OBSERVING THE LORD’S SUPPER 
I CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

I have looked for the past couple of messages at a series titled God is Serious… I started to continue today in that series but we usually try to schedule Communion on 5th Sundays. When we are finished with this passage of scripture you will see that God is serious about remembering the crucifixion of His Son.

Paul begins this chapter by commending them in verse 2, but in verse 17 he says, “Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.” We know from studying I Corinthians that Paul addresses a problem in that Church fellowship in practically every chapter. In doing this in chapter 11, it helps us today to understand the observance of Communion.

One writer said, “The purpose of the Lord’s Supper is to consciously call to mind what Jesus has done for His own in His death on the cross. The focus needs to be on Him.” (Jeremiah Study Bible, p.1587)

We can stray from the true meaning of communion by:
* Making it a ritual w/o meaning to our soul.
* Making it right in structure but wrong in heart.
* By misinterpreting the scriptures about communion.

The Lord’s Supper is a memorial of Jesus’ death on the cross for us. We proclaim the Lord’s death to a lost world through communion. As it says, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.” (I Cor. 11:26)

What a blessing it is and it is a very special time.

* Communion is not man’s idea of a way to be religious.
* Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper the night just before He was betrayed by Judas.
* Jesus, being the Son of God, knew that He would be crucified for our sins and the Lord’s Supper pointed to His death for us as we will see.
* MacArthur wrote, “Commemorating the Lord’s Supper was a regular and cherished practice in the early church, by which believers remembered their Savior’s death and celebrated their common salvation and eternal life…” (MSB, 10:16 notes, p.1744)

I. Communion is Serious (24-26)
Why Preacher?

A. The Bread represents Christ’s body (24)
   (Scripture on ppt)
   * When we eat the bread we proclaim His death for us.

B. The Cup represents Christ’s blood (25a)
   (Scripture on ppt)
   * When we drink the juice we proclaim the forgiveness of our sins through His shed blood.

C. It Represented the new covenant (25b)
   (Scripture on ppt)
   * The old covenant was repeatedly practiced by offering the blood of animals. The new covenant was established once for all in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The Covenant was made with all of humanity for our salvation through Jesus Christ alone.
D. The Observance represents Christ’s death (26)  
(Scripture on ppt)  
* Communion allows people to see the significance of the Lord’s death on the cross.  
* And every time we observe communion we are proclaiming Christ’s death for us.

II. The Abuse of Communion is Dangerous

A. By Eating or drinking in an unworthy manner (27)  
* It is not about how you hold the cup or what type of music is being played that makes it unworthy, but the condition of your heart.  
> Is there any unconfessed sin? MacArthur wrote, “To come to the Lord’s Table clinging to one’s sin does not only dishonor the ceremony, but it also dishonors His body and blood, treating lightly the gracious sacrifice of Christ for us.”

B. Bringing judgment (29-30)

1. Sickness, even death for some (30)  
“For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.” (30)  

* We should examine ourselves before partaking (28)  
We ask questions about ourselves… such as:  
> Are there sins that need to be confessed?  
> Are there actions that need to be repented of?  
> Are there attitudes that are not pleasing to God?  
> Are there activities that need to stop?

We confess our sin by agreeing with God it is sin.  
We repent of sin by turning from it.

John wrote in I John 1:9b that God “is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (I John 1:9b)

Time of Self-examination  
Music…..

As a follower of Christ to observe communion worthily:

Examine your life for things that would displease the Lord before you take of the Lord’s Supper.

Confess any sin and turn from it before observing the Lord’s Supper.

* Communion is for those who have received Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.  
If you are a visitor and you know you are saved from your sins by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, you are invited to partake also, although you may refrain if you want to.  
If there is any reason you feel you need to refrain, you may do so.