

Look Before You Eat (1 Cor 11:17-34)

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Preacher: Albert Tang

[0 : 00] So the passage today is 1 Corinthians 11, verse 17 to 34, and Angel is kindly reading this passage for us before Pastor Albert preaches. I'll be reading from the NLT version.

But in the following instructions, I cannot praise you, for it sounds as if more harm than good is done when you meet together. First, I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church, and to some extent I believe it.

But of course, there must be divisions among you so that you who have God's approval will be recognised. When you meet together, you are not really interested in the Lord's Supper. For some of you hurry to eat your own meal without sharing with others.

As a result, some go hungry whilst others get drunk. What? Don't you have your own homes for eating and drinking? Or do you really want to disgrace God's church and shame the poor? What am I supposed to say? Do you want me to praise you? Well, I certainly will not praise you for this. For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord Himself. On the night when He was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it.

[1 : 17] Then He broke it in pieces and said, This is my body which is given for you. Do this to remember me. In the same way, He took the cup of wine after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant between God and His people, an agreement confirmed with my blood.

Do this to remember me as often as you drink it. For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until He comes again. So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself.

That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died. But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way. Yet when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

So my dear brothers and sisters, when you get it for the Lord's Supper, wait for each other. If you are really hungry, eat at home so you won't bring judgment upon yourselves when you meet together.

[2 : 34] I will give you instructions about the other matters after I arrive. And this is the word of the Lord. Thank you. Thank you. My dad.

Hello. Okay. And that's the word of God. It's me again. Welcome. It's good to see you, Pastor William.

Yeah. This week, I mean, carry on from last week. Last week, you know, the words of Paul were a little bit lenient.

You know, you think for yourself. You're just for yourself. Is it right or not? You know. But this year, this passage here, pretty hard. Harsh words, you know. We just read, you know, Paul.

Paul said twice, I praise you not. You know, in the message, in the contempt, English version, it says, I'm not at all pleased with what you're doing.

[3 : 41] You know, hard words. And what was worth, in verse 30, because of this offense, many of you have fallen ill or even died.

So, coming to the Lord's Supper, to the Lord's Table, is not small business. This is pretty serious. Imagine, you know, after taking the cup and the bread, and somehow, tomorrow, somebody will call, Pastor, there's about 10 people in the middle of the hospital.

And they kind of, they found something, you know, the doctors said, there's some wafer and some grape juice, they call them sickness, and some critical, in ICU. Wow.

You know? It's serious stuff. So, better beware, when we come to the Lord's Table, we are, we are encountering God.

[4 : 40] Sometimes, I would ask myself, sometimes, when we become Christians, we kind of take things for granted, and, you know, we give thanks, before we, you know, before we eat, okay?

And, and at times, I forget, have I actually given thanks? Have I actually said grace? It's become such a normal thing, and I do it, so, disheartedly, you know?

When we praise God, when we come to the Lord's Table, oh yeah, we come and, serious stuff, can be dangerous. So, so let us remind ourselves, okay?

The Lord's Supper, how do we come, before, to the Lord's Table? And, we have read that, 11, verses 17, to 34, and I believe, Paul was really hard with, he warned, sternly, the church in Corinth, about the wrongful attitudes, attitudes, and the actions, when they observe, the bread, and the cup, and, and, Paul actually gave, proper teachings, to them.

And, what the Corinthians, the mistakes they have made, become, our reminder. Let us come, before the Lord's Table. With all the, sermons, we have heard from, from the past, about the Corinthian church, let us not, repeat, those, mistakes.

[6 : 12] So, we should come, before the Lord's Table, the Lord's Supper, with reverent heart. In order that, what we do, will be acceptable to God.

And, actually, he, he promised to bless us, when we participate, the Lord's Supper, in a proper attitude. They are blessings. They are not, super, stuff, you know, we, you know, we eat them as spiritual food, and we become, you know, strong.

No, they're not that. It's, it's the way, we participate. God is happy, to bless us. But, because of what, they have done, and this sort of thing happened, that, so, we better be careful, how, we participate, in the Lord's Supper.

Now, last time, we've seen this, PowerPoint. So, Paul was answering the, the Corinthians, about the certain questions, and particularly, in verse, in chapter eight, when he finished, with a, with a, sacrifice, sacrifice to idols, and he, in chapter 11, he starts a new, topic.

And the setting was, in a worship setting, all right? So, last week, we talked about, the head covering, and this week, we talked about, the Lord's Supper. And the next sermon, probably not next week, we'll probably have a break, in July.

[7 : 43] And then, and we talked about, the spiritual gifts, interesting, controversial stuff, but, actually, the same attitude. The Corinthians, had the, all this, individual, egoistic, attitudes, me, me, me, neglected, the whole church.

Thank you, Venus, for reminding us, the church is us, it's not individuals. We need to care for one another, one another. We're the body of Christ.

You know, when we participate, in the Lord's Supper, it actually reminds us, this is the body of Christ. Apart from, remembering, the bread, and the cup, as the, the body, and the blood of Christ, but, this is the church, the church, the church, is the body of Christ.

So, when we participate, we better be, be careful. So, the Lord's Supper, you know, be careful, look, clearly, think, clearly, before we eat.

Now, I think, that, the Lord's Supper, when they celebrated, it was more like, a love feast, instead of, like, do this sort of things, what we do now.

[8 : 59] It was actual, dinner time. They ate together, they drank together, because Jesus, when he established, it was, dinner, all right, it was Passover dinner.

They ate, to the full, they drank. But, when the Lord, had established that, and when the people, um, followed, this, this sort of a, ceremony, this rite, they need to remember, this is not, only a meal, this is a, Christian, celebration, or Christian, me, mem, commemoration, because of Jesus.

So, when we come to the Lord's table, I believe, um, yeah, we need to be reminded, Paul said, what I have received, it was from the Lord, I did not make it, did not make that up, you know, Lord's Supper is not, any people, or in the church, fathers, or, or, or pastor, who, nothing better to do, just made it up, so that, oh, let's come, and, and remember the Lord, in this way, no, it was the Lord, who initiated it, we all remember, the tradition, right, it was the Lord, the Passover, of the Jewish, um, Jewish Passover, and, and, and Jesus, on that Passover night, he broke bread, and he, he, and he, and he, blessed, and he, gave it to the disciples, and he, and he took the cup, and it was wine, yeah, they were drinking wine, it was not, no grape juice, yeah, it was fermented wine, okay, so, they, they, they ate, and they drank, it was a, a dinner time, it was evening meal, but the, the

Christian, the early church, when they celebrated, that element, the Lord Jesus, was in the middle, central, and they celebrated, as a love feast, and, I believe, they celebrated, every night, because they anticipated, that Jesus was coming back soon, so, they worked during the day, and they go, and they gathered together, every night, and they, they celebrated, okay, so, that was the background, so, I think, when we come, today, when we come, understand, the Lord's Supper, and, and the biblical perspective, so, I think there are four ways, we need to be, remembering ourselves, you know, we need to remember, as we come, come to the Lord's table, look, look what, look back, this is, to remember, Jesus, what Jesus has done, what Jesus has done, with, him sacrificing himself, on the cross, and, what Jesus, have done, in my life, as, as I, came to, acknowledge him, as my Lord, and Savior, and my sin, have been, forgiven, my sin, washed away, and, and, so, every time, when we come, to the Lord's table, we are reminded, he is, he is my Savior, I, my sin, has been forgiven, and, as a church, as we come together, this is the, very important, element, we need to remember, we are, saved, community, all right, we did, we are not, just wanting to gather, just as we please, we are, sinners, saved, by grace, and gathered, by him, into this, local church, this is why, as we come, to the Lord's table, we, remember him, remembrance, it is, it's like, recalling, it's this, recollection, of what Jesus, have done, has done, for us, surely, there is, different, I think, if we come from, different backgrounds, either, if we have, maybe, in Kiwi, in New Zealand, or maybe, some came from Hong Kong, or some from Canada, or, you know, we, there are different church, or even different denominations, have different, slightly different, ways, to remember, the Lord's supper, right, some will use bread, some will actually do, use, wines, some traditions, okay, and some, and, prior to,

[13 : 39] COVID, I mean, we never had that, until COVID, right, so we had the, waffle, and we had the, at the, the, was it, was it, Ribena, right, so, and, because of the hygiene, factors, no, we have changed that, I personally, don't really like them, yeah, but never mind, but, just, it's not, it's not the things, in what, how we remember, it's, it's my attitude, to remember, who, he is, he is, my Lord, and my Savior, and as a church, he is our Lord, and he's our Savior, we are saved, by grace, right, and as a, Baptist church, evangelical church, we simply, observe the Lord's Supper, to remember him, this is what, was recorded, alright, you do this, as a remembrance, of me, so there is nothing, magical, nothing, nothing, nothing superstitious, there's nothing, something there, you know, when I take it,

I take, well, this is not enough, I take a whole cup, I'll become stronger, and there was nothing like that, there is a tradition, I'm not sure, if you have heard that, there's, there's a, there's a term called, transubstantiation, have you heard that, it's, it's like, they believe, when you, this is the bread, and the cup, but when it comes, to a certain point, when you have taken it, and it actually become, the flesh of Jesus, and blood of Jesus, okay, but we don't believe that, okay, as an evangelical church, Baptist church, Alliance church, I believe most of, Protestant churches, evangelical churches, we only believe that, this is, we purely, remember the Lord, because we purely, remember the Lord, it doesn't matter, what kind of, juice, what kind of, waffle, wafer, that we have, right, purely, we come, to remember him, as simple, as that, there has been, in missionary situation, of course, it will be hard, to get, what we have, in the western world, some, missionaries, in China, they had, OMF missionaries, actually, in their records, they, they, they, they written something about, like, in the middle of China, how are you going to get, grape juice, no grapes in China, right, no waffles, no, no, no, they don't even eat bread, how would you, but, but you say, this is, the Lord has established that, but what do you do, what would you do, if you were a missionary, how would you, with the, with the resources, the limited resources, that you have, to help people, to remember the Lord, now, if we know, do this, in remembrance, of me, that, because of, of that, teaching, so it doesn't matter, really, what, what it was, but it was important, that, we help each other, to remember, the Lord's Supper, and this is what we said, the Passover, you know, to remember, it was the Passover, of, Jesus was the sacrificial lamb, that's why we, we come, and as we come, to observe the Lord's Supper, we look back, of what Jesus has done, in history, and what Jesus has done, in my life, so we purely, remember, the Lord Jesus, of what he has done, so when we come, to the Lord's Supper, if, it doesn't matter, what kind, in different ways, we, we, we celebrate, to remember, as long as, my heart, is right, okay, previously, we had, different ways, to celebrate, and I think, last, was this past,

Easter, Good Friday, we actually used, big, waffles, right, it was tasty, okay, it was good, yeah, and we actually, had a bigger cup, of juice, grape juice, as, so, but it doesn't matter, what you use, I think, it's most important, is that, how, we, celebrate, how we, remember, so in that situation, in the Chinese, missionary situation, they actually found, you know, the, the, the crutch, of the rice, at the bottom, of the pot, and, and so they, they rip it up, and, and this is, to represent, the bread, of the Western world, and, and, that was the, that, you know, you know, that, you know, that, that, what, it's rice wine, fermented rice, so they, they use those, as, because there's nothing else, in the middle of nowhere, so what do you do?

They use what they had, all right, so, because, that is the, the, the lesson, you know, to remember, the Lord, that is the most important thing, I found the missionaries, were quite clever, really, you know, how are you going to find, these sort of things, it take, months, and, and, maybe prohibited, to, to, to ship over there, even there, if they were, around, in, in, in, in, in the western world, so, it's, it's, in my heart, when we come, to the Lord's table, we do this, to remember, what the Lord has done, for me, for us, as a church, he is, our Lord, he is, our saviour, and the next look, is to look forward, okay, the Bible says, as you, whenever you eat the bread, and drink of this cup, you proclaim, the Lord's death, but, until it comes, yes, we proclaim, we remember, the, the, the death, the crucifixion of Jesus, his resurrection, but more importantly, he will return, so we, we are, when we do this, in a way, we're witnessing, we are pronouncing, we are speaking out, the Lord, he did not only die, for us, but he, one day, he will come again, and this, is our hope, you know, we don't just stay here, hang around, until we, oh, you and me,

[20 : 54] I get old, and then we die, and, and what's next, no, either I die, or Jesus comes back, we will meet him, so when we, when we, celebrate, when we, remember the Lord, in this way, drink this cup, eat this bread, we have this hope, one day, there will be, a heavenly banquet, together, not just me there, but all of us, a great feast, when Jesus comes, this is our hope, and, and, Jesus said, before he was, betrayed, he said to the disciples, if I go, I'll prepare, a place for you, I will come back, and take you, to be with me, that will also, maybe, where I am, this is our hope, he wouldn't, leave us as orphans, here, in this world, he's taken up, to heaven, he's preparing, a place for us, and as we, celebrate, as we remember, the Lord, one day, we know, he's coming back, for us, yes, there's, times may be hard,

I mean, we are, we're better off, here in New Zealand, but some places, some Christians, are brothers and sisters, getting persecuted, times are really hard, for them, they have hope, just like, we have hope, all right, so as we, participate, as we eat, the bread, and, and drink, of the cup, we know, one day, Jesus, will come back, there, there is a term, called, already, but not yet, there's the kingdom, of God, the kingdom, of God, has arrived, when Jesus came, already, arrived, but not yet, because Jesus, has not come back yet, so when Jesus, comes back, that is the, what we call, the consummation, of the kingdom, of God, that's the completion, of the kingdom, of God, when Jesus returns, and he will return, we're in this, kind of a, already, but not yet, in this kind of, an interim period, all right, as we participate, as we wait, and we trust, as we follow, as we take up a cross, to follow him, one day, he will come back, so Paul says, whenever you eat, the bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim, the Lord's death, until he comes, he will come again, this is our hope, and thirdly, look in, 28 and 29, everyone, ought to examine themselves, before they eat, of the bread, and drink of the cup, for those who eat, and drink, without discerning, the body of Christ, eat, and drink, judgment, upon, themselves, what sort of, judgment, and the judgment was, as we mentioned, some people got sick, some people, even died, no small business, you know, serious stuff, I don't know why, why, such heavy hand, upon them, we pray, God's mercy, that, you know, if, often we could, we could, fall into, this sort of, danger, but it's just, the mercy of God, that we're still here, right, how often, so what sort of, bad attitudes, we could, you know, we take the bread, and give thanks, and then, I hate my brother, I don't want to, anything to do with him, that's, that kind of attitude, that, Paul is reminding us, because of this, offense, many have fallen ill, or died, we don't want this, happen to us, we pray that, the Holy Spirit, to remind us, as we come, to, have the bread, and the drink, may our attitudes, be right, be right with him, and may we, sort, sort it right, with our brothers, and sisters, you know,

Jesus said, you want to offer, your gift, hey, if you think, you have something, some problem, relational problem, with your brother, or sisters, hey, lay it down first, go and set it right, before you offer the gift, I think, yeah, it's very, it's very, it's very sober warning, to all of us, we're not just, doing some sort of, religious formalities here, we're coming, with this awesome God, coming before this

awesome God, and also, I believe, it's not because, fearing him, punishing me, making me sick, or even, even, I die, it's not that, we should come, before the Lord, fearing that, he's not happy, fearing that he, yeah, he's not, he's not pleased, we should, we should come, and please him, and this kind of, positive attitude, that we should, make it right, with God, and, and, with one another, this is, the body, of Christ, this church, whether, we like it, or not, whether, certain individuals, we want, we, we know well, or not, this is, the body, of Christ, everyone, who is saved, who acknowledged, Jesus is his, or her Lord, and Savior, belongs, to the body, of Christ, Christ, and as we, participate, together, we need to, acknowledge that, so, if there, any, anything, we need to come, before the Lord, and asking, for his forgiveness, any grudges, upon, certain individuals, or any, not, we may not, be angry, we may not, have hatred, towards, certain brothers, and sisters, but I think, maybe, we want to think, are there any people, we're actually, indifference to, I don't even care, about his, him, or her, if, you know, this is the body, of Christ, if, if my body, if, if I, don't even care, my, my little toe, is giving me, give me, pain, ah, that's all right, don't worry about it, he's only a little toe, no, it will, one day, will, it will, affect my whole body, this is the, this is the sort of things, we need to, to, take into consideration, when we come, when we come to worship, when we come, particularly, to, observe the Lord's, supper together, we ask the Lord, to forgive us, to help us, to, yeah, to search my heart, and know, are there any sins, are there any grudges, between brothers, and sisters, that, that will, that will hurt, the body of Christ, that will eventually, bring grief, to God, look in, and lastly, look around, when you eat, you shall all eat, together, what it mean, because at that time, because it was, it was dinner time, for them, right, and, and,

[29 : 33] Christians, in the earlier days, they, they did not get a church, there's no church building, they couldn't go, to the temple, because they've been, driven out, so they would just, gather at homes, some homes, were larger, some homes, were smaller, so they just, in the city, in the suburbs, they just, Christians, they just gather, just like, some, house churches, in a lot of, persecuted, persecuted, countries, right, so they gathered, in secret places, in their homes, and, and some, some houses are better to do, they could get more people, but, because, different individuals, come from different backgrounds, so some, well, better to do people, they probably, didn't have to work, too much, too hard, so they could come early, with their, with their, good food, alright, quality food, but, there were those, and the majority, of the early church, would be, pretty poor, they need help, they need financial, assistance, so they, probably, had to work, very hard, from day, daybreak, to dusk, dawn, to dusk, and, by the time, they finished, they had to prepare, and, probably, their food, it was not as, as good, compared to those, wealthier,

Christians, the problem was, those, wealthy Christians, they came, oh, don't want to wait, for these people, it's too late, getting late, it was dark, man, you will, let go home later on, so they brought their food, and said, oh, let's eat ourselves, and for those, poor, brothers and sisters, they came, with a, with a, not so good food, and, and they found, they came out, oh, oh, food was finished, and we had, they had to own their own, ate their own food, and this is what, Paul was described, some, was gotten drunk, and some, didn't have enough to eat, so, Paul was saying, when you eat, you should all, eat together, that was actually, the practice, in the, in the early church, and, in Acts, they continued, to meet together, in the temple, that, during that time, they were able to meet, in the temple courts, but, many years down the road, couple, three decades down the road, they couldn't, right, so, that was the practice, they broke bread, in their homes, and they ate together, and carried on, in the early church, but, in Corinth, this problem was, they, yeah, they were just, everyone just do their own, did their own things, even the Lord's Supper, so, it was chaos, and, Paul was saying to them, no, this is not the way, to, to, to, to, observe the Lord's Supper, so, when you, eat, you should all, wait, wait, for one another, because this is, it's not a buffet meal, it's, it's the Lord's Supper, it's love feast, so, what does, what does it mean, to us today?

when we take the bread, and we wait to, take the cup, look around you, look around the people, in front of you, behind you, what are, maybe some of the needs, they have, what would be some of the, struggles, they're, they're going through, can I help them?

Because this is the body of Christ, I'm just, not just, caring for my own, or even my, my, my friends, whom I like, but I need to, look around, to the needs, the situation of different, brothers and sisters, if we acknowledge, this is, the body of Christ, it's much easier, to love those, whom we like, I'm sure there are people, that we don't like, I have, in this church, of course, yes, where, Jesus commanded us, to love, not to like, even you don't like, even I don't like, I still need to love, I think we need, we should differentiate that, that different theologies, different practices, different attitudes, attitudes,

even maybe, different actions, we hurt one another, we cause grief, to one another, surely, but if we acknowledge, this is, the body of Christ, when we eat, when we drink, we will, look around, there is a, a story about, during the second world war, there was a, a denomination, called the brethren, in New Zealand, they have that too, brethren denomination, have you heard about that, it's fairly similar, to baptist, but even more, more conservative, okay, and, and, and, during the world war two, because Hitler really, he commanded all the religious leaders, to unite, so that he could, control them, okay, so in this, letthrine, brethren denomination, they kind of, some religious leaders, felt that, yeah, we can go along with that, it's okay, just do, so that we can survive, it doesn't matter, [35 : 11] I mean, as long as we don't, we don't, we don't trust our gospel, but, they did actually, somehow, but the other, the other group, no, we want to, we want to stay apart, from politics, we don't want to do nothing, with, with Hitler, okay, and, obviously, those who would comply, they, they got easier time, but, also objected, times were hard, when the war were over, was over, these, brethren, church leaders, came together, and they had, grievances, towards one another, and, for those, who stayed, clean, they would accuse, you guys, you link, with the, with the devil, you know, and for those, who, who stood, in the government, with Hitler, they didn't want, nothing to do with him, so, it was, it was a, a big gap, a system, between them, and they knew it, so, what, what, what did they have to do, and, the leaders of each group, they thought, if we carry on,

I carry on, like this, and we call ourselves, brethren, right, it's very ironic, right, how could, brethren, don't care, don't care, for one another, so, they, the leaders of each group, met, in a quiet, retreat, they decided, to do, to, to meet, and, and let's, let's try to talk, but they couldn't talk, for several days, they just spent time, in prayer, and, examine, their own heart, in the light, of the Bible, Christ's command, and, they came together, and one of the, leader, said, as they came, somehow, after these, several days, in a retreat, we felt, this, oneness, between us, as they confessed, the hostility, and bitterness, to God, and, and they, just, confessed, they just, gave themselves, to the Lord's control, and this is, felt the Holy Spirit, created, this, a spirit of unity, among them, and they, they dissolved, their hatred, this was, an historical fact, happened, in the German, brethren, denomination, salvation,

I believe, in Christ, his love, can dissolve, our differences, whatever differences, there can be, because, we are, the body of Christ, so, as we gather, think about this, we are, to look back, we look forward, look in, and look around, this is, the, godly, and acceptable way, to, remember, the Lord's, supper, together.

show you one, ready for the Lord.