

Why Do We Partake of the Lord’s Supper in Worship?

1 Corinthians 11:23-30

INTRODUCTION:

A. Lesson Texts:

1. **Acts 20:7** – “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.”
Note: The Lord’s Supper is why 1st century Christians came together each Sunday. This is why we come together each Lord’s Day . . . Each 1st day of the week.”
2. **1 Peter 2:24** – “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness -- by whose stripes you were healed.”
3. **Matthew 26:26-28** – “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’
 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you.’
 28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

B. Every first day of the week we come together as a Christian family to observe the Lord’s Supper and remember the cross.

1. We reflect upon the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus that brought us spiritual life and freedom from sin.
2. We praise God for sending His son to die for us.
3. We do all of these wonderful things, and more, when we partake of the Lord’s Supper.

C. It is unfortunate that not all “religious” people will be observing and celebrating that which we in compliance with the will of God will be observing and celebrating every Lord’s Day.

WHAT IS THE LORD’S SUPPER?

- A. A memorial that originated with Christ on His last night on earth prior to His crucifixion, through which He is to be remembered in specified ways.
- B. Two elements of the Passover meal were given new meaning and purpose for those who would be God’s children under the new Law Christ had brought.
- C. What was the Passover?

1. An annual feast in which the Israelites were to observe and remember how God had delivered them from the oppressions of the Egyptians. Exodus 12
2. The Hebrews smeared the blood of a lamb Unblemished and of the first year) on their doorposts as a signal to God that He should "pass over" their houses when He destroyed all the firstborn of Egypt to persuade Pharaoh to let His people go.
3. The lamb was to be roasted and eaten along with unleavened bread. Called “the bread of affliction.” Deuteronomy 16:3
4. In the subsequent observances of the Passover in the Promised Land . . .
 - a. The Passover lamb would be killed and roasted with bitter herbs.
 - b. After sunset, the household would gather in a home to eat the Passover lamb.
 - c. The head of the household would hold in his hand a loaf of unleavened bread and recite a traditional saying: “**Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who bringest forth bread from the earth.**” After giving thanks, the head of the household then broke the bread and distributed it to others.
 - d. After the blessing of the bread, the head of the household would hold in his hand a cup of the fruit of the vine and recite another traditional saying: “**Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.**” After the blessing, they all drank from the cup.
 - e. After the drinking of the fruit of the vine, the head of the household would retell the story of the Passover. Exodus 13:8
- D. I am hoping you are noticing. some parallels between what the head of the household did . . . And what Jesus did.

1. **ISRAELITES:** The Israelites were slaves, in bondage to the Egyptians.
CHRISTIANS TODAY: We are slaves to sin, in bondage to Satan.
2. **ISRAELITES:** God sent a deliverer (Moses) to lead them out of bondage.
CHRISTIANS TODAY: God sent Christ to deliver us from our sins.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 1:10 – “Who [Christ] delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.”
 - b. Galatians 1:4 – “Who [Christ] gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.”
3. **ISRAELITES:** Chose a lamb that was without blemish.
TODAY: Jesus Christ is our such Lamb.
 - a. John 1:29 – “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and

said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”

- b. **1 Peter 1:18-19** – “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers.”

19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

4. **ISRAELITES**: Concerning the Passover in **Exodus 12:11** – “. . . It is the Lord’s Passover.”

TODAY: **1 Corinthians 5:7** – “Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.”

5. **ISRAELITES**: Killed the Passover Lamb in the afternoon.

TODAY: Jesus died on the cross at about the same time the Passover lambs were being killed for the Jews’ Passover.

Note: At the very hour the Jews were eating their Passover lamb, our Passover Lamb had already been served up to the ages in death, awaiting His resurrection early on the first day of the week.

6. **ISRAELITES**: Observed the Passover annually as commanded.

TODAY: Observe the Lord’s Supper every Lord’s Day as shown in the Bible.

7. **ISRAELITES**: The head of the household officiated at the Passover observance for all present in the house.

TODAY: Our Head (Christ) over His family and Household (the church) presided over the new Memorial. **1 Corinthians 11:24** – “. . . This do in remembrance of me.”

E. Lovely brethren, please observe:

1. When we observe the Lord's Supper, when we partake of the unleavened bread which represents the body of Jesus, we need to reflect upon Jesus' death.
 - a. Why? Because His sacrifice and death delivers us from the slavery of sin. That my listening friends is good news!
 - b. When we partake of the unleavened bread, we shouldn't be mourning the death of Jesus, instead, we should be celebrating.

- c. When the Israelites were marching out of Egypt, do you think that they were sad and depressed? Absolutely not! They were happy. They were praising God for His deliverance.
- d. Likewise, when we observe the Lord's Supper, we should inwardly be celebrating and praising God for delivering us from the slavery of sin
- 2. During the Lord's Supper, when we partake of the unleavened bread which represents the body of Jesus, we need to reflect upon Jesus' death.
 - a. When we partake of the fruit of the vine, which represents the blood of Jesus, we should realize that His precious blood is delivering us from spiritual death just like the blood of the Lamb delivered the Israelites from the death plague.
 - b. This is also good news. This should bring extreme joy and happiness in our hearts. When the Jewish people observed the Passover, it was a time of great praise and celebration for what God did for them. I think that when we partake of the Lord's Supper, we need to praise the Lord for what He has done for us.
 - c. Jesus doesn't want us to mourn His death, instead, He wants us to celebrate it!
 - 1, Why? Celebrate it because He is not dead . . . He arose from the grave.
 - 2. Celebrate it because He brought us deliverance from sin and eternal life.
 - 3. Just as the Israelites celebrated the Passover, Jesus wants us to celebrate the Lord's Supper.
- 3. When served the unleavened bread, we individually and personally commune with God. When served the fruit of the vine, we personally and individually commune with God.

HOW TO PARTAKE OF THE LORD’S SUPER EVERY LORD’S DAY

A. **I Corinthians 11:23-29** – “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’

25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.”

1. The bread represents His body.
 2. The fruit of the vine represents His blood.
 3. The observance is to be done as Jesus said, “This do in remembrance of me.”
 4. The observance must be done in a worthy manner.
 - a. What does it mean to partake in “an unworthy manner”?
 - b. **1 Corinthians 11:29** – “For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.”
 - c. When some of the Corinthians observed the Lord’s Supper, they were not remembering the death of Jesus.
 1. They were eating the Supper without even thinking about Jesus.
 2. They were partaking only to feed their physical appetites.
 5. How can we get caught up today in observing the Lord’s Supper in an unworthy manner?
 - a. By not thinking about Jesus . . . His death . . . His resurrection . . . His sacrifice.
 - b. By having our minds focused on other things during the Lord’s Supper.
 1. What you are going to have for lunch . . . Or where you are going to eat that lunch
 2. The ballgame you are planning to watch.
 3. The clothes you need to wash for this week’s work.
 4. Something you need to get at the store.
 5. Your job.
 6. School.
 7. A telephone call you need to make or an appointment that is quickly approaching.
 8. A difficulty you have left unresolved.
 9. Something you did this past week . . . Or something you need to do during the coming week.
 10. Etc.
 6. Before partaking of the Lord’s Supper we must examine ourselves . . . Not someone else.
 - a. Do the repenting that needs to be done.
 - b. Pray for the forgiveness that needs to be prayed for.
- B. Three perspective of the Lord Supper:
1. **RETROSPECTIVE** . . . Looking backward . . . “This do in remembrance of me.”

2. **PROSPECTIVE** . . . Looking forward . . . “You proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”
3. **INTROSPECTIVE** . . . Looking inward . . . “But let a man examine himself.”

C. How I partake of the Lord’s Supper.

1. Pause and look at the bread in my hand and think about His body. . . Partake . . . Pray . . . Then reflect on His suffering.
 Suggestion: **Isaiah 50:6** – “I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.” These 29 words are used in the NKJV to tell us three things about the mistreatment of our Lord.
 - a. “I gave my back to those who struck me,” Roman Scourging . . . How brutal!
 - b. “And my cheeks to those who plucked our the beard.” How painful!
 - c. “I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.” How humiliating!
2. Pause with and look at the cup in my hand and think about His blood . . . Then partake . . . Then pray . . . Then reflect on His blood and His coming again.

EVERY FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK THE LORD’S SUPPER IS TO BE OBSERVED.

A. The earliest historical evidence outside the Bible confirms the day and frequency

1. The Didache (DID-uh-kay) (95 A.D.) indicates Christians were to come together on the first day of the week to break bread - **Didache 14:1**
2. Justin Martyr (150 A.D.) records how Christians assembled on Sunday and partook of the Supper - **Apology I, 67**
3. “. . . The early church writers from Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, to Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Cyprian, all with one consent, declare that the church observed the first day of the week. They are equally agreed that the Lord's Supper was observed weekly, on the first day of the week.”

B. W. Johnson, People's New Testament

B. Religious scholars confirm this was the practice

1. “As we have already remarked, the celebration of the Lord's Supper was still held to constitute an essential part of divine worship every Sunday, as appears from Justin Martyr A.D. 150) . . .”
Augustus Neander (Lutheran), History Of Christian Religion And Church, Vol. I, p. 332
2. “This ordinance (the Lord's Supper) seems to have been administered every Lord's day; and probably no professed Christian absented themselves . . .”

Thomas Scott - (Presbyterian), Commentary On Acts 20:7

3. “This also is an important example of weekly communion as the practice of the first Christians.”

A. C. Hervey - (Episcopalian), Commentary On Acts 20:7

4. “It is well known that the primitive Christians administered the Eucharist (the Lord's Supper) every Lord's day.”

P. Doddridge (Congregationalist), Notes On Acts 20:7

- C. Some believe that a weekly observance diminishes the importance of the Supper
 1. Which is why they may do it monthly, quarterly, or annually.
Example: Lady told me “Whenever the pastor decides.”
 2. But does the frequent practice of:
 - a. Assembling diminishing its value and importance? No!
 - b. Singing praises and offering prayers devalue their benefits? No!
 - c. Preaching and studying God's Word decrease their significance to our lives? No!
- D. Our spiritual lives are dependent upon the value and benefits of our Lord's death on the cross; a weekly observance of the memorial helps us to live appreciatively and accordingly

CONCLUSION:

- A. Partaking of the Lord’s Supper is one of the greatest privileges that we have as Christians.
- B. The Lord’s Supper is . . .
 1. A time of memorial
 2. A time of proclamation
 3. A time of Communion
- C. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**