

# Four Looks At The Lord's Supper

**Introduction.** We read the words of 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 around the Lord's table a lot, but what is most important is to understand their implications.

Before His death, Jesus instituted what we call the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20). As recorded by Luke, Jesus wanted His disciples to do this in His memory (Luke 22:19). The importance of properly observing the Lord's Supper should not be underestimated. The church at Corinth was guilty of abusing it (1 Corinthians 11:20-22) and those misuses have serious consequences (1 Corinthians 11:27-30). To observe the Supper properly, and to receive its blessings rather than condemnation, we are going to review what Paul revealed about the purpose and observance of the Lord's Supper.

## ***I. Look Without***

- A. "Ye do show forth the Lord's death" (1 Corinthians 11:26). This testifies of His death.
  - 1. The word "show" is translated "preach" or "preached" most of the time in its 17 occurrences in the New Testament. The language indicates the announcing is continual or habitual.
  - 2. We proclaim our faith in the effectiveness of the Lord's death.
    - a) Most of us try to forget how those we love died, but Jesus wants us to remember how He died.
    - b) Why? Because everything Christians have is centered in that death; it is a part of the gospel message (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
- B. It is not the life of our Lord, or His teachings, that will save sinners — it is His death. Therefore, we also remember that He died for our sins (Isaiah 53:6; Acts 3:18; 1 Peter 2:24).

## ***II. Look Forward***

- A. "Till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). This testifies of His coming.
  - 1. We also proclaim our faith in the Lord's return.
    - a) This is to be done "till He comes" (John 5:28-29; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2).
    - b) If we do not believe He is coming, then why keep the Supper?
  - 2. The return of Jesus Christ is the blessed hope of the church and the individual Christian. Jesus not only died for us, but He arose again and ascended to Heaven; and one day He will return to take us to Heaven.
- B. Today, we are not all that we will be; but when we see Him, "we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2).

## ***III. Look Within***

- A. "Let a man examine himself" (1 Corinthians 11:28). This is an individual communion with Christ.
- B. "To examine" is to put oneself to the test as to the attitude of one's heart, outward conduct, and understanding of the true nature and purpose of the Supper. The Supper should not be taken lightly.

1. It is a fellowship or sharing in the blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16). We commune and reinforce the blessings we enjoy through the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7-9).
2. It is a fellowship or sharing in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). We commune and reinforce the fellowship together in the body of Christ (i.e. the church), as we break bread together (cp. Acts 2:42; 20:7).
3. Are we living in a manner that shows appreciation for His sacrifice?
  - a) By living for Jesus who died for us (2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 2:20)?
  - b) By accepting the grace of God in our lives (2 Corinthians 5:18-6:1)?
4. Or are we by willful sinning (Hebrews 10:26-29) and refusing to repent of our sins (Hebrews 6:4-6) and therefore “crucifying Him afresh”?
  - a) In one sense, the Supper is a very private matter between a Christian and God; a time to reflect the past and to resolve for the future.
  - b) However, this “remembering” is not simply the recalling of historical facts. It is a participation in spiritual realities. Around the table, we do not walk around a monument and admire it. We have fellowship with a living Savior as our hearts reach out by faith.

#### **IV. Look Backward**

- A. “Discerning the Lord’s body” (1 Corinthians 11:29). This testifies of His suffering.
  1. Now Paul shows how to guard against unworthy partaking of the Lord’s Supper. Some have misunderstood this phrase. Unworthily” is an adverb, describing how we take it, not whether we are worthy (none are truly worthy).
  2. Thinking of the cruel torture and humiliation of His physical body, we partake with a respect for the sacrifice Jesus made for our sins (Isaiah 53:10).
  3. If we are to participate in a worthy manner, we must examine our own hearts, judge our sins, and confess them to the Lord.
- B. “Discerning” means “to distinguish, to judge correctly.” If someone has failed to partake of the Lord’s Supper with the frame of mind that it is a memorial to the body and blood of the Lord, they have not discerned. A Christian has brought the condemnation of God on himself by failing to think properly of the divine memorial and by viewing it as a common meal to satisfy one’s hunger,

**Conclusion.** The Lord’s Supper is a very special memorial of His death for our sins. The first Christians “continued steadfastly” in its observance just as they did in the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, and prayer (Acts 2:42). Christians should never lose sight of its significance. It is a constant reminder of the sacrifice Jesus made for our sins. It is a communion or sharing of the body and blood of the Lord. It is a time for self-examination and rededication of our service to the Lord. And it is a means for building fellowship with one another in the body of Christ.