

Group Study Guide

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH MERRITT ISLAND

A Dangerous Meal

I Corinthians 11:27-32

10.8.17

Main Point

The Lord's Supper is a beautiful and powerful part of life in Christ's church. In fact, the truth that is displayed in Communion is so beautiful and powerful, God diligently guards it. For that reason, the Lord's Supper can be a dangerous meal for those who partake in an unworthy manner.

Getting Started

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is your favorite meal?

What is the most memorable meal you have ever had? What made it so memorable?

Why do you think we often gather together to celebrate events in life with food?

We regularly use meals to spend time with those who are most important to us. What effect would disrespect and division have on these celebrations? None of us would look forward to a meal if we felt left out or disrespected. As we have seen in earlier chapters, the Corinthian church was divided in many areas. However, in these verses, Paul takes some time to specifically address issues arising from their celebration of the Lord's Supper. Paul was troubled by what he heard and wrote to remind them of Christ's sacrifice and urge them to be unified when they gathered together for worship.

Observation

Read I Corinthians 11:27-32.

Why is it important that we examine ourselves before taking the Lord's Supper?

How should believers examine themselves before taking the Lord's Supper? What should we look for?

What kinds of judgment do believers bring on themselves for not observing the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner?

Read verse 29. What is the result of not taking the time to look at your own life before taking communion?

Read verse 30. Is Paul referring here to spiritual or physical death in this verse. Explain.

Paul encouraged the Corinthians to examine themselves before they took communion. When the church is unified as they gather together, it shows the world an outward picture of the gospel. Paul ends this section of the letter with language indicating a family relationship with Corinthian believers. The church is the household of God (1 Timothy 3:15). Regardless of gender or economic status, every believer should be treated with dignity and respect.

Why do we celebrate the Lord's Supper as a church family, and not as individuals?

How does the Lord's Supper encourage biblical community? Have you experienced this?

Application

Take some time to identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How is the church gathering together for the Lord's Supper an act of worship?

How could you use the practice of the Lord's Supper to share the gospel with someone who needs to hear it? Who in your life might need to hear it this week?

Are you divided from anyone else in our church? Are there people in the body with whom you need to seek reconciliation? If so, what might your first step be?

Based on Paul's instructions in this passage, what practices could you put into place prior to taking the Lord's Supper?

Prayer

As you close in prayer, thank God for His sacrifice on our behalf. Ask God that He would make our church into a united church. Pray that He would grant deep relationships among all our members and ask that He would protect us from division and disunity. Also pray that our members would feel a sense of gratitude and honor in being a part of the body of Christ.

Commentary

11:27. Whenever people participate in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, they are actually guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. To participate in the table in an unworthy manner has traditionally been interpreted broadly to mean to participate while having unconfessed sin. The unworthiness he had in mind was

participating in the Lord's Supper in a way that failed to exhibit the unity of the church in Christ.

11:28-29. In general, the Lord's Supper should be a time of celebration in which Christians focus on Christ's honor, the church's unity, and the proclamation of the gospel. The focus should be on others, not on oneself. It is only in the preparation for the Lord's Supper that individuals must turn their attention inward.

11:30. Paul continued explaining the seriousness of violating the Lord's Supper by pointing out the judgment the Corinthians were experiencing because of their failure to observe the Lord's Supper properly. He wrote, many among you are weak and sick. Paul probably received information about illnesses in the church from messengers sent to him. Second, he remarked, a number of you have fallen asleep. Some in the church had died as a result of God's judgment against them because of their sin against the body of Christ.

11:31-32. Paul added the comment that if the Corinthians judged themselves, they would not come under judgment. In other words, if the Corinthians took time to evaluate themselves before the Lord's Supper and changed their actions based on this evaluation, God would not judge them with sickness and death.