

Radiant Church, June 19, 2016  
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**The Gospel in the Lord's Supper**  
**1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

**1 Corinthians 11:23-26** *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when 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." In the same way He also 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 the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."*

The Last Supper looks back on the first Passover meal and it also looks forward to the messianic banquet promised by Isaiah the prophet...

**Isaiah 25:6** *On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.*

Some historical and theological context:

Before the Fall, food was the way we (represented in Adam and Eve, our first parents) expressed our obedience, thankfulness and trust in God. We obeyed by eating of every tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

After the Fall, we expressed our disobedience and mistrust of God, thinking we knew better than God, and that we could become equal with God, our own god.

**Romans 1:21** *for although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

The first covenant relationship was broken.

We inherited this, so how we eat reflects our condition before God:

Food for our self-image in order to be god-like instead of God's glory

Food for refuge instead of looking to God's goodness

Food for identity instead of looking to God's grace

As Americans, we treat food as "fuel," as evidence of our desire to control our own lives

Or we treat food, the finest food as an entitlement, evidencing our want for glory

We've lost the sense of food as the "gift" which evidences our basic dependence for it from God

First thing Adam and Eve experienced after eating the forbidden fruit was shame.

**Genesis 3:7** *then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.*

This is why mankind needed and needs the gospel...the shame a sinner experiences when standing before a holy God, on the outside while wanting to be on the inside, in God's banquet hall. Problem is, most people are content to be in the dark outside, because the dark covers our own sin we think.

Texas pastor, Scott Wilson:

"We won't ever come into the light of the banquet hall until we're convinced that the pain of staying outside in the dark is worse than the fear of being exposed by the light."

The idea of food and eating continued to show the gospel:

The first Passover was the defining moment of the Hebrews' history

Not only saved through an event around a meal

But also rescued for a meal

**Exodus 24:9-11** *then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu and the seventy of the elders of Israel went up, for they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.*

They should have died, but God let them live, proving it by letting them eat.

But they continually failed to find their satisfaction in God alone

**Deuteronomy 8:2-3** *and you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.*

The Covenant between God and man always involved eating...and it always necessitated something dying so others could eat.

The Old Covenant between God and Israel ended in failure

In The New Covenant Jesus represents both God and humanity

Therefore it is eternal and secure, because it rests on Christ

The Old Testament Sabbath laws made eating an act of faith

The people had to "tithes" food for all the people to feast together unto God several times a year.

Feasts were enacted to remember the rich and abundant grace of God  
Salvation is going from famine to feasting.

The First Lord's Supper was a defining moment of the Church's history

A gospel picture of sin atoned for; death defeated; access to God the Father achieved through the impending death of Jesus

**1 Peter 1:18-19** *knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*

On the roof of a little church in Germany stands a stone lamb that has an interesting history: When some workmen were building the roof, one workman fell off his ladder to the ground. His companions hurried down expecting to see him dead. But he was unhurt. A lamb was grazing below when he fell on it, crushing the lamb. He was so grateful that he made an image of the lamb in stone and placed it on the building as memorial.

Ancient cultures regarded eating together with someone as a sign of acceptance. It forced even former enemies to be close to each other around a common table.

Jesus accepts us, because He made us acceptable. His sacrifice makes us sons and daughters, servants and ambassadors of the King.

During the decades of the Roman Empire, soldiers were required, as far as possible, to return to Rome once a year from wherever they were stationed to renew the oath of allegiance to the Emperor. The soldiers of every nation were required to salute the Roman colors from time to time or be guilty of treason. Attendance at the Lord's Supper is the Christian's salute to the blood-stained banner of the King of Kings.

When we go to the Lord's Table, we acknowledge His glory, not ours  
To gain glory, one has to suffer

**Acts 14:22B** *...and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God*

**Romans 8:17B** *...heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*

We want honor without service  
We want glory without suffering

What we call the "Lord's Supper" is a foretaste of the "Lamb's Supper," when the marriage of Jesus to His redeemed Church will finally be celebrated.

**Revelation 19:6-9** *then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure" - for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."*

No longer a picture, but the real thing, the end point and ultimate goal of the gospel - God reunited with His redeemed people, the Church, whom He gives as the Bride to His glorious Son Jesus the Bridegroom.

The Lord's Supper is:  
An act of remembrance

**Luke 22:19B** *This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me*

An act of unity in community

**1 Corinthians 10:17** *because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we partake of the one bread*

An act of dependence

**Luke 11:3** *Give us this day our daily bread*

An act of participation

**1 Corinthians 10:16** *the cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?*

An act of gospel formation in us

**1 Corinthians 11:26** *for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes*

We learn and relearn our role, the habits of cross-centered living

British pastor Tim Chester has said this:

While living in a busy culture with people desperate to succeed, we practice in the Communion resting on the finished work of Christ.

In a fragmented culture that is radically individualistic, we practice in the Communion belonging to one another.

In a dissatisfied culture that's constantly striving for more, we practice in the Communion receiving what we have with joy as a gift from God.

In a narcissistic culture of self-fulfillment, we practice in the Communion joyous self-denial and service.

In a proud culture of self-promotion, we practice in the Communion humility and generosity.

All of these practices are habit-forming.

After all this has been said, remember Jesus didn't say, "Think this in remembrance of me." He said, "Do this in remembrance of me." The Lord's Supper is a picture of the gospel not when it's written about in books, but when it's shared in the Christian community. We have to do this often.

Writer Sam Chand has said this:

We come to the Table each week with a week's worth of emotions. And in a way celebrating communion with Jesus and each other causes us to face those hurts, fears and unknowns.

Do we face opposition? The civil and religious authorities opposed Jesus at every turn.

Do we encounter evil in all its forms? Satan himself tempted him.

Do we feel betrayed and abandoned? The crowds that yelled "Hosanna!" soon cried "crucify him!" And almost all of his best friends ran for their lives at his great hour of need.

Do we feel misunderstood? The Lord of glory stepped out of heaven to rescue sinful people, and they killed him.

Do we feel vulnerable? He was stripped, beaten, and hung on a cross in public humiliation.

Why did he do all this? Out of love for the very ones who had run away from him, who had driven spikes into his hands, who jeered him as he hung on the cross. People like you and me.

When we hurt, the default setting on the human heart is to run. Blame, smother the hurt in busyness, or act like nothing's wrong. To persevere, we need a vision for the future that's bigger than our pain.

It's that present, and that future we celebrate that Jesus willingly died to make happen; forgiveness and reconciliation with our God and Father.