 [29:01] Separates Judas out. And so we have him asking the same question. But did you notice. That he did not say Lord. He said master.
 Or. Rabbi. You see. Each one. Were examining. Their lives.
 Yes. And in a sense. Judas was too. And he says. Is it I? And Jesus. Knowing his heart. He said. You said it.
 Meaning. Your confession is true. Now the problem is. Judas. Did not repent. See.
 Self-examination. Is not enough. Just coming to.
 A realization. That I have sinned. And. Being honest. About that. I have sinned. Is not enough.
 Confession. Must be followed up.
 [30:01] With repentance. Confession. Is nothing more. Than just agreeing. With God. We're not informing God. He knows. And so.
 Just saying. You know. You're right. God. Is not enough. It must be. Repentance. Repentance. All right.
 So. What are we. To do here tonight. Well. First. We're to look back. And remember. Second. We're to look within. And repent. And then.
 One final thing. And you know this. About. Paul's account. As well. We're to look ahead. And rejoice.
 So. The Lord's Supper. Is not just an opportunity. To look back. And remember something. It is a clear opportunity.
 [30:57] And Paul. Really. Is admonishing us. To do this. It's an opportunity. For us to look ahead. And rejoice. He says. For as often. As you eat.
 This bread. And drink this cup. What do you do? You proclaim. The Lord's death. Until he comes. Certainly.
 We understand. That part. About proclaiming. The Lord's death. And so. In that sense. When we. Partake. Of this supper. Though it's a supper. For believers. And I think.
 Specifically. For those. Who are. Baptized believers. Members. Of his church. Certainly. We. We. We understand. That among ourselves. But. In every.
 Gathering. Every. Assembly. There are some. Unbelievers. Present. I don't know. About tonight. Who might be here.
 [31:56] Who's not yet. Repented. Of sin. Trusted. Christ. As Lord. And Savior. I don't know. Who the. Unbelievers. Are. But I assume.
 Every time. We assemble. That there are some. And when we take. Of this. Lord's supper. What are we. Proclaiming. The gospel. The gospel. The cross.
 And so he says. As often as you eat this bread. And drink this cup. You proclaim. The Lord's death. You are preaching. The cross. When you take. Of this supper.
 But not just that. We're doing that. Until. Until when. He comes. And the. The. Truth is.
 He's coming. Again. He's coming. Again. See the Lord's. Supper. Is not just. A memorial. It's a celebration. And that too.
 [32:51] We're proclaiming. See. The Jesus. That. We're remembering. Here. His body. Broken. His blood. Shed. That Jesus.
 Is not still dead. He's not. Remain. He did not remain. In the grave. He is alive. And this Jesus. But this Jesus. Not only lives. He's coming.
 Again. He's coming. Again. And he's coming. Back for us. And every time. We participate. Then.

In this supper. We proclaim. Our hope. That Christ. Will return. To this world. And not a hope. So. But a hope. That is sure. That he is coming. Again.

We'll be. United with him. And in. That event. We will also. Be reunited. With. Family members. Those who have died.

[33 : 48] And gone on before us. There's going to be a great. Reunion. Of God's people. One day. And we're looking forward to that. See. And. We look ahead.

To that. And we rejoice. I heard a story. About a certain family. Who. During Christmas. As they set up. Christmas lights.

And. Decorations. In fact. They. Really. Went overboard. And just. Really. Made their house. Look wonderful. And the Christmas tree. And the. In the. Picture window. And all of that. And it was wonderful.

And it was beautiful. And yet. To the. Mystery. Of the neighbors. When Christmas. Was over. They kept all the decorations up. In fact. Not just.

Left them up. As sometimes. People do. Anyway. But they kept them burning. Even after Christmas. In fact. All the way.

[34 : 41] To February. The lights. Were still burning. The neighbors. Were beginning. To wonder. And some of them. Were beginning. To complain. You know.

And you can. Imagine. I guess. That's fair enough. But they're all. Wondering. Why? And then. Around the middle. Of February. They all found out. Why?

Because. They suddenly. Saw. A sign. Hanging. On the front. Of the house. That read. Welcome. Home. Jimmy. And it seems.

That. Jimmy. Had come home. From Vietnam. From serving. In the military. And the family. Had kept their Christmas. Lights.

Burning. In anticipation. Of their son's. Return home. And they were excited. And. About. Celebrating. Very soon. Celebrating.

[35 : 35] Christmas. Together. As a family. Reunited. Sounds like a great idea. But here's the point.

Likewise. We. When we celebrate. The Lord's Supper. We are announcing. Well. We are. Commemorating. Among ourselves. But also.

Announcing. To the world. That we believe. That Jesus is alive. And not just that he's alive. But that we are anticipating. Daily anticipating. His. Coming.

Again. For us. To be. United. And. Also have. A. A family. Reunited. In a great celebration.

That's what we're to do. With this supper. Here tonight. Someone has written. Not a.

[36 : 31] Poem. Really. But. A little thing. That. Helps us. Understand. How. We're to approach. This table. And it goes like this.

Come. To this. Sacred table. Not because you must. But because you may. Come. Not to testify. To your righteousness. But that you sincerely love. Our Lord Jesus Christ. And desire. To be his true disciples. Come.

Not because your goodness. Gives you a right to come. But because in your frailty. And sin. You stand. In need of heaven's mercy. And help.

Come. Because you love the Lord. A little. And want to love him more. Come. Because he loved you. And gave himself for you. Lift up your hearts.

[37 : 32] Above your cares and fears. Let this bread. And wine. Be a sign. Of God's grace. To you. And a pledge. Of your love. For the Lord Jesus.

Because. Receive the love of God. And consecrate your life afresh. To Christian obedience. In service. To discover.

And to do. The will of God. In humble faith. Amen. Amen and amen.