

# The Lord's Supper

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

Baxter T. Exum (#1549)  
Four Lakes Church of Christ  
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**\*\*FIRST SUNDAY AFTER COVID-19 (SPLIT SERVICE)\*\***

It is good to see you this morning! It is great to be back! This morning, we plan on studying a passage from the Bible. All of us should already have the bread and the fruit of the vine with us (that we either brought with us or picked up on the way in), so after our lesson, John/Aaron will then lead the prayers for the Lord's Supper, we will sing a song together, and immediately after that song we will leave, we will get outside right away.

As we have done for the past two months now, I want us to start by reviewing God's plan of salvation. God sent his son to this earth to live a perfect life and then to die in our place. He was buried, and then he was raised up on the third day. We respond to this good news, we obey the gospel, by believing the message, by turning away from sin, by confessing Jesus as the Son of God, and by allowing ourselves to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins.

As most of you know, I've been sharing pictures of baptisms around the world at the beginning of each lesson lately, the two in the middle are pictures of Kaimana being baptized about a week ago at the congregation in Honolulu. We worshiped with this group a few years ago when we went to see Keola's family in the area. On the top right, we have a picture of Mashala being baptized in Dallas a few days ago. And on the bottom right we have a picture of Marty, a good friend of mine who preaches just outside of Fort Collins, Colorado. Marty is baptizing Sarah in those pictures. We rejoice with Kaimana and Mashala and Sarah this week, and we have these up here as examples. What they have done, you can also do, and you can do it today! If you are here, we have a baptistery downstairs. If you are not here, you can either come here or we can meet you somewhere. If you would like to study, please get in touch.

Several weeks ago, my wife and I made a trip out to Ridgeway to get some takeout at Hi-Point Steakhouse. It has always been good, but we have continued to go there, because they have been providing free lunches for anyone in need during the pandemic. So, we have tried to support that by going down there on date night whenever we can. On our way back home a few weeks ago, something caught my eye. I had forgotten about this, but what I saw served as a reminder. So, last Sunday afternoon, I got on my bike and took the Military Ridge State Trail down to the intersection with Highway PD, just over 8 miles from our house, and I went there to take this picture.

Some of you are perhaps familiar with the tradition of placing a “ghost bike” anywhere a cyclist is killed by a car. They take an old bike, they paint it all white, and they leave it at the site of the accident as a reminder. Here in Madison, I’ve seen one of these at Mineral Point and Yellowstone over on the west side. I’ve seen one at the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Street and East Wash. I’ve seen one along the bike trail just off of Willy Street, and maybe you have seen some of these as well. And every time, it is a shocking reminder. The one at Highway PD has a name, Valerie Fogel, who was killed when she crossed this intersection and struck an SUV at 3:40 in the afternoon of July 21, 2019, a little less than a year ago. And whenever I see this bike, I always slow down and pay attention. The memorial is a reminder, and it has a way of changing our behavior.

This morning, as we come back together for the first time in several months, I would invite you to turn with me to 1 Corinthians 11 as we study another memorial. I am referring to the Lord’s Supper. We don’t have the time to look at this passage in depth, but I do hope we can take at least a few moments to learn something from Paul’s inspired words. In context, as Paul is correcting an abuse of the Supper, he takes us back to the beginning. He takes us back to Jesus. With this in mind, let’s look at 1 Corinthians 11:23-26,

***23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” 25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.***

As we look at what Paul has written, let’s think about what we do when we partake of the Lord’s Supper.

**I. And right away, we notice that the memorial supper is intended to help us REMEMBER.**

This is the purpose of a memorial! It causes us to remember. In the words of Jesus, ***“This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me,”*** and then also, ***“This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”*** How strange to do something that causes us to remember something that we never experienced in the first place! And yet, this is what the Lord’s Supper is. We were not there, but by reading the eyewitness accounts, we remember the Lord’s body. We remember how God came to this earth in the flesh, born into a poor family. We remember his sinless life. We remember the words he spoke and the miracles he performed. We remember his betrayal. We remember the unlawful arrest. We remember the injustice of a trial held under the cover of darkness, in the middle of the night. We remember the false accusations made against him. We remember the abuse that he endured for us – the beatings, the crown of thorns, being blindfolded and spit on and slapped in the face. We remember the nails in his hands and feet and the spear in his side. We remember his violent death, the most unjust death in the history of this world.

And according to Paul, Jesus says, ***“This is My body, which is for you...”*** In other words, he suffered for us. In his body, Jesus took on the punishment we deserved. His blood was poured out for us. The Son of God took our place. He suffered and died instead of us. In a sense, then, when we partake of the Lord’s Supper, we put ourselves at the foot of the cross, and we remember it, as if we were actually there.

It is a permanent memorial that will never crumble. It will never be toppled or defaced by a mob. But it is a simple meal originating in the mind of God, and personally explained the Lord himself on the night before he was crucified for the sins of the world. The Lord’s Supper, then, is a memorial. And even though we were not

actually there, by partaking of the memorial, we remember the most significant event in all of world history, the death of Jesus for us on the cross, for us. So, first of all, very simply, when we eat the bread and drink the cup, we think of Jesus. He is our focus. He is our reason for being here. We remember. [Fowler]

**II. As we return to the passage in 1 Corinthians 11, we find something else the Lord's Supper causes us to do – it causes us to GIVE THANKS.**

In verse 24, Paul refers to Jesus having *"given thanks."* The word basically translated here as "thanksgiving" is the basis of the word "eucharist." I have read that by the Second Century, this is the most common word people would use to refer to the Lord's Supper, and the reason is: By partaking, we give thanks for the forgiveness of sins.

And so, on one hand, the Lord's Supper is a somber memorial, but at the same time, his death also gives us a reason to be thankful. In verse 25, Paul quotes Jesus as referring to *"the new covenant in my blood."* In Matthew, the Lord says, *"...this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins."* The Lord poured out his blood so that our sins could be forgiven. The same phrase, by the way, is found in Acts 2:38 as Peter answers the question, *"Brethren, what shall we do?"* He says, *"Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins..."* Just as Jesus poured out his blood *"for the forgiveness of sins,"* so also, we are baptized *"for the forgiveness of sins."* We might say that we are covered by his blood in the act of baptism, since both are described in scripture as being *"for the forgiveness of sins."* But the point here is: The memorial causes us to be thankful. As we think back to the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection, perhaps we might think back to our own death, burial, and resurrection – back to that moment we were buried in water and raised up to live a new life. And we give thanks.

**III. All of this leads us to something else the Lord's Supper causes us to do: When we partake of the memorial, we PROCLAIM THE LORD'S DEATH UNTIL HE COMES.**

And so, there is something personal about the memorial, but there is also a public aspect of the Supper – we announce, we proclaim the Lord's death. We make it known. By partaking, we are making a statement. When we come together, we are saying to each other and we are saying to the world: The death of Jesus is important to us. His death matters. And because his death is important, we proclaim it. And we will proclaim it until he comes. This is a memorial that will continue until the end of time itself. And by saying that we proclaim his death *"until he comes,"* we are affirming, 1.) That he is alive (that he came back from the dead), and 2.) That he is coming back. This is the gospel. This is the good news. Jesus died, he was buried, he came back from the dead, and he is coming again. And so, when we partake of the Lord's Supper, we are preaching the gospel. We are reminding each other, and we are telling the world, that Jesus died for us and that he is coming back. Every Lord's Day we add another link in the chain tying together the Lord's crucifixion and his final return. Every week we are a little bit closer, and the Supper is what connects the Lord's first coming with his second.

**Conclusion:**

This morning, we have studied the Lord's Supper. We've looked at what is chronologically the first written record of the Lord's instruction on this (written before what we have in the gospel accounts). And in our study, we've learned that when we partake of the Lord's Supper we REMEMBER, we GIVE THANKS, and we PROCLAIM THE LORD'S DEATH UNTIL HE RETURNS. It is so good to be back to partake of the Supper together this morning. In

just a moment, we will go to God in prayer, and then John/Aaron will lead us in the prayers for the Lord's Supper, and we will close with a song. Let's go to God in prayer:

Our Father in Heaven,

Thank you for allowing us to be together this morning. We are thankful for good health and for a safe place to meet. Above all, we are thankful for Jesus and for his death on the cross. Thank you for making a way for us to be forgiven. Thank you for making a way for us to come back to you.

This morning, we pray for our nation and for the difficult times we are facing. As your people, we pray for wisdom and courage – to know, and to say, and to always do what is right. As we continue in worship, we pray that everything we do today is acceptable in your sight.

We come to you in the name of your Son, Jesus, our Passover. Lord, come quickly. AMEN.

To comment on this lesson: [fourlakeschurch@gmail.com](mailto:fourlakeschurch@gmail.com)