

Matthew 22-10-30b

We're ready now to resume our study. We're looking at the Lord's table and its significance. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 10.

1 Corinthians chapter 10. We've looked at John chapter six and seen the Lord Jesus make an association that I am sure he made many times and expected his disciples to remember in the upper room, which is that the physical body and blood of the Lord were representative of spiritual truth. The physical sacrifice accomplishes eternal life, eternal salvation, coming to him and believing in him are in view and the bread and the cup represent represent the representative body and blood of the Lord.

In the same way that there is more to our salvation than the crucifixion of the Lord's body or the shedding of his physical blood. It is not the physical sacrifice that accomplishes our salvation that satisfies the justice of the father. Primarily it was a demonstration.

The reason the Lord Jesus' body was lifted up and the reason his blood was publicly shed, if God the father just needed somebody to die and shed their blood, it could have been done in heaven. It could have been done in a corner. It could have been done without public display.

It represents to humanity the need for sin to be dealt with, for reconciliation, for propitiation, for redemption, for sanctification to be accomplished by the power of God to display and demonstrate the heinousness of our sin and our corruption and our fallenness. It had to be put on public display and the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God in public was essential and to be done at the hands of men. Even though Jesus laid down his life, he said, no one takes it from me.

I lay it down of my own free will. Yet he allowed himself to be mishandled, to be abused, to be whipped and scourged and spit on and ultimately crucified because his physical crucifixion, his physical death and the physical shedding of his blood is itself representative and symbolic. It communicates the sinfulness, the depravity, the corruption, the self-centeredness, the arrogance, the blindness of our sinful humanity.

It communicates it, it represents it, it demonstrates it in the physical world, but it is ultimately a spiritual truth. What his death on the cross accomplishes to those who come to him and believe in him, who partake of his flesh, who partake of his blood, who acknowledge that it is representative of me and I need to partake of him as he partook of our flesh and partook of our rightful punishment, we partake of him spiritually to also partake of his life. He partook of our sin and our death so that we can partake of his righteousness and his life.

This is at the heart. That is the central truth. This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

This is my body, which is broken for you on your behalf. The second and sometimes overlooked element in this upper room meal is the communal nature. Jesus could have climbed a mountain.

He could have called each disciple individually. He could have broken a piece of bread with Peter and had him share the cup. He could have broken another piece of bread with James or with John or with James the Less, with the other Simon, with the other Judas, with Philip, with Bartholomew, with Thomas.

He could have done it individually. He specifically chose this meal in the upper room with his assembled disciples and had them partake of bread together that he broke and to drink the cup that he gave them together. It is communal.

And this truth is very important. When you go to Ephesians chapter four and Paul is talking about the body and the members thereof, he talks about this over and over again, that we are members of the body of Christ. Different members have different functions, but they are part of one body and the body has one head, which is Christ.

Paul revisits this concept over and over again. Jesus pictures it over and over again in the upper room in John 15, I am the vine, you are the branches. All of the branches partake of and abide in the same vine.

These branches rub against each other. They are similar. They are united in the vine.

The olive tree metaphor that Paul uses in Romans 9, 10, and 11, talking about the olive tree where branches are broken out because of faithlessness and wild olive branches are grafted in. This is not grafted into salvation. It is grafted into community in salvation, community in Christ, community in relationship to the father.

One tree, many branches, some of them native, some of them wild, united in the tree of God's plan and purpose. Unity versus division is central, as central as the symbolism of the bread and the cup themselves. So when you come to chapter 10, verse 14 of 1 Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 10, 14 and following, Paul says to the Corinthians, after talking about no temptation has overtaken you, but such as is common to man, don't follow the example of the unfaithful Israelites who became idolaters in verse seven, who committed sexual immorality in verse eight, who tempted Christ in verse nine to be slain by serpents.

Do not complain, verse 10, as they complained. Look at your Old Testament example and do not repeat their errors. With most of them, verse five, God was not well-pleased.

They were a community of God's people. They came out together under the blood of the Passover lamb. They were a congregation of thousands of individuals led by Moses, led out of Egypt under the blood, led across the sea to be baptized with Moses on their way to the promised land together.

But with most of them, you remember that there are six, there are five alls in the, let me just give you a quick review of 1 Corinthians 9. We did it a few years ago. In the first three verses, there are four alls. I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud.

All passed through the sea. All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. All ate the spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink.

You've got five alls in the first four verses there. They all, they all, they all. Indicating they all partake of the deliverance and the salvation represented and symbolized by the Passover lamb, the passing through of the destroying angel in Egypt, delivered out of Egypt, all of them.

Then you get to verse five, but with most of them, God was not well-pleased. All under the cloud, all through the sea, all baptized, all ate this food, all drank the same spiritual drink. Notice verse three and four, they ate the same spiritual food.

And yet we think of the manna that physically fell from heaven, was physically on the ground, physically collected, physically eaten, right? But Paul calls it spiritual food. And in verse four, they drank the same spiritual drink. They drank of that spiritual rock that followed them.

And that rock was Christ. Spiritual drink. By the way, what is the rock from which all Israel drank? Twice.

One time it is struck, one time it should have been spoken to, but Moses strikes it again, crucifying the son of God afresh, putting him to an open shame. The rock is only struck once. Speak to the rock in faith.

Don't need anything physical. The first time you physically strike it. The second time you spiritually speak.

No physical touch required. They drank and that rock was Christ. What did they drink? What came out of the rock? It's pop quiz time.

When Moses struck the rock the first time, when he struck it the second time, making an issue out of the fact that it should have been spoken to, what came out? Water. What is the first sign miracle in the gospel of John? In Cana, water turns to wine. Water turns to wine.

There's a lot of water associated with ritual in Old Testament Israel, and a lot of animal blood is sprinkled, but the water becomes wine in the New Testament age. Water to wine. That which is just essential basic life sustenance.

You can live many, many days. You can live several weeks on water alone, if you're

careful. But the wine has power.

The wine has influence. This is why we are enjoined to be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but to be filled with the spirit. Take a little wine for your stomach's sake.

It doesn't say drink some extra water. Drink eight glasses of water, Timothy, for your stomach's sake. Take a little wine.

It's got healing power. It has influential power. And in the metaphorical use by the Lord Jesus, it has unifying power, unifying power.

They all ate the same spiritual food. They all drank the same spiritual drink, which was manna and water. In our age, it is the body and blood of Christ that unites us, that empowers us.

No small thing. This is really important. What inhibited the outcome and the goal of that deliverance and that unification that God accomplished in these first four verses? Paul reviews here in 1 Corinthians 10.

It had a goal. It had a purpose. There was to be a united, spiritually healthy people that would enter in and take the land of promise.

God gave it to them, but they would go in and take it. What inhibited that? Verse five, with most of them, God was not well-pleased and their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Why? These things became our examples to the intent that we should not desire, we should not crave and lust after evil things that they desired, that they craved, that they substituted for that goal and mission, objective and purpose for which God had delivered them.

What were the problems? Number one in verse seven, idolatry. They notice as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, but they rose up to play. They didn't sit down to eat and drink in memory of the God of their deliverance, recognizing what the manna meant, recognizing what water supernaturally provided by God meant.

They sat down to eat and drink, but that communal meal did not draw them together under God in appreciation for God and in love for one another. What did it do? They sat down to eat and drink, but they rose up to play, to fornicate, to commit adultery. And they did this eating and drinking and playing in the shadow of the golden calf.

A God of their own imagination, a God of their own creation, they eat and drink in its presence and then they rise up to play in an abhorrent way. Idolatry. Verse eight, sexual immorality, which cost them 23,000 lives.

Personal gratification, self-gratification, gratifying the lust of the flesh of those that dropped in the wilderness, 23,000 fell all at once because of this. Grotesque, forward, sin

of the high hand, sexual immorality, tempting Christ. Remember when the serpents start biting them because they are unappreciative? Disobedient and complaining as some of them did and were destroyed by the destroyer.

Complaining, I am dissatisfied. I don't like the way things are going. I don't like the leadership.

I don't like the policy. I don't like this path and journey that God has mapped out for me. Complaint, bitterness, verse 11.

These things happened to them as examples and were written for our admonition, our warning. Don't make these mistakes. Oh, saved and baptized in the spirit and provided for with spiritual manna and spiritual washing of water by the word.

The spiritual bread body of Christ, the spiritual blood of the new covenant. Written for our admonition upon whom the ends, the purpose of the ages have come. God's purpose is to be fulfilled in us.

It has come upon us. This is our assignment. We're not called upon to trek across the wilderness to the land of promise, to cross the Jordan and conquer the ites of the land, the Amorites.

We are called upon to fulfill God's purpose across the ages, to bring together in Christ the fullness of God's plan and purpose. Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall. Thinking you're good to go by your own standards and according to your own measure is a recipe for falling.

What goes before a fall? What's our memory verse? Pride goeth before a fall and a self-satisfied haughty spirit before destruction. You fall and you're destroyed. If you think you stand, take heed, have some humility, do a gut check.

No temptation has overtaken you such as is common to man, but God is faithful who will not allow you to be tested beyond what you are able, but will with the test, make the way of escape that you may be able to bear it. Very interesting combination of terms here. There is a way of escape so that you may be able to avoid it, so that you may be able to exit it, so that you may be able to get out from under it.

What does the way of escape do? Enable us to endure it. The escape doesn't get us out of the test, it gets us through the test. We bear up under it.

We demonstrate the quality of our faith. We become Hebrews 11 type people who under duress, the testing of your faith, being much more precious than gold, redounds to the glory of God. Therefore, verse 14, now we're to our passage.

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. Flee idolatry. We've seen in other contexts

how referencing the first thing in a list recalls to mind the entire list.

Remember in Hebrews chapter six, let us go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance, change of mind, away from dead works, and faith toward God, baptisms, the laying on of hands, all the other things that are in the list, right? And then further down, he says, these who are like the field that bears only thorns after the rain falls many times upon it, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. He's talking about everything in the list, but he just references the title page. He's talking about the whole book, but he just gives you the blurb on the cover, repentance and faith toward God, and all of the other things in the list.

Same thing here. Therefore, my brethren, flee idolatry. That means flee idolatry, flee sexual immorality, flee putting Christ to the test, flee complaining.

Their failures and the consequences to them are examples for us. Therefore, flee idolatry. Verse 14, I speak as to wise men.

If you're wise, you'll recognize that the entire example I just gave you is in view when I say flee idolatry. We see flee idolatry and we think, well, gosh, idolatry, that's centuries ago. Nobody worships an idol anymore.

Are we casual and flippant about God's moral requirements? Are we casual and flippant about complaining, about self-gratification at the expense of others? Disregarding the word of the Lord and the example of the Lord Jesus? Are we casual about coming to the Lord Jesus and believing in Him as daily practice for life? Flee idolatry. Idolatry is putting something else in God's place. Does God have a claim on a portion of my time? Does God have a claim on a portion of my attention? On a portion of my thoughts? This is the tithing and Sabbath concepts.

I don't have to exclusively think about God. I don't have to exclusively devote all of my waking hours to God, but God has a claim on the tithe. God has a claim on the Sabbath.

There is a portion that belongs to God. And if when I come to that portion, I put something else in its place, I am not reflecting on the truth of Scripture. I am not engaging in prayer and intercession and thoughtfulness regarding the other members of the body.

I am not metabolizing. I am not digesting. I am not getting the nutritional benefit of the bread from heaven because I'm not giving it time.

I'm not giving it attention. I'm not hearing it. I'm giving it short shrift.

I'm using that time and that attention for other things. I'm thumbing through pages on my phone. I'm watching the news and getting irritated about the course of events.

That's idolatry. You have put something in God's place, that which belongs to him, you have given to something or someone else. There are people who get so consumed with another person and a horizontal relationship with one or more people, that God gets short shrift.

Jesus said, anyone who loves family members more than me is not worthy to be my disciple. It doesn't mean that you can't pay any attention to your family or your loved ones, but the Lord Jesus has a claim on a portion. Do you notice that the bread and the cup are not a complete meal? This is not everything that was on the table.

We know there was a bowl with sop. We know that there were other types of food in evidence. The Passover lamb is not there yet, but there's other food.

There is something from which the gravy, the sop was made. There are other pieces of bread that are not the one that Jesus broke and shared with his disciples. There are other cups that are not the one that he gave them.

It wasn't commonplace for there to be only one cup that everybody drank out of. Jesus took one cup and invested it with significance. He took one piece of bread and invested it with significance.

Plenty of other bread and drink and food on the table. There is a portion that is dedicated to the Lord Jesus. Don't misuse that portion.

That's idolatry to give something or someone else what belongs to God, whether it is worship, whether it is trust, whether it is time, whether it is attention, that's idolatry. Flee idolatry, run away from it. If you see it, if you detect it, if you sense it, if you realize it, run away, flee from idolatry.

He doesn't say cease idolatry, he says run and run fast. Flee the way you would flee from a mountain lion on the bicycle path. You see it, you should be in mortal abject fear of it and get away, separate from it for your own safety, flee.

I speak as to wise men, judge for yourselves what I say, make your own application. You're wise, we like to believe that we've engaged in Bible study and fellowship and discussion of the truth long enough that we've got some wisdom. We're talking about wisdom out of the Proverbs, the fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom.

We like to think we fear the Lord. If we are wise, then we're gonna heed this and judge it. Judge for yourselves, for yourselves, take what I'm saying and judge yourself with it.

Now, look at what he goes to very next verse, verse 16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? See how he has moved from the same spiritual drink of the Israelites in the wilderness to the cup that we as New Testament believers share. Now, is he back to talking about, let's have a communion

service? Really, are you gonna make that mistake again after everything Jesus said? The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The blood of Christ is not in any cup that we're blessing, in any ritual or any meal that we share.

The blood of Christ, this communion cup is representative of spiritual truth. What is Paul talking about here when he says, the cup of blessing which we bless? Notice he does not say the cup of wine which we bless or the cup of blood which we bless. What's in the cup? What cup is it? I'd like a cup of tea, I'd like a cup of coffee.

How would you like a cup of blessing? Material or immaterial? Immaterial. The cup of blessing. What did Jesus say is in the cup that he gave his disciples in the upper room? This is the new covenant.

This is the new promise, the new future, the new opportunity, the new potential in my blood. It is immaterial. Blessing.

This is a cup of blessing that is shared between believers. It is the communion of the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ is not only individual salvation for you and me, it is community.

We share it together. We are united by it. It's the communion and the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? The bread which we break, the fellowship, the table stands for fellowship.

Think of Revelation 3.20. I stand at the door and knock. Is Jesus knocking at a physical door? Do we need to have a little mock-up of a door in our church and wait for Jesus to knock on it? If any man hears the sound, hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and do what? Sup with him and he with me. He will eat with me and I will eat with him.

Is this a physical meal? There is a cup of blessing. The communion of the blood of Christ and the communion of the body of Christ is spiritual. We can be reminded of it.

Anytime we break bread together, we use that symbolically for having hot dogs or having a chili or spaghetti or any meal. We say, well, I'm gonna be breaking bread with so-and-so on Saturday or on Sunday afternoon. It is referring to the fellowship and the conversation that is facilitated by sharing a meal.

This spiritual meal that we share facilitates our fellowship. It is communal, commune, community. It binds us together and reminds us that we are one body and we have one head.

We are redeemed and forgiven and cleansed through the shedding of one individual's blood, the Lord Jesus, our Savior. And we are united by that. We are together in that.

We are accepting of one another. Our one another promise blessings are fulfilled as we love one another, as we fulfill the other 50 odd one another commands. Our salvation and our life in Christ is not just individual, it is equally and emphasized as being together, communal.

This is why we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the habit of some is. And by assembling, this just means finding a way to spend some time with fellow believers so that routine conversation, routine time spent, routine meals eaten have spiritual value and spiritual significance. And we can do them heartily as under the Lord, knowing that where two or three are gathered, as we just saw in Matthew 18, there am I in the midst.

Where two or three are gathered, anytime two or three of us are together, we are reminded and can be sensitive to the fact that this is not just a conversation we're having because we're related or because we're friends or because we happen to be in the same room. We are united by the body and the blood of the Lord. The cup of blessing, which we bless, we give thanks and we're grateful.

This is the blood of Christ. It's the fellowship of the blood of Christ. We're united by our shared salvation, our shared priorities, our shared goals and values, our shared understanding of who we are and what we are in Christ, in the present and for the future.

The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Forget the cracker, forget the plastic cup. Communion is our shared experience, our fellowship, our encouragement of one another. Look at what it says in verse 17.

We though many are one bread and one body. You're the bread, I'm the bread. We are doing the Lord's table as I speak.

You and I, we together, sharing this time, partaking of the spiritual manna, looking at the bread that came down from heaven. We are doing the Lord's table and we do it every time we gather for this purpose. Look at verse 17, same thing the Lord Jesus was emphasizing in John chapter six.

It is coming to the Lord and believing in the Lord together that creates this communion. We though many are bread and one body. We're the bread.

We fellowship and partake of each other's lives, each other's thoughts, each other's prayers, each other's expectations and understandings and appreciations and observations in the word. I love to hear what you all think about anything in scripture, something we've covered in class, something that came to your mind that didn't get covered as we spend this time together in the word. Everybody benefits.

Everybody loves to hear those perspectives. It's communion. We are the bread, our

thoughts and our fellowship.

That is the bread, that is the body. We all partake of that one bread and we become that bread. Observe Israel after the flesh are not those who eat the sacrifices, partakers of the altar.

Most of the sacrifices in Israel, the animal was brought, a portion was sacrificed and the rest was eaten in God's presence. It was a fellowship meal. It is as though God partook of some of that animal from the altar and the Israelite who brought the sacrifice and his family partook of the rest of it.

It is a meal shared with God and shared with each other. A communal meal in the sacrifices partakes of the altar, partakes of the presence of God himself. What am I saying then in verse 19? Is an idol actually something substantial? Is something offered to an idol anything? Rather these things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

It's not about the altar or the image of an idol, it's about the fellowship. And you're fellowshiping with those who are susceptible to doctrine of demons, fallen thinking, godless thinking, anti-God, anti-Christ thinking when you fellowship. To practice idolatry, to fellowship with those who are idolaters was to be partakers with them.

It's all about the fellowship here. Look at verse 21, you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. Seriously, I can pick up any cup and drink from it.

I can pick up any other cup and drink from it. What is he talking about here? It's not the physical cup. You cannot partake of fellowship in the blood of Christ and at the same time partake of fellowship from demons, from fallenness, from godlessness and anti-godness, anti-Christness.

You cannot partake of the Lord's table and the table of demons. What they have to offer in terms of food for your soul and food for your spirit is poison. You cannot do both.

You either focus on fellowship with God through Christ and through his body, which is fellow believers who are coming to Christ and partaking of that heavenly bread. But if you substitute, if you change that out and your fellowship is over politics, your fellowship is over work, your fellowship is over shared pursuits that are gratifying to the flesh in some way, my drinking buddies, my fill in your hobby here buddies and I take that which is supposed to be of the Lord, from the Lord, dedicated to the Lord, the tithe, the Sabbath, the bread, the cup and I swap it out for a false cup, a false meal, a false fellowship and it is replacing what belongs to God and what belongs to those who are of God. Do you really, verse 22, wanna provoke the Lord to jealousy? You really think you're gonna win? Then he goes on to that very famous section of chapter 10, all things are lawful, but not all things are edifying.

What you do has significance beyond the moment and beyond the action itself. What is its effect on your fellowship? Are you going to say or do things that cause other believers to stumble? You are disrupting fellowship, you're injuring the body. It's not the thing itself, it's not whether the food laid before an idol or not on a pagan altar.

What's the effect on your brother? This is the communion, this is the bread, this is the cup. So the shared element is all important. So as we think about this in terms of application, rather than worrying about somebody handing me a cracker and a small cup of liquid and whether I am eating or drinking that in an unworthy manner, it is much more productive, much more fruitful and much more central to the meaning that Jesus Christ himself invested in these elements, that the apostle Paul describes in detail related to these elements of the Lord's table, the bread and the cup, that we think in terms of the one and others.

You know, when we get to chapter 11 in 1 Corinthians, which is where we will be next Sunday, he is gonna make a very pointed remark and observation related to what goes on at their communal meals, where some are drunk and gluttonous and others are shamed and go hungry. The body, this is my body, respect the body. This is the blood of the covenant that unites you.

Are you trampling underfoot the son of God and putting him to an open shame? Are you doing despot to the spirit of grace? Are you disrespecting the blood of the covenant wherewith you were sanctified? We'll be seeing those passages before we're done, but we can get a jump start on it now by remembering these symbols, these elements are designed to focus our attention on coming to the Lord Jesus and partaking of him and recognizing that everyone who comes to him and partakes of him, that's our communion. That's our Lord's table. And to treat people in an unworthy manner is to treat the Lord that way because they are his body.

And you disrespect the Lord Jesus, his blood shed that purchased them, his body broken that cleansed them just as it did us. To be unforgiving, to be petty, to backbite, to gossip, to malign, to judge, to mistreat, to be insensitive, to be deaf and blind to their needs and their struggles and opportunities that we have to bear one another's burdens that is disrespecting the body and blood of the Lord. That is eating and drinking in an unworthy manner.

That's what it's all about. Something to think about, it's a sober subject, but there's a lot on the line. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the clarity with which your word speaks to us, the illumination that your Holy Spirit provides for us, the wonderful words and works that the Lord Jesus has put before us to give us an understanding and give us the opportunity to avail ourselves of your grace and your provision, to be rescued from ourselves, to be cleansed, to be sanctified, to have our minds transformed and renewed so that we can present ourselves

as living sacrifices just as the Lord Jesus presented himself on our behalf. We pray that as we reflect on these things, we will gain insight not only into the concept, but into the application and the practice in our own individual lives and collectively as we commune and as we fellowship in the Lord Jesus before you. We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.