

1 Corinthians 11:23-29 – The Lord’s Supper

Vs. 23:

Jesus, who washed his disciple’s feet and served them a meal was that very night betrayed by His closest associates. Every disciple betrayed Jesus in some manner.

The important question to ask is, do we today betray Jesus? Of course we do. Every time we choose disobedience to God’s Word we betray the One who died in our place. Yet, Jesus, knowing He would be betrayed by His close associates and eventually by all of mankind still gave us the gift of eternal life. Jesus’ illustrious gift was great in two ways. First, in **John 15:13**, “*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.*” Jesus laid down His life for all mankind as the ultimate free gift of life. Second, Jesus gave us the gift of life even though many will reject this gift and others would betray His love through disobedience. This is illustrated in **Romans 5:8**, “*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*”

This personal gift of life given to us by Christ is what the Bible calls grace. Grace is an unmerited favor. We didn’t earn it, nor do we deserve this gift, this gift is given graciously to us through God’s Mercy. While we were yet sinners... though we reject Him ... Christ died in our place ... the gift of life for all who will receive.

The Bread

The one, who in faith and love, partakes of the Lord’s Supper is reminded of the memory of living in contact with Jesus Christ. To the nonbeliever it has no meaning; to the one who loves Jesus Christ it is the way to His presence. The Lord’s Supper is taken in a solemn ceremony to keep us mindful and respectful of our intimate presence with Christ.

Jesus Christ body was literally broken as a sin sacrifice, not for Himself, because Jesus was sinless, but for the sins of all mankind. In Hebrews chapter 10 verse 1 reminds us that the sacrifice of animals were but “... *a shadow of the very image of things to come*”. In verse 3-4, the Scripture put in place the identification of the broken body of Christ for our sacrifice “*3But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins ... 4For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. 10... we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*”

When we partake of the bread we are reminded of Jesus’ broken body which paid for our sins and guilt. When we partake we are also entering into a unity relationship with Christ and intimately share fellowship with Him. Jesus uses a second metaphor, His blood, to remind us of His great sacrifice for us.

The Blood

Vs. 25:

The Greek preposition “en” most commonly means “in” or it can mean “at” or “around” depending on the text. In this text it means “at”. So this Scripture reads, “*This cup is the new covenant at the cost of my blood.*”

A covenant is a bond or promise relationship between two people. Covenant relationships are not to be broken. God never broke his covenants with those to whom God made a covenant.

The old covenant between God and man was based on the law. Don’t mistake this to mean the way to God was through the law. The way to God has always been by grace. In **Galatians 3:11** the Scriptures teach us that no one is justified by the law. **Galatians 3:19** identifies that the law was given to teach us sin and to drive us to faith. In **Galatians 3:13** Christ redeemed us from the law, because the law could not save us. So the way to God has always been by His grace. But again, the old covenant was a relationship between God and man based on the law. Under the old covenant God chose to approach the people of Israel and become their God, **Leviticus 20: 26**, “*And you shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am Holy, and have separated you from the peoples that you should be Mine.*” There was also a condition for that relationship, Israel must keep His law (**Exodus 24:1-8**).

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Through Jesus a new relationship was opened to mankind, not dependent on the law, but on God’s love. Under the old covenant mankind could do nothing other than fear God for he was forever in default under the law since he could not keep it perfectly. Under the new covenant mankind comes to God as a child comes to a father. Yet, when we observe this new covenant it cost the life of Jesus to make this new relationship possible.

“*The blood is the life*” says the law in (**Deuteronomy 12:23**); it cost Jesus life, His blood. So the wine stands for the very life-blood of Christ without which the new covenant (new relationship) between God and man could never have been possible.

Unworthy

Vs. 27:

This passage comes with a stern forewarning concerning eating the bread and drinking the wine unworthily. This verse has two meanings. First, it references that a person who eats and drinks unworthily does not realize what the sacred symbols mean. It means this person eats and drinks with no reverence, no sense of fellowship, and no sense of the love that these symbols stand for and no sense of the obligation that is laid upon that person.

Secondly, it means that the person who participates in the Lord’s Supper with unrepentant sin eats and drinks unworthily. This does not mean that every sinner will be unworthily partaking of the Lord’s Supper because we are all sinners. However, the one who partakes of the Lord’s Supper with an unrepentant heart is bringing on himself God’s judgment.

Self Examination

Vs. 28:

In verse 28 the Scriptures urge us to examine ourselves and identify where we are in our relationship with Christ. First and foremost the Scriptures urge us to examine whether we have a personal saving relationship with Jesus Christ or not? Accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior removes the barrier of sin that separates us from God (**Isaiah 59:2**) and enables us to have a relationship and fellowship with God.

Secondly, for those who have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ we must examine ourselves and determine if we have unconfessed unrepentant sin in our life? Specifically, and most importantly, it means are we living with an unrepentant heart?

If so, we need to take one of two actions; repent or do not participate in the Lord’s Supper. Realize that the Scripture never suggest that we do not participate, but rather the Scriptures diligently urge us to repent and participate in the Lord’s Supper.