

The Eucharistic Feast

by Todd Atkinson

Todd Atkinson's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of the Eucharistic Feast as a means of experiencing Christ's presence and fostering community unity during Lent.

Duration: 29:49

Scripture: Genesis 8:1, Exodus 12:14, Psalm 77:11-12, Matthew 26:26-28, Luke 22:19-20, Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Topics: "Eucharist"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the division between the haves and the have nots in the Corinthian church. He emphasizes that this division goes against the principles of Christian community. The preacher highlights that Paul, the spiritual father of the church, addresses this issue by reminding them of the centrality of the cross and the true meaning of the Lord's supper. He quotes the words of Jesus from the last supper, emphasizing their importance and how they can rectify the situation. The preacher also mentions that Lent is his favorite time of the church year, as it allows him to reflect on the cross and its significance in his life.

Transcript

Thank you Ryan Like you to turn in your Bibles to first Corinthians 11, I'm I'm kind of echoey today First Corinthians 11 It's wonderful to be traveling through this period of the church year with you called Lent. I Think people have parts of the church year that they may be most naturally inclined toward or understand So for many people it's it's Advent it's the run-up to Christmas but for me it's Lent This is my favorite time. It's it's actually birthed mostly in tough tough chapters of my life Where my solace was found at the foot of a cross and so I was amazed to find that That during times of Lent where I could give many weeks over To meditating on the cross and it's place in my life So this is without doubt.

This is my my favorite time of the Christian calendar Let's take a reading from first Corinthians chapter 11 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you That the Lord Jesus on the night that he was betrayed took bread and When he had given thanks he broke it and He said this is my body which is for you So this is a Eucharistic passage all but the the center of it is the cross Which is why we're doing this series during Lent It's all about Jesus brokenness This is my body which is for you do this in remembrance of me Keyword remembrance In the same way also he took the cup after supper saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me? For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes Whoever therefore eats this

bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty Concerning the body and blood of the Lord Well, we looked at this passage Last week. It's a beloved passage well known But let me just remind you what's happening here in this passage Is that this is a letter from the Apostle Paul to the church that is in Corinth? It is the church that was started by Paul. It was a church that was Taught the gospel by the Apostle Paul established by Paul Loved by this Apostle dearly.

And so he is the spiritual father of this church and In truth, they are not doing super well Together as a community now, don't get me wrong. They gather regularly They worship regularly they listen to teaching together regularly, but just under the surface There is a division we looked at that last Sunday, which was a class division Some of the divisions that exist in Roman society were brought into the church And so there's a division between the haves and the have-nots between the rich and the poor They've gathered together at the Lord's Supper some have more than they can eat some have next to nothing to eat In Roman society, they were used to lose those divisions used to living like that And they hadn't yet realized is that that could not be true of Christian community Christian community could not be done like that and still be called Christian community And so Paul the spiritual father is writing them in such a way as to rectify this and it's interesting the way He addresses it the way he challenges it the way he rectifies this situation is by reminding them of the centrality of the cross and the true meaning of the Lord's Supper So he addresses the challenges and then the the solution to what they're facing was found in the Lord's Supper I received from the Lord What I also delivered to you how that the Lord Jesus Christ on the night He was betrayed took bread and so then he quotes the words of Jesus from the Last Supper Those are called the words of institution because they are words that Jesus spoke He instituted them and so from every Last Supper from that moment to this moment or 2,000 years those words have been quoted and So what I want to do today is to is to take a closer look at those words. Why are they so important? What do they mean? How did Paul hope that they would rectify? this situation and So let's take a little closer look at the words I Received from the Lord what I also delivered to you that the Lord Jesus on the night.

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. These are packed words condensed the amount of books and commentaries that have been Written on these words has probably been as much as any other passage of Scripture. So what I've been looking for is a way in How do we understand this and I think that a key to this passage and to understanding its meaning is bound up with one expression and it's this expression do this in Remembrance of me and The reason why that expression is a key to understanding this passage Has to do with that word remembrance and The fact that there is so much more to that word than meets the eye When we hear the word remembrance, what do you think of we might think of Remembrance Day? so we think of recalling the past of Recollecting the old days of thinking backwards So recollection brings those thoughts to mind but in the Hebrew Scriptures the thought of remembrance Meant so much more than that And so we think of any number of verses but Genesis chapter 8 verse 1 is a good example.

It's speaking about Noah and the scripture says this but God remembered Noah and all the beasts and God made a wind blow and the waters subsided so God Remembered Noah something's going on there. That's more than Remembrance Day So if you're around a dinner table and you're recalling old stories or telling stories amongst friends, there's something going on That's more than just remembering old stories and God remembered Noah means God remembered something. He had said to Noah So he remembered something from the past which caused him to act in a certain way in the present So it's the scripture says and God remembered Noah and a wind blew on the earth and the water subsided he remembered that he would bring Noah to a safe place that the waters would only cover the face of the

earth for a period of time and then they would subside he remembered something from the past which unlocked something in the present He acted in the present Biblical remembrance is different than we think it is.

It's more than just recollection Exodus chapter 2 verse 24 is another good example This is the the period of time where the Hebrew people are enslaved to the nation of Egypt and once again in chapter 2 verse 24 the scripture says and God heard their groanings and He remembered He heard their groanings and he remembered his covenant With Abraham with Isaac and Jacob and then the very next verses is how he raised up Moses as a deliverer God remembered he remembered the covenant that he had made with the patriarchs and He remembered something from the past that he was in covenant relationship with these people and so out of that covenant He acted in the present. So there's there's a lot more than just Recollection telling old stories that's happening biblical remembrance is when you think back to something in the past that causes Something to happen in the presence a God thing to happen in your presence To happen in the present the Old Testament prophets. It was common To call God's people to remember the covenant So that doesn't mean just around dinner table.

They say hey, you remember that time long ago where we made a covenant with God? That was fun, wasn't it when the prophets called people to remember the covenant what they meant is remember to it Think back upon it and then live with fidelity to it in the present Think back about the agreement with God that you made and then be true to it now. Let it affect you in the present Walk in the power of that covenant in the now biblical remembrance It's a wee book that I felt It says it so much Ralph Martin writes a book called worship in the early church He was a scholar at Fuller Theological Seminary. So kind of an icon in the evangelical world He just says some great things He says at the table of remembrance The church does not simply reflect as a mental exercise upon the cross of Calvary But it relives the accomplished redemption it is taken back to the upper room It is taken back to the hill of Calvary And it shares in that saving work which it knows as a present reality Second quote to recall in biblical thought Means to transport an action which is buried in the past In such a way that its original potency and vitality are not lost But are carried over into the present In remembrance of me then is no bare historical reflection upon the cross But it is a recalling of the crucified and living Christ in such a way that he is Personally present in all the fullness and reality of his saving power now biblical remembrance we think back to something that happened in the past a God thing and The we bring it and all of its power into the present That is Biblical remembrance and so when I exercise biblical remembrance Part of me is is almost transported to Calvary I've been doing this for a lot of years now.

I Swear when I practice biblical remembrance, I feel like I'm on the hill I feel like I can feel the wind I can feel the dark cloud. I can I can hear the soldiers It's like I'm being there, but it's even better than being there Biblical remembrance is more than just being on Mount Calvary it's when the power of what happened at Calvary is Transported into my presence in such a way that there is no gap I'm not just thinking back upon the past but that the power of what is accomplished on the cross is brought into my present and Experienced in the now that's biblical remembrance. And so when I'm wondering Does Jesus forgive my sins I Remember the cross Because there's no way that I could look upon that picture and Doubt what was done for me if I'm ever wondering does God love me.

I look back upon the cross Yes, I'm looking back but his love and power is Experienced by me in the present and I could never doubt in the present something that he did for me so long ago Is experienced from by me afresh in the here and in the now that is biblical remembrance And you know, it's what every one of us what our heart longs for we don't want to think back upon the cross of Calvary Like it was just

something out of a historical Encyclopedia, we don't want to look back upon it like it's at the same status as World War two every one of us want to enter into and experience the power of Calvary in our lives Right now and so we look again at these words For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you that the Lord Jesus Christ on the night in which he was betrayed took bread and When he had given thanks he broke it and he said this is my body Which is for you. So what's transported it into our present love The cross was the greatest demonstration of God's love ever. That love is transported into our present Forgiveness he he made himself the lamb slain from the foundation of the world to secure forgiveness and redemption so the power of forgiveness real forgiveness and the power of redemption is experienced now in our present But there's so much more to that in When we think back to the the Last Supper, it's more than just Jesus words that are brought into the present It's it's the one who spoke those words You can't imagine the Lord's Supper without the Lord being there just like you can't imagine Mount Calvary Without the Savior being there and so you we don't just transport his forgiveness.

We don't just think transport his Redemption, but we actually transport his very presence into our present And so when he spoke these words, this is my body he made the closest association of himself an identification of his very presence with this Eucharistic feast With the Last Supper with the Lord's Supper He Identified him very self with this bread and with this wine. This is my body Jesus of course spoke Aramaic In the Aramaic there wouldn't be have been the word is there this is my body it was simply this Holding it up my body This my blood and so he identified himself With the Eucharist At Christmas we spent many weeks in Advent understanding the incarnation how that a human body became the bearer of Christ presence the Christ the only divine Son of God the Logos existed from the foundation of the world But then poured his presence into the body of a little baby That body became the bearer of the divine Son of God and guess what that baby didn't look any different than any other baby It didn't it didn't lose any of its human properties That's why we refer to Christ as fully God and fully man. It didn't lose anything human It wasn't less human in the process.

He didn't transform the body of the baby Jesus But there was something added to that body And it was the presence of the divine Son of God So the divine Son of God came to us in a human body and you actually had to receive the humanity of Jesus In order to receive his divinity you had to welcome him. He's a man. This was a stumbling block for many He claims to be the Son of God and here he is in human form and he looks no different than the rest of us And so you'll remember that some of the people who found it hardest to receive Jesus were his own family because they were overly familiar the divine Son of God Came to us as the human Jesus and you had to receive the human Jesus in order to receive the divine Son of God when Jesus identified himself With the Eucharist when he identified himself with the body and blood The bread and the wine he spoke these words this my body He was signaling the time when the Eucharist would become the next bearer of his presence And so I've not been able to find sympathy with the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation When Christ inhabited a body it was still a human body.

It never became less than human That was the beauty of the incarnation So I've never been able to find sympathy with the Roman Catholic doctrine that when Christ Presence comes in the elements that somehow the present the elements change that they're not actually bread that they're not actually wine and The theological gymnastics that maybe they have to go to do explain those things No, of course, it's bread where Jesus inhabited the human body. It was still a human body Didn't become a heavenly body it was it that's the beauty of the incarnation don't miss its central message and Just through that ordinary human body. It became the bearer of the divine Son of God But don't get me wrong you had to receive the human in order to receive the divine And now the Eucharist he set it up in such a way that his divine

presence Is communicated to us it's conveyed to us in the most ordinary way once again Bread and wine does the bread ever become anything less than bread? No So wine ever become anything less than wine no, but does it become a bearer of something? Absolutely, yes for those that will receive it For those that will receive it Therefore when I am receiving the Eucharist I'm receiving him When I'm taking them in I'm taking him in I'm taking in his very presence and so in the liturgy There's this beautiful phrase This is the body of Christ broken for you feed on him in your heart by Faith and as I'm preparing for communion I think back to the Gospels how that Jesus was a manly human body like you and I You touch him you could walk with him you could listen to him and yet if you received that human body You received what was internal what you couldn't see the only eternal Logos the Holy Son of God.

I Meditate on that as I prepare for communion some people say why do you kneel before communion? I said well, I feel like saying well, why don't you I mean if this is a place where his presence is You'll notice me on the front off the one worship I When the presence of the King draws near my body language wants to kneel It's almost universal human language That in the presence of royalty doesn't matter what the culture is humans have a tendency to want to bow or kneel in the presence of royalty and when I stand before the King of Kings and When I'm in his presence my body language wants to humble itself before his greatness And so when we as a body invite him to come and be present in the Eucharist Then my body wants to acknowledge his presence Humbly, and so I've it's been the most beautiful thing as we've watched people's Understanding of the Lord's Table grow what has happened with that is their anticipation gross their faith level goes their faith is engaging with what's happening Do you know people walked with Jesus for 30 years before they realized who was in him? Before he we was and many people have taken the Eucharist for 30 years before realizing what they're doing as they start to though You watch it. It's in their body language It's in their eyes. It's in the way.

They hold their hands. They're looking to him Who said I am the bread that has come down from heaven he who feeds on me will live forever They're looking to him and feeding on him and on his presence in their heart by faith so we are going to To come to the Lord's Table. It is now the bearer of the Holy and glorious Son of Jesus the bearer of his presence and as we Partake of the Lord's Table then the body of Christ.

We become the bearers of his presence and What do we do we then go out full of his presence in our ordinary bodies we become the bearers of his presence and The moment we leave those doors we are carrying through Jesus presence into a world that desperately needs him. So You might be new to this journey or as Todd said you might have come to the Lord's Table and always understood remembrances recollection and So we want to give you opportunity to allow a different kind of remembrance to settle in your heart That that changes everything in some respects and so there is There is opportunity for you to come this morning Without fully understanding with without sort of having all that stuff settled in your head and say, okay, I get that But come this morning to receive to enter into something in a new way Not to think lofty thoughts Or to be sad about the cross But to receive in the elements in the bread and the wine the presence of Jesus And that you would not it is our prayer those of us who serve you that you would not see us But that you would see Jesus And that you would receive from him. So just come with that in your heart and See what he might do for you this morning if those are your intentions then draw near With faith and take this Holy Sacrament to strengthen to comfort And to nourish you and make your humble confession to your Heavenly Father So let's take a moment The scriptures advise us that the Lord's table is so sacred a place It's because his presence Is here.

He says that those who do not first examine themselves would be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of our Lord Diminishing the sacrifice and so we examine ourselves before partaking So take a moment acknowledge his presence And say to your heart I will not sin against his presence

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