



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Lord's Supper; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Paul and the Lord's Supper, part I

TRANSCRIPT

The Scripture reading for this morning is from 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verse 17 through verse 34, in which is contained Paul's most significant words concerning the Lord's Supper. 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verse 17 through verse 34. We are looking at the subject of the Lord's Supper and we have discussed the First Passover, the Last Passover, the First Lord's Supper, and now we are looking at Paul and the Lord's Supper, and we will be on this for this Sunday and next Sunday as well, the Lord-willing. We're reading for our Scripture however, the entire section, beginning with verse 17 through verse 34, which is the paragraph in which the apostle discusses the Lord's Supper:

“Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunk. (This incidentally is one of those minor reasons why it is likely that the early church in the celebration of the Lord's Supper used bread and wine and not grape juice; it is clear that

the reference here, “and other is drunk” must have been a reference to an alcoholic beverage. The apostles, however, speak very strongly against getting drunk, and the fact that they used wine for the Lord’s Supper was a reflection of their own practice. They usually drank wine with their meals. Verse 22) What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? what shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread (the word betrayed is a rendering of a Greek word that means simply “handed over”; in this case, since Judas is likely in view here, betrayed is a good rendering of it. At other times it means simply to hand over): And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. (It is rather striking that one leading New Testament scholar who has died relatively recently has written a rather lengthy treatise on this and has treated in some detail, this do in remembrance of me, and has taken it not so much as a reference to our remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ, but more specifically, this do in remembrance of me as a reference that the believers should do this asking that God remember his kingdom that is to come, and in reference particularly to that) After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new covenant (that’s a better rendering of that word than testament) in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. 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. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body (that is unlikely to be a reference to the church, which is called the body of Christ, but rather here is a short form for not discerning the Lord’s body that he offered and his blood which he shed). For this cause many are weak

and sickly among you, and many sleep (that is, sleep the sleep of death). For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world (the apostle pointing out that disorders at the Lord’s table bring divine discipline and chastisement, but do not mean that we lose our salvation if we have truly believed in the Lord Jesus Christ). Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto judgment. And the rest will I set in order when I come.”

Now we all would have liked to have know what the apostle wanted to say in addition to this, but unfortunately we do not know. When we get to heaven, that’s another one of those many questions we will be able to ask, “Paul, what else did you intend to say to the Corinthians and what did you say when you came and visited them and the subject of the Lord’s Supper came up.” I hope that some of the things I say will be in harmony with some of the things he did say.

Let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer removed from audio]

[Message] Our subject for today, as I mentioned when we began the Scripture reading is Paul and the Lord’s Supper. And this will be our topic also next Sunday, the Lord-willing.

As most of you in the audience know, I have been going up to Chicago each week and teaching in Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. One of the subjects that I have been teaching is ecclesiology and eschatology, or the doctrine of the church and the doctrine of last things. And it seems as if I’ve been saying these things that I am saying to you every day of this week or even the last two or three weeks, because we are right at

the subject of the ordinances in that particular course. On Thursday morning and Friday morning, we were discussing the ordinances of the church, and then Friday morning two young ladies from Believers Chapel were in my class. They visited me by surprise and I looked out and saw them sitting in the back, one of whose husbands is now studying at the University of Chicago in the Semitics department, taking an advanced degree there, and the other a friend who is usually here on Sunday morning.

Well, I have been saying that the Lord Jesus left the church two ordinances to observe until he comes again, and here I was repeating the same things to them. So I apologize for the repetition, but nevertheless, it is I think a proper introduction to what I want to say. He left us the ordinance of baptism, which emphasizes our initiation into the body of Christ, the church. And he has left us the Lord’s Supper, which emphasizes our continuation or our life in the body of Christ. We are baptized once when we have believed in Jesus Christ, for once we have come to know the Lord, there is no need to be saved over and over again, for once we have eternal life, we have eternal life.

But we observe the Lord’s Supper frequently, constantly. In Believers Chapel, we observe the Lord’s Supper every Sunday night, because that emphasizes our continuance in the life of the body. And therefore it is proper that we remember it frequently as the Lord and as the apostle have urged us to do.

There is a great parallel between the Lord’s Supper and the Passover, which we have pointed out in our studies of the First Passover and the Last Passover. The First Passover was a memorial of a physical deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt and its Pharaoh by virtue of its blood sacrifice of the lamb, the blood of which was placed upon the door posts in which the children of Israel were found. In the case of the Lord’s Supper, it is a memorial of a spiritual deliverance by sacrifice from bondage to sin and Satan. In the one case, the children of Israel looked forward to the coming of the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. In our case we look back to the

coming of the Son of God who has taken away the sin of the world, and we look forward also to his second coming.

As I’ve mentioned to you, the Passover was observed till he should come, and as Paul says here, the Lord Jesus has asked that we observe the Lord’s Supper until he should come. There is a remarkable parallel then between the two, and it is not surprising then that the Lord inaugurated or initiated the Lord’s Supper. He did it in the context of the observance of the Passover.

The Lord’s Supper is to be the highlight of the corporate worship of the church. We tend to think that the highlight is the time the church meets to hear a sermon. We’ve stressed that in the early church it is likely that they thought of the highlight as the time when they remembered our Lord in the breaking of the bread and in the drinking of the wine. It is incidentally suggested by the statement in Acts chapter 20 and verse 7, when Luke the Historian says, “On the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread.” The purpose for which they came was to break bread, but Paul preached to them nevertheless at that time. The Lord’s Supper was observed then in the meeting of the church at which teaching, exhortation and other things took place. One only has to read passages like 1 Corinthians chapter 14, 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, and some other passages to see that this was characteristic of the early church.

Furthermore, of the things that are written after the time of our Bible confirm that. We even see it illustrated by the fact that the Roman Catholic Church every Sunday observes the Mass and the eucharist. That is a carryover of the tradition of the early church to observe the Lord’s Supper every Sunday.

Now we do not, as we shall point out, claim that that is something that must be done every Sunday -- otherwise, it is a sin. Our Lord does not lay down that strict a legalistic requirement. He simply says, this do, this go on doing, for the present tense is used, suggestive of durative action. We are to imagine that it has to do with action that continues frequently at frequent intervals. That seems to be the point that he makes.

Now we have said also that the Lord’s Supper is the only act of worship for which the Lord Jesus gave the church special direction. And it is obvious that he thought that this was a very important thing. He linked it with the Passover. He said to them during the observance of the Last Passover – I’m going to give you Phillips’ paraphrase of Luke chapter 22:15 – “you do not know how much I have longed to eat this Passover with you before the time comes for me to suffer.” And so the Lord’s Supper is something that our Lord longs to enjoy with the people who belong to him.

Well Paul has given us a contribution to the subject as well. Not only have Matthew, Mark and Luke given us a rather extensive treatment of the things that have to do with the Lord’s Supper, but the Apostle Paul has given us some words which he says he has received from the Lord Jesus.

Now it is likely that Paul’s account is the earliest of all the accounts. In fact it is even possible that some of the others, such as Luke, may have even known of Paul’s account. That however is questionable, and is best just to leave that up to speculation. At any rate, this is an important account, maybe the first historically, of the Lord’s Supper. Now we want to look at it and we will just briefly set the stage by taking a look at some of the things that are set forth by Paul in verse 17 through verse 22 of 1 Corinthians 11.

One of the disorderly things that was taking place in Corinth was the disorder at the Lord’s table. It was the custom in those days to, it seems, to observe a meal which was called A Love Feast. In fact, the very word for love, *agape*, is the word that was used in the plural for these love feasts in Jude verse 12. They came together, they met, they had a common meal together, and then they observed the Lord’s Supper. They observed the Lord’s Supper by taking the bread and the wine and giving thanks over it.

There are different theories regarding the way in which they observed it. It’s not necessary for us to go into these things. In my opinion, the way they did it was in these days to have a common meal and then at the conclusion of the meal to observe the Lord’s Supper very much as we observe the Lord’s Supper today. Since there was no instruction

given to have a common meal, that gradually dropped out in the early church, and there is no necessity as far as I know for observing the common meal. Those of you that are interested in a rather lengthy treatment of this subject by a contemporary New Testament scholar, orthodox generally in the faith, may refer to the book by I. Howard Marshall on *The Last Supper and the Lord’s Supper* in which a full discussion is given of some of the theories that have to do with the relationship of the Lord’s Supper with the common meals.

In current, it appears, since the believers met in homes in these days, they would meet in some of the large homes where the wealthier people lived. But, in the case of some of these meetings, the wealthier people who also had better food would observe the common meal before the common people came. The result being that by the time the people gathered for the observance of the Lord’s Supper, the richer ones and the wealthier ones had already eaten their meals and had eaten the better food as well. And the result was that some who were very poor came and did not have anything. In addition, some of those that had drunk the wine were drunken, and so the disorders at the Lord’s table had caused discipline to be exercised by the Lord God. And later in this passage Paul says, “For this cause, some of you are weak, some of you are sickly, and some have fallen asleep” in death. So, it was a very serious and solemn thing.

The Greeks and the Orientals in those days ate in quite a different way from the way in which we eat. We have, well we ought to have, a big breakfast. Now, I have a big breakfast. I have orange juice, a fruit, and of course I have coffee. And I have eggs and bacon and toast and marmalade. Breakfast is hardly breakfast without all of these things. Poor Martha [laughter], but anyway, that’s what I have for breakfast. Now, in ancient times, they didn’t have a breakfast like that frequently, and most of the time those that were the ordinary people, all they had was a little piece of bread and little bit of wine in the morning for breakfast. And then lunch was also a light meal. They ate it wherever

they might be. If they were working men, they might eat it on the job. But at night they had their large meal. That was called *daepnon*.

Now that word is the word the apostle uses here for the Lord’s Supper – the Lord’s *daepnon* – or the Lord’s – it really was the equivalent of what we would say was dinner, the big meal of the day. I grew up in Charleston, South Carolina. My sister and brother-in-law are here with us this morning from America’s most historic city. And over there we eat our “dinner” in the middle of the day, sometimes around 1:30, sometimes as late as 2, but that is the larger meal, then at night, supper.

We call this the Lord’s Supper. But really, if we were to be absolutely true to the Bible, we would call it, “The Lord’s Dinner” because it was the primary meal of the day, and it seems to me that possibly it was that that the apostle had in mind. He intended for this to be understood as the Lord’s Dinner, and thus we would be perhaps give it a little more emphasis in our church life. But, we will never be able to change the church and have it speak of the Lord’s dinner at this late date. It is however important to remember that it was very significant for them.

Well, the apostle criticizes the church at Corinth for the way in which they have been observing the Lord’s Supper. It was a disgrace. And while he acknowledged that there was some justification for divisions among them in order that the true might be distinguished from those that are false, still, he says, it’s a disgrace that you’ve been observing the Lord’s Supper in this way, and in fact for your, it has not been the Lord’s Supper.

And he goes on to explain why he speaks as he does. For, he says, in the 23<sup>rd</sup> verse, I have received from the Lord Jesus that which I have also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and said, “Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you.” The Greek text has simply, “Which is for you.” “This do in remembrance of me.” Now the Apostle says, I, in rebuke and in explanation of my rebuke, I was to repeat the original

and authoritative significance of the Lord’s Supper which I have received from the Lord. By your actions, you Corinthians must have forgotten.

He says, “Now the night in which he was betrayed” or in which he was handed over – I’ve always found that rather interesting because it just so happens that in the New Testament, this word translated “betrayed” which means simply “to hand over” is a word that is used in reference to our Lord’s death in these ways. It is said, for example, that Judas handed over our Lord, often translated as “betrayed,” as here. Judas handed over our Lord; that is, Judas was a traitor. Judas went to the authorities and as a result of what he said to them and the plans he made, Jesus Christ was handed over.

But the Bible doesn’t stop with that, because you see, one might gain the impression that the Lord Jesus died by virtue of the will of Judas, or by virtue by the will of the Jews or Gentiles only. But there is more to the death of Christ than that, for the Lord Jesus was the Son of God, and he was not at the mercy of wicked men. The Bible also says that he delivered himself over. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, Paul says, but the life that live I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered himself over for me – the same word, “delivered himself over.” So the Lord’s death is a voluntary death. It is he who delivered himself over. So there is a conjunction of the action of Judas and the Lord.

Most significantly, the Bible says it is the Father who handed over the Son. In the Old Testament, in Isaiah 53, in verse 10, it says, “It pleased the Lord to bruise him.” And then the Psalmist says, “Thou hast,” in the great Messianic Psalm, “thou hast brought me into the dust of death.” So the death of the Lord Jesus was the result of the activity of the Father, the activity of the Son in submission to the Father, and then the activity of Judas and the enemies of the Lord. He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, but you have, Peter said, with wicked hands, taken him and nailed him to the tree. So even if it is the Father, and the Son who is in submission to the Father, who gave the Son over to the sacrifice that we might have the forgiveness of sins

through the New Covenant, man is responsible for his part in that death and is justly punished for it. The sovereignty of God and responsibility of man is beautifully meshing in the giving of our Lord Jesus Christ to the cross. The same night in which he was betrayed, the Apostle Paul says.

We sing here sometimes on Sunday night in our observances of the Lord’s Supper the hymn that has this stanza: Jehovah lifted up his rod ; O’Christ it fell on Thee / Thou was sore stricken of Thy God; there’s not one stroke for me / Thy blood beneath that rod has flowed; thy bruising healeth me. That’s true to the Bible. Jehovah lifted up his rod. O Christ, it fell on thee. Ultimately, God was carrying out his great eternal purpose that the people of God might be saved through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Isn’t that a magnificent thought, to realize that God is actually in control of all of the affairs of this earth, and preeminently in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now on that night before the Lord’s death, Paul says he took bread. The bread of course is distributed first since the emphasis rests on the incarnation here. The incarnation is necessary for the death, and so the bread which suggests the body of Christ is mentioned first. The wine which represents the outpoured blood is mentioned next. It is with the wine or the blood that the new covenant is ratified. So Jesus took bread first. And it’s not without significance that it is our Lord who took bread. In all of this, there is almost an active parable going on. The initiative in the work of salvation is always with God. And in reading the Bible, we must keep that always in mind. Otherwise, the Bible becomes very confusing. But if we remember the work of salvation begins with God, we understand that even in this observance of the Lord’s Supper, there is the representation of that.

When you sit, and the bread is passed to you and the wine is passed to you, you reflect upon the fact that you are the recipient of the work that is done for you. And it is done in grace. Jesus took bread, we read in the gospel accounts, and he gave it to them.

That is the way in which we receive the benefits of his death. It is through grace that we receive them.

No we read, “This is my body.” There are several things to notice here. As you know, there has been a great deal of discussion and debate over the meaning of that expression, “this is my body.” There is a large religious organization that contends that the word that best explains “this is my body” is the word, transubstantiation. And that in the observance of the Lord’s Supper there is a transformation of the bread and the wine, substantially, or in substance, into the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is another large religious body of Protestant background that states that while that’s not exactly true, nevertheless, in the giving of the bread and the giving of the wine, there is a recognition of the real presence of our Lord in those elements, and the body and blood of our Lord is in, with, and under the elements. So that when a person takes of the bread, he does partake of the spiritual presence of our Lord in the elements.

There is another body of opinion also related to the Protestant Reformation which has contended that while that’s not exactly correct, the spiritual presence of our Lord is found in the observance of the Lord’s Supper. And when the bread, which is only bread, and the wine, which is only wine, are partaken, nevertheless, there is a communication of spiritual benefits from the spiritual presence of our Lord.

And then finally there is another body of opinion, so of the Reformed tradition and some of what we would call a more independent tradition, such as the Mennonites and others, who’ve contended this is simply a memorial. That is, “this is my body” means only “this represents my body.” I should say of course that some of the others believe it also means “this represents my body,” but nevertheless that is all that this opinion believes that is meant by our Lord’s statement.

So the act of consecration by the large religious body is said to determine the real presence of Jesus Christ in the elements. That when the priest takes the bread and pronounces the words of consecration. When he takes the wine, pronounces the words

of consecration, in that act of consecration those elements become the body and blood of the Lord Jesus and the real presence of Christ is there.

Cardinal Newman wrote to Alexander White, who was the pastor the Church of Scotland Church in Edinburgh for a long time, St. George’s West, a church in which I have been in, wrote to him and explained, for White wanted a full explanation from him of what was meant by transubstantiation. And he wrote to White and said, “In the act of transubstantiation, the substance of the bread and the wine are converted into the substance of the very flesh and blood of Jesus Christ.” One might ask the questions, well, when you look at the bread, it still looks like bread, and when you look at the wine, it still looks like wine. How can we say that this is the real presence of Jesus Christ and in the bread and in the wine we really have his body and his blood?

Well, the reply is usually made that while it is true that the accidents remain – that’s a technical term that means something like “the appearances remain” – nevertheless, the substance, the real substance is transformed. If you look at it, it has the same shape as bread and wine, it has the same color as bread and wine, the same size as the bread was before and the wine, and the same taste. But nevertheless it is really different in substance. So the substance is transformed, the accidents or the appearances remain the same. Cyril of Jerusalem, one who held this opinion, said, “We are not to judge by the taste, we are to judge by faith.”

And furthermore, a curse has been pronounced on those who do not receive this teaching, according to the decrees of the Council of Trent in 1546, roughly. And in addition, it is stated in that official document that there is no salvation outside of the church which teaches this. This was later affirmed by the Fourth Council of Lateran in 1215 a.d. So this becomes a rather serious thing for those who hold that view.

Can one actually find any support for the idea, this is my body means this is really my body, and this really is my blood? Well we do have the verb, to be, here. Jesus did say, this is my body. And one can easily see from that how it might be understood as the

“is” of identity, and not the “is” of representation. Of course, if we studied the language, we would realize that is often does mean represent. For example, in the Bible we read, “The Lord Jesus said, I am the light of the world,” but he doesn’t mean a literal light in a physical sense. He says, “I am the door by which if any man enter in he shall be saved.” He doesn’t mean a literal door. He means he’s the way into eternal life.

In one of his parables he said the field is the world. Well, he doesn’t literally mean the field is the world; the field in my story represents the world. Or when he is explaining things to the Apostle John in the Book of Revelation in the first chapter after the apostle has been given his vision of the Lord, he hears the interpretation given, “The seven stars are the angels of the seven church, and the seven lampstands which thou sawest are the seven churches,” but the “ares” of that verse obviously mean “to represent.”

Furthermore, can it be possible to believe “this is my body,” the bread, when it is the body of our Lord [which] has the bread in his hand conveying it to his apostles which are about him. In that case, there would be two bodies in that room. So it is highly unlikely that is the meaning. What we are to really think about I think is that this represents my body. When we come to the cup in the next verse or so, verse 25, and we read this cup *is* the new testament or new covenant in my blood, the same interpretation of the is in that verse is not given who hold to the interpretation given in the preceding verse. I’ve gone into this into some detail, because this is something with which we have all faced at one time or another.

Not all in that large religious organization have believed that interpretation, although that’s the official interpretation. There was a Spanish priest by the name of Maldonado who said, “Do not prepare your teeth and your belly for it, but believe in him and you have eaten him.” So, he saw that what this was was a symbolism of our Lord. It is, I think, rather inconsistent in the light of this to allow the laity to eat the bread and forbid the cup or the wine from the laity.

Now if one asks, how can you do that? If you say, this is my body and this is, my cup, is the new testament in my blood, and we really partake, and we eat of the bread and drink of his blood, how can you forbid then one of the elements from the laity if its so important and if its so necessary for salvation? Well, they have a doctrine for that, too. It’s called the doctrine of concomitance. And the doctrine of concomitance is that when you eat the bread, you have also drunk the blood. There are reasons for this; it’s not a totally irrational thing. It was done, for one reason, so that, [because] the people might spill the wine. In that case, it might raise questions, have you really spilled the blood of Christ? And so in order to forestall that, the wine was forbidden to the laity.

This raises the interesting question that I’ve mentioned to you before about what happens if an animal shall partake of the elements? Because you see, in the early days, in the great cathedrals, these were large, drafty buildings, and Orkin did not service then, and consequently, there were mice and rats within them as you might expect, and this became a theological problem, for as the elements were laid out upon the table and the altar, and the sacrifice was gone through by the priests – the unbloody sacrifice – occasionally a mouse would come out and nibble on the bread, and that raised the question. When a mouse nibbles on the bread, does he really eat the body of Christ? Thomas Aquinas pronounced on that. He said, yes, he does eat the body of Christ. He was very consistent in his interpretation.

Just after I became a Christian, I read Father Chiniqy’s book, *Forty Years in the Church of Rome*. And in this book he commented on that fact that this troubled him. And so that does raise the question. It would appear that the doctrine of concomitance improves on our Lord’s own teaching, for he said, “Eat the bread and drink the cup.” It’s rather interesting to me – I sometimes wonder if the providence of God does not teach us some things that are extremely important for us to give attention to but which seem at first glance to be somewhat incidental.

It is striking that the cup is forbidden to the laity. Now if you go back and read the accounts in the gospels, the Lord Jesus said, “This is my body, this do in remembrance of me, or take, eat, this is my body.” In connection with the wine, he says, “Drink ye – not, drink ye of it – but drink ye *all* of it.” In other words, the term “all” meaning everyone, is only used with respect to the wine, and not with respect to the bread. As if that departure from the teaching is anticipated by the words of the Lord, hundreds of years before. Drink ye all of it.

Well I don’t know that we have time or whether it’s of great significance for us to talk more scientifically about these views. It is my own personal view that when we observe the Lord’s Supper, we do remember our Lord’s body given for us and his blood shed for us, and I think also we should recognize this is a pledge of what our Lord has done for us. I do not think we stress what we do for God, but we do this out of gratitude for what he has done for us.

Some have criticized the memorial view that it is man who reminds himself, whereas if you observe it in other ways it is God who gives, and we are the recipients of his work. I think that in the observance of the Lord’s Supper as a memorial sacrifice, we acknowledge that it is he who gives everything, and it is we who receive in grace, appropriating only as recipients of his blessing, and we remember him in grace. We don’t have any concept of doing this out of merit.

What is the point of the bread and the wine? Well, it is a two-fold parable of the fate of our Lord’s body and his outpoured blood. What was done with the bread? It was broken. What does the breaking of the bread signify? That signifies the gift of our Lord and his sacrifice for us, the giving of his life for us. What does the blood or the wine signify? Well, the wine signifies his blood. In fact, in the Old Testament, wine was called the blood of the grapes. It was well known that the wine and the product of the grapes were alike.

And furthermore, that blood was suggested by the outpoured wine. So the pouring out of the wine and the breaking of the body represents the gift of our Lord Jesus as a sacrifice for us; the outpoured wine stresses the fact that it is the shedding of blood, a violent death for our benefit.

In fact, when our Lord said, as he took the bread and gave it to him and said, “Take, eat, this is my body,” and when he said also, “This cup (when he took the wine) is the new covenant in my blood, this do as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me” he was saying to them as plainly as it could be said, I must die sacrificially. I must die sacrificially, I am the Lamb of God to which Israel has looked forward for all of these centuries. And furthermore, speaking so authoritatively, the Lord Jesus said, I want you to stop observing the Passover, that important service, and I want you to put in its place a remembrance feast in which I am central. It was an expression of the sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ and of his sovereign deity, and he wanted them to understand that fact. And if it were not true, the of course he is an imposter.

For those of us who have come to know him through the Scriptures and have come to understand what they say about him, do not believe that he is an imposter, but rather believe that he is the Son of God and asks us to remember him in the Lord’s Supper in this way.

Now you’ll notice he said, “Take and eat.” And he said, “Drink ye all of this.” In other words, we’re not simply to look back and remember, but we’re actually to enter into the experience of appropriation. So I ask you a question as I close this first half of this study of Paul’s teaching, do you know what it is to take and eat? Do you know what it is to appropriate the saving death of the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you know what it is to truly believe in him and have everlasting life? Has there been a time in your life when recognizing your own unworthiness and sin you have acknowledged that to the Lord, and in free grace you’ve received the benefits of the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins?

You may have the forgiveness of sins in grace as you acknowledge your own need and flee to the cross. May God help you to do that. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father we are thankful to Thee for these very solemn and serious words spoken by the Apostle Paul as he reflected upon the words that the Lord Jesus had given to him. O God, we thank Thee and praise Thee for all that is represented by the bread that we take and the wine that we drink. We thank Thee for the blood that was shed, that we might have life.

And O God, if there are some here who have not yet believed in Jesus Christ, may by the work of the Holy Spirit they be brought to trust in him. For the believers, O God, strengthen them, edify them, build them up in the faith as we go on our way to the ultimate meeting with the Lord Jesus Christ in his coming.

Now may grace, mercy and peace be with us as we part. For Jesus' sake. Amen.