

Wil Owens  
The Supper as a Sermon; 1 Cor 11:23-26  
GPBC  
2.23.20

Introduction - The church has been given two ordinances whereby we visually portray the gospel; baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both of these sacred services are silent sermons.

Baptism, in a very powerful way, pictures God's saving, life-transforming grace right before our eyes. At its core, baptism is a visual proclamation of what God does **to** us. We are dead in our trespasses and sins, and God makes us alive in Christ! God awakens us, He quickens us, He raises us. That is portrayed when someone is lowered into the water and then raised.

The Lord's Supper is rich and meaningful as well. While baptism portrays what God does **to** us in salvation; the Lord's Supper portrays what God has done **for** us in Christ! What makes the Lord's Supper so profound and precious is that apart from God doing a work **for** us in Christ, nothing would have been done **to** us by grace. Christ secured in His death the salvation that God gives to us. What is portrayed in the Lord's Supper is the basis of, the source of, the foundation of what is portrayed in baptism. Apart from Christ's work on our behalf to save us (The Lord's Supper), we would never be saved (Baptism).

So when we gather around the Lord's Table, there is much to celebrate, much to remember, much cause for joy, for thanksgiving, for solemn soul-searching. The Lord's Supper, more than any other means we have, visually sets before our eyes and our hearts, what God has done for us in Christ. (What, Why, How?)

- I. What Does Paul Mean by Saying "You Proclaim the Lord's Death"?
  - A) By saying that we proclaim, he means we sound forth a message, in the very taking and observing of this meal. Now that's quite unusual. I can think of many messages and signals that I often send when I am eating a meal, but the Lord's death is not one of them. That's precisely why Paul addresses this issue here in 1 Cor! The way the church was partaking of the Lord's Supper was communicating the wrong message. Therefore, they were in sin. They were horribly misrepresenting the Gospel. They had forgotten the point of this table and therefore were totally misrepresenting the Gospel!

1. This meal, unlike every other meal you consume, is not meant for the nourishment of the physical body. This meal is not meant to satisfy your temporal hunger. This meal, and only this meal, is meant for the nourishment of your spiritual body. The point of this meal satisfies far more than physical hunger; it satisfies the hunger of your soul.
  2. That's the point of this meal, and that is exactly what we are proclaiming. You have a hunger deeper than the hunger of the stomach; it's the hunger of the soul. Just as our stomach will growl and groan under the pains of hunger, so does our soul growl and groan under the pains of sin. And just as Jesus said, He is the Bread of Life, He is the Water of Life, and if you would take Him, your soul would never hunger and thirst again! He totally satisfies the ache, the void, the need, the sin!
- B) Paul says we proclaim the Lord's death. What does that mean?
1. It doesn't mean that in the Lord's Supper we are proclaiming merely the historical fact of the death of Jesus. Historians make that proclamation. We proclaim much more than the historical fact of Jesus' death; we proclaim the theological significance of Jesus' death.
  2. Yes, an innocent man was crucified 2,000 years ago. That's fact. But it's what that particular death means that makes all the difference in the world. His death was more than a tragic injustice of wrongful capital punishment. His death sent a shockwave of salvation throughout all time, past, present, and future, securing redemption for every child of God.
  3. 1 Thess 5:9-10 *"For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died (fact) for us (significance) so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with Him."*
  4. That's the point of Christ's death. He didn't just die. He died for us. And in dying for us, He saved us! That's what we proclaim!

## II. Why the Bread and the Cup?

- B) What is the meaning of having two elements? Why does proclaiming the Lord's death require both the bread and the wine?
- C) Because the death of Christ accomplished two astounding, eternal graces in one profound event. Thus, the bread and the cup in one profound meal.
- D) The Bread. There are three things in our text that convey the significance, the meaning, of the bread. (v24)
3. The bread is His body. The significance is that His body is perfect. He is the sinless Son of God. The old catechism asks: Did our Lord Jesus Christ ever

commit a sin? It answers: No, He was holy, harmless, and undefiled. He was totally pure. He had no stain or corruption of sin whatsoever. And that becomes increasingly important in the second component.

4. It is broken. The bread being broken symbolizes the punishment and judgment. God's just wrath meted out against sin. So why did the holy, harmless, undefiled body of the Lord Jesus absorb the Father's wrath? And that is answered in the third component.
5. The body of Christ is broken for you. For you. We are unholy, we are harmful, we are defiled. We are corrupt and stained with sin. We deserve the judgment and wrath of God. But Christ has taken God's wrath against our sin and has borne it in His pure body on the cross.
6. The point is substitution! He took our place. Listen to 1 Pet 2:24 *"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed."* The broken bread is the broken body of the Lord Jesus FOR YOU! Substitution.

#### C) The Cup. (v25)

5. Jesus lifted up the cup and said "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," announcing fulfillment of God's promise to save His people. The old covenant was never meant to save, only to point us to our need for salvation. The old covenant said "Keep my commandments and live." The new covenant said "I will write my commandments on your heart. And I will be your God, and you will be My people." And so, in the shedding of Christ's blood, He secured new covenant grace for every believer!
6. You can't have the grace of the new covenant without the blood of Christ because sin cannot be ignored and God be just. God didn't say, "Well they'll never keep my commandments so I'm just going to ignore all of their sin and give them new hearts!" No! In order for us to have new hearts, our sins must be atoned for. 1 John 1:7 *"But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin."*
7. The broken body of Christ pays for our sins - substitution; the shed blood of Christ takes our sins away - atonement.

#### E) The Bread and the Cup visually proclaim the Substitutionary Atonement of Christ for all of God's people.

### III. How is the Supper a Gospel Sermon?

- E) We proclaim the significance of Christ's death. The bread and the cup accurately portray what Christ accomplished for us. The question now is how does the very act, the service of the Supper itself proclaim the Gospel?
- F) There are two parts of the Supper that Jesus inaugurated and that we reenact when we observe it; the act of giving and the act of receiving.
- G) Jesus broke the bread and gave it to the disciples and said "This is My body broken for you." He took the cup and said "This is my blood for you." He gave and they received. That's what we do when we pass the bread and the juice.
- 7. When we take the plate of broken bread and we hand it to one another, we are saying, "Here. This is Christ's body, broken for you. Broken for your sins. Will you take Christ's substitution?" And the cup, "Here. This is Christ's blood shed for you, to atone for your sins? Won't you take Christ and believe in Him for eternal life?"
- 8. When we take the bread and the cup we are saying, "Yes. I take Christ. I receive Christ. I believe in Christ. I need Christ. He is my salvation!"
- 9. That's also why if we haven't taken Christ, if we haven't believed in Him for salvation, this meal is not for us. Or, if we have embraced sin and refuse to live as a true believer, we let the bread and cup pass because without repentance of sin, we are not truly trusting Christ.
- 10. That's also why this meal is so important for parents. It's a gospel opportunity. We don't let our children take the Supper unless they have taken Christ or else the Supper becomes a meaningless religious ritual for them and not an expression of genuine faith in Christ.

Conclusion - "until He comes" - the offer of the Gospel will one day cease!

As believers, we offer this meal to one another. We offer Christ. As believers, we receive this meal from one another. We receive Christ.

Maybe you came to this service as an unbeliever, but right here, right now, you know you need Christ, you want Christ, you believe in Christ. Then take the meal. Take Christ and be sure before you leave this building today that you share with us that you have trusted Christ today.

If you are without Christ and you have no desire for Christ and for salvation, just know that this meal is one more offer given to you in this life, and there is coming a day when there will be no more offer given to you.