

The Supper and Judgment

- I. So often when we wrong someone, we then avoid them.
 - A. Maybe we steal something from them. We are then uncomfortable being around them, for fear the situation may come up and we are unable to present the poker face expression.
 - B. Maybe there is some bad blood in your family: a divorce, a disowned child, a black sheep. There are ways to avoid them, but then comes a family wedding or funeral. You are brought face to face again, with no telling how much intervening time and change. How do you react?
 - C. What about when the person you have wronged invites you over to an intimate dinner, or to a party. Would you feel comfortable going?
 - D. You see, rifts in relationships are powerful. Sometimes it is easier to blow the relationship off than to try to repair it.
- II. Put this in the context of your relationship with God.
 - A. We are his children, his friends, his companions, people in relationship with him. We, sometimes flippantly call Jesus our elder brother.
 1. For God so loved - you - that he gave his only son.
 2. Jesus died for you.
 3. He is our source of every good and perfect gift.
 - B. Yet we repeatedly abuse that relationship. Such broken promises and disobedient actions are called sin. We are sinners, every one.
 1. None of us lives up to our own expectations, much less God's.
 2. Sin is a part of every life here, some more than others, some more deliberate than others, but all of us are tainted.
 - C. In the middle of all that sin, He calls up and invites us to dinner. What are we to say.
 1. The invitation should cause us to look seriously at our lives, who we are and what we have done. Our response speaks volumes about our understanding of the seriousness of sin. It speaks volumes about how honest with are with our own sinfulness
 2. Some of us respond to the Lord's invitation by saying "I have other plans." In other words, "My faith is not my first priority."
 - a) (Luke 14:16-21 NRSV) *Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many." ¹⁷ At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' ¹⁸ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' ¹⁹ Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' ²⁰ Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.' ²¹ So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.'*
 - b) What triggered this parable was the proclamation by someone, "Blessed in he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!"
 - c) At the end of the parable, the proud Pharisee who thought he had a reserved seat at the messianic banquet found himself out in the cold.
 - d) The parable can be heard by a church that has become comfortable and established in its ways. We may have been in our setting for so long that we have a false confidence our own salvation.
 - e) We become so confident, that we don't recognize the Lord's priorities when they stare us in the face. God invites us to do something for him, and we quietly and confidently excuse ourselves.
 3. Others accept God's invitation, ignoring the fact that they have done nothing in preparation. Parable of guest without wedding clothes.
 - a) (Mat 22:10-14 NRSV) *Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. ¹¹ "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹² and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen."*

- b) We must never take our invitation for granted. We don't deserve God's invitation. Our realization of His grace should not make us complacent. Our inability to achieve righteousness does not mean we should not strive for that goal anyway.
- D. Jesus wants us to come. The invitation is for sinners. But it is for sinners who understand that they are sinners and want the relationship restored.
- E. The invitation of Jesus to come this assembly and take of his supper in his memory should be a time of judgment.
- III. You can't stand in both camps
- A. (1 Corinthians 10:16-22 NRSV) *The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?* ¹⁷ *Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.* ¹⁸ *Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar?* ¹⁹ *What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?* ²⁰ *No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons.* ²¹ *You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.* ²² *Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?*
- B. Our God is a jealous God. He demands an honest relationship.
- C. Fundamental to the 10 Commandments is that he will be our God and our only God. There will be others.
- D. Yahweh is not the God of Sunday only. You can't worship business or money or sex or drugs or recreation or self all week long, then arrive at the altar of God on Sunday and expect him to welcome you with open arms.
- E. You can't stay out all night worshipping the gods of this world, ignoring the expectations of Yahweh Jehovah, then show up this morning with a big smile acting all forgiven and clean.
- F. Paul says you must choose your God, but you can't hedge your bets by betting on them all.
- G. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me."
- H. This assembly and this table calls you to judgment. Who will it be?
- IV. LS does not guarantee salvation.
- A. (Luke 22:15-23 NRSV) *He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;* ¹⁶ *for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."* ¹⁷ *Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves;* ¹⁸ *for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."* ¹⁹ *Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."* ²⁰ *And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table.*
- B. Luke wants to ensure us that Judas is present at the Lord's Supper. A traitor could partake of the Lord's Supper and still be a betrayer.
- C. Presence at the Lord's table does not guarantee purity. The meal possesses no magical powers in that way.
- D. People can come, can sit here, can appear just as worshipful as the next guy, but their minds are here.
- E. They are thinking of this afternoon, or tomorrow, and, God forbid, sometimes thinking of ways to betray Jesus.
1. Maybe their thoughts are of unethical relationships, unethical business dealings, ways to get around the letter of the law or the spirit of the law.
 2. Many an unchristian thought and deed has been outlined during a church service.
- F. I'm glad you are here. I want to encourage you to attend every time these church doors are open.
- G. But realize that your physical presence is only a means to an end.
- H. The end is your relationship with Jesus the Christ and God the Father conducted through the Holy Spirit.
- I. The Supper calls you to judgment. It is no guarantee of your righteousness.
- V. We talked about the Lord's Supper as a unity meal. We are all one in our participation.
- A. (1 Corinthians 11:27-29 NRSV) *Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord.* ²⁸ *Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup.* ²⁹ *For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves.*
1. This text has been misused many times, so we must look at it in light of its context.

- a) None of us is worthy to partake of the Lord's Supper, in the sense that any of us have obtained a level of perfection that makes us good enough.
- b) All of us are unworthy before God by our own merits, God alone is worthy.
- 2. The text defines what it means by worthy, so we should not abuse it by redefining it.
 - a) In the context of 1 Cor. 11, to take of the bread and cup in an unworthy manner is to eat and drink without discerning the body, the church, and the unity for which Christ died.
 - b) If you are at odds with someone at the table; if you are a lone ranger, concerned about your fellowship with the Father but not concerned about your fellowship with the individuals who make up this church; if you have closed your heart against others who are here by the Lord's invitation - then you are unworthy and are answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. You eat and drink judgment against yourself.
 - c) So the text calls us to judgment: to examine yourselves.
- 3. The one bread and one drink remind us of the one body that we have become in Christ. If you come to this table today without being united with this family, if you come at odds, then you are called into judgment.
- 4. ²⁹ *For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves*
- B. If fellowship is to happen, judgment cannot be avoided since our exclusiveness, our self-concern, our self-centeredness, must be confronted if we are to die to our selfishness and rise to community.
- VI. The church is called upon to judge those who insist on living duplicitous lives.
 - A. This table is so significant, that scripture instructs us to hold one another accountable.
 - B. (Jude 1:4-16 NRSV) *For certain intruders have stolen in among you, people who long ago were designated for this condemnation as ungodly, who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.* ⁵ *Now I desire to remind you, though you are fully informed, that the Lord, who once for all saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.*
 - ⁶ *And the angels who did not keep their own position, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgment of the great Day.*
 - ⁷ *Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.*
 - ⁸ *Yet in the same way these dreamers also defile the flesh, reject authority, and slander the glorious ones.* ⁹ *But when the archangel Michael contended with the devil and disputed about the body of Moses, he did not dare to bring a condemnation of slander against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"* ¹⁰ *But these people slander whatever they do not understand, and they are destroyed by those things that, like irrational animals, they know by instinct.* ¹¹ *Woe to them! For they go the way of Cain, and abandon themselves to Balaam's error for the sake of gain, and perish in Korah's rebellion.* ¹² **These are blemishes on your love-feasts, while they feast with you without fear, feeding themselves.** *They are waterless clouds carried along by the winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, uprooted;* ¹³ *wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the deepest darkness has been reserved forever.* ¹⁴ *It was also about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "See, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his holy ones,"* ¹⁵ *to execute judgment on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him."* ¹⁶ **These are grumblers and malcontents; they indulge their own lusts; they are bombastic in speech, flattering people to their own advantage.**
- 1. (2 Peter 2:12-19 NRSV) is a very close parallel.
- 2. Jude writes about a permissive church that has evidently is overlooking all kinds of sin among its members.
- 3. Specifically mentioned are those who
 - a) slander, grumble and complain.
 - b) Are greedy for financial gain.
 - c) Who are sexually promiscuous.
 - d) Who are not bearing spiritual fruit for God, but only serve themselves.
- 4. Peter reminds them that judgment is coming.
 - a) God saved Israel from Egypt, but he also punished them unrighteousness.

- b) God created angels for his own purposes, but also punished those who rebelled.
 - c) People who practice the lifestyle of Sodom and Gomorrah should expect the same end.
5. So Peter says, ¹² *These are blemishes on your love-feasts (Lord's Supper assemblies), while they feast with you without fear.*
6. The church needs to hold them accountable.
- C. (1 Cor 5 NRSV) *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans.... ² And you are arrogant! (They were boasting of their acceptance of others) Should you not rather have mourned, so that he who has done this would have been removed from among you? ³ *For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present I have already pronounced judgment ⁴ in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present with the power of our Lord Jesus, ⁵ you are to hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. ⁶ *Your boasting is not a good thing. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? ⁷ Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. (When the church tolerates such a lifestyle in its members, it will spread. "So-and-so did it, why can't I?") ⁸ Therefore, let us celebrate the festival (Lord's Supper), not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. ⁹ I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons-- ¹⁰ *not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world. ¹¹ But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber. Do not even eat with such a one. (Eat, eat where? The Lord's Supper.)****
- D. It is a time of judgment. The Lord's Supper demands that our behavior be consistent with our confession.
 - E. The church as a body is responsible for holding its members accountable.
 - F. One word of significance here. Nowhere in the Corinthian correspondence does Paul tell the elders to take over and clean up the church. Elders are not mentioned in Corinth at all. The responsibility belongs to the church, everyone.
 - G. When you, regular member, see another part of our body, a brother or sister, who is sexually immoral, or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber, it is your responsibility to call them to repentance.
- VII. The Lord's Supper should follow confession and reconciliation.
- A. You can't celebrate unity where unity does not exist.
 - B. You can't celebrate salvation where forgiveness has not been granted.
 - C. You can't renew your covenant when you have a split allegiance.
- VIII. Before you can approach the table to celebrate all that God has done for you, you must first approach His throne and His people to get your life right with God.

A Psalm of Confession
Psalm 51 (edited), responsive

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.

³For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

⁷wash me,
and I shall be whiter than snow.

⁸Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

⁹Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.

¹¹Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.

¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

¹³Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.

¹⁵O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

¹⁷The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.