

27. Remembering the Death of the Lord

In our last topic, we saw that we are to help our children understand that God made men and women different so that they can complete one another and work together in unity. Today, we are going to see why we are to help our physical and spiritual children understand the importance of the death of Christ. We are to help them understand that this very important remembrance is to be done in such a way that it will bring glory to Christ. The Corinthians had many problems in their communion service that meant that they were not bringing glory to Christ. We want to help our children learn how to help others truly bring glory to Christ as they remember His death.

In 1 Corinthians 11:17-19, we read, “Now in giving these instructions I do not praise *you*, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.” The Corinthian Christians were coming together as a church to remember the death of Christ. This coming together was actually called a love feast because they had communion as a part of a meal shared together. However, Paul said that he could not praise them for coming together to remember the death of Christ because of what they were doing when they came together for a communion service. Instead of having the best motives for remembering the Lord, they were coming to the love feast with evil motives.

First, their relationships toward one another as Christians were not right. There were divisions between the Christians. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 says, “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere* men?” The communion service was not reminding them of the unity of the body of Christ because as they came together their lives were filled with envy, strife and divisions. Many churches today have similar conflicts because the Christians in those churches are walking in sin instead of walking in fellowship with the Lord and with one another. We want to help our children learn how to help Christians learn to forgive one another so that they walk in unity.

The word that is translated “factions” spoke of a group of people who were following their own ideas or opinions instead of following the Word of God. This word is most commonly translated by the word “sect.” Acts 15:5 says, “But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.’” Here, we see that some of the Christians in the church at Jerusalem had believed but continued to follow the rules of the Pharisees. These Jewish believers wanted to force the Gentile Christians to be circumcised and to keep the law of Moses.

This was the very teaching that Paul had refuted as he wrote the book of Galatians. Paul wrote in Galatians 3:13-14, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through

faith.” Paul told the Galatians that Christ had taken our curse to set the Gentiles free so that we could enjoy the blessing of Abraham and receive the Holy Spirit by faith at the moment of salvation. Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to understand that sects that approve those who follow the ideas of men do not bring unity in the body of Christ. The same is true today.

Then, 1 Corinthians 11:20-22 says, “Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of *others*; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise *you*.” The love feast was to show the unity of the body of Christ. However, in Corinth it showed the selfishness of the Christians. Some were eating the meal before the other Christians arrived so that they could get the best food. Their goal was to satisfy their own hunger even if no food was left for the Christians who were slaves that could not get to the service as soon as the others. Others were using the communion service to become drunk.

Paul said that the actions of the rich Corinthians actually brought shame on the church of God. Paul said that if they wanted to eat all their own food that they should eat their food at home instead of bringing it to the love feast and then not sharing with others. Their actions also caused those who were slaves and had nothing to experience shame. As a result, Paul said as he concluded this section in 1 Corinthians 11:33-34, “Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.” We want to help our children learn to share these instructions regarding any meal that a church would eat together. They are to wait for the poor so that the poor can also share in the dinner. They are to eat at home before they come if they are so hungry that they feel that they cannot wait and share with others. Paul made it clear that he could not approve of the actions of those who were thinking only of themselves.

After telling the Corinthians about their sinful actions that they needed to change, Paul went on to tell the Corinthians how to remember the death of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 11:23-24 says, “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’” Paul says that he received these instructions directly from the Lord. This would have happened during the time that Paul was out in the dessert of Arabia. Galatians 1:15-17 says, “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.” Here, we are reminded that Paul received three years of personal instruction from the Lord so that he would know how to share the Gospel with the Gentiles without adding any of the rules of the Pharisees.

Christ shared with Paul exactly what He had done the night that the disciples celebrated the first communion service just a few hours before Christ was betrayed. Christ told how he had taken the bread, given thanks to the Father, broken the bread and gave it to the disciples. Then, Christ told

the disciples, in advance, what was going to happen to Him the next day. Christ said that the bread was a symbol of His body that would be crucified or broken for them. Christ said that we eat this bread to remember Him and why He died for us. In the same way, we want to help our children understand so clearly why Christ was crucified that they can explain the purpose of Christ's death clearly to others. We also want to help them realize the importance of remembering Christ.

Then, we go on to read in 1 Corinthians 11:25-26, "In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." We see that Christ did the same thing after the supper. This means that Christ took the cup, blessed it and then passed it to His disciples to drink.

Christ also explained the purpose for drinking the juice from the cup. Christ said that the cup was the New Covenant in His blood. Throughout the Old Testament, sacrifices were offered as a covering for sin. Each year on the Day of Atonement, the high priest took blood into the Holy of Holies. Hebrews 9:7 says, "But into the second part the high priest *went* alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and *for* the people's sins *committed* in ignorance." The high priest first offered blood as a covering for his own sin and then he offered more blood as a covering for the sins of the people. However, that blood could never take away sin.

That is why John the Baptist introduced Christ in John 1:29 by saying, "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" Christ came to take away our sin. Hebrews 9:12 says, "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." Christ offered His blood once for all to take away sin.

In communion, we also remember that His one sacrifice also makes it possible for us to serve God. Hebrews 9:14 says, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Here, we see one of the other things that we remember when we have a communion service and observe the death of Christ. We see that communion is to be a reminder to our conscience of the fact that our dead works have been forgiven and cleansed and that we are now free to serve the living God. Here, we see that communion also reminds us of the fact that we have now been given freedom so that we can have the privilege to serve the Lord without guilt regardless of any sins that we have committed in the past. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your physical and spiritual children understand the forgiveness of sin and this freedom to serve God.