

21. Rescued, Redeemed, and Restored

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When I was about 5 years old, my daddy started to teach my older brother and me how to use fork and knife when he took us to the restaurant where they served Koreanized American foods. He also taught us how to have proper table manners in case we had a meal with foreigners. At that time, I really didn't care much about his table manner lessons, but I was altogether interested in eating different foods.

Here are 11 most important table manners we should remember. I am sure that many of us violate these from time to time:

1. Chew with your mouth closed. No-See-Food
2. Keep your smartphone off the table and set to silent or vibrate.
3. Don't use your utensils like a shovel or stab your food.
4. Don't pick your teeth at the table.
5. Remember to use your napkin.
6. Wait until you're done chewing to sip or swallow a drink.
7. Cut only one piece of food at a time.
8. Avoid slouching and don't place your elbows on the table while eating. It is okay to prop your elbows on the table while conversing between courses.
9. Instead of reaching across the table for something, ask for it to be passed to you.
10. Take part in the dinner conversation.
11. No belching or farting at the table

This morning we are going to learn about the table manners that are far more important than how we eat our meals at our table. It is about the supper with our Lord, that is also known as "Communion." In this ritual, the Lord summarizes our Christian process – Rescued, Redeemed, and Restored. Let's open our heart to hear from Him.

A. THE ROOT PROBLEM

1 Corinthians 11:17-22 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. 19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. 20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. 21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

Paul has already dealt with the problem of divisions among the Corinthian Christians in 1 Corinthians 1:10-17. There, the approach was more theological; but here, it is more practical, dealing with the problem of division as it shows itself in the Corinthian Christians during their gatherings.

Since the beginning of the church of the first century, it was customary for the believers eat together according to Acts 2. It was an opportunity for fellowship and for sharing with those who were less privileged. No doubt they climaxed this meal by observing the Lord's Supper. The "Love Feast" or "Agape Feast" was like a modern-day church potluck. Members of a church family would gather and bring whatever food or drink they could afford. They were encouraged to share it all, regardless of how rich or poor they were.

The "Agape Feast" was part of the worship at Corinth, but some serious abuses had crept in. As a result, the love feasts were doing more harm than good to the church. For one thing, there were various cliques in the church, and people ate with their own "group" instead of fellowshiping with the whole church family. While Paul condemned this selfish practice, he did take a positive view of the results: at least God would use this to reveal those who were true believers.

Another fault was selfishness: the rich people brought a great deal of food for themselves, while the poorer members went hungry and there were many of them. As I mentioned before, many of the Corinthian church congregation were common slaves and they did not have much when it came to their own property and wealth.

Though the original idea of the agape feast was sharing, but that idea had been lost. It is likely that the weekly agape feast was the only decent meal some of the poorer members could have; but to be treated so scornfully by the richer members not only hurt their stomachs, but also their hearts.

Of course, the divisions at the dinner were nothing more than an evidence of the deeper problems in the church. The Corinthians thought they were mature believers, but in reality they were a bunch of biblically immature brats. Paul did not suggest that they abandon the feast, but rather that they should restore its proper meaning of the Agape Feast.

In v22, *Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God?* Paul's message is both strong and plain – "If you want to be a pig, stay it at home!" OK, that is my version.

On a side-note, many modern day church agape feasts are done often with the same poor attitude. The main idea of the church agape feast is for fellowship. Honestly, many Christians act no different than these Corinthian people. I've seen it in the other church where we used to attend.

However, our congregation is much better. When we have our monthly Agape Feast at the first Thursday evening of the month or the church picnic, our congregation is so generous to bring all the yummy foods and share and eat together. But there is one thing I'd like to point out to y'all. It would be really nice if everyone who participates at the meals helps clean up together at the end. The majority of people take off early and only a handful of people end up cleaning the mess. In my opinion, that shouldn't be, don't you think?

B. HOW TO CONDUCT THE TRUE LORD'S SUPPER

1 Corinthians 11:23-28 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

After the feast, the most symbolic of the meal was the “Eucharist” or “Communion.” It included the breaking of bread to commemorate Jesus’ crucified body and drinking from a cup of wine in remembrance of the blood He shed for our sins. Eucharist means, “thanksgiving,” telling us something of the purpose for partaking of the bread and the cup.

We remember that the Last Supper was actually a Passover meal, when Jesus, together with the disciples, according to Biblical commands and Jewish traditions, celebrated the remembrance of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt to the Promised Land, beginning in the Book of Exodus. The breaking of bread and the drinking of wine were important parts of the Passover celebration. Jesus took these important pictures and reminders of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, and added to them the meanings connected with His own death on the cross for us and deliverance from the eternal damnation.

The unleavened bread used at a Passover meal would have the scorch-mark “stripes” and holes from baking that would look like “pierce” marks. In the same way, the body of Jesus was broken for us. He was without sin – as the bread had no leaven, and His body bore stripes and was pierced – as the bread.

Let me explain to you about the tradition of the Jewish Passover Seder: The Passover meal featured several cups of wine, each with a different title. How the cup became a Passover symbol remains a mystery. We do know that by the time Jesus observed the Passover, drinking a cup during the meal was an official part of the observance. In fact, an ancient rabbinic source, the Mishnah, instructs those celebrating to drink from the cup 3 to 4 times during the Passover Seder. That tradition remains to this day.

Each time the cup is filled, it has a different name. Opinions vary as to what certain cups actually symbolize. Most agree that the first cup is the “Kiddush,” which means sanctification. The second cup is called the cup of “Plagues.” The third cup is referred to as either the cup of “Redemption” or the cup of “Blessing.” The fourth cup is often called “Hallel” which means “Praise.” The newer way combines the second cup, “Plagues” with the fourth cup, “Hallel,” because they praise God for the plagues He used to bring the Israelis out of Egypt.

Jewish tradition says little else about the cups – though we’re told they should be filled with red wine to remind us of the blood of the Passover lamb.

The cup Jesus referred to was known as the “Cup of Redemption”, and Jesus added to the reminder of redemption from slavery in Egypt the idea that His blood would confirm a new covenant which would change our relationship with God.

Covenant means “a promise or pact between two parties in which there is a mutual agreement.” The Old Covenant was based on Moses’ Law. And the New Covenant is based on Jesus’ blood – His sacrifice for us. While those under the Law are condemned, those covered by the blood of the New Covenant are free from all condemnation.

So, what is the New Covenant all about?

1) It is all about an inner transformation, that cleanses us from all sin.

Jeremiah 31:34 For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more

2) It puts God's Word and will in us.

Jeremiah 31:33b I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts

3) It is all about a new and close relationship with God.

Jeremiah 31:33c I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

While the Lord's Supper does look back to what Jesus did on the cross, it also looks forward to the coming of Jesus, and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb:

Revelation 19:9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

The precise nature of the bread and the cup in communion has been the source of great theological controversy. The Roman Catholic Church holds the idea of "Transubstantiation", which teaches that the bread and the wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus. Scripturally, we can understand that the bread and the wine are not mere symbols, but they are powerful pictures to partake of, to enter into, as we see the Lord's table as the new Passover.

I am going to give you 5 reasons why the Roman Catholic Church's Transubstantiation theology is wrong:

- 1) There is no indication that the words were meant to be literal. Jesus' words for bread and wine were symbolic biblical words in context.**
- 2) The elements of the communion supper were still referred to as bread and wine in Matthew 26:26-29.**
- 3) There is no indication the disciples worshipped the elements.**
- 4) The supper was instituted before Jesus' crucifixion, not after.**

Taking communion is supposed to be a reenactment of the sacrifice of Christ.

- 5) The Roman Catholic view is a violation of Levitical law in the OT.**

Eating human flesh and drinking blood amounts to cannibalism which is forbidden according to Leviticus 17:14.

When we take communion, we are preaching a sermon – to God Himself, to the devil and all his demons, and to the world who watches. As you break bread and bow your heart before Him, what sort of sermon are you preaching? Often we have broken bread together at communion, and then we have gone out to do just what those disciples did – we have denied Him with our ungodly thoughts and actions.

Paul is warning the Corinthian Christians to treat the Lord's Supper with reverence, and to practice it in a spirit of self-examination. However, this is not written with the thought of excluding ourselves from the table, but of preparing us to receive with the right heart.

The KJV and NKJV of 1 Corinthians 11:27 has caused some misunderstanding in this regard: "*Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*" The wording of "unworthily" has made some Christians believe that they had to "make themselves worthy" to receive communion, or if they had sinned, they were unworthy to come and take communion.

This is a serious misunderstanding, because if anyone needs to remember the work of Jesus on the cross, it is the one who has sinned. When we are repentant, our sin

should drive us to our Savior, not away from Him. However, if a Christian is in sin, and stubbornly unrepentant, they are causing a mockery of what Jesus did on the cross to cleanse them from their sin.

C. THE CONSEQUENCE OF IRREVERENT CONDUCT AT THE LORD'S TABLE

1 Corinthians 11:29-32 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

Irreverent conduct at the Lord's table invites God's corrective discipline. If we will discipline ourselves, the Lord will not need to do it with His hand of correction.

Evidently, among the Corinthian Christians, some experienced illness, and some had even died, as a result of God's corrective discipline in the Corinthian church. In writing eats and drinks judgment, Paul is not referring to eternal judgment, but to corrective judgement. So this chastening is not a judge condemning a criminal; it is a father dealing with disobedient children.

D. THE RIGHT TABLE MANNERS

1 Corinthians 11:33-34 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34 But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

Before taking communion, we must plead with the Lord as king David did:

Psalms 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; 24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

When celebrating the Lord's Supper, how are your table manners? Do you eat with unwashed hands that come from your sins? Do you share the meal grudgingly? Think about what this supper represents. Enjoy it with wholehearted thanksgiving and reverence. If you are a born-again Christian, remember that you were rescued; you were redeemed; and you are restored into the family of God.

If you are not a born-again Christian, you need to come to Jesus now and receive Him as your Savior and Lord before you take this communion. If you don't want to do that, please do not take it because the communion is for the children of God only.