

Heart of Worship, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 4: The Lord's Supper: Remembering and Proclaiming

1 Corinthians 11:23–29

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This lesson carries significant doctrinal weight, because the Lord's Supper is one of the clearest places where the church's worship is shaped by Christ's own institution and the apostolic pattern. Several truths stand together here. The Supper comes from the Lord himself, not from human invention. It is a memorial of his death, a remembering, and a proclamation, a preaching of the gospel in bread and cup. It looks back to the cross and forward to his coming. And, as the rest of the New Testament shows, it is the church's weekly act of worship, observed when the disciples gather on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).

Be ready to handle two errors clearly and respectfully. The first treats the Supper as a sacrifice repeated or re-offered, as though Christ were being offered again and again. Scripture is plain that his sacrifice was once for all (Hebrews 10:10–14), and the Supper proclaims that finished death rather than repeating it. The second error treats the Supper as an occasional or optional observance, to be taken a few times a year. The apostolic pattern shows the church remembering the Lord at his table each first day of the week. Present both corrections positively: the Supper is a finished gospel proclaimed and a weekly gift gladly received, not a sacrifice repeated and not an occasion neglected.

At the same time, keep the lesson aimed at the heart. Paul's concern in Corinth was not merely correct doctrine but worthy participation: examining oneself, discerning the body, coming with reverence and love. The aim is that your students not only understand the Supper rightly but commune at the table with engaged, examined, grateful hearts. Help them recover the wonder that the death of the Son of God is set before them every week, and that they are invited to remember, proclaim, and wait for him there.

Question 1

Student Question:

Paul says he "received from the Lord" what he delivered to the church about the Supper (v. 23). Why does it matter that the Lord's Supper comes from Christ himself, and not from human tradition or church custom, and how should that shape the way we approach it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin with the source of the Supper. Paul did not design it, and the church did not develop it; it came from the Lord. The chain of delivery runs from Christ, to Paul, to the church, and on to us. The Supper is therefore not a custom we may reshape at will but an institution we receive.

Draw out why this matters. Because the Supper is from the Lord, its meaning and its place in worship are his to define, not ours. We do not get to decide what the bread and cup mean, how often the table is spread, or whether it matters. We come as receivers, honoring what he established.

Apply it to attitude. Knowing the Supper comes from Christ himself should lift it above routine. We are not performing a churchly habit; we are keeping a sacred appointment the Lord himself made with his people on the night he was betrayed.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The Lord's Supper comes from Christ himself, not from human tradition (1 Corinthians 11:23).
- Christ alone defines the meaning and observance of the Supper.
- The church receives the Supper as an institution, not as a custom to reshape.
- The Supper as a sacred appointment established by the Lord.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does it matter that the Supper comes from the Lord and not from us?
- How should that change the way we approach the table?
- What is the difference between receiving an institution and inventing a custom?

Question 2

Student Question:

Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me" (vv. 24–25). Remembering is an act of the heart and mind, not just the hands. What helps you actually remember Christ at the table, and what most often crowds your mind out of that remembrance?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Focus on the command to remember. The Supper is fundamentally an act of remembrance, and remembering is the work of the heart and mind, not merely the reception of bread and cup. A person can eat and drink and remember nothing.

Help students see what is to be remembered: not a vague religious feeling, but a specific person and a specific event, Jesus and his death for us. To remember at the table is to bring the cross deliberately before the mind, to consider what it cost and what it accomplished.

Address the crowding out. Wandering thoughts, the week's worries, the people around us, the order of service, all can elbow out the remembrance. Offer practical helps: fixing the mind on a scene from the cross, reading a passage beforehand, praying for focus, refusing to let the moment pass on autopilot.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Remembrance as the heart of the Supper (1 Corinthians 11:24–25).
- Remembering as an active engagement of mind and heart.
- The specific object of remembrance: Christ and his death for us.
- Practical disciplines that protect remembrance from distraction.

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to truly remember Christ at the table?
- What most often crowds remembrance out of your mind?
- What helps you fix your heart on Christ during the Supper?

Question 3

Student Question:

Jesus calls the cup “the new covenant in my blood” (v. 25). What is the new covenant, and how does the Supper put the blood of Christ and the covenant it sealed continually before the eyes of his people?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Explain the new covenant. The cup represents the new covenant in Christ’s blood, the new relationship between God and his people established by Jesus’ death. The old covenant was sealed with the blood of animals; the new is sealed with the blood of the Son of God.

Connect covenant and blood. In Scripture a covenant is ratified by blood. By calling the cup the new covenant in his blood, Jesus tells us that his death is what establishes our standing with God: forgiveness of sins, reconciliation, a people belonging to God under a better covenant.

Show what the table keeps before us. Every week the cup proclaims that we live by a covenant we did not earn, sealed by blood we did not shed. The Supper guards the church from drifting into a religion of self-effort by continually pointing to the blood of Christ as the ground of everything.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The cup as the new covenant in Christ’s blood (1 Corinthians 11:25).
- Covenant ratified by blood, the better covenant by the blood of Christ.
- Forgiveness and reconciliation as the fruit of his death.
- The table as a continual reminder that we live by grace, not self-effort.

Discussion Prompts

- What is the new covenant, and how was it sealed?

- Why does the cup point us to the blood of Christ?
- How does the Supper keep us resting in grace rather than self-effort?

Question 4

Student Question:

The bread represents the body of Christ “which is for you,” and the cup his blood poured out for you (vv. 24–25). When you take the Supper, do you receive it as something done personally for you, or only as a general truth? How would taking it personally change the moment?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Press the little phrase “for you.” The body was given for you; the blood was poured out for you. The Supper is not only a general announcement that Christ died for the world, but a personal assurance that he died for me.

Help students receive it personally. There is a vast difference between knowing a fact about the cross and hearing the cross address you by name. The table invites each believer to say, with Paul, he loved me and gave himself for me.

Show how this transforms the moment. When the bread and cup are received as personally given, the Supper becomes an encounter with the love of Christ, not a ritual to endure. Encourage students to let the words “for you” land on their own hearts each week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The body and blood given personally for each believer (1 Corinthians 11:24).
- The difference between a general truth and a personal assurance of Christ’s love.
- The Supper as an encounter with the love of Christ.
- Receiving the elements as personally given, not merely observed.

Discussion Prompts

- What changes when you hear “for you” at the table as spoken to you?
- Why is it easy to keep the cross at the level of a general fact?
- How can you receive the Supper more personally this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

Paul says that as often as we eat the bread and drink the cup, “you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (v. 26). In what sense is the Supper a proclamation, a kind of preaching, and what gospel does it announce every time the church observes it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Unfold the word “proclaim.” Paul says the Supper proclaims the Lord’s death. The table preaches. Without a single word, the bread broken and the cup poured announce the gospel: the Son of God died for sinners.

Show the audience of the proclamation. The Supper preaches to the watching world, to one another, and to our own hearts. Every observance is a fresh declaration that we belong to a crucified and risen Lord and that his death is the center of our faith.

Note the time stamp: “until he comes.” The proclamation has an end date. The church will keep preaching the Lord’s death at the table until the day he returns and faith gives way to sight. This lends every Supper a forward lean of hope.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The Supper as a proclamation of the Lord’s death (1 Corinthians 11:26).
- The table as wordless preaching of the gospel.
- The Supper proclaims to the world, the body, and our own hearts.
- The forward hope of the Supper: until he comes.

Discussion Prompts

- In what sense does the Supper preach?
- What gospel does the table announce every week?
- How does “until he comes” give the Supper a note of hope?

Question 6

Student Question:

The Supper both looks back to the cross and forward to Christ’s return (“until he comes”). How does holding both the cross and the coming together at the table guard your heart from despair on one hand and from drifting on the other?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Hold both directions together. The Supper looks back to the cross and forward to the coming. Both are essential, and each guards a danger. The backward look guards against despair; the forward look guards against drift.

Explain the backward guard. When sin and failure press in, the table sets the finished work of Christ before us. His death already paid for our sin. We do not commune as those earning forgiveness but as those receiving it. This guards the heart from despair.

Explain the forward guard. The promise “until he comes” keeps the church awake and expectant. We are not settling into this world as our home; we are remembering until the Bridegroom returns. This guards the heart from drifting into worldliness and spiritual sleep.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The Supper looks back to the cross and forward to Christ's return.
- The finished work of Christ as a guard against despair.
- The promise of his coming as a guard against spiritual drift.
- The table as both comfort and summons.

Discussion Prompts

- How does looking back to the cross guard you from despair?
- How does looking forward to his coming guard you from drift?
- Why do we need both the backward and the forward look?

Question 7

Student Question:

In Corinth the Supper had become an occasion for division and self-indulgence (vv. 20–22), so Paul calls them to “discern the body” (v. 29). What does it mean to discern the body, both the body of Christ given for us and the body of believers gathered around the table?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Set the Corinthian scene. Their gatherings had become occasions for division and self-indulgence; the rich feasted while the poor went hungry, and the meaning of the table was lost. Paul says they were not really eating the Lord's Supper at all.

Explain discerning the body in both senses. To discern the body is to recognize what the bread and cup represent, the body and blood of Christ, and to come with reverence. It is also to recognize the body of believers, refusing to despise or divide from those with whom we share the table.

Apply it. A church that discerns the body comes to the table with reverence toward Christ and love toward one another. Division, contempt, and carelessness have no place there. The table is meant to make us one, not to expose our factions.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The Corinthian abuse of the Supper through division and self-indulgence (1 Corinthians 11:20–22).
- Discerning the body of Christ represented in the bread and cup (1 Corinthians 11:29).
- Discerning the body of believers gathered at the table.
- The Supper as a bond of unity, not an occasion for division.

Discussion Prompts

- What had gone wrong with the Supper in Corinth?
- What does it mean to discern the body in both senses?
- How should the table shape the way we treat one another?

Question 8

Student Question:

Paul says, "Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat" (v. 28). What does honest self-examination at the table involve for you, and how can it be a means of grace rather than a source of dread or mere guilt?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Define self-examination rightly. Paul tells each person to examine himself before eating. This is not a morbid hunt for reasons to stay away, but an honest looking at one's heart, repenting of sin, and coming with reverence and faith.

Guard against two distortions. Some skip examination entirely and come carelessly; others turn it into crippling dread, as if the table were only for the flawless. Neither fits Paul. The table is for sinners who examine themselves, repent, and come trusting in Christ.

Show how examination becomes grace. When we honestly face our sin and bring it to the cross set before us at the table, the Supper becomes a means of grace, assurance, cleansing, and renewed devotion, rather than a source of fear. Encourage a regular, honest, hopeful self-examination.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Self-examination as a command for worthy participation (1 Corinthians 11:28).
- Examination as honest repentance and faith, not morbid dread.
- The table as a place for repentant sinners, not only the flawless.
- Self-examination as a means of grace and renewal.

Discussion Prompts

- What does honest self-examination at the table involve for you?
- How can examination become grace rather than dread?
- Why is the table for repentant sinners and not only the flawless?

Question 9

Student Question:

The New Testament shows the disciples gathering on the first day of every week to break bread (Acts 20:7), and Paul presents the Supper as a continual proclamation of the Lord's death "until

he comes,” a memorial of a sacrifice already finished once for all (Hebrews 10:10–14). How does this guard us against treating the Supper as a sacrifice that is repeated or re-offered, and how does it also guard us against treating it as an occasional or optional observance rather than the church’s weekly remembrance? Why is the weekly table such a gift to the people of God?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the doctrinal heart of the lesson, so give it room and clarity. Two questions deserve careful, respectful handling: how often the Supper is to be observed, and what the Supper is and is not. Lead with the New Testament evidence rather than with controversy.

On frequency, point to the apostolic pattern. In Acts 20:7 the disciples come together on the first day of the week to break bread; the breaking of bread appears to be a purpose of the gathering, not an occasional add-on. Paul writes to a church that gathered regularly and assumed the Supper as a normal part of their coming together. The pattern is a weekly remembrance on the Lord’s day. Present this positively: the weekly table is a gift, a steady, recurring meeting with the crucified and risen Lord, not a rare event we might easily neglect.

On the nature of the Supper, hold the line that it proclaims a finished death rather than repeating a sacrifice. Hebrews is emphatic that Christ was offered once for all and that his single sacrifice perfected forever those who are being saved (Hebrews 10:10–14). The Supper does not re-offer Christ or add to his sacrifice; it proclaims the Lord’s death until he comes. This guards against the idea that the bread and cup become a sacrifice repeated by the church. Handle this respectfully but plainly, grounding it in the text rather than in polemics.

Bring the two corrections together as good news. The Supper is neither a sacrifice repeated nor an observance to be neglected. It is the church’s weekly proclamation of a finished gospel, a memorial of the once-for-all death of Christ, gladly kept each first day of the week. Help your class marvel that the Lord gave his people such a steady, tangible, recurring way to remember him, and to long for the day he comes.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The apostolic pattern of weekly observance on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
- The Supper as a proclamation of the Lord’s death, not a repetition of his sacrifice (1 Corinthians 11:26).
- Christ’s sacrifice offered once for all, needing no repeating (Hebrews 10:10–14).
- Guarding against the Supper as a sacrifice repeated or re-offered.
- Guarding against the Supper as an occasional or optional observance.
- The weekly table as a gift gladly received from the Lord.

Discussion Prompts

- What does Acts 20:7 show us about when the church observed the Supper?
- How does the Supper proclaim a finished sacrifice rather than repeat one?

- Why is the weekly remembrance a gift rather than a burden?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole passage: a body given, a covenant sealed in blood, a death proclaimed, a Lord who is coming. Name one specific way Christ is calling you to a deeper devotion at his table, and one concrete change you will make so that the Supper becomes, week by week, a true remembering and proclaiming rather than a routine.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Gather the passage's great themes: a body given, a covenant in blood, a death proclaimed, a Lord who is coming. Ask students which of these has most gripped them, and where Christ is calling them to deeper devotion at the table.

Press for one concrete change. For some it will be self-examination they have neglected; for others, fresh attention and remembrance; for others, a recovered wonder that the cross is set before them every week. Move from understanding to changed practice.

End at the table itself, with Christ. The Supper is not finally about our performance but about him: his body, his blood, his covenant, his coming. Encourage the class to come next Lord's day as people who know whom they are remembering, and who cannot wait to see him face to face.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The great themes of the Supper gathered: body, covenant, proclamation, return.
- The call to deeper devotion at the Lord's table.
- Christ himself as the center of the Supper.
- The movement from understanding to changed practice.

Discussion Prompts

- Which theme of the Supper has most gripped your heart in this lesson?
- What one change will you make so the Supper is never mere routine?
- How does longing for Christ's return shape the way you come to the table?