

**IT'S  
SUPPER  
TIME**

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April 3, 2022

**Sermon in a sentence:** Come and take your place at the table of the Lord with the “Body of Christ.”

**Scriptures:** Ex. 12:1-14; 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 John 1:7; John 3:16; Rom. 6:23b; John 6:53-58; Ex. 12:47-48; Ex. 14:13-14, 16, 29-30a, (1 Cor. 10:1-2); Ex. 16:4; Ex. 17:6; Num. 14:22-23, 29; 1 Cor. 5:7; Mark 16:16; John 6:51; Mark 3:17; Luke 9:51-56; Mark 10:35-41; Luke 22:24-27; John 12:6; Matt. 26:74; Mark 14:31; 1 Cor. 11:17-22; 1 Cor. 11:29-32; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; Matt. 9:12; 1 Cor. 11:23-26

There is a beautiful tradition households have practiced for centuries that has provided countless good memories and bonding opportunities for their family members. It's the tradition of eating together at supper time. Typically, the parents have been hard at work all day and the children have also been toiling at school, but at supper time, everyone comes home to rest and relax, reconnect, and receive both physical and emotional nourishment.

Just so you know, I am definitely not a cook, so I was never much help on the food side. But Mom would usually come home from work and quickly whip something together for her four hungry children. Depending on the shift Dad was working at the jail, he may or may not have been available for supper, but we'd all usually get together for dinner after church on Sunday afternoons. As we grew older, my brother developed an amazing skill with left-overs, so he would often take on the cooking duties after school. Then, when our parents came home, we'd enjoy some gourmet quality meals on our No-Frills budget.

**We never consciously thought about it or spoke about it, but we instinctively knew that we all had a place at the table. We “belonged” there. Even though there may have been sibling rivalries going on and we weren’t always happy with each other, there was never any thought of excluding a family member from the table. It sounds strange to even say it. You simply don’t exclude family members from supper. When the call rings out, “Supper’s ready!” everybody comes running, no matter what.**

**I remember a couple of times I couldn’t make it to the table because of sickness. This included a Christmas dinner during high school when I had a terrible bout of the flu, and I still remember the weirdness of being upstairs in bed while the rest of my family was gorging themselves on a fantastic meal. It just wasn’t right!**

**Whatever your upbringing may have been, most of you have similar memories of those wonderful times of love and fellowship at the table. (*So, when you get together in your Life Group meetings this week, you can share some of those memories.*)**

**Now, let’s go back about 3,500 years to a particular meal that still holds a lot of relevance for us today. It was a massive national meal, eaten family by family by the Israelites in Egypt, just before God delivered them from slavery. Jews continue the tradition to this day as they get together every year for the well-known Passover Seder. Our first report of it comes from Exodus 12.**

**Exodus 12:1-14 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, <sup>2</sup> “This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. <sup>3</sup> Speak to all the congregation of Israel,**

saying: “On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. <sup>4</sup> And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb. <sup>5</sup> **Your lamb shall be without blemish**, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats. <sup>6</sup> Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. <sup>7</sup> And they shall **take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses** where they eat it. <sup>8</sup> Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. <sup>9</sup> Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. <sup>10</sup> You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. <sup>11</sup> And **thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand**. So you shall eat it in haste. It *is* the LORD’S Passover. <sup>12</sup> “For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: *I am* the LORD. <sup>13</sup> Now **the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you**; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt. <sup>14</sup> “So **this day shall be to you a memorial**; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

There are a lot of details in this reading that we need to take note of (even though I won’t be able to cover them all this morning). And as we consider these points, we’ll see that there are many similarities and foreshadowing of what Jesus brought into being about 1,500 years later.

**That's when He introduced the next step forward in our spiritual feasting; a new meal we call "Communion;" "The Lord's Supper."**

**So, let's get into it. As we just read:**

- **The blood of the Passover lamb on the doorposts saved the firstborn of Israel from death (Ex. 12:3-13). Without the blood of the lamb, there was death in every house.**
  - **Now, on top of all the statements we have from John the Baptist about Jesus being the Lamb of God, Paul also specifies that *He* is the Passover Lamb that has been sacrificed for us (1 Cor. 5:7). It is *His* blood that cleanses us of our sins (1 John 1:7), and it is through *Him* that we have eternal life (John 3:16; Romans 6:23b). The blood of Israel's Passover lambs saved lives. The blood of Jesus, the Passover Lamb of God, gives life!**
- **The Israelites ate the meat of the Passover lamb, which was necessary to sustain them as they began their journey of deliverance.**
- - **As Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples, He took bread, broke it, gave it to them and said, in effect: 'This is my body, my flesh, my meat. This is what you need to sustain your spiritual life'. He was even more explicit in John 6 where He said:**

**John 6:53-58 ... "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup>**

Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup> For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. <sup>56</sup> He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”

- The Israelites ate the Passover fully dressed, ready to leave Egypt at a moment’s notice.
  - Whenever we come to the Communion table, we need to come with anticipation. Jesus is coming again to this world to redeem His children. The songwriter said: “This world is not my home, I’m just a passin’ through.” And as Jesus said: “Remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17:32). Let’s make sure we have our eyes firmly set on our eternal heavenly home every time we partake of Communion.

After hearing the things I’ve just outlined, I hope nobody here will *ever* again deliberately miss a Communion Service! Without Christ *in* us, symbolized by the bread and the cup, we have no spiritual life!

- Please remember that only those who had entered into the covenant of circumcision were permitted to eat the Passover lamb (Ex. 12:47-48).
  - This is akin to a New Testament believer being baptized in water, in the name of Jesus

**Christ before partaking of Communion. First things first. Baptism is crucial.**

*(Along with circumcision, the children of Israel also symbolized the covenant of baptism. They were baptized into Moses at the Red Sea just as we were baptized into Christ, whether it was in a river, the sea, a baptismal pool or even a bathtub (Ex. 14:13-14, 16, 29-30a; (1 Cor. 10:1-2.)) We are God's church, in an eternal covenant with Him.*

**In John 6, Jesus gave another Old Testament foreshadowing of the Communion meal. He referred to the way God fed the Israelites with manna from heaven as they made their way from Egypt to Canaan (Ex. 16:4). Along with manna, He also gave them water to drink from rocks (e.g. Ex. 17:6). This is key: **The manna and the water were their only means of survival.****

- **Could the Israelites feed themselves? No.**
- **Could they find their own water? No.**
- **Did they need God's help? Yes! God provided everything they needed. (*Food and drink were provided, clothes and shoes did not wear out, a cloud was provided to cool them by day, and fire to warm them by night.*)**

**So, now I'd like to make the most crucial application from our learning today as we look at the character of the Israelites, God's chosen people:**

- **It is clear to see that God fed and cared for a nation of circumcised, 'baptized' sinners! They were a nation of rebels who constantly engaged in idolatry, lived immoral lives, and**

**murmured against God on a daily basis. They consistently rejected His will and plan for them as a nation, and as a result, a whole generation died in the wilderness before they got to the promised land (Num. 14:22-23, 29). God didn't provide for them because of their righteousness. He provided for them because of their need!**

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As I mentioned before, when Jesus shared His last pre-crucifixion Passover with His disciples, He also instituted the new tradition of the "Lord's Supper." So, once again, let's remind ourselves of the things we read earlier in Exodus 12:

- Jesus is the Passover Lamb whose blood saves (1 Cor. 5:7).
  - We are eligible to partake at the Passover table after we have entered into covenant with Him through baptism (Mark 16:16).
  - And similar to the manna in the wilderness, Jesus identified *Himself* as the bread from heaven (John 6:51).
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Now, let's answer this question: Just how holy and righteous do we need to be to partake at the Communion table?

- Well, just about as 'holy' and 'righteous' as the Israelites were, or as Jesus' disciples were! When we look at the disciples for example, here's what we see:

- **James and John – the Sons of Thunder – sought to call down fire from heaven on those who were unkind to them (Mark 3:17; Luke 9:51-56). (*This is the same John that is described as the apostle of love!*)**
- **James and John again, were seeking power over their brethren, which caused a lot of anger and strife within the group (Mark 10:35-41).**
- **The disciples’ table discussion after Communion was “Which of us is the greatest”? (Luke 22:24-27).**
- **Judas was a thief (John 12:6). He betrayed Jesus, then took his own life.**
- **Peter began to curse and swear as he denied Jesus (Matt. 26:74). (This is after he and all the rest of the disciples had said they would die with Him (Mark 14:31).**
- **Nine disciples fled and were absent from the trial and crucifixion.**
- **Only ONE disciple (John) went all the way to Golgotha with Jesus.**

**But even with His foreknowledge that this would be the case, Jesus served Communion to each of them, and washed the feet of each and every one of them! These were people who were clearly unworthy of receiving the body and blood of Christ. In the same way, Jesus is waiting to serve each and every one of *us* at His table, in spite of our horrible failures and betrayals.**

**So, what is Paul speaking about in 1 Cor. 11:27 when he speaks against partaking of Communion “in an unworthy manner?”**

Well, it shows us that **the emphasis is not on my personal holiness and worthy righteousness before God to partake at the table. But I do need to make sure that the condition of my heart is worthy as I partake.**

But before we go any further, let me read the whole background and context of Paul's speech to you:

1 Cor. 11:17-22 Now in this that I declare *unto you* I praise *you* not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. <sup>18</sup> For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. <sup>19</sup> For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. <sup>20</sup> When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper. <sup>21</sup> For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. <sup>22</sup> What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not.

Eating and drinking 'in a worthy manner' means we are treating the "Body of Christ" in a proper, godly fashion! We must constantly honor, recognize and see the Lord's Body – the Church, as precious. We must treat our brethren as if they were Jesus Himself!

The Corinthians' factions, divisions and 'classism' defeated any hope they had of celebrating the Lord's Supper in the way Jesus intended! Instead of bringing them life, it was bringing them under judgment (1 Cor. 11:29). At dinner, the rich ate well and got drunk, while the poor starved. No doubt the 'Paul Clique' had nothing to do with the 'Cephas Clique' and both stayed away from the 'Apollos Clique' or the 'Jesus Clique' (see 1 Cor. 1).

**Paul let them know that our failure to treat our brothers and sisters in a godly, loving manner can lead to sickness and even death if we desecrate the table by despising our brethren.**

**Yet even in the middle of this mess, God's work of mercy was still evident. The sickness and death Paul described would not lead to eternal damnation, but the complete opposite. God uses this judgment to save His people from eternal condemnation (1 Cor. 11:32)! Earlier in the epistle, Paul even delivered a sinning brother over to Satan for the "destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:1-5)**

**Jesus also said: "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick" (Matt. 9:12 NASB). **The Lord doesn't chase us from His table because of our imperfections. Instead, He welcomes us because of our need.****

**We cannot cleanse ourselves to make ourselves worthy, so He calls us to "eat His flesh and drink His blood." This is how we become worthy and receive *His* life inside of us. Not our life, but *His* life.**

**So, dear people of God. Do not avoid the table of the Lord. It gives life. It draws us closer to God and to each other. It shows the power of the gospel at work in us and in the Body of Christ. His body and blood give us His worthiness and righteousness. Communion recalls the work of Christ at Calvary and celebrates Him. It reminds us that one day we will share this meal in Heaven's great banquet hall at the marriage supper of the Lamb.**

**So now I invite you to join me at the table. It's Supper Time!**

**1 Cor. 11:23-26** For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: <sup>24</sup> And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.