



Community Group Discussion Guide

The Lord's Supper – Weekend of February 9 & 10, 2019

Luke 22:14-20; 1st Corinthians 11:23-30

I. Starter Question:

Commemoration: Commemoration, is a word we don't use every day—in fact we may even say it lacks meaning for us. But think about it this way: do you and your family have a history and habit of commemorating, or remembering significant events? Why, and what are some of them? What effect do these moments have on you personally and on relationships within your family?

“Signs” of Commemoration, or Remembrance: What are some “signs” or images you use in your times of remembering these significant events? How do they assist or impact remembrance?

Jesus Command to Remember: The Lord's Supper originated with Jesus the night He and His disciples came together for the traditional Passover meal. How is it significant that Jesus gave us a sign (partaking of bread and juice) to assist us in our remembrance and solemn celebration of His work on the cross?

II. Introduction:

Our current sermon series about “That Thing You Do” is an opportunity to remind ourselves and gain better understanding of those activities God's Word instructs us to do as His church as we gather. If you're new to the Christian faith, or wanting to learn more, this is a great series for you, as well.

When people speak of sacraments in the church, they are referring to Baptism and the Lord's Supper—two signs or seals, instituted by Christ to provide physical, tangible reminders of His love and sacrifice for us. But we have the Bible, why do we need physical activity like the Lord's Supper? Throughout the redemption story, God gave physical signs to confirm His Word. As Jesus spoke to His disciples at His last Passover Meal, along with His words describing His broken body and shed blood, He passed bread and wine. In God's great wisdom, He made physical expression, imagery and symbols highly impactful in our lives. They assist to create meaning and lasting change in our lives. They help us to become more like Christ.

III. The Lord's Supper, Jesus' Supper

Luke 22:14-20 (ESV) – And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that

from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!”

Context: Throughout Scripture we see God making promises or covenants with those He called into relationship with Him. We see it in the Old Testament with Israel, and again with the followers of Christ, His Church, in the New Testament. Often, these promises were marked by a sign, or memorial, that God established for the purpose of remembering and effecting change in their lives. Examples would be the rainbow that appeared after the great flood, where God promised to not flood the earth again as He did in Noah’s time; the Passover Meal, a forerunner to the Lord’s Supper—a meal of remembrance pointing to Israel’s deliverance from slavery in Egypt; God commanded the Israelites to establish a sign for their children, stacking twelve stones along the Jordan River at Gilgal. For generations, the pile of stones was to serve as a reminder, a call to remembrance, of what God did for his people as He led them into the land He had promised them. Moses’ staff was a visible sign, a reminder of God’s presence with him.

In this passage from Luke 22, Jesus established what the church commonly refers to as the Lord’s Supper, or Communion. This physical action of eating bread and drinking juice includes a mental action (remembering), but, most importantly, it is a spiritual activity, intended to bring renewal and growth in our relationship with Christ. Participation in this remembrance of Christ’s life-giving sacrifice is intended to include not only our minds as we hear truth from Scripture, but also our hands in handling the bread and juice, and our sense of taste in eating and drinking.

Discussion Question: A theologian of the 17th century wrote this when meditating on God’s Word and writing a hymn in celebration of the Lord’s Supper:

Here oh Lord, I see thee face-to-face;
Here faith can touch and handle things unseen.
(*the complete hymn is located at the end of this outline)

It is easy for us to allow the Lord’s Supper to become, “I came in, I sat down, I ate a cracker and drank some juice, then I left”. This is a very sad description of an experience taking the Lord’s Supper, but helpful when considering the intended significance of this unique time of worship. ***When you read Jesus’ words as He shared this supper with His disciples, and hear the reflection in the words of the hymn writer, do you think we sometimes miss what God has for us in participating in this “gospel feast”, this time of remembering all that Christ’s death has purchased for us?***

Important Note: It is important to mention here that Jesus did not represent the bread and wine as His actual body, and blood. This theology, known as transubstantiation, violates the

biblical doctrine of the incarnation where, like us, Jesus' human nature—His body—remains localized. In our understanding of Christ's incarnation (His becoming flesh, like us), He could not be in two places at one time—in both His body and in the bread. His body is not His divine nature, as God, present with us always. While there is a real presence of Christ at the Lord's Supper, it is through His divine nature, not a physical presence in the bread and juice. When Jesus said, "this is my body", His action of holding the bread as a representation of His body was much like we would do when holding and displaying a photo, a representation, of our family, and saying to someone, "this is my family". While the photo is a likeness of our family, it is not the physical presence of our family.

IV. The Lord's Supper, Paul's Instruction

1 Corinthians 11:17-34 (ESV) ¹⁷ But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸ For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, ¹⁹ for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. ²⁰ When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. ²¹ For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. ²² What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not. ²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when 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 also he took the cup, 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. ²⁷ Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰ That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. ³¹ But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. ³³ So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—³⁴ if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment.

A. The Lord's Supper is...

- The Lord's Supper is remembrance of a historical fact—that Christ lived and that He died for His church, and in doing so, as the sinless sacrifice, fulfilled and made available to His children all the promises of Scripture. (vs. 23-25)
- The Lord's Supper is a physical action involving eating bread and drinking juice.

In God's wisdom, in creation, He gave us the gift of physical experience. We often speak of

the ear gate, the eye gate and touching, and how these physical actions impact our hearts and minds. **Question: What would be the impact of telling our children every day, that we love them, but we never touch them—we never hug them as an expression of our love for them, we don't sooth their tummy ache with a soft caress, or kiss their cheek in acceptance?** It is deeply important to tell our children that we love them, but what is the impact of our physical expression of our love for them? In God's goodness, He's given us the gift of the Lord's Supper, where He have the experience of touching, holding the bread and juice, tasting it, hearing Christ's words, "do this in remembrance of me". **Discussion: Can we measure the impact of the Lord's Supper (and baptism) by imagining what our worship services would be like if we only taught about them and didn't physically practice them?**

- The Lord's Supper is a reverent and sacred moment of fellowship with Christ and His church (koinonia), partaking in a gospel feast, not of food, but of the eternal benefits or our salvation. Therefore, it is often called communion—intimate worship, in Christ's presence, alongside brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Lord's Supper is a visible expression of the gospel in our worship. It is a Christ-instituted, Christ-centered observance of His sacrifice, for His church. For this reason, Paul exhorts us to not approach the table "in an unworthy manner". The context of Paul's teaching was the Corinthian church where the meal had become a party of self-indulgence, even drunkenness, and reckless abandon of God's intention for the meal. In their sinful disregard for the supper, some of them had died—God had taken them, rather than let them continue in their sin. It is in this context that Paul exhorts us to not approach the meal in an unworthy manner. It is important to affirm the biblical truth that we do not have the ability to make ourselves worthy—worthy of our salvation or of God's continued grace in our lives. While Paul is correcting, and exhorting the church to abandon their sinful actions, he is not telling them to make themselves worthy of God's love—something God's word clearly tells us we can't do. Far from a biblical expression of the gospel, the supper had become a self-exalting party for the Corinthians.

In the Lord's Supper, we meet Christ in His divine nature—He is present! Do you come into the presence of Christ at the supper with disregard for this holy moment? One Bible teacher asked, "does the bride show up to the wedding in mud-covered jeans?". **Question: It is probable that at every worship service at Henderson Hills, there are unbelievers present. Do you see that our expression of the Lord's Supper is an expression of the gospel to the lost? How so?**

Important Statement: Paul addressed the sins of the Corinthians in the context of participating in the Lord's Supper. As a believer, you should take great care to search your heart and mind for unconfessed sin and disfellowship with other believers (Paul referred to the Corinthians as a divided church). Paul warns us not to approach the Lord's Supper as the Corinthians did. We need to be specific here. We must avoid the trap of sentimentalism, where we mistake love for a dismissive view of God's commands. Loving one another

encourages us toward obedience. Christ commanded believers to be baptized as a “sign” to the church and the world that they are trusting Christ. For this reason, we encourage those who have followed Christ to follow His command to be obedient in baptism. There is a link to baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

B. More on Remembrance

Face-to-face, in the divine presence of Christ at the Lord’s Supper, remember that He has now made available to every believer—He has sealed for us—every promise of God. In speaking to the Ephesian church, Paul said “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit...” (Eph. 1:13). Paul tells us to stop for a minute and remember what has been purchased and sealed for us in our salvation.

In this context, Scripture is speaking of the Day of Judgment: Sealed believers will be kept for their ultimate inheritance—redemption at the end of the age (Eph 1:14)—by the gift of the promised Spirit (Ezek 36:26–27; Joel 2:28–30), which is given to Jews and Gentiles alike.”¹

²⁰“For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory. ²¹ And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²² and who has also put His seal on us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”

Our salvation is “sealed” and held secure, not by us, but by the Holy Spirit. Salvation is the overarching promise, but contained in the gospel and celebrated in the Lord’s Supper is a multitude of promises.

Question: What are some of the many promises of our inheritance that we should call to remembrance when in the time of observing the Lord’s Supper?

For Discussion—God’s Promises

- The promise of His presence, when we’ve experienced great loss (He is the comforter), when we are fearful, when He has called us to a very difficult assignment, when we are weak, when we are persecuted
- Promises of freedom, from sin, from fear, from addiction
- Promise of His strength when we are weak
- presence—when we’re ill, when persecuted

The Lord’s Supper is a time to purposely draw into our lives all that Christ has purchased for us. In His divine presence at the supper, remember and express your gratitude. **Has He recently demonstrated His love for you in a very difficult time?** As you hold the cup and bread, remember that moment, knowing that in giving His body and blood, that promise was

¹ John D. Barry et al., [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Eph 1:13.

purchased for you.

V. Responding in Prayer:

1. Thank God for the “sign” of the Lord’s Supper—our salvation is sealed with the blood of Christ.
2. Pray that in our observance of the Lord’s Supper, we would come prepared, expecting to encounter Christ at the table.
3. Pray for the one struggling with following Christ in baptism.

VI. For Worship and Meditation: Hymn by Horatius Bonar (1855)

Here, O Our Lord, We See You

Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face;
Here faith can touch and handle things unseen;
Here would I grasp with firmer hand Thy grace,
And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

Here would I feed upon the Bread of God;
Here drink with Thee the royal wine of heav’n;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load;
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiv’n.

I have no help but Thine; nor do I need
Another arm save Thine to lean upon;
It is enough, my Lord, enough indeed;
My strength is in Thy might, Thy might alone.

This is the hour of banquet and of song;
This is the heav’nly table spread for me;
Here let me feast, and, feasting, still prolong
The brief bright hour of fellowship with Thee.

Too soon we rise; the symbols disappear;
The feast, though not the love, is past and gone;
The bread and wine remove, but Thou art here,
Nearer than ever still our Shield and Sun.

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
Yet passing, points to the glad feast above,
Giving sweet foretastes of the festal joy,
The Lamb’s great bridal-feast of bliss and love.