

# Why Remember?

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Tonight, we are on what seems like holy ground as we consider together the centrality, significance and purpose of the Lord's Supper, communion, the Eucharist, the breaking of bread.

This central ordinance handed down by the Lord Jesus himself as a means of grace to his church is not just a gracious provision from our God, but also the flashpoint of dispute.

It is certainly true that the four words, this is my body, are the most controversial and divisive within the history of the church.

It is the interpretation of that phrase that sees the core difference in doctrine and practice between the Catholic and the Protestant church.

The Catholics literally interpret the phrase, this is my body, as that of transubstantiation, that during the elevation of the bread and the wine, the substances are miraculously transformed into the actual body and actual blood of Jesus Christ.

[ 1 : 22 ]     This became their practice in 1215 at the Lateran Council. Thus, in the Mass, Christ is really physically present.

The result being that grace is imparted to those present. In Roman Catholic theology, every time the Mass is celebrated, the sacrifice of Christ is repeated in a real sense.

The Protestants, on the other hand, believe that the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper do not change into the body and blood of Christ.

Rather, the bread and the wine symbolize the body and blood of Christ. Christ, therefore, is spiritually present in a special way as we partake of the bread and wine together in faith.

It is a remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice once for all for us on the cross of Calvary. It is a looking back to the past, a celebrating in the present and a hope for the future.

[ 2 : 41 ]     However, even within the Protestant tradition, the frequency, focus and meaning, means of celebrating communion is multifarious.

And our purpose this evening is not to catalogue, not to comment on the rights and wrongs of each, but to dig into the Bible's teaching and see how it informs our thoughts as to this fundamental privilege we have been given in Jesus Christ.

In Acts 2, they write this. They, that is, the early church devoted themselves. They devoted to themselves. This was their focus.

This was the things that they were passionate about doing together. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

So whatever conclusions we draw, if we are to follow the pattern of the fledgling church at the beginning of Acts, we must be devoted to this. The Lord's Supper is not an optional extra.

[ 3 : 52 ]     It is not a peripheral affair. It is not a sideshow event for the church of Jesus Christ. It is absolutely integral to the health, worship, and communal life of the congregation, as it is locally expressed in the local church.

In his large book, Peter Leinhardt, Blessed are the Hungry, is the title of the book, writes this. The Lord's Supper is the world in miniature.

It has cosmic significance. Within it, we find clues to the meaning of all creation and all history, to the nature of God and the nature of man, to the mystery of the world, which is Christ.

It is not confined to the first day for its powerful seven. Though the table stands at the center, it stretches out to the four corners of the earth.

That book that Leinhardt writes is about 370 pages long. And the last paragraph says, I have only managed to write a short treatise on the depth of significance there is present in the Lord's Supper.

[ 5 : 04 ] And we have about 25 minutes. So all I want us to do is to go through 1 Corinthians 11 verses 17 to 34.

And I have five perspectives, five views that I think the Lord's Supper gives us. Five things that we see as we celebrate this together.

So let me read 1 Corinthians 11 verses 17 to 34. Paul writes this. In the following directives, I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good.

In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you. And to some extent, I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval.

So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat. For when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk.

[ 6 : 15 ] Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter.

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you. The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread. And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body, which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

But everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ, eat and drink judgment on themselves.

[ 7 : 25 ] That is why many among you are weak and ill, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment.

Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined, so that we will not be finally condemned with the world. So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together.

Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together, it may not result in judgment. And when I come, I will give further instructions.

The Corinthian church, when Paul writes, is about 10 years old. It is a church of great giftedness. If you've ever read 1 Corinthians, they are very gifted.

Paul says that you have been gifted spiritually in every way in his introduction. It is a greatly gifted church, but it is also a church in grave danger.

- [ 8 : 35 ] It is suffering from factionalism, gross immorality, and serious confusion on certain issues. This teaching on the Lord's Supper in chapter 11 is part of the central block of the letter where Paul is correcting and arbitrating between various factions within the church who see differently on various matters.

These issues are seemingly prompted by a letter written to Paul by the Corinthians asking for his clarification. The beginning of this section is chapter 7, verse 1, where Paul starts it, now for the matters you wrote about.

He's seemingly going through them now and addressing their various concerns. And throughout this section, Paul is giving a good but style of argument.

He wants to affirm something, but then say, but also remember this. On these issues where there is such a divergence of opinion within the church, he doesn't want to further polarize by saying you must do it this way and all these guys get the hump.

So he says, it's good, but trying to bring the different sides together to a point of at least understanding. So for example, on the matter of celibacy in chapter 7, he says, it is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.

- [ 10 : 09 ] He is promoting celibacy. And then he says, but since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife and each woman her own husband.

He is therefore affirming marriage. He says, yes to celibacy, but also yes to marriage.

Or on the gift of tongues in chapter 14, I thank God I speak in tongues more than all of you. He affirms that gifting. But in the church, I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than 10,000 words in a tongue.

He says it's good, but I affirm this and I affirm this. Like the Aldi advert.

But I like this one and I also like this one. He's trying to bring them together. However, when we start this section in chapter 11, verse 17, he doesn't say this is good, but he says this is all a catastrophe.

- [ 11 : 26 ] Look at verse 17 again. In the following directives, I have no praise for you for your meetings do more harm than good.

When you come together, it is explosively wrong and there is more collateral than there is blessing. He then goes on to do what I think points out five views.

He gives us five things that we should be aware of as we come to the Lord's table, as we come to take communion, as we do the Lord's supper together.

And this, I think, is the first view we get. A view of the one body. The first thing I think Paul wants us to understand as we do this is the one body.

This is the first place Paul goes in his critique of the practice of Corinth in the first five verses. He says some people come and they eat and they get drunk and people come later and they're hungry and they wonder what's going on.

- [ 12 : 41 ] It is not the Lord's supper you are celebrating, he says. And I think a bit of cultural information helps us understand what's at the real kernel of this critique.

Corinth is under Roman control. It works on a 10-day week. During that 10-day week, they have two days off, one at 5 and one at 10.

The early church is running on a Hebrew 7-day week. And therefore, the days off in the Roman calendar and the days off in the Jewish calendar hardly ever align together.

The normal practice is that the church is meeting on working days, which helps to explain why they normally meet either early in the morning or late at night. And so, when it comes to the breaking of bread, a thing they would normally remember late at night, people turn up for the meeting at different times.

So, for example, if you're a wealthy aristocrat who doesn't go to work, you think, oh, I'll turn up to church about 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

[ 13 : 59 ] And who else turns up at 2 o'clock in the afternoon? Well, all the other wealthy aristocrats. And what do you bring at 2 o'clock in the afternoon? Well, you bring a lovely picnic. And you have a bit of table fellowship together before the Lord's Supper is celebrated in the evening.

And you have a wonderful time. Bit of caviar, perhaps, some langoustine, a lovely pinot grigio to wash it all down.

2 o'clock. And you're having this wonderful love feast together of table fellowship. You turned up at 2. Well, the next people to turn up are the business people.

They've worked at 9 to 5, 5 o'clock, clocking off time. Let's go straight to the church meeting. Well, your wealthy aristocrats have been on it since 2 o'clock.

And their table fellowship is in full flow. But the business people come along. They bring a slightly smaller packed lunch, which is probably not from Waitrose. Let's go for Sainsbury's.

[ 15 : 01 ] And they're sitting down. And it's quite a cheap burlough, but there's lots of it. And so they start tucking in. Now, the last people to turn up would be the slaves.

About half the Roman world is considered a slave. And there's a multitude of different slaves, from the footwashers to the private tutors and household managers in the aristocrats' houses.

They turn up last. They probably turn up with nothing. And so by the time, later on in the evening, it finally comes round to this pinnacle moment of celebrating the Lord's Supper.

You've got the wealthy people who are well fed and full of the grigio. The business people who have tucked in, eaten their fill, and are by no means going thirsty.

And then the slaves who come in last. Hungry, tired, and thirsty. And so when they come to the centrality of this meal, rather than show the oneness of the body, it really only shows the divisions there are amongst them.

[ 16 : 09 ] That they've turned something that was so central into an absolute farce. Something that's meant to celebrate how they are one in Christ Jesus has really become a place for people to exhibit their own wealth, their own selfishness, selfishness, with absolutely no regard for others.

And this goes against what the Lord's Supper is meant to be. The Lord's Supper is supposed to be the centre and symbol of the church's unity together.

That it is, in what we remember at this point, the cross of the Lord Jesus, that everyone finds a place together. We sing that song, I think we're going to sing it later, beneath the cross of Jesus, I find a place to stand.

As everyone's humbled under grace, they're unified together. And yet when they come round to remembering the cross, because of all that's proceeded during the afternoon and later on into the evening, only goes to show just how divided they are.

As those that have been on the Pinot Grigio sing Waltzing Matilda in a raucous way, and everyone else is drowned out by the rumbling stomachs of the slaves that have just wandered in. Back in chapter 10, verse 16, Paul draws this parallel even tighter.

[ 17 : 35 ] He talks about what goes on at the Lord's Supper about being a participation in the body and blood of Christ. In verse 14 onwards.

That word participation could also be, is normally rendered fellowship. So what is the church? It is the fellowship of the body and blood of Christ. It is those that are brought into fellowship together by all that this represents.

And yet when the Corinthians get together, it looks anything but a fellowship closely knitted together by this. So as we take communion, the first view we get is of the one body.

It is of our oneness that we all come to the cross wretched, helpless, and hopeless and we stare at one who won for us. No room for boasting, no room for pride, no room for division.

We all get there on the merit of someone else. And therefore, what we celebrate together is to be the centre and symbol of our unity.

[ 18 : 44 ] unity. That in this, we have fellowship with God but we also have fellowship with each other. This is to be a glorious pinnacle of our communal life together.

And so as I come to the end of my time at Brunsfield, one of my biggest regrets is that we've never managed to find a way to all take communion together.

As a whole church. Now I don't think our 10 o'clock service and our 11.30 service is anything like what we see in Koret.

I don't think I've ever seen a Pinot Grigio at 10 o'clock. I don't think it's that same thing. But if this is to be the centre and symbol of our united life together, then it is painful to think that we've never quite managed to do it all together.

Whether we've managed to make communion the centre and symbol of our unity as one. So I ask you as I ask myself as I ask all of us together, do we love our traditions or our freedom more than we love Jesus and want to celebrate and put on display the unity that is all of us all together through his son centred and symbolised by the Lord's Supper.

[ 20 : 19 ] I have no answers to that. I have no agenda behind that. I just think that as I've read this this week there's been a chiming between the way that we do it and what it is meant to symbolise and to be the pinnacle of our unity together in Jesus.

And as I said at the beginning I think it is for the health and flourishing and prosperity of the church because it's so important that we get it right. So the first view I think we see is of the one body.

The second view I think we see is of the crucial cross verses 23 to 25. I think I discovered this week what is probably the most shocking thing I've read in the Bible.

That on the night the Lord Jesus is about to suffer and die for sinful humanity. The night where he gathers his disciples together to celebrate the Passover something he says I have been eagerly waiting to eat with them.

Before he is rejected by all of them walks the lonely cross all the way up Calvary alone where he's nailed to a cruel Roman cross to bleed and die for each of us as the very centre of world history.

[ 21 : 44 ] And what does Jesus say to them? Remember me. Don't forget me. Don't gloss over me. Don't take me for granted. Keep this event front and centre in your life.

That seems outrageous to me that somebody's going to do this most sacrificial act for each of us. And Jesus the night before it happens says don't forget.

Jesus our Passover lamb the ultimate fulfilment of all that the Passover symbolises.

Jesus the one whose blood means that God's wrath against sin will pass over us. Jesus the one who ultimately redeems us from the final enemies of sin death and Satan.

Jesus who leads us out of darkness and slavery into light freedom and the promised future. And Jesus before he makes all of that a reality says don't forget me.

[ 22 : 48 ] Remember. And to help you remember I've got some symbols to serve as an aide memoir which is my best French.

I've got these symbols to focus your attention and bring you back to the foot of the cross. Bread is a symbol of my body broken for you.

Wine is a symbol of my blood shed for you. And he says take and eat this regularly. Take and drink this regularly so that you don't forget me.

So that I don't start to drift onto the periphery. So that I don't start to become something that you have a passing fascination with. in the same way Israel were to celebrate the Passover once a year to remember all that they were in Egypt and all that they now are by God's grace.

Jesus says remember this often so you can remember what you once were without me what you now are because of me and one day that you will be with me.

[ 23 : 58 ] he says do this regularly as a constant reminder of all that I've done for you on the cross because you'll forget. And as I thought this week I thought I forget all the time.

The minute I leave here I start leaking gospel and the cross of the Lord Jesus moves from here to here to here as I go on through my working week.

from the minute I leave church on Sunday I all too readily think that my acceptance before God depends on my own performance.

I all too quickly forget my identity in Christ and start to cleave to other things. In an instant the price Jesus paid for me from the grip of sin is overlooked and the lure of sin becomes incredibly attractive.

Every week every week the cross of Jesus moves from here to the long grass way out left and Jesus knew I would do that.

[ 25 : 06 ] He knows you will do that and he says I've got these symbols for you to help you make the cross front and centre in your life. Jesus gives us the Lord's Supper to give us a regular view, a reorientating view of Jesus Christ and his cross.

his death for us. We need the Lord's Supper to do exactly what it says in the song Abide With Me that I'm still rehearsing round and round in my mind to stop me freaking out.

Last verse, hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes, shine through the gloom and point me to the skies, heaven morning breaks and earth's vain shadows flee, in life and death, O Lord, abide with me.

that's what we're doing as we come here. We have a view of the one body and we have a view of the cross. And the third view we get is a view for the unbeliever.

It's there in verse 26. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

[ 26 : 23 ] This is not an in-house ritual. The Lord's supper involves proclamation, it involves heralding, it involves the announcement of good news. This is a visible word.

I think this can perform a miraculous function in the life of the unbeliever. prayer. That if you get this right, this really provokes people to consider who the Lord Jesus is and whether what he says he's done, he's done for them.

That as we have this at the centre of our communal life, it shows us that central to our Christian faith is this event that Jesus lived, that Jesus died, and that Jesus has risen again.

if you make it really clear at the beginning that this is what we do in remembrance of our Lord and Saviour, you point out that you can't remember someone that you do not know, so therefore communion is not for the unbeliever, but please stay.

And as we take time to remember, maybe you would take time to consider who is Jesus, what has he done, and what does it mean to follow him? And I know from the experience of friends that as they come to church and they sit there and the bread and wine comes along, it provokes them to make a decision, who is Jesus?

[ 27 : 51 ] Why did he come? Is he real? Is he significant? Do I have need of him? That it can be this visible word provoking people to think about eternal things.

It shows those visiting that the very core of all we believe is what happens on that hill at Calvary, on that day in history where Jesus dies for a sinful world, that everyone who puts their trust in him will be graciously gifted eternal life.

That is what we're all about. And we make that so central in our lives that we celebrate it together at a feast that Jesus welcomes us to. love. It shows us that this message we remember, this cross that we gather around, is about Jesus who unites us, saves us, frees us, forgives us, and gives us hope forever.

Also in this verse, even just reading it out, the unbeliever's mind is blown. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Absolutely intrinsic in that second half of the verse is the concept of resurrection. Because how can somebody who died be coming again, had he not been raised, ascended, and stands to come and welcome us into eternal things?

[ 29 : 19 ] And therefore I think it's clear from 1 Corinthians 11 that this is a visible word. A visible word for the unbeliever to consider the claims, to consider the person, to consider the gospel, to consider the free invitation of eternal life that is uniquely found in Jesus Christ.

And if we explain it well, we can proclaim it without saying anything. In the bread and the wine, the body and the blood, the suffering and the death of Jesus Christ.

A view of the one body, a view of the cross, a view for the unbeliever. Fourthly, a view of yourself. Look at verse 28. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.

When we come to the Lord's supper, it is a time to do business with God. It is not some empty ritual.

It is not something that we just do. It is not what we use to just fill 15 minutes at the end of a service or an hour on a Sunday. It is a regular opportunity for self examination.

[ 30 : 46 ] It is a time to take an honest look at ourselves, a long look at the cross and realise afresh our absolute need of Jesus and his death for us.

It is a time to assess where I am failing and faltering in my life and apply the good news of Jesus' grace to every corner. It is a time where we are confronted time and again regularly by our need of Jesus Christ.

Just as food and water are to be the regular sustenance for the physical body, so for the spiritual body, our regular need is sustenance from the Lord Jesus.

As I come weak and compromised by sin, the Lord's supper invites me to examine myself and to bring the sin that is lurking in the dark recesses of my heart into the healing, restoring light of Jesus Christ.

The Lord's supper is a regular Rubicon moment where my confessed sin is removed as the truth of the gospel is applied. And just as the first Passover meal was celebrated before the actual wrath of God passed over, so we eat this in confidence that the judgment God will bring on us and will be passed over us because of their sacrifice.

[ 32 : 15 ] The Lord's supper reminds me that I am more sinful than I can possibly imagine but more loved than I could ever dream. And it brings those two and superimposes them on and gives me confidence to go another week.

It's a delicate balance to get right. We're not examining ourselves in endless introspection, building this feeling of disqualification, unwelcomeness, and being crushed by our sinfulness.

It's not about coming in an unworthy manner, as in with sin present in our lives, because none of us would come. It's about having a right view of ourselves as sinners and coming with an absolute confidence that our greatest need in life is Jesus Christ, who is the only remedy for that sin.

We're not coming to examine ourselves so as to disqualify ourselves. We're coming to examine ourselves in order to see our sin, which is the only qualification to come to this table. And so the unworthy manner is to come with unconfessed sin, to come in a blasé manner, to come unthinking or indifferent, to just go through the process as if it was just another meal with another group of people.

The way we examine ourselves is to see our sin and our need of Jesus and bring those two together so that we might know cleansing. And as Paul ramps up in the rest of the chapter, there's real implications, there's a real warning if we get this wrong.

[ 33 : 57 ] If we rush in, if we don't consider, he talks about people who take it arrogantly. I don't think he's particularly applying it to those that do it ignorantly.

He's doing it to those who do it arrogantly, those with unconfessed sin, those who are sitting, breaking bread with people where there's real rupture in fellowship. And he says there's a real warning that God takes this so seriously that he's ready to pour out temporal judgment on people in the form of discipline who hold this too lightly so it was not to care.

A warning of weakness, illness, and some of the saints in Corinth have even died by getting this wrong. Just seeks to show how passionate God is about remembering his son together.

We need to be very clear. There is not always a straight line between sin and ailment. There really isn't. A lot of it just comes as a result of being fallen people in a fallen world.

And yet God is so sovereign he's able to redeem that even for his own glory. But there are times where there is a straight line. Where we get things wrong and God is so passionate about what we're getting wrong.

[ 35 : 23 ] He'll bring discipline in our lives to get it straightened out. Just ask Ananias and Sapphira back in the beginning of Acts if you don't think that's true.

Scarily, sometimes the judgment is not always discipline in the form of illness. Sometimes it can be God withdrawing his hand of discipline and leaving us to our own foolishness to reap our own destruction until we'll come back.

I think we see that in the life of the prodigal son he's able to sink all the way to the bottom. In order that that will be the discipline that will make him turn and come home. Paul is very clear here though that the Corinthian church has suffered God's judgment because they treated this too lightly.

They didn't examine themselves. It just became another thing they went to. Another thing they did, they were more concerned about bringing their packed lunches to the feast than they were about bringing their sin to the cross.

It gives us a view of ourselves and finally, it gives us a view of the future. One of the things that Peter Leinhardt does in his book is he traces the idea of eating with God throughout the Bible and it's quite exciting.

[ 36 : 52 ] In Eden, before the fall, every meal was eaten with God. It's the epitome of their intimate fellowship together. A place you didn't have to say grace and give thanks to God because you could just give thanks to God because he was there.

However, what happens at the fall? We get independent eating. We get Eve eating. We get Adam eating.



Eve was the first woman in history who discovered that self-indulgent eating led to not having the right thing to wear. The story of the Old Testament then becomes the story of humanity eating alone.

There are glimpses. Abraham eating with the mysterious figure Melchizedek in Genesis 14. Moses, Aaron and his sons and the 70 elders eating in God's presence on Mount Sinai in Exodus 24.

The glimpse of consuming the tithes in celebratory thanksgiving in the presence of the Lord is a regular cycle in Deuteronomy 14.

[ 38 : 12 ] All these partial glimpses that show what they lost through their sin at the fall. Eating in fellowship with God.

Eating in perfect communion. Once it was all the time. Now these are sporadic anomalies throughout the history of Israel. And then the New Testament comes.

A new dawn rises. And you particularly see in Luke's gospel that God is eating with people again. In the person of Jesus Christ.

The second person of the Trinity. He eats a lot in Luke. He's endlessly being criticized because he eats with sinners and tax collectors. He has fellowship with the wrong people around the table.

And then the pinnacle of these meals with Jesus is in the upper room as Jesus redefines the shadow of the Passover in himself. A meal he leaves with them.

[ 39 : 16 ] And his church is a lasting reminder of the new covenant he sealed with his blood. And a continuing ordinance to celebrate Jesus' special presence with them in this sacrament.

However, this is only a temporal thing. It's only a stopgap for the interim. One day the fellowship of Eden will be restored.

The intimacy of a meal will once again be an unbridled reality for everyone who is in Christ Jesus. For in the very symbolism of the Lord's supper is the truth that Jesus is coming back.

We do this until he comes. The certainty that Jesus will come to marry his bride and in the new creation partake of the fruit of the vine at the wedding feast of the Lamb.

A place where the separation of sin will be removed and face-to-face fellowship with God will be our perpetual delight. A place where the Lord's supper will not be present because no one at that point will fall failure of the sinner forgetting the cross.

[ 40 : 33 ] This will no longer be necessary. This is sustenance for the saints for the journey home. The Lord's supper is a glorious thing. An astounding privilege.

A meal of such theological depth and significance that we haven't even scratched the surface tonight. However, I hope that you have seen what this shows.

These five different views. It gives a view of the oneness of the church as we eat together. It gives a view of the centrality of the cross and helps keep it front and centre in our lives and to orientate all of our lives towards the Lord Jesus.

It gives the unbeliever, those outside of Christ, a view of their necessity to be inside of Christ. What does Jesus say in John 6?

Unless you eat my body and drink my blood, you have no part with me. And that in a symbolic sense is what we do around this table. It offers us a view of ourselves and demands regular self-examination so that our sin can be brought to the cross.

[ 41 : 56 ] And it is something that is dangerous. We can't partake of it arrogantly or unthinkingly. And it's a view of the future where we're heading, heading back towards intimate fellowship in God's perpetual presence in the new creation.

I don't think we can end in a better place than the Westminster Confession, chapter 29, article 1. I'm sure you were all going there in your minds. It writes this, Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of his body and blood called the Lord's Supper to be observed in his church unto the end of the world for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing of all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him and with each other as members of his mystical body.

Let's pray. Father God, we're so sorry this evening that we all too readily forget about your Son and his cross and his death for us.

And Lord, we thank you so much that you've given us this meal in order that we may not forget, in order that Jesus might not just fade into the background, but you've given us this meal that he might have the central significance in each of our lives.

And so Lord, as in a few moments we celebrate this together, help us to examine ourselves rightly and bring our sin to the cross, knowing that it is at the cross that our sin was paid for in full.

[ 43 : 56 ] Father, help us do business with you in this time. Help us to remember you appropriately, worshipfully, thankfully, meaningfully.

And as we do that, Lord, would you nourish us and meet with us afresh. Father, the only confidence we have to ask any of this is because of your Son, Jesus, who loved us and gave himself for us.

Father, help us in this time, we pray. Amen.