

The Lord's Supper in Biblical Perspective: Life in Christ

I Corinthians 11:23-34

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We are in I Corinthians 11 for this study. These are the words that Paul institutes the Lord's Supper for the ever expanding church and particularly to the church at Corinth. I Corinthians 11:23-34 says

[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. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I have three questions this morning before we come to the Lord's Supper. My first question is why does the Lord's Supper pointedly, purposefully, without any mistake point us to the death of Jesus Christ? Very clearly that's what the Lord's Supper does. The elements, the bread, the fruit of the vine are there that we would remember the body and the blood of Christ shed for us. We are significantly pointed to the death of Christ. Why aren't we pointed to the manger,

the Virgin birth? Why aren't we pointed to the resurrection? That's happy time, isn't it? Why not the ascension of Christ or the second coming of Christ? Very clearly, those things are not the emphasis of the Table.

Now they are assumed. The Virgin birth is assumed because how could the Son of God become a man and die without the Virgin birth? The resurrection is clearly assumed because it says that we are to do this until He comes again. How can He come again from heaven if He is still in the grave? It assumes the second coming of Christ because we're supposed to do this until He comes again but significantly it's the cross. Why? Furthermore, when we read the Gospels it is very clear that Satan is doing everything he can to keep Jesus from the cross. He doesn't mind Jesus dying. In fact, he would be more than glad for His death but he wants to keep Him from the atoning work of the cross. Jesus lets us know that in a very interesting anecdotal moment.

Remember when Jesus is with the Apostles at Caesarea Philippi. He says to them "Who do people say that I am and who do you say that I am?" Peter responded "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus said, "Blessed are you Simon Bar-Jonah for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but My Father who is in heaven and I say to you that you are Peter and upon this Rock I will build My church. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I must go to Jerusalem and be put to death by the Scribes and the Pharisees but on the third day I will be raised again." Peter says "God forbid that this should happen to You." Then Jesus says to him, "Get thee behind Me Satan." Peter's perhaps well meaning burst of horror at the thought of Christ dying had become the personification of Satan who does not want that to happen.

Why is it that the Apostle Paul, when he talks about the Gospel, he uses one phrase to sum it up? I'll turn this into two questions. Why is it that the Apostle Paul when he sums up his ministry to the Corinthians said "I determined to know nothing among you but Christ and Him crucified"? Did Paul teach on the Virgin birth? Clearly he did that. Did he teach on the resurrection? Yes he did that clearly. He is saying that the crux (which we get from the Latin word for cross) of his ministry and everything is the cross. That's why when he sums up he says the Gospel is the Word of the cross.

The Lord's Supper has brought us back to remind us of the cross. Why? I'd like to look at the second letter to the Corinthians. Because of the cross there is something glorious I want to share with you in this study as we come to the Lord's Supper. II Corinthians 5:17 says *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* In the movie the Passion which is an interesting movie which was done a number of years ago, there is a moment in which the quote from the book of Revelation is made by Jesus on the way to the cross. He says to His mother "Behold I make all things new." It is because of the cross that there is a new heavens and a new earth that's coming. It is because of what Christ did on the cross that this glorious

statement can be made to you today. If you are in Christ you are a new creation. It is not will be a new creation. The heavens and earth will be rolled up, burned up and then rolled out will be a new heavens and a new earth. That's what will happen. You will one day have a new body but today IF (what a word) you are in Christ, you ARE a new creation. The old has passed away. Look, the new has come.

I'd like to give you three ways that this new can be viewed today. If you this day are in Jesus Christ here is the first one. Because of Christ and the cross you and I now have a new past. There is a lot in my past that I would give anything to be able to blot out of my memory my life from about age 13 to 20 for many reasons but I do know that the record of my life has been blotted out because of what Christ did on the cross. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. I have a new past. When God looks at my past now, He does not see the record of my sins. He sees another record. It is the record of the righteousness of Christ.

What did Jesus do on that cross? On that cross He took my sin and gave me His righteousness. II Corinthians 5:21 says *For our sake he (the Father) made him (Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* In other words when Jesus went to the cross which we are reminded of with this Table, Jesus made me new first of all by taking away my past and giving me a new past. He took away my record and gave me a new record. What is the record of Jesus' life? His record is sinless. What is the record of my life? I am a sinner. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on my behalf. My sins are gone. We used to sing this in our AYF (Alliance Youth Fellowship). The song went "Gone, gone, gone, gone, yes, my sins are gone. Buried in the deepest sea, yesthat's good enough for me. I shall live eternally. Praise God my sins are G-O-N-E, gone." My sins are completely gone from me. He says "Your sins I will remember no more."

It does not mean God has lost omniscience. It doesn't mean He has Divine amnesia – "Did Harry sin? Oh my goodness, I wonder if he did or not?" It means legally He remembers my sin against me no more. He knows the entanglements of my life. He doesn't forget the inclinations of my life. He loves me enough just like you forgive your son or daughter of something they have done but you don't forget their inclinations. You are trying to help them as a parent. You have removed the penalty. So Christ took my sins and removed them as far as the East is from the West because Christ paid for my sins but that's not all Jesus did because that only gets me out of hell. That doesn't get me to heaven. Heaven is for the righteous. The last part of that verse in II Corinthians 5:21 says *For our sake he (the Father) made him (Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin, **so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.***

So here is Jesus' life which is righteous. Here is my life. My sins are gone. Praise the Lord I'm forgiven. I have a new past and my new past isn't only new because

of what it doesn't have any more, my sin and my condemnation, but it's a new past because now what I have is the record of Christ. He gives me His righteousness so that every time God the Father looks at Harry Reeder He sees the perfect righteousness of His Son, cleansed by His blood, and clothed by His righteousness. I have a new past.

Secondly, because of Christ and the cross you and I now have a new present. The old has passed away and behold the new has come. I love the hymn that says "My chains fell off." There I was in the cellblock of sin. Thine eye diffused a quickening ray, my chains fell off. There all of my bondage to my sin was gone. Chain number one is the bondage of the guilt of my sin which is gone. There is therefore now no condemnation, I rise up and desire to follow Him. Not only that there is the blindness of my sin. A brother in Christ I was talking to this week who had just gotten back from Israel said "I don't see how people can look around there and not believe." Actually the question is how did you believe? Here is why nobody will believe. It is because they're dead and blind. They are sin dead and sin blind.

If you know Jesus Christ today it's because of the power of the Holy Spirit took the chain of your blindness away, gave you eyes to see and ears to hear. You can now rise and follow Christ and more than that He broke the power of sin. You still have sin living in you but you don't live in sin any more. You have been born again. You have a new present because of the cross of Christ. You have the penalty of sin gone, the power of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the love of Christ compelling you. You have a new present in Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, because of Christ and the cross you and I now have a new future. I love that passage in II Corinthians 5:2 where it says our body is groaning to be delivered and to leave this tent (body) in order to take up residence in our home. I'm just camping out in this tent (body) and it will be totally renewed. The mortal shall put on immortality. The corrupt shall put on incorruptibleness. Jesus said "Do not fear. Believe in God believe also in Me. I go to prepare a place for you so that where I am there **you may be** also." You may be but if you're in Christ you will be but why the may be? It is because the question is, are you in Christ?

Everything I have just said to you is absolutely true. If any man is in Christ because of Christ and His work on the cross you have a new past. Your guilt is gone and the righteousness of Christ clothes you. You have a new present. The power of sin has been broken and the power of the Holy Spirit will enable you to follow Christ. You have a new future, a promised new future. You one day will be with Christ. You have a new life, an eternal life, a forever life, you have all of those things. The question is, are you in Christ?

Here is your takeaway as you come to the Lord's Table today. Since Christ on the cross has eradicated the condemnation of our past life (so you have a new past life), empowers us for our present life and has promised us an everlasting

future life, then there is nothing that should hinder you from coming to Christ or distract us from following Christ. What is it that would hinder you from coming to Christ today? Nothing should hinder you from coming to Christ for the gift of life today. So for some of you reading this my invitation is not to the Table but it's to Jesus. The Table can't save you. The Table is where those of you who have come to Christ meet their Savior with one another. It's a time of refreshment.

My invitation to you today is to come to Christ. What is it that you would take death instead of life? What is it in the old that is worth rejecting the new which is come in Christ or because Christ gives you a new past record, a new present life and a new future life you have already come to Christ, then nothing should distract you and me from following Christ to glory. Lord, would You let everything in this world dim, and not even as the hymn writer says 'the sweetest frame' would get in the way. Thank You for the frame of my marriage, my family, my children, my life, the privilege to work and the privilege of stewardship but Father I would not let any of those good things you have given me or any sin, its addictions, insanity, treachery and absurdity distract me from following You. So I come to the Table to confess my sins. I'm forgiven. I want to be cleansed and rise with the chains gone to follow You. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for these moments we can have at the Table of our Lord together. It is because of Christ and what He has done on the cross that we have a new past, a new present and a new future and for all of that we give You praise and glory. Now Father as we said at the outset, Christ has declared "I have earnestly desired to eat this Supper with you before I suffer." Father, Christ has suffered and risen so now we earnestly desire to eat this Supper with Christ because He has suffered and I have been saved. I come personally to You. I come rejoicing with Your people. Father, we come to the Table to see our Redeemer, sealed to us those glorious promises in our soul and allow us to rise and follow Him who is our Life, I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

To prepare for the Table we will sing the first verse of when I survey the wondrous cross:

*When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

It is my privilege as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to invite all to the Table. If you know Christ as your Lord and Savior, you have put your trust in Him and you have been joined to the body of Christ then this is the Lord's Table for you. It is a glorious privilege to invite you here. The Bible tells us not to come in an unworthy manner. How do I come in a worthy manner? It's not by boasting of

what you've done for our righteousness is like filthy rags. The worthy manner is to come in Christ, focused upon Christ, confessing our sins and committing ourselves to follow Him and serve Him.

I'd like to take some time and lead us through a time of confession. If you want to kneel feel free to kneel. We are not examining one another. We are examining ourselves, our relationship to the Lord and His people. Let's pray.

Prayer:

He says if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Because of what Christ has done on the cross and you're in Christ you don't need to cover up your sin now. You have a new past, a new present and a new future. You are free to confess them. Bring before the Lord an examined heart in your personal life and your relationship with Christ. Confess your sins. These are moments where you can do business with the Lord, your Redeemer. Perhaps you would like to turn your heart's attention. Christ has put you in your family, your marriage, parents and children. Go before the Lord in that vital relationship of your home. Father, thank You so much for these moments for our lives are so busy, knowing You delight in Your people, confess their sins, claim and rejoice in their salvation and rise to follow Your Son who is our Savior and Lord. Come now and minister to Your people as they continue to focus with these elements upon Christ, His glory, His salvation and the majesty that in Him we are new creations. Amen.

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