

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

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[0 : 00] I like tables. I don't know about you. I like tables. I like coffee shops with tables in them. I don't like it. In the Starbucks at E.M. Broadway where there's that bar at the window where you can sit as an isolated individual and drink your coffee there. I like tables. I like the Drayton Court. You know that table? That's on the Drayton Court. It's a triangular table if you've been there. It's the best table I think.

It is wonderful to have conversations around tables. I like Sunday lunch. I like when people sit around a table and we talk. I think round tables are better than square tables but that doesn't matter.

The dynamic when you're sitting round a table eating together as I hope you will this lunchtime the dynamic is different isn't it? Conversations happen at tables. Families meet around tables. We sit at tables together.

And every Sunday when you come to this place where you are sitting now there is a table or at least there should be or there is a desk. We practice the Lord's desk in this church.

But there is a table at least there should be. It's not sat every Sunday. But the very fact that when you come to a reformed place of worship there is a table and there should be a table in every church building it tells you something about God.

[1 : 30] And it tells you something about his people. The table is not the only important bit of furniture in a reformed church. There should be a pulpit or something that should stick your notes in as gloriously as this or there should be a bowl.

A baptismal font in our tradition. They have been important. God communicates through words. And he speaks through his sacraments. And as we thought about that last week with baptism. God speaks to us as we open up the Bible. As the gospel is preached. And God speaks to us. We thought last week with the baptismal font if you want. And the significance of the sacrament of baptism in our life.

But today I want us to specifically think of the table. The fact that we call it a table and not an altar is important. But on a Sunday like today where we are going to be eating and drinking from this table in a little while.

We see that he is set with the necessary elements of bread and of wine. There is bread, isn't there? The common food for nourishment and sustenance. Interestingly it doesn't grow naturally.

[2 : 39] But it kind of is produced by human engineering. That says something to us of the goodness of creation. Of what God has called us to do.

Alongside the bread on our table is wine. Wine is not a drink for nutrition. Traditionally wine is a drink for celebration. And so a stranger walking into this building on a Sunday when they have never been inside a church before.

It should communicate something. That when the people of God gather together. There is a cup at the front. Which points to celebration. If they think they drink wine in this church.

They must celebrate. They are right. They are correct. And so we are thinking of the Lord's Prayer. Specifically in our series. About what do we do. And why do we do what we do on Sundays.

And what we have seen throughout this series. We are nearly at the end. We are going to look at the benediction next week. That as we come to worship. The different things that we do. Well they are very important. But they are things.

[3 : 43] More importantly. Through which. God is doing something to you and me. That as we hear the call to worship. That as we respond in praise.

As we ask for God's blessing. As we hear God's word read. As we respond by confessing our sins. And hearing glorious words of pardon. As we sing hymns of praise to Jesus.

And as we gather together to bring the needs and requests of our church and his world before us. And as we hear God's word thundered. And as we receive God's blessing. It is not just something that we are doing. But God is transforming us. God uses these practices to shape us. And to mould what we love.

To stir our imaginations. To see Sunday by Sunday a new vision of the good life. To have a new understanding of the way that life is meant to be.

[4 : 42] And I want to look at this passage from 1 Corinthians 11. If you can turn there. Page 9, 5, 8. Page 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Now it's worth pointing out. That this is not a case where Paul sat down one afternoon and thought.

Right I've got a few hours spare. What should I do today? I know what I need to do. I feel like I'm writing a theological explanation of the Lord's Supper. Who should I write it for? Well there's a church in Galatia.

Maybe they could do with it. Rome. Now I tell you what. I tell you what I'll write it for. I'll write it for the Corinthians as a treat for them. That is not how 1 Corinthians 11 came about. I hope that you've picked up on that as it was read to you.

Paul is writing to the Corinthians because they are making a mockery of the sacrament. As we've seen a little bit. Paul is saying. Whatever it is that you think you're doing Corinthians.

As you eat the elements. It's not the Lord's Supper that they are doing. But as they look at what he writes. As we look at what he writes. We're going to describe us some really helpful truths.

[5 : 48] That help us grasp the significance of the Lord's Supper. We're going to focus on two things. Firstly the Lord's Supper gives each of us a better grasp. Grasp.

A better grip on the Gospel. A better grip on the Lord Jesus. And then secondly. The Lord's Supper keeps us honest. The Lord's Supper keeps us honest as a church, as a community.

A better grip on the Gospel of Jesus. And it keeps us honest. So let's think. How does it help us? How does it help you? Have a better grip on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Supper is one of the two sacraments. That Jesus has given to his church. That we are to practice. He said after he ascended into heaven. Here are things I want you to do.

Here are things I want you to do. We thought a little bit last week about the sacrament of baptism. But many of us can't even remember what we ate for breakfast this morning. So you can't remember what I spoke about last Sunday morning.

[6 : 45] I'm guessing you've forgotten about it. Let me refresh your memory. Here's a definition of a sacrament. From John Calvin. He says a sacrament. Is an outward seal.

By which the Lord seals to our consciences. The promises of his good will towards us. In order to sustain the weakness of our faith.

And we in turn attest our piety. Our faith towards him in the presence of the Lord. And his angels. And before men. Calvin says it is an outward sign.

By which the Lord seals to our consciences. The promises of his good will. And that is where we want to start. What are these promises. That he is talking about.

What promises are communicated to you and I this morning. At the Lord's table. Well look at what Paul says. Look what he writes in 1 Corinthians 11 verses 23 to 25.

[7 : 44] He says this. For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you. That the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed. Took bread. And when he had given thanks. He broke it and said. This is my body which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way he also took the cup. After supper said. This cup is the new covenant of my blood. Do this as often as you drink it. In remembrance of me.

Now to understand. That promise. That he's given. We need to do quite a little bit of context work. We need to understand. The background. That Paul is speaking to. So that when you read the accounts.

Of the Lord's suffer in the gospels. You discover that Jesus and his disciples. Had gathered that evening. To celebrate the Passover. The Passover meal. Which was celebrated once a year.

To remember how God had delivered Israel. Out of Egypt. At the time of the Exodus. Do you remember it? That God had commanded his people. Back in Exodus chapter 12.

[8 : 49] That they were to remember that time. Annually. The time of God sending the plague. On the first fall. And each subsequent year. They were to celebrate God's protection.

And God's deliverance. Through the eating of the Passover meal. And so every year. From then on. They were to eat this meal. Celebrating it as families.

With the house. Interpreting each of the foods. As it related to their deliverance from Egypt. The heart of the meal. Was a roasted lamb. Which brought to mind.

The lamb's blood. That they were to apply to the doorpost. The eating of the lamb. In each household. And the angel of death. Passing them over. Because the blood of the lamb.

Was sprinkled on the door. And the angel of the Lord. Destroying the firstborn of Egypt. And so on that particular night. In the upper room. As Jesus. Is hosting the Passover.

[9 : 44] With his family. The disciples. They've worked their way. Through the first part of the celebration. At this stage. They've probably. They've drunk the second.

Of the four cups of wine. That would have introduced. The main course. And so Jesus. Takes the unleavened bread. At the next cup. And he drops the bombshell.

He drops the bombshell. On the disciples. When he says. In the midst of this. Feast of the Passover. He says. This is. My body. Which is for you.

This cup. The cup of the new covenant. In my blood. Poured out for many. For the forgiveness of sins. Do this. Whenever you drink it.

In remembrance of me. Now I think it's very very hard. For you and I. It's very very hard. For you and I. To really grasp the impact. Of what Jesus was saying there. Here is a meal.

[10 : 44] A Passover meal. And it's all about Yahweh. It's all about the God of Israel. The one God. The true God.

Here is a meal. A Passover meal. And it is all about Yahweh. It is all about the God. Who has rescued his people. From slavery. And from death. And Jesus takes the bread. And the cup.

And he says. It's all about me. It's all about me. It's all about me. It's not a perfect analogy at all.

But it's a little bit like. Going to a wedding reception. And the attention of the wedding. Is all meant to be. Isn't it. On the bride. And the groom. And the first man. Gets up. And gives his speech. And he starts going on.

Actually. About how it's his birthday. And he starts going on. About how. He's really looking forward. To the presents. That he's going to get. And he just keeps talking. About himself.

[11 : 41] And about what kind of year he's had. And how it's been a difficult year for him. About all his birthdays seem to come round. And they really. Kind of. You know. Bring a chapter of a year to an end. And he just keeps talking.

And talking about himself. And everybody looks round at each other. And says. This is awkward.

Don't they? It's awkward. Because it's not meant to be about him. It's not meant to be about him.

It would be totally inappropriate. For the best man to do that. And it would have been totally inappropriate. For Jesus to draw attention to himself.

In the Passover. When it's meant to be about God. Unless. He's God himself. Unless he is the rescuer of himself.

Unless. He has come to achieve that ultimate excellence. And that is exactly Jesus' point here.

Jesus was making the promise. Wasn't he? That his death.

[12 : 41] Would deliver you and me. From sin. And death. And slavery. Once and for all. And his death would achieve that. And that is why this is a table. Not an altar.

Because the price has been paid. The sacrifice has been paid. Once and for all. Altars are for sacrifices. But the sacrifice has been done. It has been completed.

It is finished. There is no more sacrifice needed. Because Jesus' death paid for our penalty completely. Jesus paid it all.

All to him I owe. Sin had left its crimson state. He washed it white as snow. So that his death.

Would purchase the forgiveness. For all the wrong things that we have said. And thought and done.

And with that promise of forgiveness. Which comes to all. Who will put their faith in the Lord Jesus.

[13 : 39] Comes the promise of reconciliation. With the God of this universe. And adoption into his family. That you are right. That you are in a right relationship.

With the God of the universe. But more than that. You are dearly loved. And you are part of the family of God. And that is good news isn't it? That you are adopted into his family.

That you are given this wonderful promise. Of eternal life. And all these promises. They are spoken to us. And they are communicated to us. And they are shown to us.

In this meal. And that means. Just as the good news. Of the Lord Jesus. Comes to you week by week. In the preached word. It comes to us in the Lord's table.

And the Lord's table. Is not communicating. A new message to you. You'll get something new. At the Lord's supper. I don't think that. It's not communicating to you. A new message. A different message.

[14:38] Than what you hear in the preaching. It's the same gospel. But again. Listen to what John Calvin said. A sacrament is an outward sign. By which the Lord.

Seals for our consciences. The promise of his good will. Towards us. To sustain. The weakness. Of our faith. That in the Lord's supper.

The Lord promises. The Lord actually. Seals. These promises. To your conscience. Now the question is. What does that mean? What does that mean?

What it means is that. This. Meal. Is not just. A verbal reminder to you. It's not just. A verbal reminder to you. Of the promises.

Of the gospel. Promises of God to you. It is more. Than just words. As we said last week. To be really helpful. Now that the Messiah says.

[15:39] That the sacraments operate to us. Something like God's body language. Isn't that brilliant? That what is said. Verbally. In our conversation. Is always shaped.

Isn't it? By body language. It's one of the things. Isn't it? As you hear preaching. Isn't it? Lots of times.

That's a sermon from the internet. But you have to see it. You can't see. Can you? The man preach it. That's why. It's so important. That when we gather together. We are not just.

Kind of. Audio people. Are we? We see. We use body language. It is. What do we say verbally?

Always shaped. By what our bodies are saying. And so it is with the sacrament. It is a meal. We eat. And drink. This. At this meal. Jesus could have said.

[16:33] Couldn't he? He could have said. Say this. In remembrance of me. But he didn't. He said. Eat this. Drink this.

It's a meal. Where people. Are involved. And we're doing things. We don't just. Observe the elements. We pass them. To each other.

We share them. We eat. And we drink. In a small way. Essentially. We reenact that supper. I quite like. A rowdy.

Lord's supper. I think. That's a good thing. I think. Parents. Talking to children. And explaining. The gospel. To them. Again. And again. I think. Husbands. Saying to wives.

This is for you. This is for you. Don't think. We all have to sit. With our eyes. Crunched up. Like we so often do. Trying to remember.

[17:28] What Jesus looked like. On the cross. That's not the purpose. Of the Lord's supper. We participate. We share. We share.

Together. And we are not just remembering. Mentally. We are actually sharing communion with the Lord Jesus. Remember what Paul says in chapter 10 verses 15 to 16.

Some of you might have been puzzled. By the first reading. I got. I gave Jess the wrong reading on the sheet. And so. You all picked that up. Didn't you? That it was a slightly puzzling reading. For the Lord's supper. But it should have been chapter 10 verses 15 to 16.

Can you turn that? Chapter 10 verses 15 to 16. It says this. The cup of blessing that we bless. Is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?

The bread that we break. Is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread. We who are many are one body. For we all partake of one bread.

[18:37] We can do a whole sermon series on those two verses. I mean. What does Paul mean. By we participate. In the body.

And blood of Christ. Much of the debate. Around the time of the Reformation. Was all about what exactly does that mean. I'm not going to give you the details of the debate.

But let me tell you where John Calvin. And where Presbyterian tradition lands. And I think it's thoroughly biblical. But it has to mean. That in the Lord's supper. We are not just remembering.

There is not just a mental activity. Not just remembering. What Christ did for us on the cross.

Though we do do that. We actually commune.

We have fellowship. We have friendship. With the Lord Jesus. We participate. We participate. In the body. And the blood.

[19 : 32] In the sense of actually. Feeding on Christ. But it's not because the elements have changed. Into the literal body. And blood of the Lord Jesus. It's ridiculous. The Roman Catholic. Doctrine of substantiation. Makes that claim. But it is because Calvin says. The Holy Spirit. Listen to this. The Holy Spirit. Lifts us. Into the presence. Of the ascended Christ. Where we feast with him. The Holy Spirit. Lifts us. Into the very presence. Of the ascended Christ. Where we feast with him. Do you fully grasp that? If you do. Please. Please. Come and speak to me afterwards. And explain to me. Because I don't. I don't understand it. I can't grasp it. Calvin did neither. Calvin said. Do I get all this?

[20 : 26] He said. No. I rather experience it. Than understand it. And brothers and sisters. As we come to the Lord's table. There is great mystery here. And we must come humbly. We must come humbly. I rather experience it. Than understand it. You and I. We often pray. Don't we? I hope you pray. Lord. Please give us a sense. Of your presence. Give us. A touch of your grace. May we know you. In a very real way. Today Lord. God answers those prayers. Doesn't he? But I think often. We miss the fact. That he wants us to see. That he answers those prayers. Every time we come to the table. That he is giving us. This meal. Specifically. For the purpose. Of communing with us. Of meeting with us. Where he feeds us.

[21 : 25] And nourishes us. In our faith. And so we are serious. When we sing. Oh my Lord. I see thee face to face. Here where I touch. And handle things unseen. Here grasp with firmer hand. The eternal grace. And all my weariness. Upon thee lean. If you want to know. Why the Lord. Has given us. The Lord's supper. It's all in the last verse. Of that hymn. I just quoted. And all my weariness. Upon thee lean. It's our weariness. Do you feel weary. This morning. I know some of you are. You've already talked to me. About it this morning. Do you see his love for you. His love for you. In this. The glorious. Matchless. Condescension. Of almighty God. The creator.

[22 : 22] Of the heavens. On earth. The Lord. The father. The father. Almighty. He does not just give you. A spoken word. This morning. He gives you a meal. He condescends. To our weakness. And to our weariness. That in the Lord's supper. He is giving us. More than verbal promises. He is sealing. And confirming. These promises. And these sacred practices. Robert Bruce. Was a 16th century. Christian minister. He preached. A series of sermons. At St. Charles Cathedral. In Edinburgh. He says this. Do you ask. What new thing. We get in the sacrament. I say. We get Christ. Better than we did before. We get a better grip. Of Christ. Now that same thing. You possess. Now. By the hearing of the word. You possess. Now. More largely. For by the sacrament. My faith. Is nourished. The bounds.

[23 : 17] Of my soul. Are enlarged. So when I had. But a little grip. Of Christ. Before. As it were. Between my finger. And my thumb. Now I get him. In my whole hand. For the more. My faith grows. The better grip. I get. Of Jesus Christ. You see. The Lord's supper. It's not only a practice. In gathered worship. Where we express. Our faith. It is that. But every time. We share that meal. We are reminded. It is a meal. For the family of God. Those who trust. In the Lord. Jesus Christ. So we do. Express our faith. But it is not only. A means. For expressing our faith. But it is also. A handle. For our faith. Isn't it? To grab hold of. Allowing us. To grasp. God's promises. Not just. With our minds. But also.

[24 : 11] With our bodies. But God gives me. Something to grip. To strengthen. My faith in him. To strengthen. My faith. In his love. For me. In Christ. Of his forgiveness. For me. In Christ. Of his utter. Commitment to me. As a child. Of Christ. So that as the word. Is preached. As I'm doing right now. It tells us. Of these promises. Made by God. In which you are to trust. And we're to believe. But when we receive. The sacrament. Later. We hold. Those promises. In our hands. It is as if.

God is saying to you. In the sacrament. These promises. Of mine. They are real. They are in effect. For you. Here and now. It is like. God saying to you. You can trust me.

For another week. Those promises. That I made. A thousand years ago. Are true today. But through the sharing. Of the bread. And the cup. We get. A better grip.

[25 : 06] Of Christ. Such is the love. Of our heavenly father. In giving you and I. This meal. So the Lord's Supper. Helps us.

To get a better grip. On the gospel. It gives us a better grip. On the Lord Jesus. But secondly. And more briefly. The Lord's Supper. Keeps us honest. The Lord's Supper. Keeps us honest.

When there's disagreements. With people. Out in the world. Don't we? We say. You know. With governments. When they're disagreeing. We say. We've just got to get people. Around the table. We've just got to get people.

Around the table. And I want to say. To you. As the body of Christ. We've just got to get you.

Around the table. When churches are falling out. What are we going to do?

We've got to get them. Around the table. This is a meal. That you and I. Do not eat alone. Do you know that? The Lord's Supper. Is intensely personal.

[26 : 04] Intensely personal. God gives each one of us. A better grip. Grip. Grip. Grip. On Jesus. Through this meal. It is intensely personal.

But it is not private. Together with baptism. The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper. Is something we do. As Christians. Together.

That we are to do. And we cannot do properly. As individuals. You and I. You can pray alone. You and I.

You can read your Bible. On your own. You and I. Can even sing. On your own. If you want. But you can't. Eat the Lord's Supper. On your own. As it is described.

In scripture. And part of the reason is. That this. Is a foretaste. Of a feast. It's a foretaste.

[27 : 03] Of the way that life. Is meant to be. And you can't feast. In isolation. Can you? My mother's here this morning. But we went through.

A terrible time. When we as a family. Used to watch neighbors. It's a horrific thing really. We used to eat. The TV. In front of. Of. On our laps. In front of the TV. That is an awful thing.

Isn't it man? Isn't it? We shouldn't do that. Because you can't feast. On your own. With your own little tray. In front of the TV. You can't do that.

So as families. We eat together. Around the table. Aren't we? Because you can't feast. On your own. You can't eat. The Lord's Supper. On your own.

It's a forte. For a feast. It's a forte. For the way that life. Is meant to be. You can't feast. In isolation. You can't. Satisfy. Your. You what? You can't. You can't. You can't. Satisfy. Your refueling. Leeds.

[28 : 01] In isolation. You can eat. A sandwich. On the go. You can eat. At McDonald's. As you're walking. Down the street. You can do that. You can eat. In your car. You can eat.

At your desk. Many of you do. You can eat. Or refill. On the go. But you can't feast. In isolation. You can't. Feasting.

Is a social event. It's what you do. With other people. And interestingly. That is the Corinthians.

Failure. That is the Corinthians. Failure. To live out. The communal.

Social. Dimension. Of the Lord's Supper. And it rendered. Their practice. A complete mockery. In the eyes of Paul. Look what he says. In 1 Corinthians. Chapter 11. Verse 20. So when you come together.

It's not the Lord's Supper. That you eat. That seems bizarre. Doesn't it? You may think. That you're eating. The Lord's Supper. But actually. Paul says. You're not eating. The Lord's Supper. And you're thinking.

[29 : 02] You're thinking. What are you talking about? What is Paul saying there? He's not saying. That they're saying. The wrong words. That somebody's got. The wrong words. Of institution.

He's not saying that. Or. He's not saying. They're doing. The wrong things. With the bread. And the wine. Or he's saying. You're not doing. The prayers. In the right way. You know.

Paul says. The problem. Is not with any. Of those things. The problem. Has to do. With disunity.

And with disdain. That they were. A church of fact. Actions. They were a church.

Where. Members. Were acting. Incredibly. Selfishly. And the difference. Between. The Lord's Supper. And not. The Lord's Supper. Is the way.

That people. Behave. With each other. In the church. And Paul. Is making the point. That the Lord's death. Is only proclaimed. In this meal. When the church.

[29 : 58] Celebrates it. Correctly. That is. When. We share. As a community. That loves. One another. Well. And that demonstrates.

Our unity. Paul reiterates that. Look actually. He ups the ante. Verses 27. Verse 28. Whoever. Whoever. Therefore. Eats the bread. Or drinks the cup. Of the Lord.

In an unworthy manner. Will be guilty. Concerning the body. And blood. Of the Lord. Let the person. Examine himself. Then. And. And so.

Eat of the bread. And drink of the cup. For anyone. Who eats and drinks. Without discerning the body. Eats and drinks. Judgment. On himself. Paul says to you. It is possible.

For you. To come to the table. And for you. To eat and drink. In an unworthy manner. So you should examine yourself. So you say. Well. What should I look for?

[30 : 52] What should I look for? Well. At a really base level. You're looking to see. Whether there's. Unconfessed sin. In your life. Whether there's. Areas.

Areas in your life. Where you say. God. Actually. I don't want you to go. That's a no go area. For you God. I'm holding on to the sin. Whether you like it or not. And if you are. Really. Spurring God. By some particular action. Or thought. In your life. Where you should. Have done yourself up. But I do want to say to you. That isn't. That is not. Paul's focus here. That isn't Paul's focus.

Paul says here. What is it. That you're examining for? As those who eat and drink. Without discerning the body. Eat and drink judgment. On themselves. What does Paul mean. By discerning the body?

And what is interesting. Is as you read through. 1 Corinthians. Particularly you read through. These next couple of chapters. In this context. And in the following chapter. 1 Corinthians 12. Where he talks about the church.

[31 : 50] As the body. The church is the body of Christ. And I don't think Paul is talking here. About the body of Christ. As in the elements. That you recognize.

Ah the bread. This is the body of Christ. And the blood. Ah this is the blood of Christ. The wine. This is the blood of Christ. That isn't what he's talking about. He's not asking you to discern. What is the connection.

Between the bread and the wine. The elements. And who Christ is. I think he's talking about the body. Which is the church. He's talking about the body. Which is the church family.

Paul is saying to you this. You do a very risky thing. You do a very risky thing. To share in this meal. If you are not right with someone else. In this congregation. That if you have an attitude.

Of pride. Or disdain. Towards somebody else. In this church family. You do a dangerous thing. In other words. Every time we come to the Lord's table.

[32 : 46] It is God's call. To check our hearts. And to check that we're not hindering unity. In this place. It's a call to repent. Of pride.

And of self-righteousness. And any situations. Where we've hurt someone. It is God's call. To the corporate body. Being healthy. And loving. And supportive. And gracious.

And patient. Every time. So we come to this family table. And Jesus is the head of this table. And he says.

Okay. Before we feast together. Are we all getting on alright? That's what he says. Are we all loving each other well?

Are we showing grace to each other? When we mess up. And do we forgive each other quickly?

Are any of you coming to the table. With this air of superiority.

[33 : 46] To others in the church family right now. Feeling a little bit of pride. Your self-righteousness. Are you harboring a grudge against someone? Someone that you just aren't willing. To deal with. He says there's a problem.

Well. Before we eat this meal. Let's sort it out. Are we constantly seeking to build one another up? Jesus says. Or are we people that tear each other down?

Are we people that put each other's needs before our own? We come to serve other people rather than getting our own needs met. That is what Paul means by serving the body. It's instruction to the church.

So it's a check on our spirits. That every time we come here. That as we share in the one bread. We are confessing to one another. No it's good here.

In our family. Before we say grace. We hold hands. Mainly to keep the children from eating food. But it's quite a good thing I think. He said we're okay here.

[34 : 47] We're family. We did it in the children's Sunday school. I don't think we'll do it here. It's a bit awkward wouldn't it? But I think there's a sense in which that is right. But the Lord Jesus.

He stands before the table. And he says. Are we okay? Are we okay here? That we say.

Well I'm not a hindrance to the unity in this good. So I'm going to share in this meal. And we profess we are one body. Do you see. As we do this. It's like everything else we've been saying in this series.

This shapes us. It shapes us. As we grab hold of Christ more tightly. As we acknowledge that. And we live out this unity to which we are called.

That we are not just doing the Lord's Supper. We are not just going through some ritual or routine. But through the Lord's Supper. God is doing something to us. That we are participating in a meal that is habit forming.

[35 : 47] We are participating in a drama. People say. Do you need drama in your church? I say yes. We have the Lord's Supper. And we have baptism. It's dramatic isn't it?

We are participating in a meal that is habit forming. We are practicing the sharing of this meal. The love and the unity that is to characterize us all the time. So that through this meal.

We keep on living out. The cross-centered life. St. Chester wrote this. He said. In a busy culture. With people desperate to succeed. We practice in communion. Resting on the finished work of Christ. In a fragmented culture. That is radically individualistic.

We practice in communion. Belonging to one another. In a dissatisfied culture. Of constant striving. We practice in communion. Receiving this world with joy.

[36 : 47] As a gift from God. In a narcissistic culture. Of self-fulfillment. We practice in communion. Joyous self-denial. And service. And in a proud culture.

Of self-promotion. We practice in communion. Humility. And generosity. All these practices. Are habit forming. And so seep into the rest of our lives.

And it all happens. At the table. It happens at the table. But so come. Come to the feast.

Come to the table. The great and the least. The rich and the poor. Come to the feast. Come to the table.

And hang it on. Let's sing.