**Proclaiming His Death**

In 1 Corinthians 11, the apostle Paul had to give the saints in Corinth a refresher course in the spiritual significance of the Lord’s Supper. They had turned it into an irreverent common meal and were behaving selfishly toward their fellow Christians. He had to remind them that the unleavened bread was symbolic of the body that Jesus had given for them and that the cup represented the blood of the covenant between God and His people. Their irreverence toward this sacred observance would lead to their condemnation if they failed to repent.

In verse 26, Paul emphasized that the significance of this ceremony goes far beyond the benefit of the participants. “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.” This act of remembrance is also intended as a proclamation to the world around us. This statement contains elements of the Past, the Present and the Future that are worthy of our consideration.

**Past:** The Lord’s Supper is the only divinely authorized memorial and the focus of that supper is the Lord’s death. As important as His birth, His life, His miracles and His teachings were, Jesus directed us to focus on His death. In fact, His crucifixion for the sins of the world was the culmination of the entirety of His incarnation and ministry. Keep in mind: many were crucified on Roman crosses. The true significance of the death of Jesus was that He was the Lamb of God, offered as a propitiation for the sins we have committed. This fact is crucial to the memorial.

**Present:** Verse 26 presents the imagery of two bookends: The Lord’s death in the past and His return in the future. Everything in between represents a series of opportunities for His disciples to gather to eat the bread and drink the cup in His memory. It is our privilege, not only to remember, but to proclaim that His body was given for us and that His blood ushered in a new covenant relationship of forgiveness, justification and eternal glory. As long as Christians eat the bread and drink the cup, the world will never, can never forget.

**Future:** Christ came the first time to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). When He comes again, it will be to take His friends home and to condemn the rest (John 14:2-3; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8). “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men…” (2 Corinthians 5:10-11). Whenever Christians partake of the Lord’s Supper, the message is clear: Jesus died so that you can stand justified when He comes in judgment. He died in the past so you can live in the future.

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