

# The Lord's Super: A Special Worship Experience

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Date: 01 December 2019

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[ 0 : 00 ] When you came in this room this morning, it was obvious what the focus of the service was going to be when you saw that table, wasn't it? Most of us have observed the Lord's Supper more times than we can count.

But I want you to think, what goes through your mind as we observe the Lord's Supper? What do you think when you take a piece of that bread or one of those cups of grape juice? What is the significance of those elements? It is important that we understand what we're doing. It's important that we have a right understanding of the bread and the cup.

If we fail to do so, then we're just going through the motions in this service. It's meaningless. Or it will be a false representation of what Jesus intends for it to be.

More professing Christians misunderstand the meaning of the Lord's Supper than understand it correctly. That's because the largest number of professing Christians in this world are members of the Roman Catholic Church.

[ 1 : 27 ] And what the Roman Catholic Church teaches about the Lord's Supper is not biblical. That's the first point I want us to look at this morning. The Roman Catholic view of the Lord's Supper is called transubstantiation.

Transubstantiation. As I was going through some notes, files, looking at things I have done, taught on when we do the Lord's Supper, I could not believe it, but I've never taught that the Roman Catholic view of the Lord's Supper is incorrect.

I apologize for that because a part of the work of a pastor in teaching is to point out false teaching. And as you'll see, this is false teaching.

The Roman Catholic teaching about the Lord's Supper says this. First, when the elements, the bread and the wine, when the elements of the Lord's Supper are consecrated by a priest, they say a literal metaphysical change takes place in those elements.

They say that the substance of the bread and the wine is miraculously transformed into the literal body and blood of Jesus Christ.

[ 2 : 43 ] Roman Catholic teaching says the bread and the wine still look, feel, taste the same, but their substance changes and becomes the actual body and blood of Christ.

The Roman Catholic teaching also says this. Whenever the Lord's Supper is observed, which they call the Mass or Eucharist, Jesus Christ is being sacrificed again on behalf of the participants in order to atone for their sins.

Now, there are numerous reasons why Roman Catholic theology is wrong about this, but I want us to see two. First, it fails to recognize the symbolism Jesus was using when he instituted the Lord's Supper.

I want you to look on the screen at a verse from Matthew's Gospel. In that section of Matthew 26, the disciples and Jesus were observing the Passover meal together when Jesus instituted what we're doing today, the Lord's Supper.

The Scripture says, now, as they were eating, Jesus took bread and after blessing it, broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, take, eat, this is my body.

[ 4 : 15 ] Now, if you had been there, if you'd been one of the disciples, what would you have thought? Jesus is standing there right in front of you.

He takes a loaf, broke it, gave it to the disciples and said, this is my body or take, eat, this is my body.

You would have known, it would have been obvious that he was using symbolic language. No one sitting around that table or reclining around that table that day thought that Jesus was referring to the bread as his literal body.

Jesus was in the habit of using symbolic language in his teaching about himself. For an example, in John 15, he says, I am the vine, you are the branches.

Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. For apart from me, you can do nothing. On another occasion, Jesus said, I am the door.

[ 5 : 26 ] If anyone enters by me, he will be saved. And then another occasion, he referred to himself as bread again, the bread of life. Look at it. Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me shall not hunger. Whoever believes in me shall never thirst. Now, it is obvious that Jesus uses words like a vine, a door, bread as figurative language.

To symbolize something about who he is or what he does. No rational person would think otherwise, would they?

What the Roman Catholic Church teaches about the bread and wine becoming the literal body and blood of Jesus is irrational. It is not biblical.

It defies common sense. The Roman Catholic view is also wrong for a more important reason. It fails to recognize the finality and completeness of Jesus' death on the cross for our sins.

[ 6 : 42 ] The New Testament is clear in numerous places that Christ's death on the cross for our sins was a once and for all sacrifice.

That it was something that was final. It was final. And it was never to be repeated. In fact, when Jesus died on the cross, one of the last things he said was, it is finished.

The penalty for our sin had been paid. He said, it is finished. And he gave up his spirit. But the book of Hebrews has the most to say about this.

I want you to look with me in Hebrews chapter 9. We're talking about how Jesus' death on the cross was a one-time event. Once and for all.

A final, complete sacrifice. Look. For Christ has entered not into holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself. Now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

[ 7 : 46 ] Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time.

Not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. The Roman Catholic teaching that Jesus is being sacrificed again and again every time the Lord's Supper is observed. It's just wrong. It's more than wrong. It's heretical. It is contrary to the clear teaching of the New Testament.

Jesus died once and for all. It cannot be what the Roman Catholics teach. That every time the Lord's Supper is observed, it's like Christ is being sacrificed, crucified again in order for us to be forgiven.

[ 9 : 10 ] So the clear teaching of the Bible shows that the Roman Catholic view of the Lord's Supper is wrong. Now I know that a lot of people, you're thinking to yourself, well I've never believed that.

That's good. But what do you believe? It's not enough just to know, well I don't believe something. What do you believe?

Do you know what the Bible actually teaches? What is happening as we observe the Lord's Supper? Let's look at this.

The biblical view of the Lord's Supper. A symbolic and spiritual presence of Christ. The bread and the wine or grape juice is what we're using.

Symbolize the body and blood of Jesus. As we've already seen, Jesus often used symbols to describe himself. Therefore, the most biblical, rational, and natural way to understand what Jesus meant when he instituted the Lord's Supper is that the bread and the wine or the bread and the juice are symbols of his body and his blood.

[ 10 : 27 ] You think? It does symbolize his broken body, his shed blood, that which happened on the cross as he died for our sins.

That's not all these elements represent. Number two, the bread and wine represent the spiritual presence of Jesus. Many Protestant Christians emphasize that Christ is spiritually present in a special way when we partake of the Lord's Supper.

Jesus promised to be present whenever believers come together. Anytime we join together with two or three others to pray, to worship, Jesus has promised to be with us.

Look at what he said in Matthew 18. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. So every time we meet on Sunday, the Lord is here with us.

It's a time of worshiping him. It's a time of talking to him in prayer. Listening to him as he speaks through his spirit. The idea that many people will emphasize a lot to think about is that if Jesus is present whenever two or three Christians come together for worship, he must be present in a special way whenever we gather together to worship and observe the Lord's Supper.

[ 11 : 59 ] Well, that's true. But we need to be careful not to make the Lord's Supper so much of a mystical or mysterious experience that we don't really understand what's going on.

The Lord's Supper or the New Testament does not actually say that Christ is present in a special way when we observe the Lord's Supper.

It really doesn't. But never think that the Lord is not here. Never think that he is absent. The Lord is with us through his spirit wherever we go.

In a special way when we gather together for worship, including observing the Lord's Supper. So it's not wrong for anyone in this room to think this observing, participating in the Lord's Supper, this is a very special time of worship.

In fact, we all should think that. But the key to experiencing the presence of Jesus right now for all of us is that we must have a personal relationship with him through faith.

[ 13 : 19 ] That's the key. If you don't have a real relationship with Jesus, trusting him as your Savior and Lord, it's through faith, then this is not going to be anything to you, mean anything to you.

Wayne Grudel points out the importance of our faith. Look at what he says. Yet we must not say that Christ is present apart from our personal faith.

But he only meets and blesses us there in the Lord's Supper in accordance with our faith in him.

Right now, think about this. If I have a real relationship, a right relationship with Christ through faith, then this can be, as I take these elements this morning, this can be a special time of worship, of fellowship with the Lord, of giving thanks to him, and really of drawing closer to him.

But also understand, if you are living in willful disobedience, you know there's something in your life God's been dealing with you about, but you won't give it up.

You won't confess it. You won't turn from it. Or, if the best way to describe you would be, you've just sort of drifted away from a close relationship with the Lord, and you're just more or less indifferent to the things of God right now.

[ 14 : 55 ] If that's a better description of you, then what we're going to do, it's going to have no value to you. If the word's disobedient or indifferent, describe your relationship with the Lord right now.

I want to encourage you to take time now to confess your sin. Confess the fact that you've just sort of drifted away from him. Turn from the sin.

Change your mind about the way you're treating him. Seek his forgiveness. Renew your commitment to him right now.

The only way this service can be a time of communion between you and the Lord is if you draw close to him. And if there's any barriers between you and him right now, eliminate them through confession, repentance, new commitment.

That's important for all of us. As we approach the Lord's Supper this morning, I want to call attention to three things that Paul stressed in his explanation of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11.

[ 16 : 10 ] First, the Lord's Supper reminds us of Christ's death on the cross. That's what we're going to look at as we actually partake of the bread and the cup in a moment.

Number two, the Lord's Supper proclaims the gospel. What we're doing out is sort of like we're acting out the good news about Christ's death for our sins.

Look at this verse from 1 Corinthians 11, 26. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. You proclaim it.

We're doing that. Baptist theologian Miller Derrickson explains it like this. The act of taking the bread and the cup is the dramatization of the gospel, a graphic display of what Christ's death has accomplished.

It points backward to his death as the basis of our salvation. But that's not how he ends his quote.

Look, more than that, however, it also declares a present truth, the importance of a proper frame of

mind and heart.

[17:19] Communicates are to examine themselves before eating the bread and drinking the cup. And that's the third point Paul stressed in 1 Corinthians. Look at it. The Lord's Supper requires that we carefully examine ourselves.

Verses 27 and 28. Whoever therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself then.

And so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. This is what we all need to do right now. Every single one of us in this room, we need to examine ourselves.

If you are in that state of disobedience or indifference, don't continue on like that any further. Talk to God about it. Deal with him about it.

Let this be a time of real repentance and renewing your love, your trust, and commitment to the Lord. If you don't have that personal relationship with Jesus, if you are not a Christian, but you want to become one right now, you want to have that relationship with Christ, confess your sin, turn from it, change your mind about the way you've been living, ignoring God, or rebelling against him.

[18:42] Put your trust in Jesus that when he died on the cross, he actually paid the penalty for your sin. Call upon him to save you now and he will.

I'm sure that many people came this morning and while none of us are living perfect, Christ-like lives, I'm sure there's a lot of people in this room, you came this morning, you are in a right relationship with the Lord.

You are enjoying good fellowship with him, close fellowship with him. Well, if that's the case, this observance should be a time of loving communion with your Lord and Savior.

It can be a time of drawing even closer to him, a time of renewing your commitment to him. What I'd like for us, all of us to do is take the next few minutes to spend time with the Lord in prayer, examining ourselves, asking him to examine us in preparation for observing the Lord's Supper.

Would you pray with me? Father, help each one of us right now to be open and honest with you.

[20:02] Help us to confess our sin, our willful disobedience, or maybe the drift into indifference that we realize has happened.

Help us, Father, to turn from sin, from self, from whatever it is that is interfering in a close relationship with you. Help us, Father, to draw close right now.

Help us, Father, to recommit ourselves. Renew our faith, our love to you, to the Lord Jesus.

Show us how we need to respond. Let's just all, in an attitude of prayer, listen to the Lord and take the next few minutes to respond to him so that we can prepare or so that we can participate in the Lord's Supper in a way that will honor him.