

# Judging The Body Of Christ

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Let us pray.

*Heavenly Father, it comes time for us to again hear from you through your word. We pray that you would anoint the preaching and hearing of your word with your most Holy Spirit who is the Lord and giver of life to work in us the grace of repentance and faith and sanctification, that we might all the more be bent according to the straight edge of your word and not be content with who we are, and all the more long for what you have promised us to become, conformed to the image of Christ in whom we pray. Amen.*

If you got a handout, you might notice that it's the same handout as last week in terms of dealing with the Heidelberg Catechism. Last week we dealt with Question 80 primarily in terms of the Lord's supper and the popish Mass, but I wanted to talk a little bit tonight about Question 81 before we moved on. Next week, I will be moving on to Lords Day 31 which has to do with church discipline, and really if you think about it, this chapter or this day is kind of introducing or opening the door to church discipline. I'll say more of that in a moment, but as we were just told, we need to rightly discern the body. Maybe if we put a title to the sermon it would be judging the body of Christ or rightly discerning the body of Christ.

We are not free to come to the Lord's supper in any way or any form that we want. We are to come as just read to us from 1 Corinthians 11, that when these believers, these Corinthian believers came together, they thought they were coming for the Lord's supper and Paul tells them, "You're wrong." Verse 20, "Therefore when you meet together, it is not for the Lord's supper, for in your eating, each one takes his own supper and one is hungry and another gets drunk." He says, "I don't say this to praise you but to your shame." How would you like to have the Apostle Paul come to our church and do an assessment of the ministry and he gets to the Lord's supper and he says, "What you're doing, your outward form might be just fine, I like your table, a wonderful table. I like the songs you sang, but you are messing it all up because of your actions and your attitudes and your relationships to one another. What you are doing is not even the Lord's supper though you call it such." And then with very sobering words, he says in verse 30, "For this reason many, many among you are weak, sick, and a number sleep." Many. And the commentators are kind of mixed on what's the significance of "many." Remember in the Old Testament as Israel was preparing to go and conquer the Promised Land and

there was the sin of Achan, the sin of one man caused the death of 30 Jews, and whatever we are to learn from that story, we are not a bunch of individualists who individually come to the table, who individually draw near to the throne of grace, we are the body of Christ. As Paul will say elsewhere, when one rejoices, we all rejoice; when one weeps, we all weep.

So who should come to the Lord's supper is the question that is asked us in the catechism, "For whom is the Lord's supper instituted?" Who should come? Who ought to come to the table? Who ought to be admitted to the table? And from the earliest days of the church, one of the ways in which that was answered is no unbaptized person is to come to the table. You refuse to take upon yourself the sign of what it means to be a disciple of Christ, to be united to him by faith and death and resurrection, the table is not for you. But there is more to it and I want to say some things. I agree with what the catechism says. I like everything the catechism says but I find if you look at your handout, it cites 1 Corinthians 10 and 1 Corinthians 11:28 and 29 which is why we had those read, and I'm going to take my sermon from the text, but I think the text actually teaches something different than the catechism. It's not that they are in conflict, I think the catechism proves something that is true and is accurate as far as it goes, but it misses some things that I want to highlight. The catechism reminds us that it's for those who are truly sorrowful for their sins and yet trust that these are forgiven them for the sake of Christ, and we can say amen to that. The table is only for those who are truly sorrowful for your sins. If you're not repentant of your sins, if you're not broken over your sins, if you are choosing to live as if the cross of Christ and the judgment of God for sin doesn't matter, then the table which proclaims his death is not for you. If you think it's okay to live as if the death of Christ was unnecessary, do not come to the table because there at the table we proclaim the death of Christ.

But also it reminds us that not only are our sins forgiven by love, but it says the remaining infirmities are covered by his passion and death. Oh, that is such good news, to know that our remaining struggle with sin as Paul talks about in Romans 7, that indwelling sin that seems to enslave us, that wages war against our minds and the law of God in our minds, that the blood of Christ covers that as well. It's one thing to know that I've been forgiven, it's another thing to know that the ongoing struggle that we have with sin is covered.

Then the catechism says to desire to have their faith more and more strengthened, and this is where I wish they had said more, and their lives more holy. Their lives more holy, but hypocrites and such as turn not to God with sincere hearts, eat and drink judgment on themselves. What is this more holy life that is to be desired? Well, that's kind of what I want to focus on from the text that the catechism cites as kind of the proof text for this whole passage.

The Corinthians were believers. We know this. We know that Paul speaks highly of them. All the way back in chapter 1, Paul speaks to them as saints, "Grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, and I thank God always concerning you and the grace of God which is given to you in Christ, then in everything you have been

enriched." He says in verse 2, that the church of Corinth, those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus and saints by calling, and yet they were a church, a true church but they had a lot of issues. I mentioned this not too long ago but I was listening to some lectures by Carl Truman and he talked about Corinth and he said one of his favorite books in the New Testament is the book of Corinthians and it's not, the question isn't why isn't the church better, he says the real question for Corinth is why was there a church there at all. He said there was probably only about 70 people, which he took as a real encouragement that the Apostle Paul would write a letter to a church of only about 70 people. You know, in our days, I remember listening on the news when that wacko Baptist church down in Kansas or whatever, that go around and do all that disruptive stuff, I don't remember the name of them. Don't remind me, I don't want to know. But I remember a news commentator dismissing them not because of their theology, not because of their activity, but because, "Well, there is only about 50 people there."

But here the Apostle Paul is writing a New Testament epistle to a church of only about 70 people, and one reason why Truman would go on to say, the amazing thing is that why is there a church there at all is because Corinth was about as morally bankrupt of a town, of an area that you could imagine. It was a double seaport. Because of where it is, it's on a very narrow stretch of land and there are basically two ports on each side of this narrow strip of land and basically the only trade there is is the coming in and out on the boats, and I think that's where Old Spice cologne started, you know, where they had a woman in every port, which growing up we used to always sing that. My dad wore Old Spice and I thought that's kind of cool, you know, a woman in every port. Then when I got older I realized that's not so good.

But Corinth was kind of like that and the temple worship and the temple prostitution, and there are all sorts of things that are wrong, but yet there is a church there, but one of the problems we know even from the earliest chapters of 1 Corinthians is one of the besetting sins of that congregation is division. Some that are saying, "I'm of Paul, and others, I'm of Apollos, and I'm of Cephas, and I'm of Jesus." There was division in the church amongst their gifts, some being proud and boastful that, "I have this gift and you don't, therefore, I am more spiritual than you." So even though they are called saints, even though they have been sanctified in Christ already, the call of God on their lives and the furthering of their sanctification is a call away from sin, but part of that sin is away from division and part of that division is learning to rightly judge themselves in how they relate to other people. So when the catechism talks about us being strengthened and their lives to be more holy, I would suggest to us that part of the right coming to the table of Christ is your right assessment of not, "Are your motives great towards Christ? Are you on fire for Jesus? Are you dealing with maybe a lustful thought here or a carnal attitude there?" I'm not excluding those things to deal with, it seems to me in this particular context of 1 Corinthians 10 and 11, and actually 12 through 14, the issue is are you right with other people in the body of Christ. The reason why many were sick and weak and a number of them dead was because they partook of the table while there was yet dissension and division in the body of Christ and, therefore, they ate and drank in an unworthy manner.

There ought not to be any divisions in the body of Christ. Paul says in chapter 1 that they are to be and he prays for them to be of one mind and one heart on these issues. It is no virtue to want to be your own person, to do your own thing, to do your own way, your own will. There is a sense in which there is no place for that in the life of the church, even as Paul would go on to say in chapter 12 and talks of different parts of the body, just like we shouldn't all want to be eyes or all want to be ears, the body in the other direction must have all of its parts working correctly in order for the body to move forward and when that doesn't happen, our loved sister Bev found out not that long ago, when the right foot is doing something other than the left foot thinks it ought to be doing, a femur can break, and so in the body of Christ.

So let's look a little bit at this text. In verse 17 he says, "I have some instructions for you." Back in chapter 7 he says, "Now concerning the things you have written to me about," they had apparently sent him a letter and said, "We've got a bunch of questions. We have some issues. We have some disagreements." And apparently something about the Lord's supper played into that, quite possibly flowing out of a question that had to do with, "Are we allowed to eat meat from a sacrifice at pagan idols," back in chapter 8 and 9 and 10. That's a real issue for them and, you know, one person being able to go, "Well, we know demons are nothing. The best meat in town is down there at the pagan temple down there. If you really want to get nice back straps, you want to get real quality prime, that's where you go." But another person genuinely converted to Christ goes, "Ah, I used to worship down there and I'm just not ready to be eating meat that was sacrificed to that god." So how do you bring unity in the body?

So that's possibly one of the things they are wrestling with, so he gives them instruction. He says, "I do not praise you because you come together not for the better but for the worse." What a sad comment on the life of the church. You go to church on a Sunday, you gather with the body of Christ and you go home the worse for it. Some of you may have been in churches like that. I'm thankful that at least in this particular season in the life of this church, I don't think that's true. I mean, there may be a Sunday where something happens where it shouldn't, but I mean, it's not a hallmark. I've been to churches where that is the ethos of the church. I'll tell you about that sometime if you would like to hear it privately about some of that. It wasn't here, though.

"I don't praise you because when you come together, it's not for the better, it's for the worse." And why? Because there are divisions in the church. Now he goes on to say that these divisions sort of have to be there because this is one of the ways in which God sifts out those who truly are the body of Christ and those who are not. Those who are schismatics, those who are not really of us, those who really don't belong with us God will eventually kind of sift them out kind of like when you, I used to love to go to this one place near the college I attended where we were able to get raw milk, and if you let the milk sit there long enough, the milk separates from the cream and the cream is sitting there at the top. There is just a natural separation, and sometimes God just works it out, makes it obvious that these people really are not saved, or these people really are not faithful brothers, or these people, and there is a division. And while that's part of the way

God does it, it's not good that it happens that way but God's process uses this to separate out the false from the true.

In these divisions, it has spread over into the Lord's supper, therefore in verse 20, "when you meet together, you do not eat the Lord's supper, for some are coming and having their own meal," and apparently what they were doing quite possibly was they were having the communion as part of a common meal together. It used to be in the early church, it was called the love feast, and it would be kind of like our fellowship meal and so it would be part of a morning worship service and they'd eat a fellowship meal and it culminated with communion. But some of the day laborers, some of the guys working down on the docks to load and unload the boats as opposed to the people who owned the businesses or owned the boats, not everybody was getting off at the same time and so here we're having the worship service, we're having the communion service and some were not available and so, "We'll just go ahead and eat without them. We'll drink without them because, you know, old Joe down here or old Sam down here, or whatever, he's not all that really important." Paul says, "That's not the way it works."

Then he rehearses for us the giving of the supper instituted by Christ in verses 23 through 26, but then he says in verse 27, "Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord." Now this has nothing to do with the sermon but I thought this was kind of an interesting thing. It struck me in a way that it never had, just like last week I had one of those. I had another one this week, "Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord," that verse may be one of the greatest verses to disprove transubstantiation because if the cup has already become the blood of Christ, or if the bread has already become the body of Christ, he couldn't say if you're eating bread or drinking the cup, you'd have to say you're eating the body and drinking the blood. He doesn't say that. He still calls it bread and the cup. That's just a parenthetical thing. That's a freebie for you but I think that's a great understanding that while we do eat and drink the body and blood of Christ, the bread and the cup remain the bread and the cup.

But notice back to our topic, it's possible to drink, to eat and to drink in a manner that is unworthy of the table. Now while there may be many ways in which its unworthy to do that, Paul has a concern about a specific way of doing that inappropriately and that has to do with these divisions and he says a man must examine himself and in so doing he is to eat and to drink the cup. In other words, the language that he uses here is the language that before you eat and drink, you are to do some discerning. A man is to test himself and so, kai houtos, and so you test and then you eat, and the word to test is to test for genuineness, to test for authenticity. The illustration I've used in the past of this word is dokimazo, to test something, is from the old Western movies, especially in the gold country and somebody would pay somebody with silver or gold and the guy who receives the payment would bite down on the coin to see if it was true silver or gold, it would be soft and his teeth could mark it. That was part of the test and if it was something else, if it was nickel, it would be easily discernible.

So the point of testing in verse 28, to examine, is to find is there genuine repentance and faith, and that genuine repentance and faith is not just, "Am I convinced that I'm a sinner and do I believe that Christ died for my sins?" That is part of the test. We can't get past that, you are not to eat or drink, but in the context part of the testing is, "How am I doing with the body of Christ," as I think you'll see in a moment. So a man must, a man is obligated, there is a command here, there is an obligation whenever we partake of the cup and the bread to do some examination.

"For he who eats and drinks," verse 29, "eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge rightly." Now in verse 29, 30, 31 and 32, Paul does something that there is no way I'm going to be able to bring it out and I'm very thankful that I found one commentator who says this, "It is impossible to reproduce in English the play upon words which is manifested in these verses." Paul will string together a whole list of words concerning judgment about what does it mean to examine myself at the table. I'm testing myself and that test is to be judgmental; it's to be critical; it is to be discerning. Krima where we get our word critic means to drink judgment to himself, he who eats drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly, and so the word judgment and judge is the beginning of this play on words. You examine yourself, then you eat or drink. If you eat or drink and you have not, the first word judgment, you bring a judgment, not a condemnation, we are going to see that later, not some kind of casting out, more of a discipline, if you have not judged the body, now he uses the same word with the prefix on it, dia, to talk about discernment. You drink judgment upon yourself if you do not discern the body rightly or justly.

Well then, what does it mean to judge the body rightly? Now, that's a big exegetical question and, again, if you look at the commentators, they are not of one mind so let me tell you the way it is and they'll just settle the issue for everybody. It could be the fact that the body is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. You haven't judged Christ rightly and you haven't discerned his Lordship and his death on your behalf and your sin in light of that rightly, and it could be that and it certainly makes sense because we've just already had the body referring to Christ even just in verse 27, "shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord." So there you have the body in a near context. It would be very easy for us to think, "Well, that must be what he's talking about." I would suggest to you that that's not what he's talking about. He's talking about here the body in verse 29, you have not rightly judged or discerned the body, has to do with the church, and the reason why I think that is all the way back in chapter 10, remember where Paul talks about in chapter 10, verse 17, it says, "Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread." I think what happens is Paul introduces in the previous chapter an issue, they are eating, one body, we are one body, 10:17, "Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body," he puts that out there, we are going to do with it, he says, "Now I've got some other things I'm going to deal with," and now in chapter 11, verse 27 and following, he's coming back to that issue.

One reason why I argue that is this: first of all, in verse 29, whatever the body is, it doesn't have all the qualifiers that are in verse 27, the body and blood of Christ. But also, the theme of the body, the church as a many in one body becomes a dominant thing in

what follows. For example in chapter 12, verse 12, "even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ." Verse 13, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free." Verse 14, "For the body is not one member, but many." Skipping down a few verses, 1 Corinthians 12:18, "But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired." Verse 20, "But now there are many members, but one body." So we do know from chapter 11, he's dealing with these divisions so why is he bringing up divisions in chapter 11? I think he introduced that topic back there in chapter 10, verse 17. Now he's getting to that topic of these divisions and he will not be done dealing with the divisions until he's gotten done speaking about the body concept in chapter 12, love in chapter 13, and the issues of spiritual gifts in chapter 14 where all these gifts have been given for the common good and development and spiritual welfare of the entire body. So when we come to the table, we are to discern the body rightly and part of the discernment is, "How am I doing with the body of Christ?"

Now there are several ways in which you can do that. We're going to assume a negative answer. The positive answer, all is good, move on. Negative answer, how could I maybe not have discerned it rightly. Well, you know, in your life there is the you you know and nobody knows you the way you know you except for maybe your mother, but there is the you that the rest of us know and sometimes that overlaps very nicely, and sometimes it's a little bit off, and sometimes it's way off. You think you're just the cat's meow, the gift to the body of Christ, you're just, you know, "Hey, man," and everybody else is like, "Oh, Brother So-and-so just walked in the room." And your showing up is not for the better but for the worse. You think it's for the better of everybody. It's kind of like me being Dutch, you know, I really believe that everybody ought to be entitled to my opinion, everybody is better off for having heard my opinion. Whether they obey it or not, just having heard my opinion they are better off for it. You know, I just feel free to give you my opinion. Other people sit there very politely and let me just blah, blah, blah, blah. No, it's not really for the better that everybody heard my opinion.

So rightly discerning the body, one of the ways in which it can be is that you really are not a blessing to other people. You think you are but at the table we have a weekly opportunity to stop and to evaluate and to consider afresh who we really are. As one writer put it: great is the fraudulence of the human heart in which people customarily deceive themselves while they estimate that all things are well enough with themselves although nothing is further from the truth, i.e. Jeremiah 17:9, "For the heart is desperately sick and who can know it?" Your heart is a fraudulent heart and you think everything's good, everything's fine, and it really isn't.

So you come and you're not really the blessing that you ought to be. A second way in which you may come and you need to evaluate is do you really think that your life is intertwined with these people, and I think that's a common sin in modern America. You know, and I don't know why it is the way it is. You know, we value the rugged individuals and maybe that's it. Maybe it's air conditioning, to be honest with you. Prior to air conditioning, people had front porches. Why did you sit on the front porch?

Because the house was just too darn hot to sit in so you went out and sat on the front porch and people walked by and, "Hey, Sam! Hey, Joe! Hey, Mike!" And you would talk and you would interact.

I remember Clare mentioning to make, he probably doesn't remember it because it's just one of those passing comments but he talked about when he was a boy just living north of here a little bit and there would be times where the whole community would get together in the community hall and there would be meals and dancing and music and people would talk politics and religion and farming and whatever else. That was part of our community, part of our North Dakota life for a long time, that we would get together because we understood we needed each other, but more and more we go home, we close the door, we don't really engage one another. We'll say hi at church, "I'll remember to pray for you. Oh, I forgot." And we really live disengaged lives. It's all about my life, maybe it's about me and my family, but the actual concept that Christ has redeemed me and placed me in this body and the eternal welfare of every other member of this body, in one form or another, is dependent upon what God wants to do in and through my gifts for these people and vice versa. For example, the way Paul puts it when he talks to the Colossians in terms of the body of Christ, and he talks about how we are, the body in terms of building each other up and he says the same thing to the Ephesians in terms of the body of Christ and each member serving. He says in Ephesians 4:15, "speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." So here it is that the body of Christ is part of, matures as the individual parts of the body do their thing, do their role in the body.

So back to the Corinthians, they didn't have that concept. Some people were more important in the body than others. Some were more necessary than others. He picks that up in chapter 12. And one of the ways in which we eat and drink in an unworthy manner is to not rightly discern how am I relating to the body. Am I a blessing, not in my own mind? You see, I'm a legend in my own mind but am I really a blessing? Are other people's souls enriched and encouraged in Christ because I'm here? Having a right view of that and do I see myself as a necessary and integral part of what God is doing as he brings all of us towards maturity? And to take time on a weekly basis to reevaluate that because our hearts are deceptive.

He goes on and says, verse 29, you're going to drink judgment upon yourself if he does not judge or rightly discern the body. Because they have not rightly discerned the body and their role in the body and the role of every other member in the body, they haven't done that rightly, "For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep." Think about that, how you come to the table having either a positive or negative impact on the well-being of other people. That is so un-American. That is so un-American. You mean my eating and drinking in an unworthy manner may be like the sin of Achan? It could be. Apparently there is a connection here between how certain people either rightly judge themselves in the body and didn't, and the fact that some were sick and weak, many were sick and weak and a number slept.



Verse 31, "But if we judge ourselves rightly," here is the same word in verse 29, if we are rightly discerning the body or discern the body rightly, verse 31, if we discern ourselves rightly, "we would not be judged." We will not come under a chastisement.

Verse 32, "But when we are judged," or chastised, "we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned." So this word "judged" in verse 29, he who eats and drinks judgment, and the word and verse 31, if we rightly discern ourselves or judge ourselves rightly, we will not be judged, and then here in verse 32, if we are judged, this is krino and it has to do with a chastisement, a discipline, and he calls that this particular kind of discipline is the kind that of training a child. Verse 32, "But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord," and the word very much has to do with training a child, and we've had a lot of that going on in our church the last several years as God has blessed us with many little ones, and there has been some discipline going on in our church and I'm thankful for it, and we pray for it. Every once in a while when I hear a loud kid, I try to remind the parents from time to time when your kid is loud and you think and you're a little embarrassed or everybody is kind of watching, thinking when is that kid going to be quiet, most of us who have had kids are thinking two things: one, I'm glad it's no longer me; and two, they are praying for you because they know this is such a special and important time and they are rooting for you, they are with you, they are supporting you, and that's great.

But what's going on when a parent disciplines his child or her child? Verse 32, when we are judged, when the Lord brings this kind of discipline and verse 30 when some are sick and weak, when God is doing this thing, he is bringing parental discipline to the body of Christ the way parents discipline a child. The child rarely if ever having been disciplined, whatever means are used to discipline, the child rarely if ever turns to mommy and turns to daddy and says, "That was great. Thank you. Can we do that again?" Wouldn't it be wonderful if kids did that? You know, "Thanks, dad, for disciplining me. I really feel like I'm getting better already." Wouldn't that be just wonderful and maybe your kids do that. Mine didn't and I didn't, and I'm sure you didn't, and I'm sure yours don't, but wouldn't it be wonderful?

But that's what the Lord is doing when he made many sick and weak and some sleeping, he was bringing this parental discipline upon the Corinthian church and when you discipline your children, I hope you are disciplining them for a specific thing. You're not just disciplining your kid because, "You know, I've really got nothing else to do. Hey, honey, what do you want to do?" I don't know, what do you want to do? "Let's discipline the kid." I hope that's not happening. What you're doing is you're disciplining the kid because they have disobeyed in a very specific way, and I hope you are telling the child, "You are being disciplined now this way because you did or did not do this," and you are giving them very specific direction. That's how they grow. That's how they know.

But notice what Paul says in verse 31, if you are rightly discerning yourself, you're not going to have this discipline, but when you do have this discipline, verse 32, when you are judged, it's this parental discipline of the Lord so that you will not be condemned

along with the world. Then he goes on to say in verse 33 and 34, which is why I think judging the body rightly has to do with the body of Christ and not Jesus himself, "So then, my brethren," his application, "So then when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment." There is our last use of the word judgment, or come together for discipline or chastisement. "The remaining matters I will arrange when I come."

So when we come to the table, we are to come in very specific ways. We are not just to come flippantly. It is a holy place. It's a sacred place. The table has been established for those who are truly sorry for their sins and yet have come to truly trust that Christ has covered their sins, and we come to the table to remember that Christ died for our sins, and then part of the coming to the table is a weekly reassessment of how am I doing in the body of Christ that he has placed me in? How am I doing with my own walk? And how am I doing in that walk and how it engages other people? Am I the blessing I was called to be to my brothers and sisters in reality, not just in my mind? If not, as Jesus says back in Matthew 5, leave your offering at the foot of the altar and go and get right with your brother. Paul will say earlier in chapter 8 of 1 Corinthians, verse 12, "And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ." If you're not really a blessing to others, it's not just your blowing off that brother or that sister, according to 8:12, you are sinning against Christ. Remember what Jesus says in the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25, "When you have done this or have not done this to the least of my brethren, you've done it unto me."

So we come to the table and we evaluate. How am I doing towards the brethren? Am I that blessing? Do I see myself as an integral part of what God wants to do in their lives and am I fulfilling that? If we had more time, we probably could begin to brainstorm other ways in which we need to do self-evaluation, but this is how we come to eat and drink in a manner worthy of the table because if we come and say we are remembering the death of Christ, who did he die for? He died for all the members of the body of Christ, didn't he? And he loved each member of the body of Christ enough to lay his life down for that particular person. How is it if Christ would die for that person, I'd find it within myself to ignore that person or to belittle that person, to shame that person, to distance myself from that person? And you see how quickly that gets to dishonoring the very body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So rather than being some type of hyper kind of pietistic, you know, looking for deep hidden sins, it's much more simple, maybe not any less difficult but certainly more simple. How am I doing? Am I serious about dealing with my sin and wanting to grow in holiness and measuring my holiness not in did I stop listening to the Beatles backwards but by how I relate to the other members of the body of Christ and the use of my gifts and allowing their gifts to be used on me.

Let us pray.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you that your grace is greater than all of our sin and we pray, Lord, that you would give us understanding om what the table means that we might*

*come to the table in a manner in which we would truly value all that it says and we would not dishonor it but we would honor it in part by not only loving Christ but by loving each other as well, and giving ourselves not only to Christ but as our confession says, the table is a bond towards one another. May we be found in unity and oneness. In Christ we pray. Amen.*