

1 Corinthians 11

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Date: 04 June 2023

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[0 : 00] And grab a Bible and turn to that passage I read, 1 Corinthians chapter 11. So I'm not preaching for a couple of weeks.

! We've got a Reuben-starring series and then Johnny Gibson is over from America and James! Chew is over from Manila and so they're going to preach the next few weeks.

In introducing the Lord's Supper, last time Chris Craddock spoke about in our understanding of the Lord's Supper as we meditate on what Christ has done.

There's just many beautiful ways we can do that. It struck me that it would be a good thing for us to spend some time thinking just a little bit more deeply than we usually do about the Lord's Supper.

What exactly is it that we're doing when we come to the Lord's Table? What is Jesus' intention when he instituted the Lord's Supper as he did?

[1 : 02] That's why we read the passage that we usually do. We call it the words of institution. And if you look at that passage, you will see that that one verse I think unlocks the whole.

It's verse 26. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

And we preached in different ways. This morning we looked at three chapters. I want us just to look tonight at one verse. And I want us to see in that verse three things about the significance of the Lord's Supper.

As here the Apostle teaches us and as Jesus intends it. In the life of us as a church family and the life of unbelievers. So first of all, the Lord's Supper is intended to be an occasion when we proclaim Christ as our Saviour who died our death.

The Apostle says, doesn't he, whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death. Secondly, the Lord's Supper is intended to be an occasion when we feed on Christ as our sustainer who upholds our life.

[2 : 17] The Apostle says, whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death. And thirdly, the Lord's Supper is intended by its institution that we look to Christ as our sovereign who's coming to be our king.

Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. And so very, very simply tonight and hopefully briefly, three great purposes that the institution of the Lord's Supper provides us with.

As we come to the Lord's Supper. As we come to the table tonight. So first of all, here at the Lord's Supper, we proclaim Christ as our Saviour who died our death. Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death.

So that is here at the Lord's table, there is a real sense in which this is a proclamation as well as a celebration. There is a message which the Lord's Supper is preaching to you tonight.

Robert Bruce, a kind of great Scottish theologian who wrote on the Lord's Supper so helpfully, says that the Lord's Supper is in a special sense an evangelist. It is proclaiming a message.

[3 : 34] It is proclaiming good news. And what it proclaims is quite specific, says the Apostle. Its message, if you can see it, verse 26, is a message about the Lord's death. Now when the Apostle speaks about the good news of the Gospel, in Galatians 3.1, he says, Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed before you.

As crucified. He was publicly placarding Jesus Christ as crucified. That is in his preaching of the Gospel. That was the focus of the Apostle's message.

It was on Jesus Christ. And he set before them Jesus as crucified. This vivid, verbal proclamation of the Gospel. That is what Paul is doing.

He says to the Galatians, Jesus Christ as crucified. But there is another way that Christ is proclaimed. That same central truth of the Gospel that is here at the Lord's table. As we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we are proclaiming the Lord's death. And in order to understand that, we need to understand the context in which the Lord's Supper was first established. [4 : 41] So Paul specifically mentions that, doesn't he? Look at verse 23. He says, He nails it in history.

He took bread. On the night he was betrayed. It's a specific historical reference. And he's putting the institution of the Lord's Supper into its context. What is its context? Well, the context is very simply this. It's the context of the celebration of the Passover. And so you think of Jewish history, and the Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus on that night, the night of the Passover.

As he's celebrating the Passover with his disciples. And the whole of the Lord's Supper is to be understood in those terms. In fact, when Paul speaks about it to the Galatians, he says, Christ is our Passover.

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

[5 : 57] And that Passover meal that Jesus celebrated with his disciples in that upper room, they were remembering, weren't they, that crucial incident in the history of the Lord's people.

In many ways, the most crucial incident in the history of the Lord's people. It was their redemption out of slavery, out of the land of Egypt. And so as they gathered together year by year, food was brought to the table, and cups were passed around, four of them in all, normally in a Passover celebration.

And the food that was brought was centered upon a lamb, a lamb that had been slain and prepared. And so as this food, which is central to the Passover day, as it's brought to the table, there were these kind of celebration rituals.

Some of them are fairly elaborate, but one of the things that happened was after the first cup had been passed around the table, the youngest person who's there, the youngest member of the company, would ask a question.

It's a question that was prescribed for them in the book of Exodus. And the child always asked it. It was the duty of the youngest, probably the youngest disciple at Jesus' Passover.

[7 : 15] And he was asked, what does this mean? What do you mean by what you're doing? What is the meaning of this meal? Why are you eating this food? Why are you doing this in such a strange way?

And the one who was presiding the meal would then begin to explain, and they would say, this is the Lord's Passover. And he would tell them that the judgment of God was to be over the whole of the land of Egypt because of their sin.

And God said that he would send out his angel to bring about that judgment on the whole of the nation of Egypt. And then God provided, and God prescribed that the only hope for men and women, or boys and girls in Egypt, was the provision of a lamb.

They were to take a lamb without spot or without blemish, and it was to be taken, and it was to be slain. And its blood was to be applied to the doorposts.

And so the family sheltered under the blood of the lamb. And God said, when I see the blood, I will pass over that house.

[8 : 27] And Israel knew, didn't they, that night, can you imagine that night, Israel knew what it was to be redeemed. What it was to be released from the judgment of God.

What it was to be brought out of the land of bondage, as a people, freed to be the Lord's people. And so they had a new song on their lips, and a spring in their step, and they stood on the rock of God's salvation.

And they celebrated it every year. And God said to them, never forget it. Never allow a year to pass. Never. But you will have this proclamation of my redeeming mercy set before you on this table.

It is not a little thing that happened on that night in Egypt. And so you gather, and you celebrate, and you rejoice. But on this Passover night, on the night that Jesus was betrayed, it is not as though Jesus took a lamb, but he himself is the lamb, isn't he?

And he laid himself upon the table. And he said to them, as the unleavened bread is passed around, as part of the ritual, as he broke it, he's clearly doing something, isn't he?

[9 : 46] Profoundly symbolic. He says to them, this is my body, broken for you. This is my body, given for you. And as they took the cup, he says, this is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins.

What's he saying to them? Well, you don't have to be a rocket scientist, do you? He's saying to them, I am the Passover lamb. I have come to shed my blood in order that there might be shelter from the judgment of a holy God.

Not just for a nation, but for all who will believe. believe. Jesus laid himself before them, as it were, in symbol form.

As the Lamb of God. And it is precisely in that sense that the apostle says, whenever you eat this bread and you drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

And so here this evening, as we come to the Lord's table, what we are doing as we proclaim the gospel afresh, is we are saying that we believe that it is only in Jesus Christ.

[11 : 08] It is only in Jesus Christ, in his broken body and in his shed blood, that there is any hope for sinful men and women, boys and girls like you and me. Without the Lord Jesus Christ and his sacrificial death, we are all under the judgment of a holy God.

And we are declaring, as we share this bread and wine, that it is in Christ and Christ alone that salvation is to be found.

And so by our very coming and breaking bread together and drinking the wine, we are pointing away from ourselves and to him. And we are saying, as we come to this table, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Here at the Lord's table, we proclaim Christ as our saviour. But secondly, at the Lord's table, we feed on Christ as our sustainer. Because you'll notice that the apostle has told us exactly what we're to do.

He specifically instructed us to do this, isn't he? That we are to eat the bread and drink the cup. There is, isn't there?

[12 : 24] There is a message in the very spreading of this table. The message of Christ crucified as the hope of sinners is spread before us as God instructed us to come together for this purpose.

But note the significance of this. We don't merely look on the bread, do we? And we don't look just at the wine. It is, in that sense, not a picture merely to help us remember Christ's death.

Don't think of it like that. But we are to eat and we are to drink. We are to participate by receiving the bread and drinking the wine.

It's picture language, isn't it? It couldn't be more obvious. It could not be more simple. And so, when you went home, children, today, and I assume that your parents gave you lunch, alright, what did you do?

So, your dad, they prayed, didn't they? They gave thanks to the food. What did you do then?

[13 : 43] What did you do? What did you do? You did what? Did you? You ate it. You didn't just look at the food. You ate it, didn't you?

That's exactly right. No food ever benefits you unless you consume it. Nothing that we take as sustenance ever benefits unless we eat and drink it.

And so, it's precisely for this reason that the institution of the Lord's Supper involves us eating and drinking. that's why we say the Lord's Supper is for believers, for those who have received the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because symbolically, what we are saying is Christ is the only hope and I have received him into myself. I have received him that he may bring salvation to me and I am glorying in that fact that I have taken Christ into my life and I have communion and fellowship with my brothers and sisters in Christ because this is what binds us together.

We are bound together by this common fact that we have received the Lord Jesus Christ and we have trusted, entrusted ourselves to him and we glory in him as our saviour and so our souls at this point rise up and you can only share in that if you have shared in Christ.

[15 : 19] That is, if you have received him not merely, not merely spectated him, not merely admired him.

There may be people here tonight, isn't there, and you're a great admirer of the Lord Jesus. And you might even say, actually, I'm a sympathiser of the Lord Jesus.

You can even look at the cross and admire Jesus and sympathise with Jesus and yet not have taken Jesus, partaken of Jesus.

Taking him, receiving him into your life into your life. To open the gates of your soul, if you want to put it like that.

And so, Lord Jesus, I hunger and I thirst. That's what the Lord's table is saying tonight. It is saying, I feed on Christ as my sustainer, not only as my saviour.

[16:28] What we're saying tonight as we come to the Lord's table is what Jesus himself said, he who eats this bread and drink this cup will never thirst again.

The bread of God is he who came down from heaven, who gave his life for the world, and the bread of God is what feeds our souls. That is what we declare at the Lord's table.

And we declare that in Jesus and in Jesus alone, we find the nourishment that our souls need.

And so, as you take the bread and as you drink the cup of the Lord, it is a demonstration that you've not only taken Christ as your saviour, but that the great business of your life is to feast on all that Christ is.

The great business of our lives is to feast on all that Christ is in himself so that the riches of his grace may fill our lives with all his fullness.

[17:46] That we might have Christ as my wisdom, Christ as my inheritance, Christ as my sanctification, Christ as my love, Christ in all his glory, he is the one on whom we feast.

He's the one whom we need. It's a very significant thing, you know, that when God sent his people out from Egypt to be a pilgrim people, he provided them, didn't he, with bread from heaven to eat lest they should be hungry.

And when God at the end of the Lord's day sends us out into the wilderness of this world as his redeemed people, he has only one food for you to nourish your soul upon and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

in all his glory and all his beauty, Jesus is the true and the living bread. And that is what we ought to be sharing together as well.

I'm on Instagram, quite a large number of followers, but some of you will know, but one of the things that surprised me about Instagram is people are really into food, isn't it?

[19:03] So at the good of a restaurant they take a photo of their food and they put it on at different angles and all sorts of course, people show you how they cook and all sorts of things.

But if you know food, I don't particularly enjoy it as you can tell, but if you know food, isn't it, you'll look at it and you'll share it with each other and you'll say, isn't this food wonderful?

Maybe it was at lunchtime, you think, what a table was spread for us. Isn't that marvelous? And that ought to be in our hearts, isn't it, as we come to the Lord's table?

We should be saying to one another, my brother and my sister, isn't the Lord Jesus glorious in all his fullness? Isn't the Lord Jesus glorious?

All I have needed, his hand has provided all that we have has been given to us by him. He has fed us and blessed us and enriched us and saved us and washed us clean.

[20:20] And so, you, oh Christ, are all I want, more than all in thee I find. And that's what we're saying, isn't it, I hope, when we come to the Lord's table.

If you're anything like me, you spend so much of your time and energy and resources on the things of this world. And the Lord's supper is a great reminder of what truly matters, of who truly matters.

Here's the third thing, the institution of the Lord's supper tells us that we proclaim Christ as our saviour who died our death, we feed on Christ as our sustainer who upholds our life, and then thirdly, we look for Christ as our sovereign, our coming king.

It's really simple, isn't it? The Lord's supper, you will notice, the apostle says at the end of verse 26, it's an unfinished meal, it's a temporary meal. And so whenever 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 already seen that tonight. It looks back in a very real sense to a supper in Israel. but I tell you tonight, it looks forward to a supper in heaven.

[21:33] And on every occasion we come to the Lord's table, the upward, onward look should be part of our experience at the table of Christ. Because, you see, in a sense, it's only a foretaste, isn't it?

It's only a foretaste. We have something, isn't it? An appetizer. Is it an appetizer?

That you taste something and it's an appetizer of what is to come. Is it hors d'oeuvres or not? Isn't that French?

That's right, isn't it? You see, I'm very cultured. Hors d'oeuvres. The hors d'oeuvres or the appetizer, they give you a taste of what is yet to come.

And the Lord's table is like that. The Lord's table is an appetizer to give us a taste for the marriage supper of the Lamb in glory.

[22 : 38] And so this evening, we are coming 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 mercy.

but our hearts look and long for that day when Christ will come in glory as our sovereign and our king and he will take his people into that glorious realm where he reigns.

And the marriage supper of the Lamb will be celebrated. and in that world, in that world, the Lamb is all the glory in Emmanuel's land. And that's what the Lord's supper should give us an appetite for.

J.C. Ryle said this, 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.

God means this feast, this table, to be a foretaste of glory.

[24 : 06] So that we may go out into the world this week as pilgrims, as those who have their eyes on the coming king. Let's pray together.

Father, we worship you. We adore you as the God who has set before us a table that is overflowing, that is bountifully laden with all the benefits that you've won for us in Jesus Christ.

Enable us now as we come to the table of the Lord that we might say, I hunger and I thirst. We ask it for your name's sake.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.