

Basic Truths for Young Believers

Stark Road Gospel Hall

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Topic 6. The Lord's Supper

Readings: Matthew 26:26-9; Mark 14:22-5; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 20:6-7; 1 Cor 10:16-21; 11:10-34.

I. The Priority of the Lord's Supper: God is First.

A. God is first. God has absolute priority in the universe (Isa 44:6), and we are called to ascribe to Him “the glory due unto His name” (Psa 29:1-2). The intent of eternal life, our supreme blessing, is to know God (John 17:3), not to achieve “self-actualization.” In a day when Christian teaching centers on man, and therapy is replacing worship, we must stress that *we were made solely for God's pleasure* (Rev 4:11). We seek the psalmist's attitude: “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory...” (115:1).

B. Worship is the main priority of the people of God. Worship is simply giving God His rightful due. It is our highest calling, greatest privilege, and most pressing duty. Indeed, it is the very purpose for which God made us (Phil 3:3). Worship springs from loving the Lord “with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mat 12:29-30). This inward devotion causes the heart to overflow with words that ascribe glory to God (Psa 45:1; 29:1-2; Heb 13:15-16), and leads the worshiper to give His life in service to God (Rom 12:1-2). The following examples underscore the utmost priority God places on worship:

1. The LORD released Israel from Egyptian bondage for the express purpose of worshiping Him (Ex 3:18; 5:1-3). In addition to all of the other sacrifices, the sweet smell of the perpetual burnt offering was to ascend from the bronze altar both day and night (Ex 29:38-42).
2. When Ezra led the Jewish remnant back from their captivity in Babylon, He put the worship of God first. Thus the rebuilding of the altar was Ezra's first priority (Ezra 3:3). After finishing the altar, Ezra's next step of obedience was to construct a new temple (Ezra 5:16). Only later did Nehemiah oversee the rebuilding of the city walls. This historical order illustrates God's spiritual priorities: God is first, the house of God second, and the world third. In order to honor this pattern today, we must place the worship of God first, service to the assembly second, and the needs of the world last.
3. 1 Peter 2 identifies believers as a priesthood, a people set apart for God's service. The apostle shows that we are first a “holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable by Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:5). Later, Peter adds that we are also “a royal priesthood...that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9). Again, our priority is first to minister to the *heart* of God, and only then to minister to the *house* of God and to the world.

C. God desires collective worship. God saved us as individuals, and He delights in our private worship and service. He makes every believer a priest, and grants each of us unlimited access to His presence--a private audience whenever we choose. Yet God never intends any believer to be isolated, and thus He gathers us together in local assemblies (Mat 18:20). As members of an assembly, God blesses us with certain privileges that are *collective*. The Lord's Supper is chief among these collective privileges. We should notice that whenever the NT discusses the worship of believers, it always views them as a group--not as individuals. The descriptions of our priesthood, e.g., are all collective or plural (1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6), and the passages that describe the Lord's Supper clearly imply collective praise (e.g. 1 Cor 11:23-26). Similarly, Hebrews 13:15 says, “By Him [the Lord Jesus] let *us* offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks unto His name.” This passage again portrays worship as a singular sacrifice offered by a united group of priests.

God is seeking the worship of *assemblies* as much as the worship of individual Christians. This concept explains the centrality of the Lord's Supper. God is calling His people to gather together as a *company* to offer Him praise collectively. When a brother leads the congregation in praise to God, he is therefore speaking on behalf of the entire group of priests, and His worship is accepted from every priest. The congregation affirms their participation in the prayer of the leading brother by saying, "Amen" (note: "...how shall he...say 'Amen' at thy [singular] giving of thanks...?" 1 Cor 14:16-17). Just as "we [plural] break" the loaf, so "we [plural] bless" the cup (1 Cor 10:16)--even though only one brother speaks, all are worshiping. The sisters do not lead publicly, but they nonetheless are offering praise through the brother who leads. Ultimately, it is the Lord Jesus Himself who leads the praise which we direct to the Father (Heb 2:11-12).

D. Satan hates the worship of God. The devil wants to thwart worship above everything else. He seized the chance to attack Job, because in Job he saw an opportunity to change a worshiper (Job 1:5) into a blasphemer (1:11). Satan's attack on worship failed in Job's case (1:20-22), but his later attacks on the Lord's Supper have often succeeded. Sadly, this chief meeting of the church has lost its prominence and focus in many places throughout the last two thousand years. On the other hand, it is not surprising that times of revival have been marked by a rediscovery of the importance of worship in general, and of the centrality of the Lord's Supper in particular. In the spiritual awakening of the past century, for instance, the brethren first learned to restore the priority of the Lord's Supper in their gatherings. Following this, they were led to restore the "house of God" by returning to pure NT doctrines, especially church truth and dispensational truth (including the doctrine of the rapture). Following this, they turned their attention to the world, and launched a remarkably productive era of evangelistic and missionary enterprise.

The Lord's Supper remains under siege today, e.g. in places where the Renewal movement is creeping in. The proponents of Renewal have presumed to reinvent the Lord's Supper. They seek a new format that will please modern people and draw larger crowds. They want to eliminate politically incorrect doctrines, like the silence and head coverings of women. But in all of this, they have forgotten what worship *is*. Worship is not meant to entertain us. In fact, it isn't for *us* at all. Worship is for *God*, and the Breaking of Bread is *His* meeting. So the question is not whether instrumental bands and drama will make the Lord's Supper more appealing to people; the question is whether these additions will make the Lord's Supper more appealing to *God*. What pleases God is simple obedience to the plain words of Scripture (1 Sam 15:22-23). If we drift away from giving the Lord's Supper its central place, or if we tamper with its biblical pattern, we are guilty of departing from God's chief priority and prerogative. To pervert God-centered worship into man-centered entertainment is Satan's work.

II. The Establishment of the Lord's Supper.

A. The purpose of its institution. On the night of His betrayal, after sharing the Passover meal with His disciples, the Lord Jesus originated the Lord's Supper. He told His disciples to eat and drink it in remembrance of Him. He set up the Supper so that we might dwell on Him during the time He would be absent from us bodily (though He is present spiritually to lead our praise, Mt 18:20; Hb 2:12). Eating and drinking are strong symbols of fellowship in the Bible, so Christ chose a meal as the most suitable way of expressing our fellowship and union and intimacy with Him. Beyond that, the bread and the cup specifically remind us of His body and blood--of His sacrificial death at Calvary. Just as Passover was a continual reminder and proclamation of God's redemption of Israel from bondage in Egypt, so the keeping of Christ's command is a remembering and proclaiming of our deliverance from bondage to sin.

1. Remembering what is past. "This do in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor 11:24) is the first reason we come to the Supper. The NT pattern suggests a time devoted to giving thanks (1 Cor 14:16-17), singing "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Eph 5:19), and reading Scripture (1 Cor 14:26). By choosing bread to represent His body and wine to represent His blood, the Lord Jesus obviously wanted us to remember His death especially (1 Cor 11:26). We should, however, interpret "remembrance" as broadly as possible, and bring to mind everything we know about the Son of God. Thus the worship that precedes the Breaking of Bread takes in the glory of Christ's deity, the

wonder of His incarnation, the beauty of His life, the accomplishments of His death, and the victory of His ascension and session at the right hand of God.

2. Showing His death in the present. The partaking of the loaf and cup is a present proclamation of Christ's death in symbol (1 Cor 11:26). We do not proclaim the Lord's death to the world at the Supper, although unlearned believers and interested unbelievers are welcome to look on (1 Cor 14:26-27). At one level, we proclaim it to each other and to the angels (1 Cor 11:10). However, in the deepest sense, we proclaim the death of our Lord to God Himself. This is consistent with the principle that worship is for God. Reflecting on the symbolism of the bread and the cup should elicit worship directed at the Father (John 4:23,35-38) for the love and grace that sponsored our redemption (1 John 4:9-14). The Father did not spare His Son, and thus showed that His love for us is illimitable.

3. Looking to the future. We will only partake of the Lord's Supper "till He come" (1 Cor 11:26). At the first Supper, the Lord Himself looked forward: "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in My Father's kingdom" (Mat 26:29). So the Supper points forward to heaven at the same time it points back to the Cross and provides a present fellowship with the Savior. This orientation to the past, present, and future helps us to see things from God's perspective and to keep in line with His priorities. The Supper reminds us where we came from, where we are now, and where we are going.

B. The Pattern. There are four accounts of the institution of the breaking of bread. Matthew and Mark are very similar, while Luke is closer to Paul's account in 1 Corinthians 11. Comparing the accounts yields this order:

1. Christ took the bread.
2. He gave thanks for the bread and broke it.
3. He said, "This is My body."
4. The disciples partook of the bread (implied).
5. Christ took the cup.
6. He gave thanks for the cup (Matthew and Mark only) and passed it.
7. He related the blood to the new covenant.
8. The disciples drank from the cup (implied).
9. He commanded the disciples to continue to observe the Supper (Luke and 1 Corinthians only).

The Lord did not suggest that the disciples continue to observe the Supper. He *commanded* it (notice the imperative mood of the verbs "take," "eat," and "drink." Paul received the same command directly from the Lord (1 Cor 11:23). From the start, the followers of Christ continued steadfastly to observe the Breaking of Bread (Acts 2:42) on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).

C. The significance of the scriptural titles. The phrase "Breaking of Bread" (e.g. Acts 2:42; 20:7) is the simplest description of the Supper. In NT times, "to break bread" meant simply to partake of a meal. Thus the Breaking of Bread suggests a simple meal that we take together to express our fellowship with each other in Christ and His Word. On the other hand, "the Lord's Supper" (1 Cor 11:20) shows the supremacy of the Lord Jesus, and reminds us of our duty to submit to Him. (Paul probably chose the phrase "Lord's Supper" over "Breaking of Bread" in I Corinthians precisely because the Corinthians were *not* submitting to Christ's lordship.) The term "Lord's" is actually an adjective; the only English equivalent is the abstruse "dominical." This term appears again in the phrase "the Lord's Day" (Rev 1:7). The Lord Jesus is paramount on the Day and at the Supper; the Supper is the great event of the Day.

D. The first day of the week. "Upon the first day of the week...the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7). Here Luke details (1) a specific day, Sunday; (2) a specific place where the church customarily gathered; and (3) a specific purpose, the Breaking of Bread. There is more in this verse than meets the eye, for Paul appears to have arrived at Troas on a Monday, missing the Lord's Day by just a few hours (v 6). Even though Paul was on an

urgent journey (v 16), he waited a full week in order to break bread with the Christians and to minister to them. This church probably only met once a week, and the day of the week was not negotiable. They met Sunday evening (v 7), and gave the Lord's Supper priority. After that, Paul preached for a while (vv 7-10), and then partook of an ordinary meal (v 11). We find the same pattern being followed in Tyre (Acts 21:4) and Puteoli (Acts 28:14). The first day of the

The first day of the week became known to Christians as the Lord's Day (Rev 1:10). After His resurrection, the Lord Himself established the importance of this day and for His followers by appearing twice to them on the first day of the week (John 20:19-29). This was resurrection day, the day symbolizing the new creation, the day of His power, the day that proclaims the triumph of His love. This is thus the appointed day for observing the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cr 11:20; 16:2). Even though the Lord's Supper commemorates His death, the fact that the Lord chose the first day of the week adds the triumph of resurrection to the Supper.

In the early days, it appears that some churches met only once a week, and that meeting began with the Breaking of Bread. Following the worship, which was given priority, the meeting would continue with prayers and teaching and preaching (Acts 20:7-12; 1 Cor 11:17-14:30). The gospel was generally preached in public fora. Clearly we have implicit grounds, at least, for our custom of devoting certain meetings entirely to preaching or teaching, but we dare not allow the Lord's Supper to lose its unique status. It must be at the beginning of the week, on "the first day of the week." And it should be the first meeting of the day.

E. The frequency of observing the Supper. How often should we celebrate the supper? "As often as ye eat" (1 Cor 11:26) implies frequent observance, but is not explicit. "Continuing steadfastly in...the Breaking of Bread" (Acts 2:42) further implies that the Supper was a steady and regular meeting, not an occasional thing. Recognizing the priority of the Lord's Supper, the "first day of the week" pattern clearly mandates weekly observance for us. We may easily infer that the Corinthians *knew* that they were to observe the supper on the first day of every week (1 Cor 11:20; 16:1-2).

III. The Doctrine of the Lord's Supper: The Bread and the Cup.

A. The scriptural significance of sharing a meal. Out of many possible activities, the Lord chose a meal as the means by which we would remember Him. Why a meal? Because a meal expresses fellowship and family. Just as a family shares common food, so Christians have fellowship with each other when they meet to share Christ. Just as a meal meets our bodily needs, so Christ meets our spiritual needs. Our spiritual life depends on feeding on Him in the same way that our physical life depends on eating ordinary food. Bread is the staple of the entire diet, and Christ should be the basis of our lives. Wine is consistently associated with joy in the OT and NT; it tells of the joy that Christ has given to us.

B. The Christological significance of the bread and wine. The bread and wine are symbols of the body and blood of Christ, respectively. In His death, Christ gave His body and shed His blood for us. The bread and wine thus teach us of the substitutionary, propitiating sacrifice of Christ. Precisely, the body speaks of substitution (Col 1:21-22), and the blood of propitiation (Cl 1:20).

Here is a brief meditation which connects the four references to the blood of Christ found in the accounts of the Lord's Supper to the four standard blood sacrifices of the OT (Lev 1-7).

Matthew: "Which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matthew describes the blood of the *trespass offering*. This offering emphasizes individual *acts of sin*, and views them as *debts*. The trespass offering provides restitution and compensation for the damage caused by sinning.

Mark: "Which is shed for many." Mark speaks of the blood of the *sin offering*. The sin offering deals not with individual acts of sin, but with the nature of the *sinners* themselves. Sins are now viewed as *crimes*, the works arising from a corrupted heart. In the symbolism of the sin offering we see God putting our sin natures to death in the death of Christ, our perfect substitute.

Luke: “Which is shed for *you*.” Luke focuses on the blood of the *peace offering*. The peace offering looks as sin as *estrangement* from God, and emphasizes *God’s love* for the sinner. Each act of sin expresses the enmity which the sinner harbors against God, an enmity that makes fellowship with God impossible. But the symbolism of the peace offering teaches us that the blood of Christ has reconciled God and man by removing this enmity (Col 1:21).

Paul: In this earliest account of the Supper, Paul simply records, “*My blood*.” Paul points to the blood of the burnt offering, for he speaks only of Christ Himself. Rather than looking at our sin, he focuses instead on the beauty and devotion of the sacrifice (Psa 40:6-10).

C. The Ecclesiastical significance of the bread and the wine. In 1 Cor 10:16-17, Paul derives further symbolic significance from the bread and the cup. He teaches that the death of Christ is the basis not only of our acceptance with God, but also of our unity with each other. The observance of the Lord’s Supper is an expression of this unity. In fact, it is the principal manifestation of our fellowship, and witnesses to the union in Christ of all who partake (John 20:17-9; Col 2:5; 3:1).

In 1 Cor 10, the cup broadly stands for all of the *blessings* which we share together in Christ, and the bread now speaks of Christ’s *mystical* body, of which He is the head and we are the members. All of our blessings flow from the shedding of the blood of Christ, and our belonging to mystical body results from Christ giving His physical body in death. Since the subject in 1 Cor 10 is fellowship, Paul mentions the cup first. He is following a doctrinal order: The shed blood of Christ is the *basis* of our fellowship, while the one loaf presents the *circle* of fellowship, the Body of Christ into which all Christians have been brought as a result of the Atonement. When we drink from the same cup, we are showing our participation in all the benefits that flow from the blood of Christ, and when we eat of the same bread, we are showing our oneness as members of His body.

This passage explains why “the back seat” only is necessary in the Breaking of Bread meeting. Those not in the fellowship cannot partake, for the one loaf represents not only the physical body of Christ given for us at Calvary, but also the spiritual or mystical Body of Christ, of which every Christian is a part. The loaf represents not only the body of Christ Himself, but of our unity with Him and oneness in Him (1 Cor 1:13; 12:12). The loaf stands for the Body, the Church, for which He died (Eph 5:25). Obviously two or more loaves or wafers utterly destroys this vital imagery. Plural loaves would be inappropriate even to symbolize the one physical body of Christ, but they would be especially destructive to the image of unity. Further, the pattern stated in 11:26 is “this loaf” and “this cup.” Therefore even though the symbolism of the cup (or the fruit of the vine)--the price of our redemption--may seem to allow more latitude than the symbolism of the loaf--unity in Christ--yet the pattern specifies only one cup. And the use of “fellowship” with the cup in 1 Cor 10 argues for a single cup, for people can only “share” from a common vessel.

Although distinct from the Lord’s Supper, the Lord’s Table is closely related to it here. The Lord’s Table (1 Cor 10:21) speaks of fellowship, while the Lord’s Supper (11:20) speaks of remembrance. The Lord’s Table is the fellowship of Christianity, as opposed to the fellowships of Judaism and paganism (10:18-20,32). In the Bible a table is the place where fellowship is enjoyed. We should enjoy fellowship and communion with the Lord at His table every day. The weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper expresses what the Lord’s Table is to a group of local believers in a visible, collective way. Anyone enjoying the Table will come to the Supper; anyone not enjoying the Table cannot enjoy the Supper. Again, in 1 Cor 10 the one loaf speaks not of the physical body of Christ, but of His mystical Body, the Church, of which He is the Head (v 17). Just as those who partook of the Jewish altar were Jews, and those who partook of the pagan altar were pagans, so those who partook of the one loaf were Christians. They were committed to the Lord and to Christian fellowship, and the partaking of the loaf was a visible expression of it.

In Ac 2:41-2, addition/reception precedes the breaking of bread, reminding us that we don’t receive a new believer to the breaking of bread, but rather to the assembly itself. We are also happy to welcome unbelievers and unlearned believers among us, but we do not receive them to the fellowship of the assembly. We cannot, for we do not “share” the gospel with the unbeliever, and we do not “share” the full Word of God with the unbaptized or unlearned believer. At the Lord’s Supper, however, the issue of reception becomes critical, for this is the only meeting where *all* must participate by breaking from the bread and drinking from the cup. When we break the bread and drink the cup, we show that we are in fellowship with each other. The cup speaks of the blood, the basis of all

our blessings, and the bread expresses our oneness as common members of Christ's body. Thus there must be a clear demarcation between those adults who are *in* and those who are *outside* the assembly only at this meeting.

D. A summary of the symbolism of the bread and the cup:

General Symbolism: The partaking of bread and wine impart strength and joy.

Christological Symbolism: The body (substitution) and blood (propitiation) of Christ

Ecclesiastical Symbolism: Our blessings in Christ (the cup) and our union with Christ (the bread).

E. Misconception #1: The bread and the cup are not "types." The bread and the cup are *emblems*, *symbols*, or *figures* of Christ's body and blood. These symbols belong only to the churches of this dispensation (age), and the churches will only partake of them "till He come" (1 Cor 11:26). Thus the bread and the cup are not *types* (i.e. OT people, objects, and events that prefigured greater NT realities, as Adam, e.g., prefigured Christ, Rom 5:14). The loaf is not a meal offering nor is the cup a drink offering. We are not told to draw any analogy between the substances that comprise the bread and wine, and the body and blood of Christ. Thus the presence of leaven is permissible, and the shape, color, and consistency of the loaf do not matter. The baking of the bread and the crushing of the grapes do not illustrate the sufferings of Christ. Such teaching imparts allegorical meaning which is not hinted at in the NT. Thus the leaven in the bread has absolutely no significance (if you try to make the bread a type, then the presence of leaven is inexplicable. There is no merit in the whiteness of modern processed flour. The color and shape of the loaf do not matter. Once the bread has been partaken of, it retains no significance whatsoever.

The OT types are intended to teach us *spiritual* lessons in this age, as Paul does with leaven in 1 Cor 5. He is not speaking of the bread of the Lord's Supper, but metaphorically of sincerity and truth in our lives which we obtain by figuratively feeding on Christ. Col 2:16-7 reminds us that the shadows withdrew when Christ came, and we must not supplant the new life in Christ with the literal strictures of the defunct system of shadows.

F. Misconception #2: Transubstantiation. The phrases "this is My body" and "this is my blood" have engendered great debate through the ages. Roman Catholicism interprets these phrases concretely in its doctrine of *transubstantiation*: The "substances" of the bread and wine are "transformed" into the real flesh and blood of Christ, although the outward appearances remain that of bread and wine. Certain Protestant denominations have adopted a doctrine of compromise called *consubstantiation*: The real flesh and blood of Christ are miraculously *added* to the bread and wine. These unscriptural views have led to a common doctrine of "real presence"--that Christ actually becomes present at the supper through the bread and wine.

In fact, *nothing* happens to the physical nature of the bread and wine at the Supper. These emblems merely *symbolize* the body and blood of Christ, which are not actually present at the Supper (instead, He is present in Spirit). The argument lies with the simple verb *is*. The Catholic and Lutheran teaching interpret *is* ontologically, despite the fact that the Lord always used *is* figuratively in His teaching. He said, "I am the door," and "I am the true vine." *Is* means *represents*. He was not literally a door or a vine, and the bread and wine are not literally His flesh and blood. Further, the biblical prohibition against drinking blood survived in apostolic times (Acts 15), so either trans- or consubstantiation would have violated this law of God. If the apostles had understood the Lord to mean that His blood was really present in the wine, they would have been at pains to distinguish drinking Christ's blood from drinking animal blood in Acts 15.

The real objection, however, is theological. If Christ's humanity is equally present all over the whole world at the same time, then His humanity has merged with His deity. But the Bible clearly teaches that each of the two natures of Christ retains its own attributes. The human body of Christ cannot be omnipresent, but resides in heaven. It is not on earth in any concrete sense. Thus the concrete interpretation ends up denying Christ's true humanity.

We believe, of course, in *real presence*--the presence of the Lord Himself "in the midst" (Mat 18:20). He promised to be with those who were gathered in His name, and this is certainly true of the Supper. Yet He is not present at the Supper in a way that differs from the way He is present at any other assembly meeting. His real presence at all such gatherings goes beyond His general omnipresence (which is always true) and His presence in us through the Spirit (which again is always true). There is a special sense in which the Lord Jesus is spiritually present with us in our gatherings.

IV. Preparation for the Lord's Supper.

1. First requirement: A local assembly. The breaking of bread stands connected with a resident assembly in every case: with the assembly at Jerusalem (Acts 2:42); with the assembly at Troas (Acts 20:7); and with the assembly at Corinth (1 Cor 11:26). There is no record of its observance apart from a local assembly. Paul teaches that the whole assembly must “come together” in order to observe the Supper (1 Cor 11:17,18,20,33,34; 14:23,26).

Acts 2:41-42 records the formation of the first NT assembly. In a pair of summary verses (Acts 2:41-42), Luke lays down the pattern for all subsequent churches to follow. The pattern consists of seven elements that will pertain to every biblical assembly. There are three *one-time* events that happen to *individuals*, and then four *ongoing* commitments that apply to a *company* of people:

- a) **Glad reception of the Word.** This is salvation (vv 38,44).
- b) **Baptism.**
- c) **Addition to the assembly.** The existing company of 120 received 3,000 new converts.
- d) **Steadfast Continuation in the Apostles' Doctrine.** The Apostles' doctrine is the teaching of the Apostles which they received from the Lord Jesus directly, or through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (John 16:12-4; 2 Tim 3:10). For us, it is the New Testament.
- e) **Steadfast Continuation in the Fellowship.** Fellowship means sharing. The Christians were bound together by what they shared in common: Christ, and the truth of Scripture. Fellowship follows doctrine because it is based on doctrine. The members shared in all of the privileges and responsibilities of the local company, as spelled out in the Word of God (1 Cor 1:9; 10:14-22). Although a spiritual unity based on the blood of Christ (1 Cor 10:17), fellowship extended to sharing even material things (Acts 2:44-45).
- f) **Steadfast Continuation in the Breaking of Bread.** Luke now mentions the *first function* of the assembly, the Breaking of Bread. But note that God has stipulated five prior conditions for observing it: Those who participate must be (1) believers in the Lord Jesus who have also been (2) baptized. They further must have been (3) added to the local assembly of Christians gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus (Mat 18:20; 1 Cor 1:1-9; 5:4). Further, this company must be affirming (4) the Word of God and (5) sharing in all of the privileges and responsibilities that flow from that doctrine. Then and only then can the assembly convene the Breaking of Bread.
- g) **Steadfast continuation in the Public Prayers.** The church started as a prayer meeting (Acts 2:1), and the prayer meeting became a steadfast practice. But in the pattern here, the prayer meeting yields priority to the Breaking of Bread.

2. Second requirement: Self-examination. Paul is absolutely clear about the need for self-examination prior to partaking of the Supper (1 Cor 11:28). It's not just a Saturday night affair, but the result of ongoing surrender during the entire week. We must learn to bring every relationship of our lives out of the shadows and into the blazing light of God's Word. 1 Cor 10:16-22 warns us to separate from the evil of false religion, while 1 Cor 11:17-20 emphasizes separating from secret sin, defilement, bitterness, and carelessness. The case of Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10) graphically displays God's view of presumptuous, carnal worshipers. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to convict us of our pride, and of all the ways we fall short of God's expectations. We must ask for and accept God's abundant forgiveness, submit ourselves once again to Christ's lordship, and allow His grace and power to flow through us again. God knows our frailty; He simply seeks openness, honesty, and the desire to change.

Those who are careless about self-examination are in dangers of being “guilty [liable for legal action] of the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Cor 11:27). In Corinth, this resulted in real punishment: many were weak and sickly among them and many slept (died).

3. Third Requirement: The Leading of the Spirit. We worship God “by the Spirit” (Phil 3:3). The Spirit indwells the believer and the church (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19). He forms and guides our prayers and praises (1 Cor 12:3; Jude 20). As the Son pointed us to the Father, so the Spirit, like the unnamed servant of Gen 24:34-6, points us to the Father and the Son. He shows us the riches of the Father, teaches us that the Son is the Heir, and tells us that the eternal purposes of the Father center in the Son. As the Lord Jesus promised, “He will guide you...He will show you...He shall glorify Me” (John 16:13-5).

In addition to being victorious over sin, a believer in the habit of self-judgment will be more sensitive to the direction of the Holy Spirit in worship. The leading of the Spirit is not a jolt that hits a brother on Sunday morning when it is His turn to lead in worship. The Spirit rather leads during the week, showing the things of Christ to us as we read and meditate. Worship is a serious matter, and demands preparation. The psalmist, e.g., presented what he had *composed* about the King (Psa 45:1). If you have not allowed the Spirit of God to lead you through the week, it is rather presumptuous to think that He will guide you during corporate worship. We are to come to the Lord with our baskets already full (sisters too), and never to appear before the Lord empty.

“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor 3:17). This is not the liberty of each brother to do his own thing in his own way, but rather the liberty of the Spirit to use whom He will to orchestrate the worship of the Father and the Son. Thus the Spirit will bring thoughts into our minds that suit His purposes, and He will burden brothers to offer their thoughts publicly for the congregation.