

STONE HARBOR

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Dear Readers,

What follows is one man's weekly attempt to know the truth of God's Word and bring it to His people for their good and ultimately for His glory. Please regard these only as notes belonging to a busy pastor uploaded as they stand (for better or for worse, complete or incomplete, almost always with grammatical errors, and always with room for refinement in content, structure, presentation...) to support the ongoing study of God's Word. I firmly believe that the community of faith which is the body of Christ can and should bring their gifts to bear for the good of the rest of the body and that any one teacher can be taught by the others with an understanding of the truth. Therefore, should you have insight that would sharpen any of the thinking expressed here, know that I would be pleased to receive it. Clearly, the input that is most welcome and most helpful is that which is more concise than verbose, Biblically grounded and expressed with the goal of displacing misunderstanding and apprehending the truth of God's Word. Your thoughts of that nature are most welcome, certainly appreciated and will be thoughtfully considered. You are invited to send those insights to me at johnny@stoneharborchurch.org.

In pursuit of truth and growing a shepherd's heart,
Johnny

Transformation Card

This page provides an overview of the message and resources for individual and group study.

Date: Jan 3, 2009
Series: The Church of God's Intention
Section: The Lord's Supper
Topic: The Lord's Supper
Message Title: The Lord's Supper: Understood & Enjoyed
Short Title: The Lord's Supper
Text: 1 Cor 11
Key Words: Church, come together, examine, remembrance, bread, cup, body, blood, new covenant, proclaim, Lord's death, until He comes

Message Outline

The Lord's Supper: Understood & Enjoyed

- I. **Understanding** the Lord's Supper
- II. **Enjoying** the Lord's Supper

Related Scripture

1. 1 Cor 10
2. 1 Cor 11 (esp. 23-26)
3. Mat 26:20-29
4. Mark 14:17-25
5. Luke 22:14-23
6. John 13:21-22

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. What works against a meaningful celebration of the Lord's Supper?
2. How would you have explained it before this message?
3. What insights did you glean about its meaning?
4. Why did Jesus want His disciples to celebrate it?
5. How should we properly prepare for it?
6. What should we be thinking about as we participate in it?
7. In what sense are we to practice it after the service ends?

Memory and Meditation Verse

"This is My body, which is for you;
do this in remembrance of Me."
"This cup is the new covenant in My blood;
do this, ... in remembrance of Me."
From 1 Cor 11:24, 25 NASB

Message

The Lord's Supper Understood & Enjoyed

Goals

To understand and participate in the Lord's Supper in a way that honors God and accomplishes His purposes.

Service Plan

- Greeting (Johnny)
- Worship in Song (Chuck & Co.)
- Community Life Announcements (Leslie)
- Pastoral Prayer (Johnny)
- Scripture Reading
 - Reading 1: (Becky)
 - Reading 2: (Lori)
- Message (Johnny)
- Communion (Johnny)
- Closing Prayer (Dave)

Benediction (Johnny)

Intro

Introduce series topic.

Introduce this message topic.

Why this message at the beginning of a series on the church.

First reason: It was the first Sunday of the month and it is our habit to celebrate Communion on this schedule.

Second: What better way to begin a study about the church than with the participation in the rite Jesus gave His church to observe together as His church?

My hope is that any lack of clarity in our minds about who the church is and what it is charged to do would, over the next several Sundays, be replaced with enhanced clarity and a real excitement about being a part of the body of Christ as God intended.

There is much to give attention to in this new series we are beginning on the church (what it is, who its members are, what God's purposes are for it, what God has commissioned it to do, how we can experience life in the fullest as members of it...) but let it suffice today to consider what our Lord has intended His church to understand and enjoy about this observance we call Communion, and which some call the Eucharist, or the Table... this observance we do periodically as part of the worship service that should probably most properly refer to as "The Lord's Supper."

I. Understanding the Lord's Supper

A. *The Trap of Tradition*

1. The Value of Tradition

We need not reinvent the wheel and we would benefit from standing on the shoulders of the saints who have gone ahead and continuing what we have received that is from the Lord. But...

2. The Dangers of Tradition

a) They can become "meaning-challenged"

That is, they can take on a life of their own where the original good purposes for the activity get lost in the execution of that activity. When this happens, the tradition become empty and meaningless. "Why are we doing this?"

An annual family meal originally meant to give opportunity for a family to be a family -- loving and enjoying each other -- could conceivably degrade into a time of petty bickering and complaining about each other and actually working against the family unity and enjoyment that was the impetus behind getting together in the first place.

When this degradation and separation from any tradition's original purposes takes place ...

b) They can actually become vehicles of opposition to their own original intentions

That annual family meal can become the trial to endure, or even worse avoided. "I just can't make it this year."

B. *The State of our "Tradition" of Communion*

1. Partially "meaning-challenged"

We have started down that road of separation from original intention. To be sure, the degree to which this is true of any one person in the church on any given Communion Sunday is variable.

Sometimes by good mood and good attitude and having recently reflected upon God's purposes I am able to experience God's intentions for the Lord's Supper quite successfully. Other times when I'm in a less-than-good mood, with a less-than-good attitude and not having recently reflected on God's purposes, Communion becomes very much empty and ritualistic without any attachment to God's purposes for it.

That we are at least partially meaning-challenged when it comes to our observance of Communion can be seen in that if I asked you to write down right now the meaning of

Communion according to God and including God's main purposes for it, many of us would have difficulty articulating a response we would be pleased to submit to God. If this was an essay question on a test and Jesus was the teacher, I imagine most of us would be hoping for some more time.

2. It's a Little Hazy

It is fair to say, we live in the haze of less than crisp understanding of Communion.

Sometimes we can look across Monterey Bay and actually make out some of the details of Santa Cruz. Other times it is hard to see the smokestacks at Moss Landing in the middle of the bay though the haze.

- a) We don't have crisp understanding of the meaning of its parts**
- b) We don't have crisp understanding of the meaning of its whole**
- c) We don't really know why we do it**
- d) We don't quite know what to think about when we do it**
- e) We don't know what the goal is**

And that's just me looking through the haze from my vantage point!

So, in regard's to our understanding of Communion, I think we can rightly say for many of us, "It is a little hazy out." But the forecast is for rain followed by an approaching high pressure resulting in clearing conditions and that after-the-storm crisp visibility. In the case of understanding Communion the rain that clears the haze out of the air is the word of God. So let's listen to Him in the pages of Scriptures and get some clarity on communion.

C. God's Word on the Lord's Supper

1. Jesus' Institution

a) The Gospel Accounts

(1) Mat 26:20-29

(2) Mark 14:17-25

(3) Luke 22:14-23

(4) John 13:21-22

b) "The Lord's Supper"

That Jesus instituted it argues for us calling it "**The Lord's** Supper"

2. The Larger Redemptive Historical Context

a) Jewish Passover Celebration (Ex 12)

(1) God's Judgment

God executed judgment on the people who held His people from His plans for them -- from dwelling with Him in the land He had intended and promised for them.

(2) God's Deliverance

(a) **Out of bondage as slaves to Egypt's Pharaoh**

(b) **Into covenant relation as sons with God the Father**

(3) The Exodus & the First Passover

b) The Lord's Supper as Fulfillment of Passover

It is out of the context of, and more precisely in fulfillment of this Passover Feast that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper.

(1) Corresponding Elements

(a) Deliverer

(i) P: Moses

(ii) LS: Jesus

(b) Means of Deliverance

(i) P: Bread -- sinless sustaining provision from God for natural and temporal life in tangible bread

(ii) LS: Bread -- sinless sustaining provision from God for spiritual and eternal life bound up in the body of Jesus

(iii)P: Blood of Lamb slain applied to houses (death)

(iv)LS: Blood of Jesus crucified applied to hearts (death)

(c) Result of Deliverance -- Redemption from Captivity

(i) P: Release from bondage in Egypt

(ii) LS: Release from greater bondage of sin -- estrangement from God.

(d) Result of Redemption – Reconciliation to God

- (i) P: To live as the nation of Israel with God in His promised land of Canaan
- (ii) LS: To live as the people of God with God in intimate communion throughout the whole world.

(2) Relation of the Elements**(a) Passover: Pictured & Celebrated God's Deliverance in Part**

- (i) Deliverance in the earthly realm pictured a future final ultimate deliverance in spiritual realm – a complete deliverance.

(b) Lord's Supper: Pictures & Celebrates God's Deliverance in Full

- (i) Inauguration of the KOG in the first coming of Jesus
- (ii) Anticipation of the Consummation of the KOG in His second coming.
- (iii) Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper as the fulfillment of OT Passover and then the Apostle Paul instructed the first century church of Corinth helping them understand the meaning more clearly. It is Paul's instruction that we will lean into most fully today in 1 Cor 11:23-26

3. Apostolic Instruction**a) Background on Corinthian Church Situation****(1) Kit's Sacred Space Analysis (pp. 253-256)****(a) Natural Mindedness**

“The underlying problem at Corinth was “natural-mindedness.” The believers there continued to look...” at things “...through the thinking paradigm of the “old man” rather than the “mind of Christ.”” ... **“And at the heart of what it means to be “men of flesh” is a natural, loveless mind that views all of life through the perspective and interests of oneself.** [bold in original] Everything plaguing the church at Corinth was the outflow of an autonomous, self-seeking spirit.”

(2) 1 Cor 11:17-22 – Divisions**(a) Their gathering for worship was “for the worse”**

In v. 17b – Paul rebukes them, “...you come together not for the better but for the worse.”

(b) Why “for the worse”?

Why were Corinthian worship gatherings “for the worse”?

Because, Paul continues in v. 18, “...when you come together as a church...divisions (schisms) exist among you...” Paul continues as if peeling the mask off a very ugly error in v. 20,

“Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.”

(c) Their Error

(i) In General:

(a) *“Natural Mindedness”*

(ii) In Particular:

(a) *Divisions existed where they should not have*

(b) *Their “Worship” was Non-Worship.*

They were meeting as if to worship as the gathered body of Christ but the underlying division caused an effectual despising of the church and shaming of some of its members. Apparently somehow the abundance of some flaunted next to the want of others under the outward appearance of worship **was not worship at all** and warranted this strong rebuke.

(c) *The outcome of their “worship” was self benefit at the expense of others*

(i) “Self-benefit” from a natural mindset.

Those who had resources were well fed and even drunk while, those who had nothing were hungry and shamed.

(ii) Carson: People's differences were brought into the Lord's Supper dividing rather than unifying.

No wonder Paul's rebuke was so strong.

(3) Is Their Error in any way Our Error?

(a) Do we think on things with a natural mindedness?

(b) Do divisions exist amongst us even as we ostensibly gather as the one body of Christ?

(c) Do some come out of our worship services fat and happy while others go away hungry and shamed?

(d) We will give time in just a little bit to deal with this error before we participate in the Lord's Supper this morning.

Having identified the errors of natural mindedness and incongruous division for the Corinthian church to correct, Paul now instructs the church on the Lord's Supper. The heart of Paul's teaching is in 1 Cor 11, but there is a significant unfolding or truth in 10 as well

b) 1 Cor 10:16-17

(1) The Lord's Supper symbolizes Unity of its Participants

(2) The Unity of the Church

(a) Gal 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

(b) Eph 4:1-6

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

(c) Romans 12:5

“so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

(d) See also Roman 12:12, 27

c) 1 Cor 11ⁱ

Let's Read 23-26

4 Points of Understanding Re: the Lord's Supper

(1) It is to be done in “Remembrance” of Jesus

(a) “It reminds us of Jesus death.”

(b) We need this reminder because we forget

At least we **effectively** forget, i.e., Jesus slips from His appropriate place as the defining reality of our lives to something less, and **anything less is totally wrong!**

Effectively He **is** someone we forget about. We deal with our own plans and our own ideas in our own wisdom according to our own schedules seeking our own goals for our own good – oh yes and of course there is Jesus.

Jesus knew and Paul explained that we need to remember Jesus and particularly His death by which we have been redeemed and reconciled to God.

(2) The cup of the Lord's Supper "is the New Covenant" (25)**(a) Old Covenant**

(i) That between God and Israel as Mediated by Moses and summarize by the 10 commandments written on tablets of stone.

(b) New Covenant in Promise

(i) Jer 31:31-34

(ii) Ezek 36:22-28

(iii) Joel 2:28-32 & Acts 2:16-18

(c) New Covenant in Fulfillment

(i) Jesus is the Fulfillment of the New Covenant

As we take the cup in this rite we are reminded and we declare that we are members of this New Covenant community by our association with Jesus whose blood was shed in order to establish this covenant.

It strikes me that Jesus had asked His disciples if they were able to drink the cup that He had to drink and they said they were able, not understanding what that cup represented. And here Jesus exhorts His disciples to drink a cup that symbolizes His death, a cup they could never have drunken with the same atoning effect, but one we all are admonished to drink in remembrance that Jesus death cut the new covenant that now binds us as covenant sons to God.

(3) It Proclaims the Lord's Death – It is Evangelistic (26a)

(4) It is Temporary and Anticipatory (26b)

(a) Temporary: Only Until He Comes

- (i) When He comes to consummate all things, we will not need to remember Him for we will be ever with Him as faith gives way to sight.
- (ii) 2 Cor 5:7 says we walk now by faith and not sight
- (iii) 1 Cor 13:12 speaks to the time when we will see not as in a mirror dimly, when we will know not in part but in full.
- (iv) That time is the time of His second coming.

(b) Anticipatory: of His Coming

- (i) Anticipate the Final Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev) Portrayed in Jesus parable of the prodigal son and prophesied about in John's revelation See Tim Keller

With this instruction fresh in our minds we move towards participating in and, our second point, enjoying the Lord's Supper.

II. Enjoying the Lord's Supper

A. *Preparation by Understanding*

We must understand:

1. God's Intentions for the Lord's Supper

a) As above

2. The "unworthy manner" of Approaching the Table

a) V. 27 – "Unworthy Manner"

b) There is an unworthy manner – an unworthy way -- of approaching the Table

This begs the question, "What is this unworthy manner that we might avoid it?"
The answer is found in verses 28-29.

3. The Participants' Charge to "examine himself"

a) V. 28 – "...a man must examine himself..."

b) Deal with the Error Examination Reveals

(1) Examine Yourself in Relation to Jesus the Head of the Church

(a) Are you living as the new creation Jesus has redeemed and reconciled?

(b) Or are you living like the "old man" still doing what you think is best for you without regard for how God has intended you to be?

(2) More in Context, Examine Yourself in Relation to Brothers and Sisters in Christ

(a) Are you loving them as Christ has loved you?

(b) Are you preferring them to yourself?

(3) Most in Context, Examine Yourself in Relation to the Church

(a) Are you remembering Jesus' death – how it secured your salvation and that of the others in the church?

(b) Are you remembering Jesus' body – how it is one body with many members of equal importance?

(c) Or are you primarily focused on yourself?

(4) Dealing with Sin

- (a) Recognize**
- (b) Confess**
- (c) Repent**

These sins may properly be regarded as windows into the unseen reality of our spiritual condition. There is no question that the most fundamental problem we have is not what we have done or not done but who we are. Likewise the most seminal corrective is not our own actions even our confession and repentance, but the redemptive and reconciling actions of our Lord which He has already done via His death and resurrection and ascension and His sending of His Spirit upon His church.

4. The Participants' Charge to "judge the body rightly"**a) V. 29b – 30 "...if he does not judge the body rightly."**

(1) I take "the body" to be the Body of Jesus referring to Him and His Church

(a) Body = Jesus

- (i) Carson points to Jesus who is to be remembered

(b) Body – Jesus' Church

- (i) Culverⁱⁱ points to the Church of which Jesus is the Head
- (ii) JP: V. 31 argues for body = Jesus' church
In saying, "If we judged ourselves rightly..." the plural subject and object (we...ourselves) speak to more than one person thus not Jesus but the plurality of the many members of His church.

(2) What it Means to "Judge the Body Rightly"

(a) Less about an awareness of one's individual sins of omission or commission

(b) More about an awareness or our mutual connectedness to Jesus and through Him to each other.

"The Table was to be a testimony and celebration of the truth and uniqueness of Christ's Body as the community joined to Him and one another by His Spirit." (Culver, p.256)

We judge the body rightly when we see ourselves as members of "the community joined to Him [Jesus] and one another by His Spirit."

We judge the body wrongly if we attend church services as independent people without conscious regard for Jesus and the other members of His church.

(3) How we "Judge the Body Rightly"

Pastor Kit Calls us to:

(a) Put off the Old Man (Eph 4:22, Col 3:9)

(b) Put on the New Man (Eph 4:24, Col 3:10)

(c) Renounce "Natural-Mindedness"

(i) Stop understanding reality apart from Christ

(a) Ego-centric thinking

(b) Natural Mindedness Re: LS

I am thinking like this if I observe the Lord's Supper for my individual benefit w/o regard for the rest of the body or its Head. It is all about me and what I do and what I gain by my actions.

(c) Illustration of Natural Mindedness Re: Personal Fortune

Can you imagine how nice it would be to be set for life: house paid for, investment portfolio yielding secured returns greater than you living expenses, college fund in place for each of your kids, down payment fund for each of your kids houses, vacation house in Hawaii paid for, a complete quiver of your favorite recreation toys in their own garage... no boss, no schedule requirements... Set for life. Can you imagine? You would be freed to live as you wanted to live.

(ii) Start understanding reality in Christ

(a) Christo-centric thinking

(b) Christ-Minded Thinking Re: LS

I am thinking like this when I observe the Lord's Supper for the sake of Christ and His church and

those He is calling into it. It is all about them and Jesus and what He has done.

(c) Illustration of Christ-Minded Thinking Re: Personal Fortune

I'm convinced that the believer has something even better. You **ARE** set for **true life!** You are set not just for the best life you can imagine free from bosses and others you don't want to deal with, but you are set for the true life God has intended for you to live – a life of intimate communion with Him and in good relationship with all those so joined to Christ by faith.

b) Why Judge the Body?

(1) V. 31 – So that “...we would not be judged.”

(2) Heavy consequence of not so judging

(a) God's Judgment

(i) .v29a – “...eats and drinks judgment to himself...”

(ii) V.30 – “...weak, sick, sleep...”

(iii)V.32 – Judgment as Discipline

“When we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.”

c) Deal with any error that exists in our church as it did in Corinth

(1) Stop thinking naturally

(2) Start thinking supernaturally – with the mind of Christ

Rightly conceived, this is not a church service you decided to take in because you wanted to get some personal benefit out of it; rather it is a gathering of the redeemed of Christ for the glory of God and the mutual edification we can bring to each other. It is not about you. It is about Jesus and His church.

I have much to learn about putting on the mind of Christ. But with that way of thinking in place to the best of our abilities with God's help, let's now participate in the Lord's Supper.

B. Participation

1. First Let Me Speak to any Unbelievers

a) The LS is for Believers (the Church) to Participate In

We are about to participate in this rite that Jesus has asked us as believers, to do.

b) LS is for Unbelievers to Observe & Come to Know of God and His Love for Mankind

I invite you to:

(1) Hear Gospel

(2) See the Gospel

(3) Observe Today as Unbelievers, Participate in Future as Believers

(4) Don't Feel Awkward

(5) Rather Feel Loved

This community of believers in Jesus transparently and somewhat vulnerably welcomes you to look in on a simple but meaningful rite that helps us remember the central importance of Jesus' death. As the valued guests gathered at a **wedding** ceremony take pleasure in watching the kiss that symbolizes the two becoming one, so here I invite you valued guests at this communion service to watch the believers of this church and see their commitment to and love for their groom Jesus.

2. Now to the Believers

a) Pastoral Led Congregational Prayer of Preparation

Let us pray and ...

(1) Examine Ourselves

(2) Judge the Body Rightly

b) Take the Bread

(1) Take

(2) Give thanks

(3) Break

Let's pass the bread to each other saying, "the body of Christ given for you." Hold onto the bread meditating on its meaning. The last person

served can bring the tray back to the front. When we all have the bread we will eat it together as one body.

(4) Say

“This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

Let's take the bread together remembering Jesus, His death, His church...

c) Take the Cup

“In the same way,” implicating taking, giving thanks and pouring. The omission of explicit reference to these actions could indicate the subordinate importance of them to the superior importance to the explanatory words spoken.

(1) Implicit

(a) Take

(b) Give Thanks

(c) Pour

As with the bread, let's pass the cup to each other saying, “the blood of Christ shed for you.” Hold onto the cup meditating on its meaning. The last person served can bring the tray back to the front. When we all have the bread we will eat it together as one body.

(2) Explicit

(a) Say

“This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

d) Remember Why

(1) Statement of Reason for Participation in this Way

Verse 26 -- “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.”

- We proclaim it to believers by way of reminder, praise and worship
- We proclaim it to any beloved unbelievers by way of evangelism

C. Practice

1. Exhortation:

- a) The realities spoken of in this rite live on outside of the worship service**
- b) Live in the Reality of Truths Displayed in the Lord's Supper 24-7**

Closing Song of Response

Invitation to Fellowship

Benediction

ⁱ I relied greatly on D. A. Carson's teaching on the Lord's Supper and commend it to you as very helpful: <http://thegospelcoalition.org/resources/a/The-Lords-Supper-1-Corinthians-1117-31>

ⁱⁱ See Pastor Kit Culver's *Case Study – The Corinthian Church and the Lord's Table* from His *Sacred Space: God with Us* series on pp 253-256 of his teaching notes also found as message 59 of 62 in his Sacred Space sermon series

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