

"Proclaiming the Lord's Death on the Cross"—1 Corinthians 11:26

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, "Proclaiming the Lord's Death on the Cross", is 1 Corinthians 11:26 → *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Death is no friend. When death is accompanied with love and relationship the mixture produces grief and sorrow. Sitting by the bedside of a dying loved one and knowing the moment of death is close at hand is still not like the moment of death itself. Even if you may have a feeling of "relief" combined with sadness, or seek to comfort yourself in the fact of no more physical suffering for your loved one, or striving to calm your troubled heart that s/he looks at peace, does not take away the grief which accompanies death in the midst of love and relationship. Death is just not right!

While Jesus was born to die, it was no friend to Him either on both sides of its presence. Why would Jesus, knowing that He would raise His good friend Lazarus from the dead, weep by the side of his tomb? (cf. John 11:35) Could it be because He wasn't just facing death but rather

facing sin itself? After all, *the sting of death is sin.* (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:56)

Could it have not simply been His love for Lazarus but rather His love for all mankind and His desire to *deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to its lifelong slavery?* (cf. Hebrews 2:15) Death is just wrong.

Thus, *Jesus wept.*

Yet, our text tell us that every time we partake of the Lord's Supper we *proclaim the Lord's **death** until He comes.* Why would we proclaim His death? Why not proclaim His resurrection from the dead since by it He has given us victory over the grave and eternal life? Galatians 2:20 answers that question: *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.* Proclaiming the Lord's death on the cross is proclaiming who you are in Christ.

As Paul spoke to the Christians in the church at Corinth about their behavior while celebrating the Lord's Supper he was very specific about the witness which their behavior gave. They came to the Lord's Supper with no consideration of who they were in Christ. They came together with such an improper respect for its complete meaning for their lives that Paul had to rebuke them and told them: *When you come together it is not for the better but for the worse.* (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:17) 1 Corinthians 11:20-22 says it was *not the Lord's supper that they ate. For in eating,*

each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. 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?

Apparently a community meal was shared by the Corinthians when they celebrated the Lord's Supper, maybe comparable to our pot lucks. Everyone basically did what they wanted with no regard for the body of Christ present in the bread and the cup, in the gathered church or on the cross. Thus the words in 1 Corinthians 11:29 → *Anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

Instead of proclaiming the Lord's death on the cross in humble faith for all people they claimed their own rampant individualism. This was evident in their factions and divisions by pitting servants of Jesus against each other (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:11-13; 3); by allowing sexual immorality to be openly practiced among them as if it were not sin (cf. 1 Corinthians 5); trying to "resolve" their conflicts by law suits against each other in the courts of unbelievers (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:1-8); functioning with sinful pride in the use of spiritual gifts (cf. 1 Corinthians 12-14); and now their idolatrous selfishness in the midst of taking the Lord's Supper together (cf. 1 Corinthians 10-11). With such unrepentant behavior and refusal to change they approached the Lord's Supper in *an unworthy manner, guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord* (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:27 NIV).

Jesus has provided the Lord's Supper so you may be forgiven of your

sins according to His promise, *this is My body, which is **for you*** (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:24) and *this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out **for many for the forgiveness of sins.*** (cf. Matthew 26:28) Proclaiming His death on the cross while partaking of His body and blood together means that you come desiring in His forgiveness to die to your sins in Christ's death for you. It means we remember that the death of Jesus' body on the cross was for the body of Christ gathered in this communion together to receive His body and blood in the bread and the cup. It is not a supper displaying some kind of rampant individualism but rather a unity in the body of Christ, as 1 Corinthians 10:17 says: *Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.* It is a communion—a common union in Christ and His Word—proclaiming *the Lord's death until He comes.*

Thus, proclaiming the Lord's death on the cross in Communion is proclaiming that His death on that cross has changed your life! It is the continuation of our baptism where *we were buried . . . with Jesus into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, **we too might walk in newness of life.*** (cf. Romans 6:4) It is a confession that *we belong to Christ Jesus and have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.* (cf. Galatians 5:24) Therefore, we desire to *live by the Spirit, not becoming conceited, provoking one another and envying one another* at this altar or any other context in our congregation

and daily lives. (cf. Galatians 5:25-26)

Notice our text says *as often as we eat this bread and drink the cup, we proclaim the Lord's death **until He comes***. See? It is also about Christ's resurrection and our joining in the resurrection on the Last Day. According to 1 Corinthians 15:26, it is on this day that *the last enemy to be destroyed is death*. No longer will it show it's ugly face. No longer will it be present to bring grief and sorrow in the midst of love and relationship. Instead, Yahweh's love for all believers in Christ Jesus will bring them into a perfect relationship with Him, eternally restoring our human natures where *the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be our shepherd, and . . . God will wipe away every tear from our eyes!* Amen.

*May I never boast except
in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
through which the world has been crucified to me,
and I to the world.*

(Galatians 6:14 NIV)

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