

7/5/20 - The Lord's Supper - Statement of Faith Series

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Preacher: Brenton Beck

[0 : 00] Please join me in prayer as we get into the message today. Dear Heavenly Father, we are humbled before you to call this a worship service, as being a service of worship corporately to you. And so, Father, we pray that this time can be only fixated upon you, what you've done for us. And Father, the grace that you have lavished upon us through the blood of the cross. And today, as we switch gears and look upon our statement of faith and get into the summer season of the church, we pray, Father, for you to unite us, to be glorified in our community, in our gatherings, and all that we do. Be with all the dear families that are still tuning in on the live stream with us at this moment or later in this day, who are unable to gather. And Father, protect this congregation from this illness of COVID-19 and help to bring an end to that because we know that you can do that. We pray this in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

Like I said, we're switching gears today. We're going to be pausing in the Gospel of John, and we'll be looking at the next two weeks, our statement of faith, and a couple topics within our statement of faith that we can hone in on. Being a unique season that we're in, we usually take the Lord's Supper, the first Sunday of typical normal months other than locked down and quarantined. So, I use this time to expound upon the Lord's Supper. And next week, we have a baptism, and it will be a baptism Sunday, and we will speak on baptism.

So, today we're going to be switching gears and looking at the Lord's Supper and why we do what we do. And being through an 18-message series just recently in the book of Judges, I could imagine that that had numerous benefits in our lives, to see the sickness of sin, to remind us of God's faithfulness, and especially man's forgetfulness. Even those who have just recently, maybe within a generation or two, have experienced the intervention of God mightily through the parting of the Red Sea and Moses and the leadership of Joshua, and they just forgot.

God's people suffered from what the 90s band called Chumbawamba called amnesia. You know, that song, they suffered from long-term memory loss. And what memory loss that they suffered from?

So, while forgetting is natural to mankind, as we can look throughout history and see many cycles of forgetting, we can see and understand that if we're prone to forget, remembering, therefore, is something that we have to work at. It's something that we have to labor towards. That by remembering who God is and what God has done, has a vital role in setting the course of our lives to be fully devoted to Him because we forget. We are forgetful people. And how often we need similar reminders in our own lives. Birthdays come up. I am notorious for forgetting birthdays, so feel very special. If I remember anyone's birthday in here, I forget my own birthday. I'm not even kidding you. And anniversaries. I got an anniversary nine years coming up. Anniversaries are big days we should not forget and set those reminders. Men might want to use this time to take a look at the calendar.

[4 : 33] Or simple items like a wedding band that men wear on their fingers to remind them of something. Or maybe the framed diploma upon the wall of your house to remember your training, remember your schooling, remember your achievements. Or maybe even pictures and frames of family members so you don't forget them. You always keep them at hand within eyesight so you remember. We need these reminders in life. The narrative of Scripture is full of these reminders to the people of Israel of the mighty ways of God working and intervening within the course of their lives and even their ancestors. All throughout the Bible, God calls His people to remember. That's what the Passover was after all. It was a time to remember God's salvation of His people. And the salvation we remember is in Christ. And that's so much greater than that Passover. It's not salvation over temporal slavery or immediate situation, but it's a salvation from eternal slavery of sin. God's people need to remember that. The truth of human beings is this.

We need reminders. And who better to know this than God, our very Creator? Jesus had an understanding of the traditional link between apostasy and forgetting as well. Apostate means a letting go of or forgetting.

So an apostate is someone who has forgotten what he once was committed to. This often reminds me of a Psalm of David in Psalm 103 where he says, the very words we sang, the first song we sang this morning together corporately, bless the Lord, O my soul. And he continues, and forget not all his benefits.

Being forgetful people, the Lord Jesus Christ instituted two ordinances within the church. And the one we'll be seeing today is that of the Lord's Supper. It is very important for us to be reminded and instructed of why we do this, especially since it's been a while since we've done this.

Lest we fall into like a thoughtless routine that many churches, unfortunately, have a tendency of doing, forgetting. So as we go into the first point today, I want us to observe God's solution to forgetful people. And we're going to take this from sort of like a 3,000-foot overview in point one. We're going to be zeroing it into ground level in point two. And then we're going to get under the microscope in point three. So we're going to kind of hone in on what we're doing as a church.

[7 : 49] So the first point, a 3,000-foot overview of this is God's solution to forgetful people. This obviously has many links into biblical theology. I could stand up here and speak on circumcision and the sign of the Old Covenant and with God's people as being distinguished from others.

But some in the New Testament refer to the ordinances or sacraments. Either way, ordinance and sacraments mean the same thing. Regardless, God's solution to remind people was providing ordinances in the New Testament church to remind them. Ordinances are simply acts or rituals that hold symbolic meaning. They mean something else. They have immediate implications, but it's ultimately an inward reality of our faith. And this occurred way back, even ever since the Westminster Assembly of 1640s, where Reformed Christians have talked about the ordinances of being a sign and a seal in their statement of faith and confession.

As signs and seals, they're an outward indication of an inward reality, an inward reality of faith. Okay? And this sign is very powerful. I love how John Calvin says, the sacraments or ordinances bring the clearest promises. And they have this characteristic over and above the word because they represent them for us as painted in a picture from life. Meaning that the characteristics of the ordinances bring to life the word of God. They bring to life what we find in the word of God and God's salvation to us. We see that there are four purposes of the ordinances as God's solution to forgetful people. Number one, they represent Christ and His benefits for us.

They represent Christ and His benefits for us. Number two, they confirm our interest in Him. They confirm our interest in Him. And three, they define the gospel. They define that Christ has indeed died, rose for the forgiveness of our sins. And that definition marks out where the world ends and the church begins. There's a hard line between those two realms. And fourthly, they engage us in service to God in Christ. They engage us in service in God in Christ according to His word. They represent Christ. They confirm our interest in Him.

They define the gospel and they engage us in service to God. And today, we're going to observe these ordinances as being signs and seals. And they were used by the body of Christ to remember.

[11 : 19] And so, as I said, we're going to kind of be going from a 30,000-foot overview to ground level to a microscope. And I'm going to do this sort of systematically. It's a little bit different than an exposition, but it's more of a systematic look upon the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

And we're also going to look at Paul's instructions to the church in Corinth. We're going to be looking at some confessional resources as well to help us to construct a healthy and biblical conviction of the vital ordinances that we observe as being a body of His church. So, my aim is just that today. To construct and to refine, to construct and to refine our conviction of the Lord's Supper, as it distinguishes the church from the world and proclaims the gospel power in our lives. So, turn with me to the Bible. We're going to start in the Bible.

We will end in the Bible. We are going to be in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 first. And as you get there, within the Corinthian church, Paul begins to address this church in his letter concerning the divisions that were going on. There was a lot of division in this church. There was spiritual elitism. There was misuse of gifts. And he reaches chapter 10 in his letter. And he goes from warning against idolatry and starts to shift his focus at a certain point in chapter 10, where he goes from idolatry to our participation. And it's very, very dynamic. This is a very dynamic participation with one another. And we're going to look at this today. So, let's kind of zoom into ground level of what's going on in the Corinthian church in point 2. And there's going to be a word that you're not going to be familiar with, but we will explain it very soon. Point 2. Defining our koinonia.

Koinonia. It should be up on the screen. Point 2. There. There it is. I just proved my sanity. It is a word for all you Greek scholars in here. Look at it with me in 1 Corinthians 10, starting in verse 14. It says, Therefore, leaving idolatry behind, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

Verse 15, I speak as to sensible people. Judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread. We who are many are one body. For we all partake of the one bread. If there's one single word that jumps off the page in Paul's letter to this Corinthian church, it would be that first point, or the second point term, koinonia. That means participation. And this word that we see in our English as participation means the act of sharing in the activities or privileges of an intimate association or group.

[15 : 03] Especially used in marriage and churches. Think about that, because we're going to be expounding on that as we enter the microscope in just a little bit. This word is used and speaks of marriage in churches. The participation which Paul is instructing the church is one that visibly marks out the community of God and the commitment they have individually, personally, between you and God, but also corporately to one another. This is the participation that he speaks of.

And just as this verse talks about our oneness, being of one body, taking one bread, there's oneness in this. There's individual oneness. Oneness that when we take the wine, it represents the blood of Christ that cleanses us from all of our sins. That when we individually have this oneness with God and we take the bread, we are declaring that this represents his body, that by taking it, we declare that all Christ has achieved by his sacrificial death for us.

And we see this corporate sense of oneness as well, of one body taking of one bread, this corporate oneness with others. It's the act of partaking in this ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

We declare the grace that we extend to one another as well. As the gathered body of Christ and commitments that we have to one another. So participation declares oneness with God and oneness with others. And let's look at the participation of perpetual remembrance. And this is a term that comes out of the London Baptist Confession of Faith.

And I have it up on the screen for you. It says, The supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by him the same night wherein he was betrayed, to be observed in his churches unto the end of the world for the perpetual remembrance, and showing to all the world the sacrifice of himself and his death.

[17 : 32] Confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, and their further engagement in all duties which they owe to him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him and with one another. So furthermore, along with 1 Corinthians, what Paul is telling that church of participation, you might want to leave that up for a minute.

Keeping in mind the participation, and put on the first slide of that confession, we see that the London Baptist Confession of Faith calls us to perpetual remembrance. And in this little statement of faith, it's showing to the world the sacrifice of himself in his death.

It's confirmation of believers and the benefits thereof, which are the spiritual nourishment of believers, and also their growth in him by further engagements in their duties. And also, it's a bond and pledge of our communion with him and one another. How often we lose the wonder of the Lord's Supper?

How often we lose the wonder of the Lord's Supper and the power of the message that it holds. That when we gather for the Lord's Supper, it's something that you reprioritize in order to partake with the gathered body of Christ. When you know it's Communion Sunday, the Lord's Supper, man, I'll leave with an IV in my arm to take the Lord's Supper with y'all, because I know the message that it holds. So we should be corrected in our mindsets and reminded the Lord's Supper requires active participation, koinonia, participation. That same participation as being married to one another. It's a commitment. It's a firm commitment, and it's expressed within the church. There's no sideline warriors. There's no kind of sideline coaches or participation. This is everyone in the game in the church. There's no being kind of partakers of the Lord's Supper, just like there's not kind of being married. You're fully married. You're fully participating in the Lord's Supper and the commitments that it brings. So Lord's Supper is greater than any fancy logo that a church can have, fancier than any cool arch ceiling and lights and all this woo. The Lord's Supper is something that defines who that church is and their allegiances. Through our perpetual remembrance, we are reminded greatly of the corporate gathered sense, but also the individual sense of our individual reality and call to be in communion with God. I also want to look at this participation, the koinonia, participation of corporate commitments. So we just looked at the participation of perpetual remembrance. I want to look at the koinonia of corporate commitments. In this one, I want to look at our statement of faith, which communicates this very well. Our statement of faith, if you could put it up on the screen, says, our statement of faith describes the Lord's Supper as a means in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ, preceded always by solemn self-examination. This is what we believe, church. Again, so we should understand the level of our participation is a visual display of our individual unity with God and now corporate unity with one another. This is not just a thoughtless routine at all.

It's very important. And this is a reminder for us all that we meet Christ in one another, according to our statement of faith. That we should see Christ in one another. In order to see Christ in one another, guess what? We have to be present consistently with one another, right?

[22 : 17] It might sound a little strange, but it isn't. We should see Christ in each other's lives. Furthermore, we should be present in each other's lives consistently.

I just got a really good birthday present the other day. It was my birthday, not too long ago. Don't sing me happy birthday. Last time I said that from the screen, it just erupted in a birthday song. No, don't do that. But I went to the BMV, got my birthday presents. You know, every four years, your license expires. And, you know, I'm actually thinking about proposing to the BMV to maybe partner with Dairy Queen. Because I think, because most people go into the BMV on their birthdays.

So why don't they sell birthday cakes or something? I really think that that would be a good marketing campaign. If there's anybody on the live stream already getting the copyrights to that idea or something, I got it. It's on live stream. I beat you. So I got my birthday presents at the BMV.

And as I'm going to receive my birthday presents, I had to provide many details about what creates my identity. I had to not lie about my weight. I had to put my weight on there, the color of my eyes, the color of my hair, how tall I am, things of that nature, all these details that make me unique.

And there I have it. They print out the driver's license, and I'm on my way. I have my identity secured without my Dairy Queen birthday cake, unfortunately. But the church also has similar markings and details that make us who we are, that provide a form of identification of what we're doing when we gather. Much of the details revealed within the identity of the church are expressed in participating in church ordinances, sacraments, ordinances, whatever you want to call them.

[24 : 30] It's the Lord's Supper and baptism. And in so doing and participating in these elements and the Lord's Supper, we acknowledge our unity with God and our unity with one another, individually and corporately. Similarly, through the baptism and the Lord's Supper, we are reminded of the duties that we have to one another. This is a deep-reaching attribute of the church. This is deep characteristics of what makes us unique and our identity. So yes, there is a time of where this participation looks like repentance or confession or reconciliation, which expresses to all that we live in charity towards one another. This is far more reaching and instilling than commemoration. This isn't simply just a memorial service for a dead ancestor. This is a declaration. This is not only stating past of the grace that bought us, but it also states and declares and reminds us of the grace that we're experiencing every day we open our word and we come in communion with the Lord. We are acknowledging the grace that we receive individually as well. Because truth be told, the world is watching.

The world is watching us. Mark Dever says that the Lord's Supper makes the gospel visible in the world. The Lord's Supper makes the gospel visible in the world. And the identity of the church is distinguished upon participation in the Lord's Supper through His body and blood.

And as we go into point three, I want us to see under a microscope a transcendent sign and symbol in the Lord's Supper.

I want to dig a little bit deeper into the ordinance of the Lord's Supper because we know up to this point that this being an ordinance established to mark out the church, this marks the oneness, corporate and individual oneness. This also marks out commitment, individual and corporate commitment. But we also are looking at the transcendency of these signs as well.

Signs and seals serving greatly as a time to remind us. And I planned on taking this thing off to show you. I often think of the simple yet complicated sign and seal of a simple wedding band. Think about the simplicity in this object. It's just a ring.

[27 : 20] All it is. But the complexity and the meaning that this little thing has to the world means that my allegiance is devoted, koinonia, participation with somebody, that being my wife.

I'm just going to leave it there. I mean, especially taking the fact that men are from Mars and women are from Venus. I mean, this situation is so complex. It's so charitable to one another. It's so bearing. It's so forgiving, this relationship of the koinonia, participation of marriage. It's a sign and a seal that sets my life apart.

Let's look back at Paul in his letter back at 1 Corinthians. Only we're going to go just a little bit to the right to chapter 11 now. I want to circle back to him as he continues to address the divided church in chapter 11, starting in verse 23. A little big passage here, but bear with me.

It says in 1 Corinthians 11, verse 23, For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, also he took the cup after saying, after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 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.

[29 : 58] There's a great resource on the Lord's Supper by Broadman and Holman's NAC studies. And in this series that was written by Thomas Schreiner and Matthew Crawford, there's an exposition in there of James Hamilton Jr., and he's tasked with looking at the Lord's Supper in Paul, looking at these verses, exegeting these verses, studying these with a critical examination. And in his thesis, he says that Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 11, 17 through 34 explain that the Lord's Supper is a proclamation of the gospel made by those who embrace the gospel, meaning believers, those whose identity is shaped by the gospel. So clearly we can observe that Paul is telling us that the Lord's Supper is a transcendent reminder of what was done in the past. There's past implications, there's present implications in his words in this chapter, and there's also future implications as well. Let's look at the past for a moment in this verse. The Lord's Supper reminds us that what Jesus Christ has completed upon the cross. And this is why he told us to do this in remembrance of me. This is a reminder, church, that is good, that is nourishing to our souls as Christians, which would pull me out of a hospital bed with an IV in my arm to gather with the church to take the bread and take the juice.

This remembrance. This remembrance is not to be confused in a Catholic sense of transubstantiation, that these elements somehow transform in our mouth to the physical body and blood of Jesus Christ.

I would similarly, actually completely opposite, look at these elements as having transignification, that the significance of these elements are what's importance. Meaning that these elements of bread and wine or juice for us take on heavenly significance.

Simple, common elements. I'm sure we all had a burger or hot dog yesterday. Simple bread yesterday, but now set aside within the gathered church with heavenly significance.

Not transformative significance. R.C. Sproul says, In participating in the Lord's Supper, we meet with the living Christ, receiving the benefits of communing with the bread of heaven, and yet at the same time, we must keep ourselves from any form of behavior or distortion of this sacrament that would cause the displeasure of God to fall upon us.

[33 : 02] So as we take the bread and the wine, we hold within our hands common elements, simple elements, common to man, set aside for spiritual significance. In partaking, we proclaim the gospel within us and around us. Those are the past, what it has to do with our past implications.

Now this is also a reminder to the presence as well. Participating in the Lord's Supper is far from simply commemoration. Like I said, it's not like a memorial service that we have for our grandfather or parents. This isn't just a memorial service. This is a declaration of the presence.

Paul describes it in this passage as saying something about the present reality of that when we take the Lord's Supper, it is only after examining ourselves presently. Examining ourselves presently and evaluating what we saw in point one of our oneness with God and our oneness with one another, and also point two, our commitment to God and our commitment to one another. So we should understand that when we, our present reality and the present reminder when we approach the table of the Lord's Supper, that there is a prerequisite for participation. It is preparation. You don't just approach the Lord's table when you have disagreements, when we have sin against one another, unless we have judgment upon ourselves. Examining ourselves to be sure that we're in right relationship with God and right relationship with one another. Verse 29 says that if we eat and drink without discerning the body, look in verse 29. Don't take my word for it. Take Paul's word.

If we eat and drink without discerning the body, we eat and drink judgment on ourselves. A judgment that apparently led to the death or sickness of somebody or a group of people within the church in Corinth. Church, this is no laughing matter at all. I'm not saying that in any way it was laughing, but we shouldn't minimize the Lord's Supper as an empty ritual.

How often do we approach the Lord's table out of blind habit or maybe blind routine or ritual? So discerning the body. This is more than just recognizing what these elements say. Like, yep, I'm a sinner saved by grace. I know God's forgiven me. All the while there's this tension between person A and person B. It's not just an examination of the implications that these elements hold, but the expression of them within our corporate gathering between one another.

[36 : 06] This is a recognition of what the congregational body represents. That together, we represent Christ. Together, we mark out the gospel for the world to see.

And we see also the future reminder in this passage. Lastly, as we come to a close, we see the future reminder of this ordinance. You can recognize the future shift in Paul's words in taking the Lord's Supper because it says, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Isn't the Lord's Supper a beautiful snapshot of not only our unity with God, but with one another? And I want you to think about that for a minute.

The oneness, the commitment, the unity with God and the unity with one another. Hear me this morning. That when we take the Lord's Supper, this is a snapshot of heaven.

This is when heaven meets earth. When the church comes together, not only corporately singing songs and hearing the Word of God preached, but taking in the ordinances for the purpose of remembering for us because we are so forgetful of this. It's amazing by what our forgetfulness can do to us by this is Sunday. Think about tomorrow night after a hard day at work.

[37 : 51] Come on. Forgetfulness. This is a snapshot of what is to come, church. Our oneness and our commitment because of who is participating in this and the unity that is expressed to one another.

Every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper, it should be a celebration. We should give thanks. I'm not going to go too much in the Eucharist, but you know, we should celebrate. We should give thanks to the Lord's Supper.

We should be looking forward to the accomplishments that we are proclaiming and declaring in the Lord's Supper and taking it with one another. Our participation forecasts anticipation. Our participation, our koinonia, anticipates what's laying ahead of its final coming. It's literally a dress rehearsal for the church of what is to come. The messianic banquet awaits ahead. So as we participate, we acknowledge that it's not just a sign and seal of what's already taken place. Not any different than this. Doesn't just represent a wedding day back on July 11th, 2000, or July 16th, 2011. Sorry, Bethany.

This isn't just a commemoration of a date. I know, isn't that amazing? It's not just a commemoration of a date and a simple act, but it has present implications in what it means today and the forgiveness as I walk in the door as I just beefed our anniversary day.

But this has tremendous, deep implications that point to the present and the future as a sign and a seal of what's to come. So these are the first moments we would see you kahpani, typically, that one person being both third from about the previous years to to consider such an end for the bed, akajenigen in Spanish school institutions.

[40 : 01] Now, it's about five to see pinpoint statues of teachers playing that may not make them since generation schools of Port b Chrlàdn Wilson and African Pinterest onlineol. Oh, great! So here can be helpful here to see your journey. Now, that's someone who sees closer and closer and closer and closer is you potentially there is 000 in the subsequent ■■■■ of what happens now.

So the pastemc pressures start clicking on onto the street, and at least those 11-1 months in the tent of the wedding reception space and this is here and of the wedding pool is altijd shooting requests up