

GETTING READY FOR SUPPER

- I. There are two important reasons for doing it
- II. There is a thorough way of doing it

INTRODUCTION

Now I am quite sure with the Thanksgiving & Christmas season we have done a lot of preparations.

- meals to get ready, trees to be trimmed, presents to be wrapped, other decorations to be put up.
- & a whole lot of other things.

And now with the New Year coming there will be more preparations made

- parties planned, new year's resolutions made, & a lot more.
- all to get ready for what is coming in 2016.

Now I am also quite sure, when it's supper time we usually wash up to get ready to eat.

- & if we are going to have special guests for dinner, or going to someone else's house, then we really will want to get ready.
- we wash up good, wear our best clothes so we will look nice & neat & smell good.

And there are other times we also get ready by conducting an investigation.

- we run many tests to make sure everything is a-okay & are properly prepared.
- th'fore when we send men & machines into space, build a new airplane or any other vehicle or machine, it takes a lot of time & money in testing & preparing personnel & products & equipment.

We also make examinations before we buy a home or food or clothing or a car.

- so we pinch the bread for freshness, try shoes on for size, test drive a car, walk through a house.
- we also spend time in front of a mirror examining ourselves before we go on a date or a visit.
 - we want to make sure our hair is combed; our makeup or tie is on straight.
- all to make sure we look our very best.

Well, we are invited by God to have supper with Him next **Sunday**--a very special supper.

- th'fore it must be our desire to get all spruced up spiritually so that we are ready & prepared to properly dine with Him.
- as a matter of fact, ICor.11 says it is Lord's command that we prepare by examining ourselves.
 - for it says we can only come & eat with Him & be favored by Him if we are nice & neat spiritually with true faith & love & obedience to Him.
 - or else we are going to eat & drink with the unwashed faces & dirty hands & soiled clothes of unbelief & sin so that we will be punished by Him.

And so, as we are going to celebrate the **LORD'S SUPPER**, let's be reminded again of God's command to **GET READY FOR SUPPER.**

- **1st** we consider there are 2 important reasons for doing it.
- & **2nd** there is a thorough way of doing it.

I. THE TWO IMPORTANT REASONS FOR DOING IT

Now **ICor.11** gives **TWO IMPORTANT REASONS** why we must examine ourselves before we celebrate the **Lord's Supper.** (OVER)

- the 1st is found in vs.17-26, which says it is because of the true meaning & significance of this Supper.

You see, the **Corinthian Christian Church** was making a mockery of the **Lord's Supper** & the **Love Feast** that went with it.

- it was so bad Paul bluntly wrote in vs.20: “When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat.”
- it wasn't, because vs.21&22 indicate there was “a rather obnoxious kind of snobbishness between the rich & the not-so-rich [So] the Church was badly splintered, & [this] made worship & fellowship so negative, that Christians went away in a worse state spiritually than when they arrived.”

For after all, the **Love Feast**, celebrated before the **Lord's Supper**, was to be celebrated by everyone bringing what food & drink they could.

- & then all were to share it together to show Christian love & fellowship & unity in Christ, even as the celebrating of the Lord's Supper together was to symbolize.
- but, with divisions among them, when Corinthian Christians “came together, there was no sense of being 1 family in Lord. Each group kept to itself. The food was not shared, but each enjoyed his or her own provisions. Some managed even to get drunk. The arrangements emphasized divisions in the church at Corinth.”

And the results were that they were celebrating the **Lord's Supper** in the wrong way--with wrong attitudes & actions of selfishness & snobbishness.

- & so they had forgotten the real reason Christ had given this Supper to His Church so that they were disregarding its special, spiritual, sacred, saving meaning & purpose.
 - instead they were making it an ordinary meal to fill their own sinful, selfish physical pleasures.
- & that made them guilty of insulting Lord so that they were bringing His judgment on themselves.

“It's no wonder,” someone states, “Paul could not call the [Corinthian's] gathering the ‘Lord's Supper’.

- “There was hardly any awareness of Lord's presence; the purpose seemed [not] to be directed towards remembering Lord's death. There seemed to have been a callous insensitivity to the physical needs of those with very little, almost to point of humiliating them.
- “[So] how could such an occasion be the 'Lord's Supper'? Each person was far more concerned with satisfying his own hunger & thirst. If the purpose of coming together was to satisfy physical appetites, why not stay at home?”, as ICor.11:22 says.

Well, in **vs.23-26 Paul** reminds the **Corinthian Church**, & all us Christians, just what the **Lord's Supper** is really all about, & gives the best & most beautiful explanation of its meaning found in **Bible**.

- he tells us what supper is by recalling just how & why Jesus instituted it.
- that it is Lord's meal to primarily remember Him & His death on the cross for the salvation of all who believe in Him as Savior & Lord.

Th'fore we must realize the **Lord's Supper** isn't an ordinary meal like a supper we eat in our homes, or like a potluck dinner we eat together in our church.

- neither is it just a memorial meal in honor of the founder of Christianity.
- nor is it a mysterious, magical meal in which our regular attendance & our partaking of its elements automatically forgive & save us, & make us acceptable to God.

No, for the **Lord's Supper** is a very special, sacred supper that has a saving, strengthening meaning & purpose.

- its primary focus is on our Lord's death & it must dominate its whole significance & atmosphere & actions any time we celebrate it.
- for it's not an empty table, but it is set with Christ Himself being there to feed & strengthen us with His crucified body & shed blood to assure us of salvation & eternal life in Him.

The **Lord's Supper** then is not just some bread & grape juice, but God's picture & proof that we do have salvation & life everlasting by faith in the crucified Christ & risen Lord.

- it vividly & visibly shows & guarantees that Calvary really did happen so that we remember & believe Jesus died there for our sins.
- we can then rest assured, with a personal, living faith in Him; our sins are all forgiven; we are accepted by God; we have eternal life with Him; & we will be His forever until He comes again.

Then too, the **Lord's Supper** isn't just eating & drinking some physical elements.

- but they are real means of grace by which we feed on Christ spiritually so that He feeds & strengthens our faith & life in Him.
- for the Supper assures us that, just as we eat & drink the material elements to nourish us physically,--
 - so surely does our spiritual & constant eating & drinking Jesus by faith feed & strengthen us by the presence & power of HSpirit.
- &, when we hear from God's Word that we have complete salvation & strength & life in Jesus Christ & we also see & touch & taste it through the Lord's Supper, --
 - then we continue to grow strong in the knowledge & assurance of salvation, & in our trust & obedience to Him in our daily lives.

Also we note in our **passage** that the **Lord's Supper** is a sign & seal of our covenant-relationship to Lord.

- that through His death on Calvary any person, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, pagan or legalist, can be forgiven & belong to God personally if they turn from unbelief & sin to Christ in faith.
- & so by eating & drinking together at Lord's table, we are showing we are in a personal, covenant relationship with Lord.
 - & that puts us also in a covenant-relationship with one another.

Now, that's what **Corinthians'** behavior was undermining, for Christ's death & His return weren't central in their **Lord's Supper** celebration.

- & His love wasn't in control so that they weren't loving one another.
- indeed, just as Paul said, their get-together surely wasn't the **Lord's Supper**.

Now, because this is what **Bible** teaches, the **Lord's Supper** is, neither is it an **open table** to which anybody can come, nor one we can participate in any way we want.

- this sacrament must then be only celebrated by true believers in Christ.
 - & only in the way God commands: by remembering & believing He died for our salvation & by obeying His will.
 - if we don't, then the Lord's Supper will have no more spiritual affect on us than having a morning coffee break, or eating apple pie.
- & the consequence of partaking without true repentance & faith & obedience to God are disastrous.

Now that brings us to the **2nd reason** we must get ready for the **Lord's Supper** by examining ourselves.

- it is so we won't partake of it in an unworthy way, our text says, & become guilty of mishandling the body & blood of Christ & sinning against God.
 - we won't desecrate His holy table & trample on His saving blood with unbelief & sin.
- for then we will receive God's judgment, even in this life, ICor.11says.

Th'fore we must get ourselves ready for the **Lord Supper** so we won't use it in an unworthy manner.

- now that word unworthy means unequal or unbalanced weights like when we have balance-scale with one side weighed way down & the other side is way up.
- & so to celebrate this Supper in an unworthy way is to have our hearts & lives not in balance or in tune with this holy meal's real, sacred, saving meaning. (OVER)

Unworthy partaking means then to participate improperly with wrong attitudes & sinful ways.

- that we eat & drink without really understanding its meaning & not believing its truth & teaching are actually for you & me personally.
- & so to partake unworthily is to not be sincerely sorry for our sins against God, to not really turn in faith to Jesus as our only Savior, & not living in love & obedience to Him as only Lord & to our neighbors.
- instead we come to the Lord's table just out custom & habit with no genuine desire to believe in Him & to serve Him, while we pretend do so by being present at His Supper.

We see then no one can dine at Lord's table without a real commitment of one's complete self & life to Jesus in faith, & are still living in sin, even though we say we love Lord & we are Christians.

- neither can we be blessed if we think that by partaking that will automatically bring us into God's favor & family, or make others think we are Christians.
- to do that only makes us guilty of mocking Christ's shed & saving blood.

That's because, when we partake of the **Lord's Supper**, we are making the statement that we do believe He died for us & that we love Him with our all.

- but, if we really don't mean that, then we are degrading the Lord's Supper.
- & when we do that, someone else points out: "we become guilty of shedding the blood of Christ."
 - "that is, we place ourselves, not in the company of those sharing in benefits of His passion, but in the company of those responsible for his crucifixion."

And that's serious because God will never tolerate taking Jesus' saving death lightly.

- instead those who eat & drink without discerning the body of Christ, or not believing the risen Lord is present in His worshipping community & at the Lord Supper,--
 - & think it is just a common ordinary meal, they will eat & drink judgment on themselves.
 - God will surely punish them, with diseases & even with death, ICor.11 says.
- you see, that's how serious it is to abuse & make a mockery of the Lord's Supper.
 - as matter of fact, to partake of this sacrament without understanding what it's all about or without believing its real meaning or in Christ is worse than not partaking at all!

II. THE THOROUGH WAY TO DO IT

Now because of what the **Lord's Supper** is & the disastrous consequence of using it in the wrong way, God commands in **ICor.11:28** we must examine ourselves before we eat of its bread & drink its cup.

- that means then we must do more than just mediate on its real meaning.
- instead we are commanded to prepare ourselves with an examination that is THOROUGH IN ITS MANNER.

Th'fore we aren't told here that we must reach some moral or spiritual standard of perfection before we can come to Lord's table.

- instead it is our responsibility to make an examination, & note well, not by looking at & judging what other Christian's are saying & doing.
 - but this examination must be a personal--directed only to one's own self.
- this self-examination must be of our total self so that we must pursue a process of a rigorous, honest, detailed investigation of our being & behavior.
- we must then engage in a thorough testing & careful checking of every part & parcel of our character & conduct & concerns.
 - of our hearts & hands & heads, our minds & thoughts, our desires & our wills, our tongues & lips, our words & works & deeds.

We must then thoroughly examine our **ATTITUDES** to see what we are thinking & feeling.

- to discover if our thoughts are evil & impure, our emotions are filled with hatred, or if they are really pervaded with love & purity.
- & we must carefully check out our ACTIONS to see what we are saying.
 - whether our words are those of hurt & filth & falsehood, or of love & truth.

So we must thoroughly look over our daily lives to see what we are doing at **home** with God's Word, **Bible**, & His will regarding our relationships there as spouses & parents & children.

- we must examine our business life to see if we are working hard & honest for Lord.
- we must examine our recreation & relaxation to see if we are using our leisure times in wholesome activities that praise Lord & not put Him to shame.
- & we must examine our religious life of worship & work for God to see if what we are doing is from our hearts & with our whole life; if we are faithful to His Church & Kingdom.

We must then put it all under the light of God's Word & what it says that makes a person a real Christian able to partake of the **Lord's Supper**, & not what we or others think.

- in other words, as vs.31&32 say, we must let Lord judge us by His Word so we won't be condemned.
- for only when we let Him search us, will we make a right judgment about ourselves.
 - will we see if all is in good spiritual order.
 - if we are spiritually a-okay in Christ before God.
 - if we really are related to Him in sincere repentance & faith & obedience.
 - if we really are living & acting in love to Him & to others.
- & if we are, then we will be ready to dine with Him for our spiritual & eternal good.

CONCLUSION

And so we must get ready for the **Lord's Supper** by applying this **3-fold test** on ourselves:

- 1st, have we really responded to Jesus with a true displeasure of ourselves because of sin?
 - do we have the desire & drive to turn from all evil?
- if we have, then the Lord's Supper will assure us all our sins are forgiven through Christ's shed blood.

2nd, do we truly & totally trust Jesus as our only Savior for salvation?

- do we believe all our sins are forgiven only because He died for them on the cross?
- if we do, then with the Lord's Supper Jesus will feed & strengthen our faith so that we will be more & more sure of that forgiveness & the salvation & eternal life we possess in Him.

And, 3rd, do we really desire to live only for Lord in faith & love & obedience?

- & in love & peace with our neighbors?
- if we do, then the Lord's Supper will empower us to live even better for God & others.
 - for being at His table will bring us closer to Him & to one another.

Well, next week God has prepare a special meal for us.

- a meal to remember how, in His grace, He has accomplished salvation for us through Christmas' empty manger, Calvary's empty cross, Easter's empty tomb.
 - through the broken body & shed blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior & Lord.
- & He invites you & me to His supper & to dine with Him.

Let us then make sure we are properly washed & ready so we will not eat & drink to our own condemnation.

- but we will be eternally blessed by Him.

AMEN