

# **THE LORD'S TABLE, A MEMORIAL**

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**1 CORINTHIANS 23:26 • TV096A**

A television broadcast sermon delivered

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By

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## **1 Corinthians 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: 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. 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. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

I have a different type of message that I want to bring to you today. It may be that you've never heard a message on the subject: **"THE LORD'S TABLE."** Well, that's my subject today, **"THE LORD'S TABLE, A MEMORIAL."**

It may be that you have many questions in your mind and in your heart regarding the Lord's Table or Communion.

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Well, I want you to listen carefully to the message. I would like for you to follow in the Scriptures as I read. I'm going to be reading a passage from **1 Corinthians chapter 11**. We will begin our reading with **verse 23** and read through **verse 26**.

And our subject: **"THE LORD'S TABLE, A MEMORIAL."**

But you listen to this message and follow along in God's Word. It may be the Spirit of God will be pleased to speak to your heart today in regard to this important subject: **"THE LORD'S TABLE."**

Now, let's read the Scripture in **1 Corinthians 11:23**; Paul said: *"I received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread and brake it and gave thanks and said: take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me."* Now, remember that statement: *"This do in remembrance of me."*

*"After the same manner also, he took the cup and when he had supped saying: this cup is the New Testament in my blood. This do ye as oft as you drink it; (remember that), as oft as you drink it in remembrance of me."* There's that statement again: *"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you do show the Lord's death till he comes."*

Now, this is a key phrase mentioned twice in these three verses: *"This do in remembrance of me."* It's not do something else; it's, *"this do,"* just exactly our Lord said, as I have given it to you; *"this do."* Not something else, not whatever you think's best but, *"you do this."*

And this is not a church fellowship supper. It's not to rally people together around the cause; it's in memory of Christ. *"This do,"* (not something else or not whatever you think is best adding to it or taking from it, but) *"this do,"* (and this is the purpose of it and this is the reason for it), *"in remembrance of me."*

It's not a sacrament. The Lord's Table has no saving power whatsoever. It is a memorial. It is, *"this do in remembrance of me."*

The hymn writer put it this way:

**"In memory of thy cross and shame  
I take this supper Lord in thy name  
This juice of grape and flower of wheat  
My outward man doth drink and eat.**

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**Oh may my inward man be fed  
With better wine and better bread  
May thy pure flesh and precious blood  
Supply my spirit's daily food."**

Now, this Lord's Table or we call it "Communion;" this Lord's Table was instituted and ordained by our Lord himself.

He met with His disciples before He went to the cross. He met with His disciples to observe the Passover. He told them to go and prepare and He would eat the Passover with them. While eating the Passover our Lord instituted the Lord's Table.

Well now, the Passover is a type of Christ. The Passover gave birth to the Lord's Table because our Lord was the fulfillment of the Passover. In **1 Corinthians 5:7** Paul said; "*For Christ our Passover, is sacrificed for us.*"

Now when Israel was down in Egypt and you've seen the television programs, "The Ten Commandments" and Moses the Lawgiver. And so, this is fresh in your mind. The people of Israel were down in Egypt and had been there 400 years.

They were in captivity and they were in slavery and God determined to bring them out of Egypt, to deliver His people, to set them free. And on the last night that they were in Egypt, God told Moses that He would pass over, that God would pass over and the first born in every home where there was no blood on the side door posts and on the upper door post; the firstborn in every home where the blood was not put on the door, the firstborn would be slain.

So Moses told the people of Israel; "*Take a lamb.*" Christ is a Lamb; He's called, "*The Lamb of God*" throughout the Scriptures. He's called: "*The Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.*" In **Isaiah 53** he's called: "*The Lamb that was led to the slaughter as a sheep before her shearers is dumb.*"

And the announcement that John the Baptist made on the shores of the River Jordan when he saw Christ coming toward him he said: "*Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.*"

Israel slew a lamb, Christ is our Lamb, our Passover and sacrificed for us. And this lamb was to be without spot or blemish. Moses told the people of Israel: "*Take a lamb, a lamb for each household:*

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*“If the household be too small for the lamb then you put two households together, but take a lamb without spot or blemish.”* How does this picture Christ our Lord? He was without sin. *“He knew no sin. Neither was guile found in his mouth.”*

Pilate said, *“I find no fault with this man.”* He said, *“Which of you convinceth me of sin?”* God the Father said, *“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”* Christ was without spot or blemish.

Not only was this lamb to be without spot or blemish but *“it was to be a male of the first year,”* not an old sheep, not one whose life was almost over, but one in full strength and one in full health. And Christ our Lord was a young man in full strength and in full health.

Not only was this lamb to be without spot or blemish and male of the first year, but this lamb was to be put in a pen and kept there for four days. Moses gave them plenty of time, several days warning. He said, *“Put this lamb in a pen and observe it. Keep your eye on it; look at it, test it and try it.”*

Our Lord Jesus Christ came down to this earth and lived here 33 ½ years. He was tried by the law, He was tried by the civil governments, He was tried by the courts, He was tried by Satan, and He was tried by the heavenly Father. He was tried in every way, *“tested, tempted, in every point as we are, yet without sin.”*

And then this lamb after the fourth day was to be slain; its blood was to be shed. Our Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross and died for our sins.

And then the blood was to be applied. The blood was to be put on the lintel and on the two side posts. And God said, *“When I pass through the land of Egypt, when I see the blood, (the blood that was put on the door posts by faith, the blood of the lamb that was without spot or blemish, that was tested and tried, that was a male of the first year, the blood on the door), I will pass over you.”*

And then the people of Israel when they came out of Egypt; they kept this Feast. Every year on a certain day they kept the Passover in remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt, in remembrance of their deliverance from slavery and from bondage and from Pharaoh's power. They kept this Feast every year.

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Our Lord Jesus Christ was born a Jew. He had a Jewish mother and a Jewish father. He was the heir to the Jewish throne, the throne of David. Our Lord was circumcised when he was eight days old.

He was subject to all the Jewish ceremonies and all the Jewish laws. He kept those laws. He said: *"I didn't come to destroy the law but to fulfill it."* His parents took him to the temple when he was a certain age every year to do unto him after the Law of Moses.

And just before His death as the Passover Lamb, as our Passover, as our sacrifice, as our sin-offering, as the fulfillment of every type and promise of the Old Testament; Christ is the fulfillment of the priesthood, Christ is the tabernacle, Christ is the atonement, and Christ is the sacrifice.

You better learn these things because this is the Scripture: *"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. He was buried and rose again according to the Scriptures,"* fulfilling what the Scriptures said about Him.

And our Lord Jesus Christ before He went to the cross met with His disciples to observe this Passover and He said to them, "There won't be any need for you to observe another Passover. The Passover ends tonight."

This is the last Passover because Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Christ our Lamb is about to die and His blood will totally and completely and effectually put away all sin. He will deliver us from the Egypt of darkness and sin and the slavery of sin. He will deliver us from the curse of the law, *"Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."*

That's exactly what He did. We do not sacrifice a lamb anymore. We do not take a lamb every year like Israel did, a lamb without spot or blemish, a male of the first year, put in in a pen, keep it four days, and then put the blood on the doorposts or the blood in a basin on the altar, a mercy seat, because Christ our Passover and our sacrifice and our Lamb is sacrificed for us.

But we do observe this Feast. We do have the Lord's Table. And just as Israel kept the Passover every year to remember their deliverance from Egypt by the hand of God, by the power of God, by the mercy of God, and by the grace of God; we observe the Lord's Table.

We observe the Lord's Table in remembrance of our deliverance from Egypt, from sin, and from darkness, by the power of God, by the blood of Christ, by the mercy of God, and because of the love of God.

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We don't keep it on a certain day of the year. Our Lord didn't tell us to. He said: *"As often as you eat this bread and drink this wine, as oft as you do it; you do it in remembrance of me."* It's not kept on a certain day but as often as we feel led of God's spirit to observe the Lord's Table.

Something else about it; it's not for all the sons of Adam; it's for believers. Just like the Passover was for Israel; it wasn't for all the sons of Adam; it was only for Israel.

Our Lord handed the broken bread to His disciples and He said: *"This is my body broken for you."* He handed the wine to His disciples, to the believers; He said: *"This is my blood which is shed for you."*

And Paul in the Scripture that I read to you a moment ago from **1 Corinthians 11** says: *"Let a man examine himself and so let him eat."* I can't examine you and you can't examine me because I don't know your heart and you don't know my heart.

I don't know whether you believe in Christ or not. You don't know whether I believe in Christ. You've got to examine yourself. I've got to examine myself. What for; why should we examine ourselves before we come to the Lord's Table?

It's to see if we discern the Lord's body. What does the word discern mean? It means to understand if we judge correctly that Christ's body was broken for us, that His blood was shed for us. *"Let a man examine himself and so let him eat."*

Now; the Lord's Table is a memorial. Christ said, *"This do in remembrance of me."* It's not for every son of Adam because you can't remember one whom you never knew. You can't remember an event of which you are not aware. You can't remember an event in which you have no part. So, this is for believers: *"This do in remembrance of me."* It's the memorial for believers.

We know who Christ is as Peter said: *"Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."* Who is Jesus of Nazareth? *"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."*

He is none other than God Himself. That's what He said: *"I and my Father are one. He's the express image of the Father. He's the brightness of his glory."* And the Father said to Him: *"Thy throne O God is forever."*

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Why did He come into this world? Well, the angel told Joseph and Mary: *“He shall save His people from their sins.”* That’s why He came. And He said: *“The Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost.”*

And Paul wrote of him: *“This is a faithful saying that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.”* That’s why He came. *“In the fullness of the time God sent his Son into the world, made of a woman, made under the law; to redeem that were born under the law.”* That’s why he came.

What did He do? He died on the cross. He gave His blood. *“He made his soul an offering for sin. He was made sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*

He was a substitute just like down in Egypt; that lamb was a substitute for the people. But the lamb was a picture of Christ the substitute; it was a type of Christ the substitute and they sacrificed the lamb in anticipation and in expectation of the coming of Christ who is the effectual substitute.

We know why He must die. He must die *“that God might be just and justify the ungodly.”* That’s the question that Job asked; *“How can man be just with God? How can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold the moon that shineth not; the stars are not pure in God’s sight. How much more abominable is man that drinks iniquity like the water?”*

How can man be just with God? There’s only one way, a substitute, someone to take his place and bear his iniquity and be wounded for his transgressions and bruised for his iniquities and be healed by that substitute’s stripe: *“He died that God might be just and justify the ungodly.”*

And we know where He is now; He’s on the right hand of God. The man Christ Jesus is seated on the right hand of the majesty on high. What’s He doing? He’s making intercession for all believers.

So this memorial Feast, this Lord’s Table; it’s not indiscriminately for every son of Adam; it’s for believers. Paul said; *“Let a man examine himself and so let him eat. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, (in an unworthy manner), not discerning the Lord’s body, (not understanding the significance of this Table; listen carefully), eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.”*

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If you want to play church, you better play with something else besides the Lord's Word, the Lord's body, the Lord's cross, or the Lord's blood. This is serious business. You better not come to the Lord's Table.

You better not take the bread and the wine if you do not discern or understand or have some understanding of what it's all about. That's what the Lord said. That's what Paul warned us about.

Now, what's the main object of this Lord's Table, when the church of the Lord Jesus Christ meets together and the Lord's Table is served, the unleavened bread and the wine is served? What is the meaning and what is the main object?

Well, listen to Paul as he quotes the Lord Jesus: *"This do in remembrance of me. As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup you show the Lord's death till he comes."* Now, if words can mean anything at all you will understand what that means, at least in your head; *"This do in remembrance of me. You show the Lord's death till he comes."*

As I said, this Supper has no saving power. There's no saving efficacy in the bread; the bread is just bread, that's all it is. It does not become the body of Christ.

The wine is just wine; that's all it is, nothing more. It does not become the blood of Christ. It does not actually turn into the body and blood of Christ; that's impossible. It is representative; it represents His body and His blood.

This bread and this wine; they are symbols. The bread is symbolic of His body that was bruised and broken for you and me. And this wine is symbolic of His blood that was shed on that cross: *"This do in remembrance of me."*

He didn't say, this do in order to go to heaven, this do in order to be saved, this do in order to be forgiven, and this do in order to be cleansed; He did say, *"this do in remembrance of me."*

Eating the bread and drinking the wine represents the act of faith by which we have received Christ in our hearts.

I eat the bread and I drink the wine and that pictures the act of faith by which I receive Christ into myself. Listen to what he said in **John 6:54**: *"Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh this my blood; hath eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day."*



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The same way that we eat this bread; we have by faith partaken of Christ. The same way that we drink this wine; we have by faith partaken of the blood of Christ. *“Christ in you; that’s the hope of glory.”* Paul said, *“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.”*

And when I eat something it goes into my body. It’s digested and it goes into every part of my body. It’s the nourishment, it’s the life, it’s the strength, and it’s the power and that’s what Christ is to the believer. He’s our life, He’s our very nourishment, and He’s our spiritual life.

And then, eating the bread and drinking the wine by a believer shows three things. Now you remember these three things if you don’t remember anything else I’ve said. When we come to the Lord’s Table and eat this bread which represents our Lord’s body and drink the wine which represents his blood; it shows three things:

First of all: It shows the Lord’s death! His body was broken for us just as this bread is broken and crumbled up and distributed to every believer. And His blood was poured out just like the wine is poured from the pitcher into the cup; it’s poured out: *“His blood was shed for the remission of sin. It makes atonement for our soul. It cleanses and purifies our soul.”*

Secondly: It shows our dependence upon Him! He is our sacrifice; He is our sin-offering. He is our only way to God. Christ said: *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.”*

And when we sit down around the Lord’s Table and take this bread and this wine we are saying before God and before the congregation of God’s people; *“This is my hope.”*

**“My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus’ blood and his righteousness  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame  
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.”**

I can’t in the flesh keep God’s law but I can believe on Christ. I can’t in the flesh meet to perfection God almighty’s commandment but I can believe on Christ. *“I cannot in the flesh please God;”* that’s what Paul said, but I can believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And that’s all I can do, but yet that’s enough because our Lord said, *“He that believeth on the Son hath life.”*

Thirdly: When we take the Lord’s Table it shows we have received Christ into our hearts. Christ dwells in me. He’s not just a creed; He’s my life!

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Now, I want to show you some important things about the Lord's Table and I wish every one of you would listen carefully to these things:

**First of all:** It is simple; the Lord's Table is simple!

We have complicated it in this day. We've added so much to it. It's become a complicated ritual, it's become a ceremony. It's become a formality. It's become to the point where people don't even know how to act, when to stand, when to sit, when to speak, and when to be quiet.

The Lord's Table is a simple ceremony. There are only two things present, bread and wine; that's all. Find anything else in the Scriptures, bread and wine, that's all, no uniforms, no candles, no soft music in the background, no eloquent speeches, none of these things, no exterior means, just bread and wine. And to add anything other than bread and wine is to destroy this simple feast. It's a simple feast.

Our Lord sat down with His disciples. *"He took bread and brake it."* He said, *"This is my body broken for you."* He took wine and when He had supped, He gave thanks and He said: *"This is my blood; drink ye all of it,"* simple service.

There was no background music. There were no candles burning. There was no uniformed priest. There was no hocus-pocus or mumbo-jumbo or carrying on or superstition or signs, just these two elements. And that's all Paul gave to the church in **1 Corinthians 11**.

**Secondly:** I'll tell you something else; it's universal. Our Lord said: *"Drink ye all of it,"* every one of you. It's not just for the priest and the minister. The Lord's Table is not just for the mature Christian. The Lord's Table is not just for the most spiritual people in the church.

The Lord's Table is not just for my organization. The Lord's Table is for every believer. Peter took the Lord's Supper though he was to soon deny His Lord. Thomas was present and took the bread and the wine though he was soon to doubt his Lord. But he was there and he took it.

I've heard people say: "Well, I'm not worthy to come to the Lord's Table." You never will be worthy to do anything. You never will be worthy *"to unlatch his shoelaces."* That's what John the Baptist said, the greatest man born of woman. But you come because you are unworthy. You come because you have a need. *"Drink ye all of it."*

One time Roland Hill a great English preacher was invited to a certain church to preach for them and they were having the Lord's Table. And he was sitting there with the congregation while

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they were observing the Lord's Table and the deacons took the bread and the wine and they began to pass it around to the congregation.

And they came to Mr. Hill and he reached out to take the bread. He was a visiting preacher. He was not a member of that congregation but he was visiting, but he was a Christian; he was a believer, a child of God. He knew the Lord.

He reached out to take the bread and the deacon pulled it back and he said: "You can't come to our table." Mr. Hill looked at him and he said: "Oh I'm sorry," he said; "I didn't know it was your table; I thought it was the Lord's Table."

That ought to answer any question you have about whose to come to the Lord's Table, believers, believers. It's not for the priests only, it's not for the minister only, it's not for the mature only, it's not for the most spiritual; it's for every believer.

*"Let a man examine himself and so let him eat."* It's a memorial supper. It will not save but it remembers Him who does save. The bread and the wine cannot make atonement for my soul but it represents Him who did. The wine does not take away my sins but it represents the blood of Christ who takes away my sin.

**"Come ye weary heavy laden  
Bruised and mangled by the fall  
If you tarry until you're better  
You'll never come at all."**

We come to the Table of the Lord, weak and unworthy. We come to the Table of the Lord, not to judge others but to judge ourselves: *"Let a man examine himself and so let him eat."* Our weakness and our unworthiness is the reason we need His broken body and His shed blood.

And we come not with resolutions and we come not with regrets and we come not with rebukes but we come with rejoicing.

Now, we shouldn't need anything to remind us of our Lord should we? But we are human and we do; we're human. *"The heavens declare the glory of God."* I have to look every once in a while and remember that the glory of God is there.

His law written on my heart reveals His holiness. Creation reveals His providence and care. Life and reproduction reveals His power and wisdom but this Supper represents His broken body and His shed blood.

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The Lords Table, a memorial: *“This do in remembrance of me!”*