

Good morning! We have been talking this week about the Lord's Supper, also called the Eucharist and Communion. Churches have been celebrating this meal as an important part of Christianity since Jesus Himself initiated it. The Lord's Supper was the central part of Christian worship in the early church. Despite being in agreement over the importance of the Lord's Supper, churches celebrate it different ways, at different intervals and for different reasons. We saw that churches understand the nature of its significance differently, as well. As we move toward the end of our study, there is one aspect of The Lord's Supper that often gets overlooked. Let's consider it today as we read together from one of Paul's letters to the congregation in Corinth:

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. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

### **1 Corinthians 11:28-29**

Golly! Have you ever read this passage before? Have you thought much about it? It's quite a serious warning. Paul is emphasizing that receiving the Lord's Supper is serious business. It isn't just a symbolic religious ceremony---it means something and there are consequences when we take it too lightly. I don't really know what Paul means exactly when he writes, "Whoever... 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." While I don't fully understand how this works, I do understand the next part. Let's read it together: "Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself." Paul is saying here that before we go up for Communion, we need to take some inventory. If I need to repent or get something straightened out, I should do it before going forward; otherwise I will be subjecting myself to judgment.

Most churches don't make time for this but I can remember some times at one church where we were members for a number of years, where this was an important part of the Lord's Supper. We saw people get up, weeping, and head across the sanctuary to get to someone so that they could confess their sin or to get something resolved in a relationship that was failing. We could hear people weeping as they worked through their repentance. They took Paul's comments seriously---and so should we. When we are receiving the Lord's Supper we are doing business with God, not just in our own hearts but together, corporately, as the Body of Christ. When you and I receive the body and blood of Christ we must do it penitently. Let me encourage you this morning to consider this before you take your next Communion. Take time beforehand to honestly and penitently face your sin. Repent of it and then go forward to receive what God has given: the body and blood of Christ, given for you... for the forgiveness of sins!