

PPT>>> 2. The Lord's Supper — A Fellowship Feast



PPT>>> Part One: A Fellowship Feast, Focused on the Future

Introduction: In seminary, when studying the Lord's Supper, discussed are such things as:

- PPT>>>** The Roman Catholic doctrine of **transubstantiation**
- PPT>>>** The competing Lutheran idea of **consubstantiation**
- PPT>>>** The Baptist view of the Supper as a **memorial**
- PPT>>>** The Reformed view of **spiritual presence**

Those are very important subjects, but by focusing so much on such historical debates, an important aspect of the Lord's Supper is often neglected: how the early Christians celebrated the Lord's Supper. The first-century church celebrated the Lord's Supper along with the Love Feast or *agapé*. It was an actual meal. This holy meal was a wonderful time of both unification and fellowship. It was also a vivid reminder of Jesus' promise to come back and eat it again with us.

— **God Remembers Covenant Promises** —

The wedding ring serves as a reminder of the marriage covenant. The Bible is a book of covenants. Most covenants in the Bible had some unique sign that went along with it as a reminder to the parties of the covenant.

- What is the sign of God's covenant with Noah?** It is the rainbow (Ge 9:12ff).
- What is the sign of God's covenant with Abraham?** It is circumcision (Ge 17:11).
- What is the sign of God's covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai?** It is observing the Saturday Sabbath (Ex 31:16-17).
- What is the sign of the new covenant?** Arguably, it is the Lord's Supper (the purpose of a sign is to cause people to remember: "do this unto my remembrance", Lk 22:19-20).

It is also good biblical theology to state that God remembers covenant promises.

1. What are some Old Testament examples of God remembering His covenant promises? See *Genesis 9:12-16, Exodus 2:23-25, Ezekiel 16:59-60.*

Now, I'd like to point out something odd, something you may have never noticed before:

******In Genesis 9:12-16, who gets reminded when the rainbow is seen in the clouds?**

PPT>>> ESV **Genesis 9:12-16** And God said, ". . . I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant . . . When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant . . ."

According to the text, it is Jehovah God who gets reminded. Notice that this reminder concerns the future. A reminder can remind about a past promise to do something in the future.

*****In Exodus 2:23-25, who got reminded of promises of the Abrahamic covenant?**

PPT>>> ESV **Exodus 2:22-24** During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help . . . God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham . . .

It was God who remembered.

*****In Ezekiel 16:59-60, who it is who remembered the Sinai covenant with Israel?**

PPT>>> ESV **Ezekiel 16:59-60** "For thus says the Lord GOD: ". . . I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth . . .

The Lord Himself did the remembering. Is that not amazing?!

The Point: *God remembers covenant promises. Does God forget things?* Of course God does not forget; these are anthropomorphic statements. Yet biblically, is good theology to say God *remembers* His covenant promises. This is very important as we consider the sign of the New Covenant: the Lord's Supper ("Do this unto my remembrance"), and the purpose for that sign. It may be that the remembrance aspect of the Lord's Supper has to do with reminding Jesus of his new covenant promises.

PPT>>>

— Section One —
A Fellowship Feast, Focused on the Future

PPT>>> In **Luke 22:7-13**, Jesus sent Peter and John to prepare the Passover feast. How much food was typically eaten in the Passover feast? See *Exodus 12:1-11, 14, Deuteronomy 16:1-8*. It was a true feast, a actual meal, and a joyful time.

Teaching Goal: Just as the Passover feast was a true meal, the goal here is to demonstrate that the Lord's Supper was originally a true meal. The key idea to be derived is that the Lord's Supper, in New Testament days, was not only a feast, but it was also focused on the future.

— Luke 22:14-16 —

PPT>>> **** Jesus had eaten Passover meals every year his whole life. According to **Luke 22:14-16**, why did Jesus keenly desire to eat this particular Passover with His apostles? It was to be His last supper with them, 22:16.

PPT>>> 2. When we observe the Lord's Supper, we rightly remember something that happened in the *past* (Jesus' death on the cross). What can you find in Luke 22:16 that is *forward* looking?

PPT>>> In Luke 22:16, what does the English word "until" mean? Here it carries the idea of "before" or "up to the time that." It is a forward-looking word (*heos hutou*) and establishes a time frame (a future reference).

PPT>>> Jesus said he would not eat of it again (Passover) “until” (22:16) what happens?

PPT>>> Prophetic Type: What does the use of the word “fulfilled” (22:16) imply about this Passover/Last Supper?

PPT>>> The word “fulfilled” suggests that the Lord’s Supper functions as a prophecy, or type, of something that is *yet to come*.

3. Jesus said that the Passover/Last Supper would be “fulfilled” in the kingdom of God (Lk 22:16). When and how might this fulfillment take place? See Revelation 19:7-9.

PPT>>> NAS **Revelation 19:7, 9** Let us rejoice and be glad . . . for the marriage of the Lamb has come . . . Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

PPTS>>> Isaiah described the coming kingdom feast in this way: “the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined . . . He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken” (Isa 25:6-8).

PPT>>> “The Passover celebrated two events, the deliverance from Egypt and the anticipated coming Messianic deliverance” (Reinecker, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, p. 207). So too, the Lord’s Supper celebrates two events, our past deliverance from sin through Jesus’ death on the cross and the anticipated Second Coming.

Future Focus: Thus it is not unusual that Jesus would have also cast a *forward look* to the Lord’s Supper. Jesus, our sacrificial Passover lamb, promised to come back for His bride, the church, and to set up His Kingdom. The Passover (turned Lord’s Supper) may well have been a foreshadowing of the wedding banquet of the Lamb (**Re 19**). Celebrated as an actual meal, the Lord’s Supper is like rehearsal dinner for the marriage banquet of the lamb.

PPT>>> *The Baptist Faith and Message of 2000:* “The Lord’s Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and *anticipate His second coming*” (italics mine).

4. Some people think of heaven as a time of floating on a cloud, playing a harp. This is not how the people of the Bible envisioned heaven. What scriptural evidence is there that first century Jews envisioned heaven as a time of feasting in the Messiah’s presence? Compare Exodus 19:16-23, 24:9-11, Matthew 8:11, Luke 14:15, Revelation 3:20, 19:7-9.

PPT>>> **Matthew 8:11** . . . many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

PPT>>> **Luke 14:15** Blessed is everyone who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!

PPT>>> Revelation 3:20 Behold, I (Jesus) stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

This Jewish idea of heaven being like eating in God's presence may stem from the Sinai experience. Mount Sinai shook as thunder sounded, lightning flashed, a trumpet sounded and smoke clouds enveloped it. God warned that any living thing which touched the mountain would be killed (**Ex 19:16-23**). However, in contrast to this, look what happened to the seventy elders of Israel:

PPT>>> ESV Exodus 24:9-11 Moses . . . and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel . . . And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.

The seventy elders of Israel were summoned up the mountain where they not only saw God but were not stuck dead, and even *ate and drank* in God's presence (**Ex 24:9-11**)!

— Luke 22:17-18 —

**** 5. **PPT>>>** What can you find in **Luke 22:17-18** that is forward looking? The word “until” is a forward-looking word. Jesus associated partaking of the cup with the thought that Jesus Himself would partake of it again in the future.

6. It is common knowledge that Jesus passed around the cup during the Last Supper. According to **Luke 22:17-18**, **why** did Jesus have them partake of this cup (what reason did He give)? The reason given is because Jesus would not partake of it again until the kingdom of God comes, 22:18. He said nothing here about it representing His blood (although it clearly does).

The Point: Yet again we see a forward looking aspect of the Lord's Supper.

— Luke 22:19 —

PPT>>> ****After the cup came the bread. In **Luke 22:19**, what did Jesus say the bread represents?

What command was given in **Luke 22:19**?

PPT>>> In English, what is a “remembrance” (**Lk 22:19**)? In English, a remembrance is like a memorial. Example: “The flowers were given in remembrance of the late Mrs. Smith.” It brings to mind something from the past.

PPT>>> The Greek word for “remembrance” is *anamnēsis* (364).

PPT>>> *an* means “not” and *amnēsis* (“amnesia”) means “forget”. A “remembrance” is “not amnesia”!

PPT>>> Significantly, while, *anamnésis* can indeed mean “remembrance,” it can also and equally mean “reminder” (BAGD, p. 58).

PPT>>> 7. In English, what is the difference between a “remembrance” (Lk 22:19) and a “reminder”?

PPT>>> A remembrance is a memorial or even a keepsake, like a souvenir bought as a remembrance of a vacation. It is backwards looking.

PPT>>> A reminder can be backwards looking also, but it can also look forward. **Example:** You might tie a string around your finger as a reminder to do something in the future (like to buy milk on the way home).

Fact: The Greek word *anamnesis* can mean either “remembrance” or “reminder.”

The Point: The bread and cup are “reminders” that can also remind us about Jesus’ future return to eat it again with us.

A Reminder for Jesus?

8. **PPT>>>** The literal Greek in Luke 22:19 reads: “unto my reminder” (see an interlinear).

PPT>>> To whom could this “reminder” belong? Who owns it? *Rhetorical.*

PPT>>> Is this “reminder” designed to remind *us* about something? (*Rhetorical*)

— Or —

PPT>>> Could it be to remind *Jesus* about something? (!) *Rhetorical.*

PPT>>> **Example:** Suppose you heard me say, “That’s my picture!” What could I have meant?

PPT>>> **Monet Painting:** If I were pointing to a painting of water lilies, I would mean that the picture belongs to me. I own it.

PPT>>> **Newspaper:** If I were pointing to a picture in which I was the subject, I would mean that it was about me, but not necessarily that I owned it.

PPT>>> The reminder could **BELONG** to Jesus or it could be **ABOUT** Jesus. << Pause to allow truth to sink in

PPT>>> The standard word for “my” = *mou*.

PPT>>> *Mou* is grammatically ambiguous.

PPT>>> The reminder could be about Jesus or it could belong to Jesus.

PPT>>> X However, the word *mou* is not used here.

PPT>>> Instead, the more **emphatic Greek word *emos*** is used here instead of the more common *mou*. The possessive pronoun (*emos*) was used when emphasis was desired (as any basic Greek grammar will confirm, such as *Learn to Read New Testament Greek*, David Alan Black, p. 158).

PPT>>> *emos* more specifically denotes possession

PPT>>> Jesus said *emos*, not *mou*

PPT>>> This strongly suggests that the reminder actually belongs to Jesus. He owns it. The word “*emos*” in the Greek is possessive, suggesting that the reminder is not just about Jesus, but that it belongs to Jesus. If *mou* had been used, there would be more ambiguity of meaning. The phrase might then have been translated, “do this to that you (the church) might remember me.” The word *emos*, however, denotes possession (in this case, Christ’s memory, not the church’s, is in view). Thus, the bread of the Lord’s Supper is specifically designed to be a reminder for Jesus.

PPT>>> Truth: God remembers covenant promises. Just like the rainbow is a covenantal sign and God sees and remembers his covenant, so too the Lord’s Supper is the sign of the new covenant. Jesus sees us eating it and He remembers His promise to come back and eat it again with us in the Kingdom.

PPT>>> J. Jeremias (Professor of Theology, University of Leipzig) understood Jesus to use *anamnesis* in the sense of a reminder for God, “The Lord’s Supper would thus be an enacted prayer” (*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol. III, p. 244).

9. What would the bread (22:19) remind Jesus to do? The bread points forward (consistent with 22:16, 18) as an object-lesson prophecy/prayer designed to remind Jesus to fulfill His promise to return so as to eat and drink “again” (22:16,18) of the Passover (i.e., “do this so as to remind me”). It was to remind Him of His dinner reservation!

In Luke 22:19, why is it important to link the bread with Jesus’ body? Jesus’ death on the cross is what made it possible for us to join Jesus in the kingdom of God. Without His past sacrifice, we would not be included in the future banquet. The bread thus serves to remind Jesus that He has not yet finished (“eat it again,” 22:16) what He started (“body given,” 22:19). He still needs to return with His kingdom!

— Luke 22:20 —

PPT>>> **In Luke 22:20, what did Jesus say *another* time He passed the cup?**

Note: It is not important to the overall topic, but Jewish tradition suggests that Jesus may have actually passed one cup around four different times. Only two of the four are referenced in Scripture. See a Bible dictionary for more information on this.

What else does the cup represent, according to Luke 22:20? See Matthew 26:28. It represents the “new covenant” in His blood. Arguably, the sign of the New Covenant is the Lord’s Supper. The purpose of a covenant sign is to remind both parties of their covenant obligation. Jesus said the Lord’s Supper is “reminder”. It is a sacred, covenant meal.

Gospel: The death of Jesus on the cross was no accident. It was the whole purpose for which he came to earth. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. Jesus became sin for us, our substitute, giving up His life so that we could have eternal life. Thus Matthew recorded, “this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (**Mt 26:28**).

PPT>>> **10. In relation to the supper, when did Jesus pass this other cup (Lk 22:20)?**
See Matthew 26:26. Jesus took up this other cup “after the supper” (**Lk 22:20**). This means that Jesus passed the first cup and the bread during the course of the meal. That this is so is confirmed by Matthew 26:26.

PPT>>> While they were eating, Jesus took bread . . . — **Matthew 26:26**.

Timing: Timing is everything. The bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper were given in the context of a full meal, not separated from it.

What does the word “supper” (1Co 11:26) mean?

Teacher’s Note: The word supper is not in the ESV or the NAS in Luke 22:20. It is found in the KJV and the NIV. This is because the verb form (*deipneo*) was used by Luke, which means “eat, dine” (BAGD, p. 173).

PPT>>> **SUPPER = *deipneo* (verb) or *deipnon* (noun)**

PPT>>> *deipnon* = “dinner, the main meal toward evening, banquet” (BAGD, p. 173).

It does not mean snack, appetizer, nor *hors d’oeuvres*!

PPT>>> NIV **Luke 14:16** A certain man was preparing a great **banquet** (*deipnon*) and invited many guests . .

PPT>>> NIV **Revelation 19:9** Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding **supper** (*deipnon*) of the Lamb!

PPT>>> **da Vinci Painting. 11. The last supper occurred in the context of the Passover Feast.**

PPT>>> **The Twelve rightly understood that all future Lord’s Suppers would also be actual meals. Explain.**

So Say The Scholars . . .

PPT>>> In *New Testament Theology*, Donald Guthrie stated that the apostle Paul “sets the Lord’s supper in the context of the fellowship meal.” (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), p. 758.

PPT>>> Gordon Fee stated, “from the beginning the *Last Supper* was for Christians not an annual Christian Passover, but a regularly repeated meal in ‘honor of the Lord,’ hence the *Lord’s Supper*.” (*The First Epistle to The Corinthians, New International Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), p. 532 & 555.

PPT>>> Canon Leon Morris, Principal of Ridley College in Melbourne, **Australia**, in his Commentary on 1 Corinthians for the *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, writes, “Holy Communion was not simply a token meal as with us, but an actual meal. Moreover it seems clear that it was a meal to which each of the participants brought food” (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976, p. 158).

PPT>>> J G Simpson was Principal of Clergy School in Leeds, **England**. Writing in *The Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, under entry for the Eucharist he says, “The name Lord's Supper, though legitimately derived from 1 Cor 11v20, is not there applied to the sacrament itself, but to the Love Feast or Agape, a meal commemorating the Last Supper, and not yet separated from the Eucharist when St. Paul wrote” (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1909, p. 244).

(He here acknowledges that the New Testament teaches the Lord's Supper as a meal, but that it was later replaced by bread and wine services with the name 'the Lord's Supper' then being used not of the meal, but of the bread and wine service that replaced it when the meal was phased out by the early church fathers).

PPT>>> I. Howard Marshall (Emeritus Professor of New Testament Exegesis University of Aberdeen, **Scotland**), in a work entitled, *Christian Beliefs: An Introductory Study Guide* stated, on page 80, in a section entitled 'the Lord's Supper', "This simple rite was observed by His disciples, at first as part of a communal meal, Sunday by Sunday" (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1972).

PPT>>> John Gooch, church historian and editor at the United Methodist Publishing House in Nashville, **Tennessee**, wrote, “In the first century, the Lord’s Supper included not only the bread and the cup but an entire meal.” (*Christian History*, Issue 37, p. 3).

PPT>>> John Drane, lecturer in Religious Studies at Stirling University, **Scotland**: "The early church observed the Lord's Supper as an exclusive community meal" (*The New Lion Encyclopedia*, Lion, p. 173).

12. What is the scholarly consensus as to how the early church celebrated the Lord’s Supper? Why does this consensus matter? The scholarly consensus matters because it leaves little doubt as to how the early church celebrated the holy meal: as an actual feast.

Application: This leads to the next question, *Why are we not celebrating the Lord's Supper in the same way the New Testament church did? Rhetorical.*

— Luke 22:28-30 —

PPT>>> ****In **Luke 22:28-30**, what did Jesus picture the apostles doing in His future kingdom?

- 1.) Eating and drinking at His table, 22:30.
- 2.) Judging.

Review: In Jewish thought what, symbolically, did it mean to eat and drink at the Messiah's table in His kingdom (22:29-30)? Compare Exodus 19:16-23, 24:9-11, Matthew 8:11, Luke 14:15, Revelation 3:20, 19:7-9. It meant you were accepted into the kingdom to enjoy the full fellowship of the host.

13. What is the significance of Jesus picturing the disciples eating and drinking at His table in the kingdom (Lk 22:29-30)? This imagery was consistent with the Jewish idea of heaven: to eat at God's table. It is very important to appreciate why the Lord's Supper was originally an actual meal: it is a picture of heaven.

The Main Point: The last supper has numerous forward looking aspects to it (Lk 22:16, 18-19). As a full meal it evidently prefigures the future feast of the coming Messianic kingdom (22:16, 18, 19, 30), that is, the marriage supper of the Lamb.

PPT>>> What better way to typify the coming Messianic banquet than with a banquet?

— Acts 2:42-47 —

14. If Acts 2:42-47 refers to the Lord's Supper, how would you describe the mood of these meals? They were associated with "fellowship" (2:42) and "glad and sincere hearts" (2:46). It is no accident that communion and community are from the same root word!

Why are the words "the breaking of bread" (Acts 2:47) associated with the Lord's Supper? See Luke 22:19. It is because Luke, who wrote both books, recorded in Luke 22:19 that Jesus "broke" the bread of the Lord's Supper; thus the connection.

Application: When the early church celebrated the Lord's Supper, it was a time of fellowship and gladness. It did not seem to carry a funeral atmosphere as in modern observances of the Lord's Supper.

PPT>>> ESV **Acts 2:42** . . . they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Study the punctuation of Acts 2:42. Notice the “and” between “teaching” and “fellowship,” and between “bread” and “prayer,” but not between “fellowship” and “bread.” In some Greek texts, the words “fellowship” and “breaking of bread” are linked together as simultaneous activities (the “and” is missing). They had fellowship with one another as they broke bread together. It was “fellowship in the breaking of bread.” As has been stated above, in Jewish thought to eat with someone was the perfect picture of fellowship (see also **Revelation 3:20**).

Summary of Section One: Should the Lord’s Supper be understood as a **wake or a wedding?** As a **memorial or a marriage?** The biblical evidence suggests that the Lord’s Supper should be celebrated as a full feast that is focused on the future, and that the bread and wine uniquely serve as a sign of the New Covenant to remind Jesus of His promise to return and eat it again with us.

PPT>>>

— SECTION TWO —
The Purpose of a Church Meeting
Why One Cup & One Loaf?
Another Prophetic Aspect of the Lord’s Supper

— Acts 20:7 —

PPT>>>15. Acts 20:7 is one of the few places in Scripture where the purpose of a church meeting is stated. **Why did the church at Troas come together?** They met in order “to break bread.” The phrase “to break bread” is, in Greek, a telic infinitive that denotes a purpose or objective. The reason for the meeting evidently was in order to eat the Lord’s Supper.

We meet to eat. Their meeting was a meeting!

The Primary Purpose of a Church Meeting: The Lord’s Supper. This passage suggests that the main reason the church at Troas met each Lord’s Day was to eat the Lord’s Supper. If this reflects the general practice of the early church, it should also be the main reason for our church meetings today.

The Secondary Purpose of a Church Meeting: Teaching. Paul took advantage of the already existing practice of the church to gather in the first day and he used it as an opportunity to speak to the gathered saints.

PPT>>>First Day of the Week: The early church at times met daily, but its most regular practice was to meet on the first day of the week, as indicated in Acts 20:7.

Early church father Justinian, about the year 160 A.D. stated that “And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place . . . when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought . . . and everyone participates in that over which thanks have been given” (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, p186, emphasis ours).

— 1 Corinthians 10:17 —

16. In 1 Corinthians 10:17, what theological significance was given by Paul for using a single loaf of bread for the Lord's Supper? It has to do with unity (10:17). At the very least the one loaf symbolizes our oneness in Christ. The common practice of using many pre-broken crumbs pictures disunity and division.

PPTS>>> NIV **1 Corinthians 10:17** Because there is one loaf (<<cause), we, who are many, are one body (<<effect), for (cause>>) we all partake of the one loaf.

17. Look carefully at the prepositions in 1 Corinthians 10:17; what is cause and what is effect? Using one loaf at the Lord's Supper actually *creates* unity within a body of believers! In this sense, it is more than a mere memorial or an object-lesson prayer. Some type of grace unto unity is actually conferred.

Consider also the opinions of well-known Bible scholars concerning this verse. One states that the bread "both *signifies and causes* **CAUSES** churchly unity" (Wainwright, emphasis his). This view is also shared by C.K. Barrett, F.W. Grosheide, Leon Morris, and the majority of scholars. (Svendsen, p 32, fn39).

PPT>>> **Application of One Cup & One Loaf:** In our Lord's Supper celebrations, it is important that we all partake of the one cup and one loaf. At the very least this pictures the unity that God's people have in Christ. Moreover, it may even be used by God to actually create unity in a body of believers.

Note: The Lord's Supper is also a time of "participation" (10:16, *koinonia*, #2842) with both Christ (1Co 10:14-17) and His people (in Acts 2:42, "fellowship" is also from *koinonia*). The bread of presence in the Old Covenant was not eaten by the people. In contrast, the bread of presence in the New Covenant is to be eaten!

— 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 —

**** **PPT>>>** **According to 1 Corinthians 11:17-22, why were the meetings of the Corinthian church doing more harm than good?**

PPT>>> It was due to class divisions (11:18), that led to hunger (11:21a), and drunkenness (11:21b). The rich did not want to eat with the poor. Unfettered by employment constraints, the rich arrived for the Supper in advance of the poor, specifically so as not to have to eat with the poor. It was a similar problem as that dealt with in **James 2:1-7** (the church paid special attention to the rich man and neglected the poor man).

18. The Main Reason: What in 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 indicates that eating the Lord's Supper was the main reason for the coming together of the church? Compare 11:17-18 to 11:20, 11:33.

Church History: Evidence that celebrating the Lord's Supper was the primary reason for gathering each week of the New Testament church is seen in church history. To this day the Roman Catholics gather each week primarily to celebrate the Lord's Supper (Eucharist or Mass). The same holds true for the Anglican Church.

It is obvious from 11:20 that the Corinthians came together for the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper. What had they done wrong that made it cease being the Lord's Supper? 11:21-22. Their divisions had turned the "Lord's Supper" into their "own supper" (11:21, NASV, ESV & the Greek).

PPT>>> ESV **1 Corinthians 11:20-21** When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk.

PPT>>> **19. Full Meal: What in 1 Corinthians 11:20-22 indicates that the Corinthians ate the Lord's Supper as an actual meal?** That some went away hungry demonstrates that they came to the meeting expecting to be filled. That some became drunk shows that more than a thimble full of wine was used!

Observation: Paul wrote to the Corinthian church some twenty years after Jesus first turned His Last Supper into our Lord's Supper. Just as the Last Supper was an actual meal, so too the Corinthians celebrated the Lord's Supper as an actual meal.

— 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 —

******In 1 Corinthians 11:23-25, which parts of the Lord's Supper are designed to serve as reminders?** See 11:24-25.

Review: As in Luke 22, the Greek behind "in remembrance of me" (1Co 11:24, 25) clearly shows the reminder to belong to Jesus. The bread and the cup are to remind Jesus of the new covenant that his death inaugurated and thus of His promise to return and complete what He started!

— 1 Corinthians 11:26 —

PPT>>> According to 1 Corinthians 11:26, what are we doing when we eat the bread and drink the cup?

20. Exactly to whom do we "proclaim" (11:26) the Lord's death? See Luke 22:16. Based on the Greek behind "in remembrance of me," it may be to Jesus Himself that we are proclaiming His death. Once again we see that the Lord's Supper is a reminder to Jesus that His own death on the cross initiated the new covenant (making certain our forgiveness) and reminds Him to fulfill (Lk 22:16) His promise to return ("until he comes," 1Co 11:26).

21. Additional Prophetic Aspect of the Lord's Supper: Based on 1 Corinthians 11:26, why are we to proclaim the Lord's death (for what purpose)? The wording of the text suggests we are to do it so that the Lord will come (purpose).

PPT>>> 22. Why does the word “until” in 1 Corinthians 11:26 indicate purpose and not merely duration? Compare its same use in Luke 11:3, 2 Peter 3:11-13, Revelation 6:9-11.

PPT>>> In English, I might say that I used an **umbrella** “until” it stopped raining (denoting a mere time frame); the umbrella had nothing to do with causing the rain to stop.

PPT>>> We’ve already seen this usage of the word “until”. It was when Jesus, in **Luke 22:16**, said, “I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” This means that Jesus will not eat the Lord’s Supper again before the kingdom of God comes. It is a time frame. The Greek for “until” in such usages is *heos houtou*. It simply indicates *how long* a condition will last.

PPT>>> *achri hou*. However, the Greek behind “until” in 1 Corinthians 11:26 is *achri hou*.

PPT>>> When used along with an aorist subjunctive verb, it grammatically can denote a goal (it is a different word than is used in Luke 22:16).

PPT>>> Much more than a mere time frame, the Greek behind “until” in 11:26 refers to an objective (“until the goal is reached”), Fritz Rienecker (German theologian), *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, p 427. The purpose of the proclamation of the Lord’s death through the bread and the cup is in order to persuade Jesus to come back!

PPT>>> NIV **2 Peter 3:12** . . . Look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

Can you speed up the Second Coming? Peter evidently thought so!

PPT>>> NAS **Revelation 6:10** How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?

Here we see martyred saints pleading with God to move, to act, to stop refraining.

Note: *achri hou*, used to refer to a goal or objective, is also used in several other eschatological passages:

PPT>>> NAS **Luke 21:24** . . . Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

PPT>>> NAS **Romans 11:25** . . . a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

PPT>>> NAS **1 Corinthians 15:25** . . . He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

PPT>>> **The Lord’s Prayer:** The eating that is associated with the coming of Christ’s kingdom may also be reflected in the model prayer suggested by Jesus. In reference to the kingdom, Jesus taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done” (KJV, **Luke 11:2**).

PPT>>> The very next request is “Give us each day our daily bread” (NIV, 11:3). The Greek underlying Luke 11:3 is difficult to translate. Literally, it reads something akin to, “the bread of us belonging to the coming day give us today.” Thus the NASV marginal notes read, “bread for the coming day.” Linking together both 11:2 and 11:3, Jesus may have been teaching us to ask that the bread of the coming Messianic banquet be given to us today. That is, Let your kingdom come — Let the feast begin today!

PPT>>> **Athanasius** explained it as “the bread of the world to come” (Godet, *Commentary on Luke*, Kregel Publications, 1981, p. 314).

PPT>>>

— SECTION THREE —
Eating & Drinking in an Unworthy Manner (11:27-32)

— 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 —

PPT>>> ****What in **1 Corinthians 11:27-30** reveals the seriousness of the Lord’s Supper? 11:27b, 29b, 30.

23. From the greater context of 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 (the whole section), what “unworthy manner” (11:27) made some in Corinth guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord? How should this impact us today? Notice that it was not the people themselves who were said to be unworthy (though they were) but rather their “manner” that was unworthy. The unworthy manner consisted of eating the Lord’s Supper with unresolved divisions so extreme that the rich ate all the food before the poor arrived (causing them to go away hungry). Others were so insensitive to the sacred nature of the meal that they had become drunk from the wine. More modern parallels might be Chinese Christians refusing to eat with Japanese Christians, or white believers avoiding eating the Lord’s Supper with black Christians, or an upper class Christian in India not eating the sacred meal with a brother from a lower class.

PPT>>> KJV: “unworthily” (1Co 11:27). << This is misleading, confusing.

PPT>>> Greek: *anaxios* = “in an unworthy manner”

PPT>>> ESV: “unworthy manner”

PPT>>> NASV: “unworthy manner”

PPT>>> NIV: “unworthy manner”

PPT>>> The root problem was division

24. How does eating the Lord’s Supper in a “unworthy manner” make one guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord (1Co 11:27)? Compare 1 Corinthians 10:14-17. Jesus gave His body and spilled His blood to buy us forgiveness and to make us one body of believers. The divisions and selfishness of the Corinthians ran directly contrary to everything Jesus died to accomplish. Such division is almost blasphemous.

According to 1 Corinthians 11:28-30, in what sense should a man examine himself prior to the Lord's Supper? It is not to search his soul for unconfessed sin, but to be sure he realizes both what the Supper is all about, and that it is his brothers who constitute the "body of the Lord" on earth. The Lord's Supper is not just another meal. It is a holy, sacred, covenant meal.

What penalty can result if we fail to examine ourselves? Failure to recognize this truth can lead to judgment, sickness and death.

— 1 Corinthians 11:33-34 —

PPT>>> **25. What, in 1 Corinthians 11:33-34, was the inspired solution to the Corinthian abuse of the Lord's Supper (11:17-22)?** The solution was not to cease holding the Lord's Supper as a true meal, but simply to wait for each other (see 11:21). Those so hungry that they could not wait for the others to arrive were instructed to "eat at home."

PPT>>> Barrett Quote: "Paul's point is that, if the rich wish to eat and drink on their own, enjoying better food than their poorer brothers, they should do this at home; if they cannot wait for others (verse 33), if they must indulge to excess, they can at least keep the church's common meal free from practices that can only bring discredit upon it . . . those who are so hungry that they cannot wait for their brothers should satisfy their hunger before they leave home, in order that decency and order may prevail in the assembly" — C K Barrett, theology professor at Durnham University in England (*Black's New Testament Commentary, The First Epistle to The Corinthians*, Hendrickson Publishers, 2000, p. 263 & 277, underlining mine).

PPT>>> 26. Based on 1 Corinthians 11:33, why did the Corinthians come together each week? They came together as a church in order "to eat" (another telic infinitive).

27. What is the only reason ever given in the New Testament as to why the early church came together each Lord's Day? It is noteworthy that three references (**Ac 20:7a, 1Co 11:20, 11:33**) constitute the only reason ever given in the New Testament as to why the early church assembled together. Doubtless they did other things when met besides eat, but the driving purpose behind their gatherings was to celebrate the holy meal.

— Synthesis —

PPT>>> 28. What evidence is there as to the frequency with which the early church ate the Lord's Supper? *Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 11:18-20, 33.*

PPT>>> 29. What was the original form of the Lord's Supper (symbolic token or actual meal)? One loaf or pre-broken cracker remnants? Feast or famine? *Explain.* Why are each of these forms important?

PPT>>> 30. In the modern church's Lord's Suppers, the deacons who carry the bread and wine of the Supper are more like pallbearers! Was the overall focus of the Lord's Supper originally intended to be past looking (funeral mode) or forward looking (wedding atmosphere)? Fellowship or funeral? Why?

PPT>>> 31. What were the various original **functions** of the Lord's Supper? To serve as a **reminder** to Jesus of His promise to return, for the **fellowship** of the saints, and in order to create **unity** among a body of believers.

PPT>>> — Summary —

The elements of communion look back to Jesus' death on the cross to pay for sin. The *agapé* adds a forward look. When celebrated as an actual feast in a joyful wedding atmosphere, the Lord's Supper typifies the wedding supper of the Lamb. It is a reminder of Jesus' promise to return and eat it with us. A major benefit of celebrating the Lord's Supper as a holy banquet is the fellowship and encouragement experienced by each member of Christ's body. This relaxed, unhurried fellowship meal with God's family is a significant means of edifying the Church, building community, cementing ties of love, and supernaturally creating unity.

PPT>>> 1. The Lord's Supper is the **primary purpose** for which the church gathers each Lord's Day. Indeed, it is the *only* reason ever given for a church meeting.

PPT>>> 2. The Lord's Supper should be **eaten as a full meal** to typify the wedding supper of the Lamb. We deny that taking the Lord's Supper as a snack is a legitimate option.

PPT>>> 3. Typifying the wedding supper, it is thus **forward-looking** and is to be eaten with a **wedding atmosphere**, not a funeral atmosphere. It is the original "happy meal"!

PPT>>> 4. A major benefit of eating the Supper weekly as a meal is the **fellowship and edification** of the church. It is the Christian equivalent of the neighborhood pub.

PPT>>> 5. Within the context of the full meal, there should be **one cup and one loaf** from which all partake so as to **create unity** within the church. These are also **symbolic of Jesus' body and blood**, poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

PPT>>> 6. The wine and loaf serve to **remind Jesus** of His promise to return.

PPT>>> NTRF Lord's Supper Resources

32. Since Jesus said that He would not eat of it again until its future consummation, should the church also wait for Jesus to return before eating it again? Why?

33. How can the Lord's Supper be celebrated like a wedding banquet when the threat of death is made (1Co 11:27-30) and when 1 Corinthians 10:20-21 speaks of eating with demons (even more frightening!)?

34. How can the cup and loaf be integrated into the meal so that they are not seen as separate from the rest of the feast? Some have found that taking the cup and loaf prior to the meal separates it from the meal too much as a separate act. It is as if the Lord's Supper is the cup and loaf, and everything else is just supper. To overcome this false dichotomy, try placing the cup and loaf on the table with the rest of the food of the Lord's Supper. The cup and loaf can be pointed out in advance of the meeting and mentioned in the prayer prior to the meal, but then placed on the buffet table with everything else. This way, folks can partake of it as they pass through the serving line. This is a freedom issue; do what works best for your church.

35. What bearing should the practice of the early church have on how the contemporary church celebrates the Lord's Supper?

36. What blessings is a church missing by not celebrating the Lord's Supper as an actual holy meal?

Celebrating the Lord's Supper as an actual meal is never commanded, nor is observing it weekly. Why should we do something not commanded even if it is a New Testament pattern? Sometimes it is charged that it would be an extra biblical standard of conduct to teach that churches should celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly and as an actual meal. It is opined that a command has been issued beyond what the Master intended. The final answer to this question is to be found in how the various biblical texts on apostolic "traditions" are dealt with (see workbook lesson on Apostolic Traditions).

When in history did the church stop celebrating the Lord's Supper as a holy meal? It appears that from the mid-third century (A.D. 250) onward the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper were separated from the meal. However, even though the two were separated, the church continued to practice both until sometime after Constantine (who died in A.D. 337). Perhaps the love feast would have continued on down to the present had the original apostolic tradition (keeping the two together) not been broken.

— Practical Issues —

1. Exactly what type of beverage was in the cup (Lk 22:18)? Jesus called it the fruit of the vine.

What in 1 Corinthians 11 indicated whether the "fruit of the vine" (Lk 22:18) was wine or grape juice? See 1 Corinthians 11:21.

What good imagery is wine associated with in the Bible? Genesis 27:28, Isaiah 25:6.

What do you think Jesus will be drinking when he finally drinks "again" of the cup at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb?

How would Romans 14:21 apply to using wine in the Lord's Supper?

Joke: What is the difference between Baptists and Methodists? Two Methodists would speak if they happen to see each other in a liquor store!

Should all drink out of the same cup? The Anglicans have done this for centuries without obvious harm to their health! However, another option is to pour from the same container, or to dip one's bread into a common cup.

2. Should the bread be unleavened? The Jews ate unleavened bread in the Passover meal to symbolize the quickness with which God brought them out of Egypt. Certainly Jesus used unleavened bread in the original Last Supper. However, nothing is said in the New Testament about Gentile churches using unleavened bread in the Lord's Supper. Though sometimes in the New Testament yeast is associated with evil (1Co 5:6-8), it is also used to represent God's kingdom (Mt 13:33). It is a matter of freedom.

3. Should unbelieving children or adults be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper? Many churches practice closed communion and doubtless can make a compelling argument for it. These same churches usually also observe it as a ritual, not a full meal. Celebrating the Lord's Supper as it was celebrated in the New Testament, as a full meal, arguably changes one's perspective on the presence of unbelievers. Certainly, the Lord's Supper, as a sacred, covenant meal, has significance only to believers. Yet to nonbelievers, it is merely another meal. It is clear from 1 Corinthians 14:23-25 that unbelievers will occasionally attend church meetings. Unbelieving adults and our own children too young to believe get hungry just like believers do, so invite them to eat too. Love them to the Lord! The danger in taking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner applies only to believers (1Co 11:27-32).

Regarding the one cup and loaf, if an unbelieving child desires to drink the grape juice just because he likes grape juice, that is fine. However, if the parents purposely give it to an unbelieving child as a religious act, then that would be a violation of what the Lord's Supper is all about. It would be closely akin to the error of infant baptism.

4. It is necessary for ordained clergy to officiate at the Lord's Supper? This notion is foreign to the New Testament and perhaps is a holdover from Catholicism. All believers are priests under the New Covenant.

5. Should the meal be planned out? Should it be pot luck? Many churches have found excessive planning to be wearisome. In over twenty years of eating the Lord's Supper as a full meal, one church has been following the "pot luck" (or pot providence) method. It has served them very well. Only once did everyone bring a dessert! Ask folks to bring plenty of something to share with everyone else. Remind them to see this as a giving expense, a ministry, an offering to the Lord.

To help with cleanup, consider using paper plates and plastic cups and forks.

Structural Summary:

1. There are more forward looking aspects to the Supper than is commonly recognized.
Examples: Luke 22:15-16 & 17-18 (“until” and “fulfillment”) & 1 Corinthians 11:26 (until he comes).
2. Eating the Supper as a full meal is important because it pictures the Hebrew idea of heaven and looks forward to the wedding banquet of the Lamb, Luke 14:15, 22:30 Revelation 3:20 19:7-9.
3. Eating a sacred meal was already associated with a biblical covenant, Exodus 24:9-11.
4. “Reminding” God of His covenant promises is good Hebrew theology, Genesis 9:12-16, Exodus 2:23-25, Ezekiel 16:59-60.
5. *Anamnesis* can clearly mean either remembrance (past) or reminder (future).
6. The “my” of Luke 22:19 denotes possession (*emos*) and suggests that the reminder belongs to Jesus.
7. Paul’s solution of Corinthian abuses was that they wait for each other (11:21), not that they abolish the meal. The “eat at home” remedy was second best, for those who felt they could not wait for the others (the best option).
8. The word “until” in 1Co 11:26 is from two Greek words that (when used with an aorist subjunctive verb) can mean “goal” or “objective”.
9. The lack of imperatives about the Lord’s Supper weekly as a full meal is dealt with in our chapter on apostolic tradition, which we are commanded to hold to, 2 Thessalonians 2:15. Virtually no ecclesiology is commanded in the New Testament, but the pattern is clear for many of the things they practiced. Scholarly sources generally agree that the church ate the Supper weekly, as a full meal. I see this as part of the “tradition” the apostles laid down and to ignore it is to refuse a blessing!
10. Arguably, the word *deipnon* (“supper”) never refers to anything less than a full meal, and is so used throughout the Scriptures.

Wording for Announcement to Create Interest:

You may be thinking, “What is there to learn new about the Lord’s Supper?” Did you know . . .

It looks forward to the wedding banquet of the Lamb?

The early church ate it as an actual meal?

It was observed as a celebration rather than a funeral?

It is an acted out prayer for Jesus to come back?

God confers grace in it unto unity?

It is a prophetic type that will find fulfillment in the coming kingdom of God?

It should be the main reason the church meets each week?

Further Study: NTRF has a DVD on the Lord’s Supper as rehearsal dinner for the wedding banquet of the lamb. We also offer an on-line seminary course on the Lord’s Supper.

Next Lesson: E-mail the next set of discussion questions out to the class (or print them up and hand them out at the end of this lesson). Ask them to consider the issues, answer the questions and be prepared to discuss them at the next meeting.

Teacher Preparation: To help you prepare to teach this, go to www.sermonaudio.com/ntrf, go to our series on Early Church Practice and find this lesson.

**** = Ask this question before having someone read the text aloud.

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