

Lord's Supper: Joint participation

Gospel Worship

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Bible Text: 1 Corinthians 10:16-22
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Well, if you would, turn in your copy of God's holy word to 1 Corinthians 10:16-22. We have been in a small series on the Lord's Supper in our larger series on gospel worship. Last time, we saw how frequency is determined, that every session by the general rules of the word are to do all things when it comes to frequency to the edification and building up of the local body that they have been entrusted with by Christ. Tonight, in our final sermon on the Lord's Supper, we come to consider the administration of the Supper and how the biblical administration of the Supper leads to a joint participation or joint fellowship in Jesus Christ.

Well, with that then we come to 1 Corinthians 10:16. Please give your attention now once more to the reading of God's holy word. These are the words of God.

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. 18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? 20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. 22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

Amen. May God bless the reading of his word.

Let's pray for the preaching.

Our Father and our God, our flesh, Father, yearns for individuality and our flesh does not really ache for communion neither with you or with each other, and the same is true of the flesh of the minister who preaches. So, O Father, would you cause the minister to not preach in his own wisdom or his own strength but rather by the Spirit of the Lord, and may the Spirit of God rest on the ears that hear and open the hearts that will hear

the word of God, that we would behold such wondrous and beautiful things that speak to the glory of the church and the glory of Jesus Christ, only Christ by his Spirit can do such things. Help us see more of Christ by the preaching of the word and help us see less of the minister who preaches. And so, Father, to that end we pray that you would help me speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. And we ask this for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Well, today I don't think that it requires a lot of work to come up with this thesis but individualism runs rampant in the church and really truly threatens to tear her apart. Schism is everywhere. Rarely is seen what was in the book of Acts that we saw last time which is when the first disciples, "did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people." And if you want to hear of how the gospel works, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." When we saw this singleness of heart, praising God with one heart, that is a picture of the church, that is the picture of the church not even in glory but on this earth. You know, this morning, Christ told us to love our enemies. Sad to say our problem seems to be more basic than that, it is to love our brethren.

We have difficulty with that, friends, and perhaps the most visible demonstration of our individualism is found in how the sacraments are understood and administered. In baptism, it is common to say that my baptism is simply my pledge, my personal pledge to God, but it has nothing to do with entering into the covenant people of God; that my baptism really makes this visible, which has very little to do with me individually, that, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all," Ephesians 4:4-6. Do you hear one, one, one, one, not many there? And in our text "you being many are one body in Christ." And then the Supper, then, the church often tells its people to take the sacrament in their own seat, with their own little portion of bread, and their own individual cup, teaching them, what? That they commune all by themselves with their own Jesus, their own individual Jesus, not jointly participating in their Lord together, that they share one Lord and one faith. This has led to its logical conclusion, friends, and who knows how much further it may go, taking the Supper at home while watching services on the television and now in virtual reality in the Metaverse.

What's caused this? We have departed bit by bit from the Lord's precepts and the Lord's institution. Over time, bit by bit we have drifted from his way of administering the Supper and with every compromise in it, we make one more allowance to create a new ceremony unknown to Christ which is in danger of becoming strange fire. But when Jesus instituted the Supper, he was so crystal clear, he said, "This do in remembrance of me," meaning that he is setting the pattern for what we must do. And what is our duty? It is to observe whatever he did. Whatever he did is included in this "do." We must ask, then, and that's what we will discover tonight, what aspects of his administration of the Supper on the night in which he was betrayed endures until he drinks with us at the wedding feast of the Lamb the fruit of the vine which he said he would not do until that day?

So what I want to see today in the scripture with you is that the common table, the common loaf, and the common cup, these three have spiritual significance yet all three, strangely enough, have been ignored by the church in the last century and this has led to a lack of discernment and a lack of power in the unity of the one Christ that we share as the people of God, and it has led to the current climate of schism and individuality we observe. It has led, and I fully believe this, to the love of many growing cold both to their Savior and their Lord, and what else would do it but ignoring a means of grace that pictures oneness in Jesus Christ? No surprise, friends, we are seemingly not having the grace to live as one people.

So our theme, then, tonight is that the biblical administration of the Supper shows that God's people have a joint participation in the one Christ which is to the glory of Jesus and the strengthening of his bride. With that before us, we divide our time into three heads: joint participation at the table; second, joint participation in the loaf; and third, joint participation in the cup.

First, joint participation at the table. Let us first ask the question and let us understand what parts of Christ's administration have significance. For instance, must we take the Supper at night in an upper room? That's how he did it. Some English Baptists actually said communion services must take place at night, thinking that that had significance but the time and the upper room have no significance, they were circumstantial. It took place on the night of the Passover meal, as we have already seen, and the room was just a room needed to celebrate the Supper, but I will make the case out of the scriptures that the table, the loaf, and the cup, they have significance. Why? Because the scripture says so. All three, you might have heard this, have a place in our scripture text. We have the Lord's table in verse 21. We have the one bread in verse 17. And we have the cup of blessing in verse 16.

These three aspects of the institution demonstrate for us spiritual truths in the Lord's Supper and all three are designed to further what the apostle calls our joint participation in Christ. In verse 16, we hear that, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Now the Greek word there for "communion" is actually probably very well-known by you, it is *koinonia*, *koinonia* which means "fellowship." And so the literal translation would be here, which communion is a literal translation, it's just that we often now think, it wasn't the case probably at the time that this was translated but we now think of the sacrament as communion, right? Which it is, we call it that for this reason, but really here communion signifies a joint participation in something. So we might say, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the joint participation or sharing of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the joint participation or sharing of the body of Christ?" And interestingly enough the New American Standard Bible translates it, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the sharing of the blood of Christ?" And the same with the bread.

It is a joint sharing and Christ instituted the sacrament at a table so now we come to the first point which is the table; the sacrament was instituted at a table to show us and to enable this joint participation. For instance, in Luke 22:21 at the night of which he was betrayed the Lord says, "the hand of him that betrayeth me is with on the table." Why? Why a table? Why was the Lord so keen on using a table? Friends, it's pretty obvious, isn't it? Families sit at a table when they share a meal. Their supper is set on a table. It is a familial place full of love and peace to one another. You only invite those to the table where there is a sense of friendship and fellowship and that's what's so neat about so many of you opening your homes to the people of God in the church. You come and say, "Let us have a fellowship meal. Let us share the peace of Christ at the table." A table is a place of peace and love for God's family, seeing that the source of our bond is the host who is Jesus Christ who is with us at the table.

I have heard this many times because it's gotten out of the ordinary anymore to see this in the Reformed and Evangelical churches, but those who come to a table in communion for the first time, so often they come and tell me, they tell me how different it was to have communion at the table where they are seeing their brethren in front of them or to the side of them and they are sitting there at the table together, seeing that we partake of the same element together, we take the same bread, my brother to the left or my sister to the right, and we are all sharing of the same Christ; and if they've never done that at a table before, it is an astonishing thing to them.

We see at the table, as well, that no matter, you know, I look in this congregation and we come from so many different places and the table says that the family of God comes from every nation, tongue and tribe, that all are one in Jesus Christ, there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. At the table there is no black, there is no white, there is no brown, all are one in Christ. At the table there are no doctors and there are no janitors, all are one in Christ no matter their standing in this world. And when the minister calls to the congregation in the name of Christ to leave your pew to come to the Supper, the table, then, is this astonishing preview of when all the goats and the sheep are separated on that last day, and the table divides communicants that from those who have not made a public profession of faith. The table shows those who have peace with Jesus Christ and pictures that great division where those in Christ will take their place, where? At the wedding feast but all others are cast out into hell.

So this division is not a time to shame the people who are not yet here but instead it's the time to exhort the people who are there. Yes, come to the table next time. Receive Christ now. Why have you not, we ask? Why have you not received Christ? Will you take hold of him and live forever, participate with us? There is always room for more. There is enough room at the table for every sinner who puts their faith in Jesus Christ and we exhort them, "Come."

And coming from the pew to the table shows that we come into the King's innermost chambers. It's a picture of that, that we draw, as communicants, very close to the God of heaven made flesh. You think about this, maybe we don't think about this so often, maybe Jesus Christ has become too ordinary and plain to us, God forbid. But you think of

this, the God of heaven sitting at the table even on that first communion, and you have his 12 disciples around who drew as close to God as any man ever can through the Mediator, and that's what that table signifies.

Coming to the table also makes us examine ourselves, "Do I belong at this table?" Being at his table, you already heard it, is what Jesus said made Judas' presence really heinous. Luke 22:21-23, "But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table." The betrayer is there in the most intimate place. "And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!" And what did that cause when he said those words? What was the reaction by his disciples? "And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing." What a thing to hear that the betrayer was so close at the table. It made all of his disciples ask, "Is it I who should do this thing?"

Without the table we also miss that the Supper is a preview of the greatest feast of all. Revelation 19:9, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Friends, you know this, wedding feasts are set on a table because there is so much and it's not served ordinarily in individual chairs. A wedding feast, in other words, is no instant meal. It is meticulously prepared, set in a banqueting house, what the Bible calls a house of wine. With the table removed, God's people are so quick to forget that their destination is not this world, it is to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and that is where I'm headed as a communicant.

And they miss also that together they are the bride of Christ. Not individually but together. Christ tells you that the table will also be there in the kingdom of God. Luke 22:30, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." The table has rich spiritual significance that the upper room and the time of day does not, and all that richness is robbed from God's people when the table is removed, and in our text the table is even a point of doctrine for the apostle in verses 20 and 21, communion is called a partaking of the Lord's table, "I would not that ye should have fellowship," there it is, *koinonia*, or sharing, "with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." You see here the table, just as the cup does, demonstrates our fellowship together in the Lord and is that not what is happening there? The analogy he makes is the joint participation with devils that pagans have at their ritual table, but for us at the Lord's table there is a joint participation in Christ.

Without a table, then, something of our fellowship in the Lord is not to be grasped. For these reasons and more, the adopting act of the Church of Scotland in 1645 when it adopted the Westminster's Directory of Public Worship, they noted that sitting at the table is not a matter of indifference but is required in the observation of the Lord's Supper. This was contrary to the independence but our forefathers knew it was a crime, friends, to remove the table from the people yet today the table has all but disappeared in Presbyterian churches but here in 1645 we fought tooth-and-nail to keep it. In a lot of churches, all you find is really not a table, it's a shelf to put the elements on that has, "Do

this in remembrance, this do in remembrance of me," but nobody thinks of it as a table, think of it as a shelf. It's hard to know what is being done with it because nobody goes up to that table, and no one really sees it as a place to set a communal feast. But what about on our communion days, people of God? When people walk into that assembly, they see the tables, they see that it is set, and you see the elements of the Lord's Supper, and you see the chairs arrayed around it, and you know that there is a feast to be had, a spiritual feast to be sure but you know that there is something here of feasting on Christ, and they see that the Supper is a place of joint participation in Jesus.

So don't think of the table as some circumstance. We don't believe that. We believe it has spiritual significance. And when you come to the table, then, communicant, see the table in all those ways, beloved, see the table with joy, that my Beloved is calling me to his chambers to feast with his people on himself. So seeing, then, that the table sets a place for our joint participation we consider our second point which is joint participation in the loaf, and the next matter of significance is the common loaf of bread, that the Supper should be celebrated with a common loaf that the communicants share together. And this significance should be so obvious here in verse 17, that "we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." One bread signifies we partake of the one bread of life who is Jesus Christ, and we being many, right, all of us here and many more are many like many pieces of grain being made into one loaf. We are together, the spiritual mystical body of Jesus Christ. Just as many grains come together to form one loaf, we being many are one body, and the one bread shows that you and I share one Christ whose one body was broken for many who then become one body in him.

So the minister should not pre-cut this bread or serve something like individual crackers, and the minister must break the loaf in front of you. Christ's institution demands it. It's amazing how many things we ignore, "And when he," Jesus, "had given thanks, he brake it," the bread and see what the spiritual significance is, "and said, Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me," 1 Corinthians 11:24. He breaks it because he's showing you the gospel, that he was broken. He would be broken at the time of this but in 1 Corinthians 11 it is done in remembrance of his broken body, "this is my body, which is broken for you." And this is I'm going to come back to this thesis over and over again: if the Supper is the gospel in visible form, every change we make from the institution in some way is robbing us of the gospel, or perhaps giving us a different gospel.

Then you each jointly participate in that broken bread, when the bread is passed, each one of you reaches your hand out by faith to pull from that one body and eat of it seeing the broken Savior for your sinfulness in that, broken for you, and this is, again, a problem with our moderns, is that when we hear the word "you," all I think about is myself but it's plain in the Authorized Version that "you" here is plural. He is broken for you, plural, not individually, and so it is a communal fellowship with that one broken body. We being many are one body and partakers of that one broken loaf of bread. Again, when we tamper with anything that presents the gospel, friends, we start to drift from the gospel. Do you think that Jesus sort of was winging it that night when he did this? Or do you

think that everything that he did had thought and care and had spiritual significance? Why else would he say, "This do in remembrance of me"?

This is a well thought out, powerful picture of the gospel and yet what is so common to see? The common loaf is removed, the bread is precut. This is not what Christ instituted. He instituted one loaf which is broken, broken only in the sacramental action of tearing it. And then he passed that bread to the communicants, and this is important too, who pass it to one another. Jesus showed the pattern when he served his disciples in Luke 22:17 and this time he was talking about the cup, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves." Though it's not mentioned with the bread, that pattern, we believe, is the same pattern he would have done with distributing all of the elements. You see, this has significance too, friends. There is no Mediator but Jesus. And that's what happens when a priest or even a pastor or an elder hands you the Supper, it is to say that this person is mediating between you and Jesus Christ. And it's so interesting, the table is removed first, and then we come up with other ways to fence the table and to keep those who should be kept from the table by having now elders go through and pass the elements around to make sure, okay, is this one, one that I know has faith? Is this one too young? Is this one a child and shouldn't have it? You've created a priesthood, is what you've done. But coming to the table and having the communicants pass the bread says that we ourselves share directly in Jesus Christ. Again, tamper with the institution, you tamper with the gospel.

Why did we go from the Bible's teaching to precut bread in services? The real reason is hygiene. We precut the bread, you hear this many times, lest we spread germs, and the rationale here is this: that we must keep the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," and we say essentially then that the church used a single loaf throughout her history because we were ignorant of bacteria. If the church would understand modern science, then in the old days they would have done the very same and they would never have been dogmatic to follow the institution of Christ so closely.

What are the implications of that statement? First, is that the church instituted the Supper. It did not. Jesus Christ, Son of God, God in the flesh, instituted the Supper. And what the hygiene argument implicates is who, Jesus Christ, friends, that he broke the sixth commandment when he passed a single loaf to his disciples to share. May it never be thought, never be said that Jesus broke the sixth commandment or we would be utterly lost, friends.

It also meant that Jesus instituted something to harm his precious lambs. No, he did not. He is the one who says he will not even break a bruised reed, friends. He didn't come to harm us. His institution is meant to be a blessing to us, and this argument also, while it's visceral, it ignores so much science. You're more likely to get germs from the doorknob over there, you're more likely to get germs from handling a shared Psalm book, from breathing shared air in our very small room, the passing of the platter where the bread is contained than you are from partaking of a single loaf. Yes, we can be reasonable, though, without changing the institution. You notice we set out hand sanitizer, right, at the table, and I use it as the minister before I break the bread. Just reasonable sensible precautions but the institution must not change.

By faith, friends, we must always believe the Lord never institutes a blessed thing for our harm. I'll just say it is in the fallen flesh to be suspicious of our God, to be suspicious of his wisdom to be suspicious of his intentions, and we allow the serpent of old to whisper to us that God's institutions will harm us. Where did that lie come from? Genesis 3, that to go away from God's ways will have the blessing. That is a lie from the father of lies. You stick to God's ways and you find the blessing. Do not be wiser than Jesus, and never forget he is sovereign over germs.

So seeing the significance of the one shared loaf which signifies that we being many are one, that we jointly participate in that one broken body of Jesus, we consider our joint participation in the cup. Now the very same principles that govern the bread also govern the cup of wine, and I'm going to say something today that will be very challenging to many of us, that Christ's institution is a common cup and not individual ones. This is an area where I believe that this congregation, myself as well, must reform, and I believe we are drifting away from the Lord's intentions in the institution of the Supper. And this is not an argument that my flesh wants to make, believer, but I can't get away from it when I look at the scriptures. The scriptures testify to a single cup that each communicant shares.

In verse 16, "the cup, the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" "The cup" is singular in Greek and our translation. A singular cup of blessing. It says that "the cup" is a joint participation, *koinonia*, in the blood of Christ. In the same way, in Christ's original institution it was a single cup that the disciples shared. Mark 14:23 says, "And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it," singular, "to them: and they all drank of it," singular. A joint participation in the cup. Matthew 26:27, "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it." All the Greek articles, all of them throughout the Bible when it comes to the Supper are singular because the text says it is a joint participation in the cup. Luke 22:17, "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." The dividing here is not that they then poured out the cup into little cups, the meaning in the Greek is "distribute this cup among yourselves, distribute this cup among yourselves." After it was blessed, also you notice. He blesses the cup and then they divide it among themselves. You know, the Scottish Reformer, George Gillespie said, "We conclude that when Christ commanded the apostles to divide the cup among them, the meaning of the words can be no other than this, that they should give the cup, singular, one to another." *Koinonia*, joint fellowship, that's what's seen in all the gospels. They drank of it. Then in 1 Corinthians 11:25, one chapter over, this is the institution, "After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

Now I want you to remember, how did the apostle preface this manner of observation? 1 Corinthians 11:23, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." Verse 25 teaches, then, is that this is what the Lord wants us to do in the Supper. You see, these are the things that have significance. Not the upper room, not the time of day, but

these are the things which are delivered from the Lord and the text says a single cup. And I've not quoted every text in the scripture that deals with the Supper, in every case, though, you find it as a singular cup and not plural. The command is in 1 Corinthians 11:28, "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Drink of that singular cup.

I don't know as Reformed Presbyterians when we suddenly decided that we will claim the regulative principle in Deuteronomy 12:32 that, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." I don't know when we decided that doesn't apply to the specifics of the Lord's Supper but sometime we felt like we can do that, that we are at liberty to change the Lord's ways. Beloved, you've heard that we are not at liberty to do this, and with multiple cups we have changed the ceremony. You think of what we do, we say we wait now, "Let's wait until all of us have our little thimble and now we will partake together." That was never done, friends, before. There were individual cups. That's an innovation to try to regain some unity lost in the individual cups. This is man's wisdom, friends. Okay, unity is being lost in the common cup, let me now figure out some way to maintain a modicum of unity though it is very clear that each disciple took of the cup individually.

How quickly we change our worship and forget God's words, "I will be sanctified by them that draw nigh me," Leviticus 10. So I want to give you a quick history lesson on when these things changed because the exegesis of this "one cup" is so plain that for 1,900, now we talk about this, right, we say, okay, exclusive psalmody lasted for about 600 years universally around the church, instruments and no instruments lasted a little bit longer than that, but for 1,900 years, friends, the church used a common cup. The first deviation was not until 1893. I don't want to sound cynical but this is, again, one of America's contributions to the church along with grape juice. Was this change theological? In other words, did some bright Reformed scholar discover something in the Bible that was never discovered before? No, of course not. It was our old friend hygiene again. And then the temperance movement latched onto it, knowing that grape juice spreads germs more readily than wine, and they really pushed for the individual cups because individual cups allowed for alcohol to be eradicated in communion service. This is a very late innovation to the church, beloved, and if you would chart the peace and progress of the church from the late 1800s, I think you would understand where these things are coming from.

Modernism. In our denomination, it took until 1912, 1912 before synod gave an allowance. Now it wasn't mandated, it was allowed to use individual cups. Listen to the rationale in our minutes of synod, you can look this up. But the word "cup" as used in connection to the sacrament refers not to the vessel but to the contents of the vessel, and inasmuch as this is not a question of doctrine but – here it is – of efficiency and hygiene, efficiency and hygiene, and they go on to say that sessions can decide whether to permit individual cups. And the one theological argument here is that the cup refers to the contents of the vessel and not to the vessel itself. But all throughout you can see from the texts we have surveyed, it is a joint participation of the contents of a singular cup that is in the text representing a singular Christ sacrificed for many, not many little Christs in

little thimbles of Christ for every communicant. I believe you heard the reasons here and, again, this is our church, want to be respectful of her but synod said it is for efficiency and hygiene. Not theological and that's why we have drifted away.

The same argument I made about hygiene and the bread applies here, beloved. Jesus Christ understands biology and germs better than any of us and he instituted the common cup, and for 1,900 years the church used it. There has never been an outbreak, there has never been a disease spread by it, nothing has harmed God's people. It has been, as the text says, the cup of blessing which we bless. The modernist way of looking at things by way of germs crept into the church at the same time with the rejection of miracles, with the rejection of the Trinity and so, all at the same time, causing science to interpret the Bible for us. You know, at the time in 1912, several men in our synod wrote dissents captured in the minutes, you can look at them.

J. M. Foster, he wrote four points of dissent but one point really grabbed my attention because it relates to the theme of joint participation in Christ. He said, and this is his heading for this fourth point of dissent, "Because the individual cup is a change in the name of science," that's really what the synod was saying. He continues, "The Lord of all ages ordained the common cup foreseeing all the scientific discoveries," and here is what grabbed me, "The power of the common cup to break down race prejudice and caste systems is a deeper system of the Great Physician than the sanitary proposals of our modern physicians." Is that not beautiful, friends? That is so beautiful and that is precisely the case.

We have all these social programs but the gospel, remember the gospel is found in the common cup. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither black nor white nor brown. All are one in Jesus Christ. We go, you know, back to some of our homelands, right, in India where there are caste systems, what a wonderful thing when people who come from totally different castes, some opposite ends, untouchables drinking with those of the highest castes out of the same cup. That is the gospel and it is not found in any other faith on this planet.

Our denomination, you remember, dissented from the US Constitution because, among other things, we could not countenance that a black man was worth 3/5 of a white man in Article 1, Section 2. In our denomination, in the 19th century we saw the gospel in the Supper when a black man who was told he is less than a white man in society comes from the pews to sit next to his white brother, he takes a sip from the cup and passes it to his white brother who drinks from the same Christ unashamed. That is the gospel in visible form, friends. We are truly drinking together of Christ who is no respecter of persons and has no divisions among his bride, a shared participation, koinonia, in the blood of Christ.

If the church would do such things today, what a witness we would be. This morning, we heard about loving our enemies, what a witness that would be. If the church, black, white, brown, whatever color, whatever social status would drink together, what a witness that would be. The social justice warriors would be defanged, true equality shown in the gospel. But science, it's interesting, science agrees with the safety of the common cup, by

the way. The CDC has been routinely asked this question and they studied it in 1998. This is their conclusion. A recent study of 681 persons found that people who received communion as often as daily are not at higher risk of infection compared with persons who do not receive communion or persons who do not attend Christian church services at all. In summary, the risk for infectious disease transmission by a common communion between communicants, a communion cup is very low and appropriate safeguards, that is, wiping the interior and exterior rim between communicants, use of care to rotate the cloth to ring, would further diminish this risk. In addition, churches may wish to consider advising their congregations that sharing the common cup is discouraged if a person has an active respiratory infection, that is, a cold or a flu, or moist or open sores on their lips. It's interesting that even the CDC, friends, whatever you think of them, even the CDC vindicated our Lord's institution of a common cup. I brought copies of the paper if you'd like to read it here. I brought like 15-20 copies. When I read it, right, and I think of the distance between 1912 when that initial dissent was written and 1998, our brother, J. M. Foster vindicated after 80 years by the CDC, but even moreso vindicated in the beatific vision and the perfect knowledge of God.

Well, friends, we must be reasonable and we must take precautions not testing God. You heard the CDC that when you take from a common cup, if you're ill, do not partake. The last time that I was in a service with a common cup, I was actually the minister and I was not feeling well so I did not partake of the Supper and another minister administered the Supper that day. If you have an infection of some kind or some sort of virus that's easily transmitted, do not partake. Take to the session, maybe there's something we can discuss about that. And as husbands studied and you probably well know, use of noble metals like silver in a cup are naturally resistant to microbes. Wine deters it as well, alcoholic content as well.

Now interestingly enough, I've talked to other ministers but the common cup is often helpful to those who have an allergy or aversion to wine. One can simply wet their lips if need be and taste as little of the wine as they wish. It's actually very helpful for those who have allergies because you feel that you have to drink all of that thimble otherwise you're strange to people, you think, and you feel like there's something wrong. But you can just simply, if you have a problem, you know, one man I know, his wife has an issue with alcohol, she grew up, she has no problem with people partaking but she just is not used to it and he said the common cup is helpful for her because she just has to take a very little. And we use alcoholic wipes or special cloths to wipe the rim between communicants and we often set those things out for communicants. And in the services I've always partaken in, the minister partakes last showing he's a servant of all and that he is not afraid that the cup of blessing which we bless is anything but blessing. So he will go last.

So after much study, all that to say the session does want to reform our practice at DRPC to bring us into what we believe is greater conformity to the word of God and we would want to go to the common cup. At the same time, we love you all and want to shepherd you well and our next communion date is March 13. So please, if you have issues or you have some concerns, we want to hear from you. Don't think that we are shutting down any lines of communication and we're going to be angry at you if you have a concern or a

question about this. Please, do come and speak to us, especially if there's some health issue or something that we are just unaware of, right? We want to understand these things and we can communicate with other ministers. You know, so many churches do this, that we would just simply inquire and see how other churches handle such things.

But as we come back to the scriptures, I just want to encourage you in this way because it was helpful for my own soul, because if you're squeamish about the common cup, it's not anything health related, right, if you're squeamish about the cup and you're thinking, gross or something, I want you to meditate on something: what would you do if you were there on that night in which our Lord was betrayed sitting at that table on the first Lord's Supper and the Lord said, "This do in remembrance of me," and the cup was passed to you after Peter, James, John, Matthew and the others had taken their sip, would you say to Christ, "Lord, I cannot sip from the same cup as Peter. I cannot take from the cup that that fisherman drank out of." Or would you take the cup of salvation and bless your Lord for it? You know, remember in John 6 when the Lord spoke of all men must receive him as flesh and blood, you remember how the people said, "This is a hard saying and we're offended and many walked away," and the Lord asked, "Will you go away also?" What I want to say in that is this has nothing to do particularly with you walking away from this church, that's not my point, what I wanted to make the point of is ours is not a faith easy for the flesh. Remember our other doctrines you embrace. Once your flesh recoiled at the exclusivity of Christ. Once your flesh recoiled at the doctrine of hell. Once your flesh recoiled at the doctrines of grace. Our faith is uncomfortable to the natural man, you heard that this morning out of Luke's gospel, but from it's very beginning, our faith is uncomfortable to the natural man. In the Old Testament and we forget this, we have such a sanitized view of the faith, in the Old Testament rivers of blood and screaming animals poured out of the temple in Jerusalem to signify the forgiveness of sins. The smell and sounds of dying animals punctuated the worship of God's people. And our Lord in an unhygienic manner was torn in a bloody fashion on a cross, a crown of thorns pierced his brow, he gasped and he moaned and he groaned. And that is our faith, friends, that is what we partake of.

Satan, I believe this wholeheartedly, desires to sanitize your faith because then you will lose the gospel. You see that. Let's take the Supper away, let's talk about preaching, preaching, his desire is it would no longer confront you but confirm you in your sin. "Make me feel good, pastor about myself. Tell me smooth things." And now with the sacrament, we take thimbles of grape juice and our little pieces of bread in cozy seats, isolated from one another and the reality of the broken body and cup of salvation. Yes, it is very tidy, very 21st century, but nothing to do with the atonement, nothing to do with the joint participation and singleness of heart in Christ.

And in baptism, baptism has gotten to the point where it's my time to pontificate for 10 minutes about my testimony, individualism rather than speaking of a shared Savior who has brought me into the people of God, that I was once of a people who are not a people but are now the people of God. Rampant individualism has become so bad, I had just considered this, we have what is called a split tray now, friends. This is particularly hurtful to those who see the unity of Christ. Some can take wine, some can take grape

juice, choose your preference, as if to say what kind of Savior do you like. This is an American innovation as well, do you want a fermented, and I mean no disrespect, do you want a Savior fermented or unfermented?

How modern and how unbiblical, friends. This all, all of this attacks the unity of our common Lord and Savior. Now there is no longer Greek or Jew, right, that is rejected but the grape juice party versus the wine party. That's how strange things have become since we abandoned the common cup and is it a wonder that, I'm not saying this is the only reason, is it a wonder that the church is in decline? Not to me. Well, you might ask, "What of our brethren who don't follow a table, common loaf or common cup? Are they not celebrating the Lord's Supper?" No, I would never make that pronouncement at all. We ourselves have never used a common cup since our planting, but I do believe we are drifting away and what we do is irregular and not according to institution.

Now at the end of the day where I have to stand is no man is at liberty to change what Christ has instituted, especially not for the sake of germs. You know, I want us to consider how far we've gone. The sad and sorry state of a church yet to be revived, friends, yet to be revived is that it fears germs more than God. My fear of God must be greater than my fear of germs, friends. My God says he is a consuming fire. What is my duty as a minister, to see how far I can skirt the rules of his word? No, my duty is simple obedience like a child to walk by faith and not by sight, to see the cup, the singular cup in the scriptures as a cup of blessing and joint participation in the Savior, and to never lose sight of it, and to never lose the glory of it, that it is the gospel in visible form. The communion and the table, bread and cup is worth fighting for because the gospel is worth fighting for, friends. And above all, the worship of God is worthy fighting for in every exhaustive detail. Scripture says, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear for our God is a consuming fire." The glory of the gospel is at the Lord's table, at the Lord's table in the bread and in the wine. You see in there a consuming fire who was consumed himself for the sake of sinners who deserve hell.

So I would just exhort you, let us not change the table, the bread or the cup, and let us be blessed by seeing our joint participation in one Christ that we share together, and may the bonds of charity and fellowship be revived in the churches of God. Amen.

Please rise for prayer if able.

O Lord our God, to many of us this doctrine is a hard saying and, Father, we find in your word the singleness of heart and we long for it. And Father, we pray that you would use the means you have appointed to do this thing for your church, that we would glory in our one Christ, we would love one another, that the bonds of charity would be strengthened in your people through the very means of grace you have ordained to do this thing. Help us, Father, in love and charity embrace the doctrines of the word and help us to love one another, help elders love the people of God here, and shepherd them well if they have concerns. And Lord, we do pray that it would be for the good and health of your people that you would continue to reform all your churches and, Lord, so when

we come to you in this as we look as this doctrine, we are again confronted with the fact that we are not a perfect church and there are many areas where we may yet have to reform. Help reform your people, O God, that we would enjoy God and that we would honor our King and our Lord. Help us seek out the glory of God and the good of Zion for we ask this in Zion's King and Head Jesus Christ. Amen.

Welcome to the Dallas Reformed Presbyterian Church

We extend a special welcome to our visitors. Please join us as we seek to glorify God in worship and our enjoyment of the blessed Sabbath Day of rest as the people of God.

The *Dallas Reformed Presbyterian Church* is a congregation of the Midwest Presbytery of the RPCNA. You can learn more about us at www.dallasrpc.org. Follow us on Facebook for up-to-date information and events: www.facebook.com/DallasRPCNA.



Lord's Day Schedule

Morning worship	10:30 am
Lunch and fellowship	12:15 pm
Sermon discussion or class	1:00 pm
Catechism	1:30 pm
Afternoon worship	2:15 pm

Church Officers

Pastor	Rom Prakashpalan	805-404-3547	romeshprakash@hotmail.com
Elder	Nick Schoenberger	972-569-7143	repeater75@gmail.com
Elder	Andrew Silva	325-864-0593	andrewsilva80@gmail.com

Readings for Next Lord's Day

Morning	Isaiah 44	1 Corinthians 14:20-39
Afternoon	Isaiah 45	1 Corinthians 15:1-19

Upcoming Events

February 25	Romans Bible Study at the Christian's home.
February 27	Dinner and Doctrine.
March 11	Hosting Midwest Presbytery

Please remember that this is the Lord's Day and His desire we set the day apart for Himself should guide our conversations and our actions throughout the day.

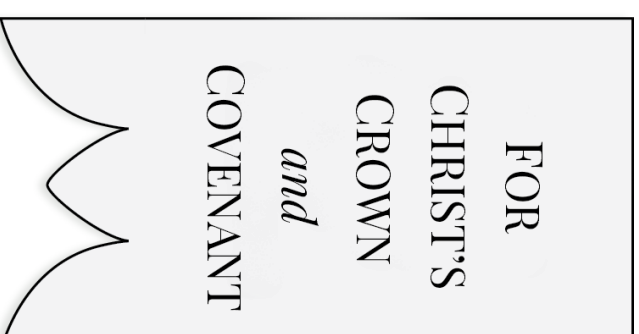
Dallas Reformed

Presbyterian Church

That in all things He might have the preeminence

A congregation of the

Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA)



Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear;
Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;
So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty:
For he is thy LORD; and worship thou him.

Psalm 45:10-11

Morning Worship

Lord's Day February 20th, 2022

Call to worship	Psalm 45:10-11
* Prayer of adoration	
* Psalm	Psalm 99A <small>ROPTW</small>
Old Testament reading	Isaiah 42
New Testament reading	1 Corinthians 13
* Psalm	Psalm 119E <small>ROPTW</small>
* Prayer of intercession	
Sermon	<i>Love your enemies</i> Luke 6:27-36
* Prayer of application	
* Psalm	Psalm 35:13-18 <small>SMV</small>
* Benediction	Numbers 6:24-26

Tunes: Psalm 35:13-18 (Marlyrdon, 120B)

Love your enemies and demonstrate that you are a child of God

- I. The understanding of "love your enemies".
- II. The application of "love your enemies".
- III. The power of "love your enemies".

Larger Catechism Q. 194. What do we pray for in the fifth petition? In the fifth petition, (which is, *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*) acknowledging, that we and all others are guilty both of original and actual sin, and thereby become debtors to the justice of God; and that neither we, nor any other creature, can make the least satisfaction for that debt; we pray for ourselves and others, that God of his free grace would, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, apprehended and applied by faith, acquit us both from the guilt and punishment of sin, accept us in his Beloved, continue his favour and grace to us, pardon out daily failings, and fill us with peace and joy, in giving us daily more and more assurance of forgiveness; which we are the rather imboldened to ask, and encouraged to expect, when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offences.

* – Please stand if able

Afternoon Worship

Lord's Day February 20th, 2022

Call to worship	Psalm 45:10-11
* Prayer of adoration	
* Psalm	Psalm 87B <small>ROPTW</small>
Old Testament reading	Isaiah 43
New Testament reading	1 Corinthians 14:1-19
* Psalm	Psalm 119C <small>ROPTW</small>
* Prayer	
Sermon	<i>The Lord's Supper: Joint Participation</i> 1 Cor. 10:16-22
* Prayer of application	
* Psalm	Psalm 116:13-19 <small>SMV</small>
* Benediction	2 Corinthians 13:14

Tunes: Psalm 116:13-19 (Bedford, 119F)

Our joint participation in Christ is seen when the Supper is purely administered

- I. Joint participation at the table.
- II. Joint participation in the bread.
- III. Joint participation in the cup.

Confession of Faith XXIX: Of the Lord's Supper

III. The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use; and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants; but to none who are not then present in the congregation.

* – Please stand if able