

Taking Part In The Lord's Table

by Zac Poonen

This sermon delves into the significance of the Last Supper as described in 1 Corinthians 11, emphasizing the spiritual revelation given to Paul about the meaning behind Jesus' actions. It highlights the importance of remembering Jesus Christ's sacrifice, the new covenant in His blood, and the need for self-examination before partaking in communion. The sermon warns against taking part in communion in an unworthy manner, drawing parallels between Judas Iscariot's betrayal and the potential consequences of not discerning the body of Christ. It concludes with a reminder of the discipline of the Lord as a sign of His love and care for His children.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:23, 1 Corinthians 11:24, 1 Corinthians 11:26, 1 Corinthians 11:27, 1 Corinthians 11:30, 1 Corinthians 11:31, Hebrews 12:6, 1 Corinthians 10:17

Topics: "The Last Supper", "Self-Examination in Communion"

Description

This sermon delves into the significance of the Last Supper as described in 1 Corinthians 11, emphasizing the spiritual revelation given to Paul about the meaning behind Jesus' actions. It highlights the importance of remembering Jesus Christ's sacrifice, the new covenant in His blood, and the need for self-examination before partaking in communion. The sermon warns against taking part in communion in an unworthy manner, drawing parallels between Judas Iscariot's betrayal and the potential consequences of not discerning the body of Christ. It concludes with a reminder of the discipline of the Lord as a sign of His love and care for His children.

Transcript

Let's turn to 1 Corinthians in chapter 11, let's read slowly verse 23. I received from the Lord that which I delivered to you that the Lord Jesus in the night which he was betrayed took bread. Now, you know Paul who wrote this was not at the Last Supper and Jesus broke bread.

That's why he says I received this from the Lord. It's not just a report he got from others. He betrayed took bread and that's why he expands on it in a way in which none of the Apostles have done because there was a spiritual revelation of the meaning of this given to Paul who was not there at the original Last Supper.

This is my he broke it saying this is my body which is broken for you do this in remembrance of me. That's the first thing that when we come together we come to remember Jesus Christ. That means we have to be conscious of his presence in our midst like I often say Lord, please give me this bread from your hand like you gave it to those disciples.

Give me the cup from your hand. I want to drink it straight from you. In the same manner he took the cup also after supper.

The cup is the new covenant in my blood. You know that in this church, we emphasize new covenant a lot more than perhaps any other church and that's the one time the only time that Jesus spoke about the new covenant in his entire you read all his sermons and everything he spoke. He never spoke about the new covenant, but when he took that cup which symbolized his blood symbolized his death.

He spoke about the new covenant. This is this is a new covenant in my blood. And I would say put it like this in the old covenant it is the blood of bulls and goats which gave them an old attitude towards sin.

The new covenant is the blood of Jesus which gives a new attitude towards sin. So let's look at it as an old attitude to sin and a new attitude to sin. The old attitude to sin was oh well, I know I'm gonna keep doing this again and again and again.

Every Old Testament person who brought a bull or a sheep to be killed shed his blood he'd go away from the altar and tell the priest hey, I'm gonna come back again because I'm never gonna get victory over sin. I'm just gonna be defeated defeated defeated till my dying day. I'll keep coming and bringing the blood of bulls and goats.

That is the old covenant. We must not come with that spirit to the new covenant. Jesus said this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

But I don't drink like those people and say oh well, I know I'm gonna keep on sinning sinning sinning sinning sinning sinning. No, we come with a spirit which says I'm gonna overcome one of these days. I'm not gonna keep on coming and sinning and sinning sinning.

This is a new covenant in my blood. Remember me. That means remember also why he hung on the cross.

It is not to just to forgive our sin. It says our old man was crucified with him that I might never be a slave to sin. One he died for our forgiveness of our sins.

Second he crucified our old man so that we don't become slaves to sin. And third he defeated Satan on the cross so that we may never be afraid of him or enslaved to the devil in any way. So remember those three things happen on the cross and most Christians think of only one of those things.

But we have to remember all three when we come to the Lord's table. And as often as you eat this bread you proclaim the Lord's death these three things that happen there until he comes. Which means the bread is here and the death of Christ is there and his coming is here.

We look back to his death and we look forward to his coming. So there's a this is a transition stage where we say we know Jesus has come and we know he's coming again. So in the Lord's table, there's also looking forward to the coming again where we'll finish with this breaking of bread over there.

We won't be doing it in eternity. So it's only for a short time. And then it says here, these are the words of warning.

Whoever eats the bread and drinks the cup in an unworthy manner shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord means if I eat or drink this in an unworthy manner

His question is not are you unworthy? We are all unworthy. I'd be the first one to raise my hand and say I'm unworthy to be a child of God.

Sinner saved by grace. We are all unworthy. That there's no doubt about it.

In heaven they sing the Lamb alone is worthy. Nobody else is worthy. But here is speaking about taking part of it in an unworthy manner.

Not talking about whether you're unworthy or not, but the way you're taking part in it is not in a worthy manner. That means you're not in a proper way. You're not taking part in a proper way.

And isn't it interesting that verse 23, he received from the Lord. This is not what Jesus told his twelve disciples at the Lord's table that you know you can take part in an unworthy manner. Though it did happen in that first Lord's Supper.

There was one man sitting at the table, Judas Iscariot, who took part in it. You know what all Judas Iscariot experienced there? Jesus washed his feet. Can you imagine? Peter said, oh, I won't let you touch me.

But Jesus said you have to. I wondered what did Judas say when Jesus came to wash his feet? What was his reaction? He knows in a few minutes, I'm gonna betray this man. But look at him washing my feet.

Amazing that he was not convicted. I would have thought if there's anything that convicted Judas Iscariot, it would have been that action of Jesus' humility, going around one disciple after another, coming to him. And I think he knew that Jesus knew that he was the crook.

Because you know pretty soon he gave him the bread and said this is the one and told him okay, what do you want to do? Go and do. I think Judas sensed because earlier Jesus had once said one of you is a devil. John chapter 6 the last verse.

So Judas knew that Jesus somehow knows what I am like. But he didn't betray him. I mean Jesus did not reveal who Judas was to the others.

But he took part in an unworthy manner. All the twelve were unworthy. But one person took part in an unworthy manner.

So we're all unworthy. But it's possible to take part in an unworthy manner like Judas Iscariot. That he is betraying the Lord.

You know Peter denied the Lord, but that was not unworthy. It was a weakness. He got scared.

He did not go to the courtyard of the High Priest planning. I'm gonna betray Jesus. No.

There's a difference. He suddenly got scared when the people asked him. He's scared for his life and he said no, no, no, I don't know him.

There's a difference between that type of you know, suddenly you accidentally fall into sin whether it's anger or any such thing. You didn't plan or scheme it, but Judas Iscariot was different. He was planning and scheming.

I'm gonna do this. Do it to someone who is the kindest person that he ever met. So when we treat the Lord like that, that's taking part in an unworthy manner.

Not an accidental falling in a time of pressure like Peter, but something deliberate, something you know. For example, you may know something right now that you need to set right in your life. And you have no intention to set it right.

Not at all. Like Judas, you know what is right, but you have no intention to set it right. You have no intention to ask that person's forgiveness.

You have no intention to do the right thing, but you take part. That's dangerous. That type of sin is different from you're really wanting to live a pure life and accidentally you slipped up for you.

In a moment of weakness you lusted after a girl or you lost your temper when you immediately you repented. That wasn't planned and schemed. It's a sin.

You have to confess it. You have to forsake it. Ask the Lord to cleanse you.

But there's a difference between the sin of Peter and the sin of Judas Iscariot. Peter did not take part in an unworthy manner. Judas did.

So I hope you will take that to heart. And the Lord revealed this to Paul that people can take part in an unworthy manner and if they do, they are guilty, it says in verse 27, of crucifying Christ. Guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.

As guilty as those soldiers who hammered the nails and pierced his side with a spear. That's the meaning of guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Peter was not guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

Judas Iscariot was. He was guilty of crucifying Christ even though he didn't take the hammer or the spear. So I don't have to take the hammer or spear and I can still be guilty of crucifying Christ if I take part in an unworthy manner, just like Judas Iscariot.

We don't realize that when we are doing something which we know is directly contrary to what the Lord is telling me in our conscience to do. It's not an accidental fall. An accidental fall the Lord ignores even if you do it three times like Peter.

But that which is deliberate and planned and schemed is in a different category altogether. You know, it can even be in a husband and wife. Sometimes the husband and wife can, in a moment of weakness, just flare up and get angry and say something.

We must ask forgiveness. It's over. But it's very different when a husband or a wife schemes and plans and says, I'm gonna teach my husband a lesson or I'm gonna teach my wife a lesson and you scheme and plan to go and say something to hurt.

That's in a completely different category from accidentally flaring up. Please remember that. Schemers and planners are in the camp of Judas Iscariot.

Accidental, people who accidentally fall are in the camp of Peter. All unworthy. But those who scheme and plan up and break bread do so in an unworthy manner.

They are guilty of crucifying Christ again. And therefore, since that warning is given, it says in verse 28, let everyone examine himself. See, that is why we don't come and take the plate away from you or take the cup away from you or tell you you shouldn't take it.

Because it does not say, let the elder examine you. How in the world can the elder examine you, your private life? I mean, I don't know anybody's private life. I hope you're comforted to know that.

God doesn't show me anybody's private life. I don't want to know it. God knows.

If I knew your private life, you may live a holy life to impress me. But God doesn't show me your private life, so that you have to, if you live a holy life, just to impress God, not me. Therefore, it says let a man examine himself.

You examine yourself. I examine myself. And you must examine himself because it says before you eat the bread and drink the cup, you must examine yourself.

I don't know whether you do that every time. Every single time you break bread. Actually, a real sincere Christian will be judging himself every day.

So he doesn't even need that exhortation because he's living in a self-judgment every day. But at least when we break bread, let everyone examine himself. Not your husband, not your wife, not a brother, not a sister, yourself.

And then eat. It's a very clear command. You're not supposed to eat till you examine yourself.

And that's the reason why we share the word before the Lord's table. So it gives you an opportunity to remind you of these things. Because if you ignore that, well, it doesn't matter.

Then verse 29, you're eating and drinking judgment to yourself. That means God will judge you. Because you don't judge yourself, God judges you.

Because of another reason, not just the body of Jesus Christ, but this new body of Jesus Christ with whom you are sitting today. This is another body of Christ right here. Members of Christ's body.

And you are eating bread with the members of Christ's body saying, this is one bread. I'm part of this body. Are you? Or are you betraying CFC? Like Judas betrayed Jesus Christ.

He betrayed Jesus when he was on earth physically. Here it speaks of the danger of your betraying this spiritual body of Christ with whom you're breaking bread now. That means you're not committed to the body, but you're acting as if you are.

You know 1 Corinthians 10. It says in verse 17, 10-17. There's one bread and we who are many are one body.

Because we all partake of that one bread. So that is the body spoken of here. I'm partaking of that bread and saying I'm part of this body.

Are you? I'm not asking whether your name is on some telephone list. But are you a part of the body? Do you feel yourself a part of this church? You know how one member of this body says the other, I'm part of this body. The other left hand may be different from mine, but I'm part of it.

So the breaking of bread also speaks of a commitment. And it says here if you read drink lightly and say, oh, well, it doesn't matter if I committed to this body or not. I'm a Christian.

I don't care whether I'm committed to CFC or not. Then you're not judging this body properly. You don't understand what it means.

What does it mean to judge the body rightly? That means you haven't understood that this is the body of Christ. You can't judge the body of Christ as crucified on the cross. That's referred to in verse 27.

In verse 29, he's referring to this body, which you're not judging rightly as the body of Christ. You think it's just another group sitting here. It's not another group.

You haven't judged it as the body of Christ. You haven't judged it rightly. Then it is dangerous.

For this reason, verse 30, not one or two, in the Corinthian church, many among you are weak and sick. And the number are dead. Sleep means dead.

But if we judged ourselves rightly, that would not have happened. I heard of a case of someone who was attending one of our CFC churches in another place, who was warned a few times about are you committed yourself here before you break bread? And he died prematurely. So, one of the elders wrote and asked me, brother, do you think we should warn people about that example in that church? I said, no, please don't threaten people like that.

Once a person is dead, God is his judge, because the Bible says it is appointed unto men once to die after that, the judgment. And that judgment is not from us. It's from God.

So don't even mention it. But I said, you can mention what it says here. In verse 30, about what happened in Corinth.

Forget about what happened in some CFC church, what happened in Corinth. Many were weak and sick. And some died.

Because they took the breaking of bread lightly. Okay, if that doesn't warn people, then I don't know what will warn people. But if we judge ourselves rightly, we'll never be judged.

It's one of the great verses in verse 31, which says, If I live a life of self-judgment every day, one day when I stand before the Lord and He opens the scroll to judge me, He'll say, Zach, there's nothing. I'm happy. Do you want the Lord to say that about you? Every one of us.

I want it. Desperately, I want it. I want to be absolutely clear when I stand before the Lord, that there's nothing.

I've done so many wrong things in my life from my childhood, but there's nothing there to be judged. Because if we judge ourselves rightly now, we will not be judged. It's a wonderful promise.

I want to encourage all of you to take advantage of it. Now, there will be no judgment. If we judge ourselves rightly and the breaking of bread is one more occasion to remind us what we so quickly forget to judge ourselves every day.

But, we're speaking again about these people who got weak and sick and died. When God judges you like that, that you become weak or sick, that is a discipline. So that you don't get condemned to the world one day.

I mean, if you die, it's too late. But before that, it says here, a weakness and a sickness can sometimes be a discipline from the Lord. Sure.

I've seen that in my life at times when the Lord loved me so much that He gave me some weakness or sickness because I had to correct myself in some area. And I said, thank you, Lord. I accept it.

Like a spanking from a loving father, Hebrews chapter 12 says, if you don't get disciplined, then you're not a real child. If you don't discipline our neighbor's children, then you're not a real child of God. Because it says, which child is there whose father does not discipline? So discipline from the Lord is one of the marks of being God's children.

So when you say, how do you know you're a child of God? Well, I'm disciplined. That's how I know. I'm not the neighbor's child.

I'm my heavenly father's child. How do I know? Because He disciplines me. So He says when we are disciplined, it is to save us from being condemned with the rest of the world.

We discipline our children so that they don't get ruined like our neighbor's children. God also does that. So let's keep these things in mind as we there are comforting words when we come to the Lord.

Encouraging words and also words of warning. Both are necessary for progress, you know, like the two wings of a bird. Exhortation and encouragement.

With both of them, we fly towards the Lord. Okay, let's give thanks for the bread.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/815vOw3lfAg.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/taking-part-in-the-lords-table/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net