

1 Corinthians 11:26

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[0 : 00] But it's communion tonight, and I thought it would be a good thing for me to preach on communion. What was the intention of the Lord Jesus in instituting the Lord's Supper in the way that he did?

That's why we read this passage nearly every time. We call it the words of institution. And if you look at the passage carefully, you'll see that it's summarized in that one verse.

For as often as you eat this bread, whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. And it's from those words, this single verse, that I want to say three things to you about the significance of the Lord's Supper, as the Apostle taught it.

And as Jesus intended it for the life of the church. And so first of all, the Lord's Supper is intended to be an occasion where we proclaim Christ as our Savior.

Savior, who died our death. You proclaim the Lord's death.

[1 : 36] Secondly, the Lord's Supper is intended to be an occasion when we feed on Christ as our sustainer, who upholds our life. The Apostle says whenever you eat this bread and whenever you drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death.

And thirdly, the Lord's Supper is intended to be an occasion when we look for Christ as our sovereign, who is to be the coming king. And so I want us to concentrate on those three things.

The Savior, the sustainer, and the sovereign king. So let's do that.

At the Lord's table, we proclaim Christ as Savior, who died our death. So there's a real sense, as we come to this table this evening, that it is a proclamation as well as a celebration.

There is a message which the Lord's table is preaching to you this evening. It's not surprising that Robert Bruce, who wrote a brilliant little book, a man from Scotland hundreds of years ago, he wrote a magnificent little book on the Lord's Supper.

[2 : 44] He said this. He said, the Lord's table is in a special sense an evangelist. That as we come to the Lord's table, it proclaims a message. And the message that the Lord's table proclaims is quite specifically, says the apostle, a message concerning the Lord's death.

When the apostle is describing his preaching, we're going to see it as we study Galatians. In chapter 3, verse 1, he says, When I preach to you, he says, Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed before you was crucified.

That is, the essential focus of the apostle Paul's preaching, as you heard him, was on Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ sent before them as crucified.

And in a vivid verbal proclamation of the gospel, that is what Paul is doing. As he preaches, Paul placards Jesus Christ before our eyes. But there's another way that God proclaims and placards the same central in which the Lord's Supper was given.

It was first established. And you'll notice it's mentioned at the start of the passage, isn't it? In verse 23. Where he says, For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you.

[4 : 02] That the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread. So it's a specific night with a specific historical reference.

He's putting the institution of the Lord's Supper into its context. What is the context? And the context is very simply this. It's the context of the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Of the Passover. The Passover within the whole broader context of Jewish history. And so, the Lord's Supper was instituted by the Lord Jesus on the night which he was betrayed.

And because it was the night when he was celebrating the Passover with his disciples. And the whole of the Lord's Supper is to be understood in those terms. When Paul speaks of it to the Galatians, he says, Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us.

Therefore, let us keep the feast. And again and again in the Gospels. And here in 1 Corinthians 11. And in many other places. The key to understanding what we're doing at the Lord's Table is to be found in the Passover.

[5 : 12] Of course, the Passover meal that Jesus celebrated with his disciples. They were celebrating, weren't they? An incident which was so crucial in the history of the Lord's people. The occasion when they were brought out of the land of Egypt.

When they were redeemed. And as they gathered together and food was brought to the table and cups were passed around. Four of them normally in a Passover celebration.

And the food that was brought centered upon one thing. The Passover night centered upon a lamb who had been slain and prepared. As the food that was central.

And it was brought onto the table. And there was a kind of little ritual that went on. A kind of elaborate ritual. But one of the things that happened. Was that after the cup has been passed around.

The youngest member of the people would ask a question. It was, what are you doing? What are you doing in such a strange way? And the one who presided over the meal.

[6 : 14] Would then begin to explain. This is the Lord's Passover. And he would begin to tell them, wouldn't he? About how the judgment of God was upon the whole land of Egypt. Because of their sin.

And how God promised. That he would send his angel. To bring that judgment. Upon the whole nation of Egypt. And that God prescribed. And provided.

The only possible hope. For men and women and boys and girls. Or children. And it was the provision of a lamb. Without spot or without blemish. And it was to be taken and slain. And its blood was to be applied.

Upon the doorposts. And so every household. That sheltered under the blood of the lamb of God. Was safe. And God said.

When I see the blood. I will pass over that house. And Israel knew that night. That it was only by the blood of the lamb. That they were redeemed.

[7 : 11] It was only by the blood of the lamb. That they were released from the judgment of God. And they were brought out of the land of bondage. As a people. And they were freed. As the Lord's people.

And they had a new song on their lips. And they stood on the rock of God's salvation. And they celebrated it every year. Never forget it. God said to them. But on that Passover night.

On the night on which Jesus was betrayed. It was as if Jesus took not the lamb. But himself. And he laid himself upon the table. And he said to them.

As the eleven. Broken for you. And as they took the cup. He said. This cup is the new covenant. In my blood. Shed for many.

Do this as often as you drink it. In remembrance of me. What was he saying? He was saying wasn't he. Very very simply.

[8 : 12] I am the Passover lamb. I've come to shed my blood. In order that there might be shelter. From the judgment of a holy God. And not just for a nation.

But precisely in that sense. That the apostle says. Whenever you eat this bread. And drink this cup. You proclaim. The Lord's death until he. What we believe. That it is. It is only in Jesus Christ.

In his broken body. And in his shed blood. That there is any hope for sinners. Like you and I. That it is only under the shelter. Of the blood of the lamb of God.

That we can be rescued. From the judgment of a holy God. And we are declaring. As we share the bread. And the wine. That it is in Christ. And it is in Christ alone.

That salvation is to be found. And by our very coming. And our breaking bread together. We are pointing away from ourselves. And to him. And we are saying to one another.

[9 : 12] Where are we? Behold the lamb of God. Who takes away the sin of the world. And here at the Lord's table. We proclaim Christ as our saviour. But secondly.

Here at the Lord's table. We feed on Christ. As our sustainer. We feed on Christ. As our sustainer. Because you'll notice.

The apostle Paul tells us. And what Jesus has specifically. Instructed us to do. The message in a sense. By the very spreading of this table. The message of Christ crucified.

As the hope of sinners. Is spread before us. As God has instructed us. To come together. For this purpose. But do you notice. The significant thing. We don't merely look upon.

The bread and wine. It's not in that sense. A picture of the bread. And the wine. We eat of the bread. We drink of the wine. It's the simplest.

[10:08] The simplest possible. Illustration. The picture language. Could not be clearer. Could not be more simple. So. No food.

Ever benefits you. Unless you consume it. Unless you eat it. Does it? Food doesn't do you. And it's precisely for this reason.

That the institution of the Lord's Supper. Involves us. In eating. And drinking. That's why we say. Don't we. That the. The Lord's Supper. Is an occasion. For believers. For people who are trusting. In. The Lord Jesus Christ. Who are part of his church.

For those who've received. The Lord Jesus Christ. Because symbolically. We are saying. Here. Here is Christ. The only hope. For sinners. The only hope.

[11:04] For my life. And I have received him. Into myself. And that he may bring. His salvation. To me. And I am glorying.

In that personal. Experience of it. That I have communion. With. God. Father. Son. And Holy Spirit. And I have communion. With my brothers and sisters. As I eat of the bread. And drink of the cup. Because this is what binds us together. We are bound together. By this common fact. That we've received. The Lord Jesus Christ. That my beloved is mine.

And I am his. And we are bound together. That we've received. The Lord Jesus. We glory in him. As our saviour.

And so as we come to the table. Our soul should rise up. And we say hallelujah. Because he is the true. And the living bread. And of course. You can only share in that.

[12:01] Can't you? If you've shared in Christ. That is. Have you received him? Not. Not merely. Spectated him.

Not merely admired him. It would be strange tonight. If there weren't a few of us. That weren't great admirers. Of the Lord Jesus. Great sympathizers.

With the Lord Jesus. Great spectators. Spectators. Of the kind of doctrine. Of the cross. People say that to me. All the time. Don't they? They say. Well I admire Jesus.

I think he. I think he's. He's a wonderful character. A wonderful example. But the question is. Have you received him? Into your life. Have you opened. The gate of your soul?

Lord Jesus. I hunger. And I thirst. That's what the Lord's Supper proclaims. I feed on Christ.

[13:02] Christ. As my sustainer. Not only as my saviour. And so. What we say tonight. As we come to the Lord's table. Is life for the world.

The bread of God. Is what feeds our souls. And that is what we declare. At the Lord's table. We declare that in. Jesus alone.

We find. The nourishment. That our soul needs. And so. In taking the bread. And drinking the wine. It's a demonstration. That we've not.

Merely taken. The Lord Jesus. As a saviour. In himself. So that the riches. Of his grace. May. Fill my life. With all its fullness. That I might have Christ.

As my wisdom. That I might have Christ. As my righteousness. That I might have Christ. As my sanctification. That I might have Christ. As my love. That Christ.

[13:58] Is. All my glory. That he is the one. On whom I feast on. It's a very significant thing.

Isn't it? That when God. Sent his people. Out from Egypt. To be a pilgrim people. We've seen it. We've looked at it. A number of times. We've seen that he provided them. With bread from heaven. To eat. Lest they might be hungry.

And God sends you out tonight. At the end of his day. Into. The wilderness of this world. As redeemed people.

And that is what we ought to be sharing together as well. Do you notice how people are. They're connoisseurs of food. Aren't they some people? We used to watch MasterChef.

But it just got depressing. To watch it. I'd be sitting there with it. Sometimes we're like that. Aren't we? We go to a restaurant. And go to someone's house.

[14:59] And there's an amazing table of food spread before us. We get our phone out. It's kind of modern phenomenon. And we take photos of the food. We put it on Insta. We say. Isn't this food beautiful?

Isn't this table beautiful? And then there's a photo afterwards. Isn't there? Of empty plates. And an emoji. I don't know what it would be.

And as we finish. We say. About this great feast. We say. Isn't. Wasn't it wonderful? I know it to be in our hearts.

As we come. To the Lord's table. We should say to ourselves. What a feast is spread for us. Isn't the Lord Jesus wonderful and glorious.

In all his rich fullness. He's. The food for our souls. He has provided everything that our soul needs. [15:56] He's refreshed us. And renewed us. And blessed us. And enriched you. You. Oh Christ. Are all I want.

More than all in. You. I find. I've butchered that. That hymn. But that's. That's what we're saying at the Lord's table. And we leave the Lord's table thinking.

Why have I spent so much time. Wasting my time on the world. And their. Their snacks. And all those sorts of things. The institution of the Lord's supper.

Tells us we proclaim Christ. Is our savior. Who died our death. The institution of the Lord's supper. Tells us. That we proclaim.

A savior. Who is our sustainer. Who upholds our life. And thirdly. The institution of the Lord's supper. Tells us of a Christ.

[16:53] Who is our sovereign. And our coming king. The Lord's supper. You'll notice. The apostle says. At the end of verse 26. Is unfinished.

It's an unfinished meal. It's a temporary meal. For as often as you eat this bread. And drink this cup. You proclaim the Lord's death.

Until he comes. It looks back. Doesn't it? We've seen that. In a very real sense. To a supper in Israel. But I tell you.

It looks forward. To a supper in heaven. And every occasion. We come to the Lord's table. That upward. Onward look. Should be part of our experience.

At the table of the Lord. Because. You see in a sense. It's. It's only a foretaste. It's only a foretaste. Have you ever been for a really.

[17:54] Really. Posh meal. One of those restaurants. In. In the West End. Where you go. Claire and I went to. And once. Someone gave us vouchers. We went. Only been once.

It was incredible. Claire was a little bit uncomfortable. I took to it like a duck to water really. You know. And felt at home. But you sit down. Don't you. And you feel kind of.

Slightly uncomfortable. And there was this little tiny. Like it was like. Like these. Little communion cups. But even smaller. And it had some. I don't know what. Well I didn't know what it was. And it was an appetizer.

Not appetizer. But it was an appetizer. And. It was incredible. This little. Tiny thing. And you. You. You. Drank it down. Trying to look graceful.

And it was an appetizer. It was a foretaste. Of what was to come. It was a taster. And the Lord's table is like that. It is an appetizer.

[18:55] To give us a taste. Of the marriage supper. Of the lamb. In glory. And here this evening. We. We come to say. Blessed be God.

For what we taste of Christ. Here. Blessed be God. For our experience of him. In all the riches. Of his saving mercies.

But our hearts look forward. Our hearts look forward. To that day. When Christ will come. In glory. As our sovereign. And as our king. When he will take.

His people. Into that glorious realm. Where he reigns. And the marriage supper. Of the lamb. Will be celebrated. In that world. Because the lamb.

Is all the glory. In Emmanuel's land. God. And that's what the Lord Jesus. The Lord's supper. Should give us an appetite for. A taste for. J.C.

[19:52] Ryle said. There is more. Of heaven. On earth. To be tasted. Than most of God's people. Have ever believed. There is more.

Of heaven. On earth. To be tasted. Than most of God's people. Have ever believed. And I say to you this evening. God means this feast.

To be a foretaste. Of glory. So that we might go out. Into this world. This week. As pilgrims. As those who have their eyes.

On the coming king. To be a sovereign. To be a sovereign. To be a sovereign. To be a sovereign.
To be a sovereign. coming King. Let's pray.