



**CHRISTIAN
ENDEAVOUR**
for Christ and the Church



Covenants

Ongoing Covenant, Communion

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Teaching Aim

To help understand how 'The Lord's Supper' shows in a visible way the ongoing covenant of God to His people.

Setting the Scene

In 1 Corinthians 11, we find that even during the first century the Christians were misusing the Lord's Supper; confusing it with a common meal. Paul rather severely admonished them in this regard. In fact, in verse 20, he told them "when you meet together, it is not to eat of the Lord's Supper." Some were eating and leaving others hungry and others were becoming drunk. This was clearly a misuse of the Lord's Supper.

The Command – This do

The early Christians were commanded to "eat the bread and drink the cup" (1Cor 11:24-26). "This do." "Perform this action - continue to take the bread, give thanks, and break it in remembrance of me. The command to continue the celebration of the Lord's Supper rests upon Paul, but the passage implies that it was already a firmly established practice. As often as you eat and drink..." "This is not permission - this is a command." The Lord commanded that the Supper be often repeated. In the verse Paul gives no direction as to how frequently the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated but implies that it is to be done frequently, in order to keep the remembrance of the Lord's death regularly before us. The Lord's Supper continually calls to mind the redemption brought by Christ from the bondage of sin just as the Passover recalled for the Israelites the redemption obtained for them from the bondage of Egypt. This was not just a memorial of His death but also the remembrance of all that He has done, and all that He is to us today.

Things never to forget

These are the things we are never to forget. The love of Jesus, with its constraining power, is to be kept fresh in our memory. Christ has instituted this service that it may speak to our senses of the love of God that has been expressed on our behalf. There can be no union between our souls and God except through Christ. And nothing less than the death of Christ could make His love effective for us. It is only because of His death that we can look with joy to His second coming. His sacrifice is the centre of our hope. Upon this we must fix our faith.

Christ's Second Coming

The Communion Service points to Christ's second coming. It was designed to keep this hope vivid in the minds of the disciples. Whenever they met together to commemorate His death, they recounted how He said He would not drink of the fruit of the vine until He drank it with them in His Father's kingdom. In their sorrow they found comfort in the hope of their Lord's return. How precious to them was the thought of His return. *"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He come"* 1Cor 11:26. This shows that the Covenant He made is an ongoing Covenant that would only come to completion at the end of the world. To proclaim is to make known publicly. Therefore, we show forth the Lord's death as we partake of the Lord's Supper. This is not for physical fulfilment but is for spiritual nourishment. How long are we to proclaim the Lord's death? Paul tells us that it is *"until He comes."* Since He has already come one time, this refers to His second coming. We should always remember the promise of His coming when we take the Lord's Supper.

Summing up

The death of our Lord Jesus lies at the very centre of our Christian faith. Anything that brings us back to this crucial point is very worthwhile and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper does just that. Jesus introduced the Lord's Supper on the occasion of the Passover, and the covenant sign is for God's covenant people, until He comes.

Resources

Discussion

1. Who should partake of the Lord's Supper? - See 1Cor 11:27-29
2. What event did the Lord's Supper anticipate? - See Rev 19:9
3. Is it really necessary for a Christian to partake of the Lord's Supper?
4. Is it not enough to remember Jesus at Christmas and Easter, do we need 'The Lord's Supper'?

Prayer Points

Give thanks for:

- The visible way Christians can remember their Saviour.
- Ministers, Sunday School Teachers, C.E, Leaders, and others who have told us about Jesus' love for us.

Pray for:

- Those who are taking the Gospel message to those who have never heard it.
- Courage to witness for Christ.
- Those who think taking their communion will get them to heaven that they will come to understand that they need to be saved to get to heaven.