

Why Did Jesus Die?

Long Beach Alliance Church • September 20th, 2009 • Pastor Chris Lankford

For as often as you eat this
bread and drink the cup,
you proclaim the Lord's
death until He comes.

~1st Corinthians 11:26 (NASB)

1) Don't Lose Sight Of The Main Point...

- A) The church in Corinth tolerated "divisions & factions" between followers of Jesus (1st Corinthians 11:17-22) while still participating in church ceremonies (communion).
- B) However, the lack of love which some Christians had for other Christians came out in selfish and abusive ways which revealed deep divisions and a lack of unity.
- C) Paul contrasts the approach of the Corinthians with the example of Jesus Christ (11:23-26). His point is not to set out a thorough theology of communion, as much as it is to contrast one example against the other.
- D) Thus, the point is not to create a stiff ceremony to be followed, as much as it is to call on all Christ-followers to properly "examine & judge" themselves (11:28-29).

2) Body/Bread & Blood/Wine

- A) It is notable that Paul is recounting a narrative from “the night in which He was betrayed” (11:23). Images of Christ’s Passover meal with His disciples and the graphic nature of Christ’s death would have filled the minds of the readers.

- B) Jesus took bread, gave thanks for it, and then broke it to distribute (11:23-24). The bread represents Christ’s body, which was given on the cross. Without this sacrifice, there is no acceptable payment for sins (Hebrews 10).

- C) Jesus then distributed a cup (in a similar fashion, 11:25). The wine represents Christ’s blood, which was spilled out on the cross. Receiving the new covenant (promise), cleanses us from sin (1st John 1:7-9).

- D) Thus, communion represents both the ultimate payment for sin, and the invitation of God to participate in forgiveness for our sins through Christ’s sacrifice (11:26). We “proclaim” Christ’s death because it is victory over sin, and salvation for all who confess in faith (1st John 1:9).

- E) Communion is a mini-message of salvation! It proclaims Christ’s redeeming death. His life for our lives. His victory over death (body/bread) and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ’s sacrifice (blood/wine).

3) Judge Rightly

- A) Thus, we are to judge rightly (11:28-29). If Christians do not judge rightly, we face earthly disciplines by God (11:30-32).

- B) Communion is a regular time of examination & judgment. It is meant for followers of Christ to examine their relationship with Christ and with others (11:33-34).