



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Corinthians 11: 27-34

1 Corinthians

"Sickness at Supper"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Mark. As Mark indicated, we are considering the subject of the Lord's supper again. Began it last week, and we're continuing with the last half of it in 1 Corinthians 11, and we'll look at verses 27 through the end of the chapter, verse 34:

"Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world. So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment. The remaining matters I will arrange when I come." May the Lord bless this reading of His word. Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, we thank You for this time together and this opportunity we have to worship at this time, and read the texts of Scripture that we've read and consider its meaning. And I pray Lord, that we do that, You'd bless us with understanding of this very important subject of the Lord's supper, and give us clarity on it, help us to see the importance of it, and motivate us to be obedient. We recognize that it is an important subject, just from the problems that arose from those in Corinth who didn't take it seriously. So, help us to do that. Teach us. We are so inclined to become indifferent to Your word, to find importance in other things, and fill our time with

things that may be valuable but are certainly less valuable than Your word and the study of it and obedience to it. So Father, give us a sense of the importance of this, and help us to focus our attention on the things that we will study this morning, and bless us. Bless us with Your instruction. It's a comfort to know, as a preacher, that the ministry doesn't depend on the preacher, that we have a teacher in our hearts who is alive, who is real, who is a person, and who is infinite and powerful, and that's the spirit of God. We take that for granted, I know. I know I do. But that is a blessing beyond measure and beyond anything we can comprehend, that God Almighty, the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, lives within the hearts of every believer, and He teaches us. And so, we pray for His ministry, that it will go unhindered. We will not quench the Spirit. We will be sensitive to His instruction, and we'll be built up in the faith as a result of our time together. So Lord, we pray for Your spiritual blessing upon us, and then of course we seek Your blessing upon our material needs because they are great, too. In fact, we're totally dependent on You for our daily bread. We are as dependent upon You for our material needs as we are our spiritual needs. We are completely dependent upon You. We have the strength, most of us, to work. We have the diligence. We have all of that, the energy. We can begin to think that that's ours, that we manufacture it. But we're certainly to discipline ourselves and to be active and to be energetic and to carry out the work that's assigned to us, but ultimately Lord, the ability to do that is from You.

So, we acknowledge that, we pray to You because we need Your blessing in the material things of life. Some in a particular way, some need employment, we pray that You would grant them that, that You would give them the diligence to seek, and the wisdom to seek wisely. But open doors for them, and for those who are discouraged. Give them encouragement. Many have work, and yet work is hard. Sales don't come, or they dry up. Help those who are in such condition to be patient and diligent, and may they see Your hand of providence and blessing. Others are just tired, worn out from working hard. Give them strength and encouragement. And then there are those that are discouraged from the hardships of life. Give them encouragement too, and those who are sick, and those who are recovering from surgery. Lord, You know their material needs. I pray that You bless there, and give healing, and help, in all of these ways. We could go through all kinds of suggestions and needs, Lord. You know all of our needs better than we do, so we pray for Your blessing. Materially, and in this hour, and spiritually, and then again this evening.

Father, bless us as we return here to worship Your Son and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. So bless us now, Lord, as we turn our attention to Your word. We pray that You'd prepare our hearts for that as we sing our hymn and we pray that it would be useful and helpful in preparing us for our time of worship and study together. [End of Prayer] We pray these things in Christ's name, Amen.

[Message] I said at the outset when I began reading the text, that we are in an important study. I say that not because this is more important than anything else in Scripture. Every section of Scripture is important, but I think that maybe we can forget to see the importance of this or take it a little more lightly than we should. Paul's subject here is the Lord's supper, and he certainly saw this as very important. And God treats it as a matter of life and death. So, this is an important subject, important instruction that Paul gives us, and our passage this morning is actually the second part of his lesson. He has explained the meaning of the Lord's supper. He has shown the sacredness of it. The Lord's supper is a memorial. It is designed to remind us of Christ. Do this in remembrance of Me, Jesus said. It is like a portrait. It illustrates the person of Christ and His work in our salvation, and when we take it, we proclaim His death until He comes. So, it is also like a sermon.

It is a very solemn occasion, but the Corinthians failed to realize that. They had certainly failed to treat it as sacred. They were taking it in a superficial and even flippant way. They observed what is called the Agape, or the Love feast when the church would meet for a common meal, they would share a meal together. And then, at the end of the feast, they would take the bread and the wine. But the Corinthians were coming mainly for the meal and forgetting the memorial. It became an occasion for excess. It became an occasion for gluttony and even drunkenness.

The result was a lot of the poorer people got scraps, if even that. There was no love in the Love feast. Nothing sacred in the way it was observed. Certain Corinthians dishonored some of the members of the church and treated the Lord's supper like an ordinary meal. They treated the Lord's death with complete disrespect. That is serious. That is sin. And sin always has consequences. Consequences in Corinth were deadly, literally. People had become sick. Many had even died. And that became the occasion for this portion of the letter, this lesson on the Lord's supper which illustrates a principle, and the principle is that God makes the wrath of man to praise Him. God is so wise and great that He can take something bad and turn it to something good. And so, we say often, quoting Psalm 76 verse 10 that God makes

the wrath of man to praise Him, and we see an example of that here. The

Corinthians, their failure became an opportunity for some very important lessons on worship.

David and Israel were given one of those very important lessons on worship. It's recorded in 2 Samuel chapter 6 when the ark was being transported up to Jerusalem. It was a joyful occasion. Musicians were playing harps and tambourines. People were singing. They were happy. They were also careless. They had failed to follow Moses' instruction for carrying the ark. Instead of the Levites carrying it on the special poles made for that purpose, they had put the ark on an ox cart. Now, that is not untypical. Where we would always be better off if we would just follow God's instructions. But men think they know better, and think they can improve on God's ways. That is actually trivializing God's word, as though it's not always efficient, as though it's not always up to date, always relevant. God's word is always relevant. God's word is always up to date. But they, that is those contemporaries of David, thought different. Or, really, I think they just were indifferent. Just indifferent.

So often that is the problem. We're just indifferent about God's word. And so, they put the ark on a cart, and on the rough roads of that day, it became unstable. And when it started to fall off the cart, a man named Uzzah reached out to steady it. Well, we think: well, that's a good thing. He's going to steady this ark. Keep it from falling. Keep it from being damaged. And instinctively, I'm sure, he reached out. And as soon as he took hold of it, the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah and God struck him down. That's what the text says. God killed him on the spot. The celebration ceased. The people were shocked. David became afraid of God, and even angry with Him. It seemed like an example of no good deed goes unpunished.

But it wasn't that at all. What the text also says is: God struck him down there for his irreverence. Uzzah treated the ark like a common piece of furniture, like an ordinary box. It is God's throne on the earth. His footstool. It was holy, and it was not to be touched by human hands. He had no reverence for it. That should've been known, and the ark should've been respected. Uzzah had a frivolous attitude, and that was common among the people. That's clear from the fact that they were careless in the way they carried the ark. They were disregarding God's word.

So, this became a lesson for the nation. When I was young, and I think I was probably 14, I went up to the public swimming pool to get a summer pass. I was with a group of friends. We were standing in line. We were having a very nice time.

It was the beginning of vacation. Dallas Power and Light was also there about 50 yards, maybe 100 yards away working on the power lines when one of the workers accidentally touched the cable and fell to the ground dead. It cast a cloud over the celebration. But it also gave a startling reminder of the respect we must give to electricity. It is awful, awesome power. It is as deadly as it is beneficial. It cools our homes in the summer. It warms our homes in the winter. It gives light in the night. It runs our computers in the day. But no one can touch it. And we cannot live carelessly before God. Corinth was given that lesson, just as Israel had learned it a millennium earlier. God is holy, and His people must live holy, reverent lives.

Now, having said that, the Lord's supper is not a time for dread. It's a time for joy. The transportation of the ark was a time to rejoice as well. And when that situation had been corrected, and the nation again with a proper attitude, and in complete obedience, began to transport it up to Jerusalem, the nation did rejoice. That's when David danced before the ark and the people shouted and sounded the trumpet. That was a time of feasting, a time of giving gifts, a time of great happiness. That's true worship. And the Lord's supper is a time for joy. We are remembering what Christ has done for us and what He's presently doing for us, and what He will yet do for us. He saved us from eternal judgment. He's given us eternal life. He is supplying us with that life at every moment of our existence. That's why we take it routinely, repeatedly. I mentioned this last week. We're baptized once because once and for all, we're placed in Christ, and we don't repeat that. But, we are continually refurbished, refreshed, given life by Christ. Every moment of our lives, so we take that often to remind us of that fact.

Now, we should do that with great joy. And when we meet on a Sunday night, we learn a lot about ourselves by the way we respond in the hymns we sing, and the things that are said or not said, the teaching that's given or not given. You can tell a lot about the spiritual climate of this church by that meeting. We should be full of joy. We should be singing our hymns with great joy. We should be proclaiming the grace of God in a variety of ways, with enthusiasm. That tells us a great deal about ourselves. It is a time to rejoice and a time to be joyful. But it is also a solemn occasion. Whenever we take the Lord's supper, Paul says we proclaim His death. That's not a time for being indifferent or flippant.

So, Paul begins the second part of his lesson with a warning that follows naturally from the importance of the occasion. "Therefore whoever eats the bread or

drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord." Because the Lord's supper is a picture of Christ, and a proclamation of His sacrifice, those who attended are to participate in a worthy way. Now, part of the way we do that is by recognizing that we are all unworthy. We're all sinners saved by grace, every one of us. We are debtors to mercy alone. We don't deserve to be taking the Lord's supper. But that's what the Lord's supper is about. It is for sinners who are saved and who come together to remember that, to remember that we've been saved by grace. Knowing that is the ground of humility and it is the basis for the right way to approach the table, the Lord's supper.

It's those who take it without humility, without a sense of gratitude, who will be inclined to take it unworthily, with an irreverent attitude, and be guilty as Paul says. And their guilt is serious. They are like a man who tramples on the nation's flag. It's not simply mistreating a piece of cloth. In fact, the cloth and the colors aren't what's important to such a person doing that. He's dishonoring the nation it represents, and a person who dishonors the symbols of Christ's body and blood is dishonoring the person they represent. And Paul indicates he or she is taking the side of those who crucified Christ. Paul doesn't mean that these people are actually, would actually participate in a crucifixion. They are acting carelessly, not deliberately.

But, their actions have that effect. They are that bad. That serious. So, this is sobering. It should be. Indifference is that serious. So, in verse 28, Paul gives the solution to irreverence and indifference. It is self-examination. The idea is to test oneself, like a person tests metal to determine the quality of it, to determine whether it is genuine. We are to examine our understanding to determine whether or not we have a correct view of the nature and the purpose of the Lord's supper. Do we understand what it's about?

This assumes, of course, that those who examine themselves are believers. It is the Lord's supper. It's not believers' chapel's supper. It's the Lord's supper, so it is only for those who belong to the Lord, those who are joined to Jesus Christ through faith alone. No unbelievers allowed to partake of the elements. They can be there and observe, and we would hope that there are unbelievers in the congregation or in the auditorium to observe this, but they're not to partake in it. It is for those who are joined to Christ.

But the believers must examine themselves. There must be preparation before

participation. So, we ask ourselves: do we understand the Lord's table? Do we understand why we are there? Why we are doing this? Why we're taking it? Are we approaching it with thankful hearts, understanding what Christ has done for us, understanding the purpose of His death, the purpose of His atonement. These are the kinds of questions we need to ask in order to take it in a worthy manner.

Christ died not only to save His people from the penalty of their sins but to save them from the power of their sins. And the Lord's supper reminds us of that, and it should, as we think about that, think about what Christ has done for us, think about the purpose of His atonement, what it has accomplished in us. That should inspire within us, motivate within us a resolve to live obedient lives. When we have done that, when we have examined ourselves, examined our understanding of the supper and considered our motives in taking it, when we've got that right, Paul says we are to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

Paul doesn't require in any of this, that we be faultless in order to take the elements. We can't be that. That's impossible. But, we need to take an honest look at ourselves and change what we see is wrong in ourselves. The Lord's supper has a purifying function in the Body of Christ. It forces us to do some soul-searching, and resolve to make some changes when those changes need to be made. Paul explains the importance of doing that in verse 29. And what he says here is similar to what he's just said in verses 27 and 28. This is, perhaps we should say, the negative side of examining oneself. It's the consequence of not doing it, of not judging things properly. "For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly." It is necessary to judge the body rightly. Failure to do that actually invites judgment.

So, how does a person judge the body? And what does Paul mean by that phrase, "the body?" The word "judge" is actually two words in Greek. It's a compound verb. The Greeks love those kinds of words. They would put a preposition onto a verb to intensify it, and this is one of those verbs. It means something like "judge through," and it has the idea of separate: be able to distinguish the parts of a thing and analyze it well, discern its meaning. Understand it clearly and carefully, and that's what we are to do. We are to understand the body. We are to judge the body.

What is the body? I ask that question because there are different interpretations of that. Some interpret it as the Body of Christ, meaning the church,

and Paul's meaning is the Corinthians were to respect the members of the Body of Christ. They were to respect, especially, the poor members of the body. They weren't doing that. The wealthy were treating the poor as second-class citizens. They were eating up the meal and they were leaving the leftovers for others. They were to stop doing that. And that is true. Paul will make that point, but that at least to my mind, is not the likely meaning here. The meaning of the word body is given in verse 27. And that refers to Christ. And, what he's referring to here is Christ. Evaluate, judge rightly, Christ. His death, His life, His sacrifice for us, His ministry for us, through the symbols of His death and sacrifice for us in the Lord's supper.

There's no reason to think that Paul's changed the meaning here. That fits with what they were failing to do. They were careless. They were not reverencing the symbols of the Lord's body and blood. And Paul is counselling them to recognize the nature of the Lord's supper, recognize that this is different from all other meals. This isn't an ordinary meal. They were treating it that way, but they were to not do that. They were to separate it from all other meals that they enjoyed. This was no ordinary supper. It is holy. And, it is to be treated as holy. They are to judge the Lord's body. They are to judge the whole meal, the whole supper as we would judge electricity. The people judge electricity properly by valuing it properly and using it properly, but using it respectfully. They don't treat electricity like water, something you can touch, something you can play with. They treat it with great reverence if they're wise. It's the same with the Lord's supper. It is to be revered. It is not to be treated with indifference or as something that is common. Those who do that eat and drink judgment to themselves, Paul says. Which means they invite divine discipline, which is what the Corinthians were experiencing.

Paul explains that to them in verse 30. There were lots of problems, serious problems in the church. They evidently hadn't put things together, so Paul explains all of this. Their failure to reverence the Lord, reverence His supper, was the reason that they were having so many health issues in the church. Verse 30. "For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep." Physical problems can be the result of spiritual failures. Now, Paul isn't teaching that all sickness is due to personal sin. We live in a fallen world where calamity, disease, death; they are inevitable. We're all going to get sick. If the Lord doesn't come in our lifetime, we're all going to die. That's life in a fallen world.

John chapter 9 is the definitive proof that not all illness or affliction has a

spiritual cause. Remember, the disciples see this man in Jerusalem. He's blind, blind from birth, and they wonder: well, why is he blind? Whose fault was it? Whose sin was it? His, or his parents? And the Lord said it wasn't because of anybody's sin, but for the glory of God. And in the providence of God, this man had been put in this position. He had been blind from birth so that Christ could heal him, and there would be a great, glorious event through that. But, that passage demonstrates very clearly that not all illness and not all affliction is due to personal sin. But some is.

Sometimes, that happens because of sin, and sometimes God disciplines His people in this way, in a physical way. He did in Corinth. And the problem was widespread. Many were sick. A number were dead. Literally, Paul says, they "sleep," which is his way of describing a Christian's death. It's worth a comment, I think, because in the midst of this very sobering, kind of gloomy passage, there's that little light that's encouraging there, this description of a Christian's death as sleep. It describes the body while the soul is with the Lord. It suggests that the person who has died is really alive, and they are resting. That's what we do when we sleep. It's pleasant, it's refreshing, and it concludes with waking and rising. And the believer's death will end with the resurrection when the body rises in glory. The soul is at peace with the Lord. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, but the body is in the grave as one sleeping, but the day will come when the Lord returns and the body will rise to glory.

And so, Paul describes the believer's death as sleep. It's temporary. And it has a great future, a glorious future. But, these believers who sleep, slept due to divine discipline. They were still believers. They were with the Lord. That wasn't taken from them. They weren't deprived of their position in Christ. But nevertheless, their sin had brought about severe discipline: death. That's what John refers to in 1 John 5:16, as the sin unto death. That's physical death that John is talking about. We have an example of that here in Corinth.

Christians are forever forgiven. We are justified through faith and we are eternally secure. But, Christians still sin. And we are not exempt from punishment, from temporal punishment, from the discipline of God. In fact, the author of Hebrews tells us that we should expect that. It's not unusual that we would be disciplined. In fact, that is the very proof that we're children of God, that God disciplines us. Because a father disciplines his children. A father disciplines bad behavior. And when we engage in bad behavior, God disciplines us. In God's

household, that discipline can sometimes be as severe as death. It was in Corinth.

That's what happened. It's a sobering fact and it reminds us of an important fact, and that is: sin is deadly.

This again shows the value of examining ourselves because if we judge ourselves rightly, Paul says, we would not be judged. That's the way to avoid discipline. Otherwise, discipline occurs to correct us, and Paul says in verse 32: keep us from being condemned along with the world. It is used to keep us in the right way. It is used by the spirit of God to keep us persevering in the faith. Discipline is always for our good, but it's always difficult. It's never pleasant. It wouldn't be discipline if it were pleasant. We want to avoid it. So, we need to examine ourselves. We need to consider our relationship with the Lord. Is it what it ought to be? And when we come to the supper, are we walking faithfully with the Lord? Do we understand what we're about to do when we take the Lord's supper? Do we understand that supper?

And, we need to consider not only our relationship with the Lord, but our relationship with others, with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul ends his instruction with some final advice. He tells them, in effect, to get their act together, wait for all the brethren to arrive at the service, and if food is a distraction to worship and to fellowship, then eat at home. It's not necessary to have a meal at that service. What's necessary is that we take the bread and the wine. But we need to show concern for one another. That's what he's telling them. We are a family. We are a spiritual family which means we are bound together in a closer relationship to one another than with our physical family. That's not to take away in any sense the importance and the unity of a physical family. Even when we are united with brothers and sisters who aren't believers, or with parents that aren't believers, we are close to them and should be close to them. That's in the providence of God, the family that He's placed us in.

But that can't compare ultimately with the spiritual family, the church in which we are members. We are reminded of that by our Lord Himself. He, in Matthew chapter 12, was with His disciples and His family was there, and He pointed to His disciples, and He said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers." His family, His true family was His disciples, and it is you, and it is me, and it is every believer in Jesus Christ. That's our family. We will find our best friends in that fellowship. A friend that will stick closer than a brother. So, we are to stick close to them and

honor them above ourselves regardless of social status.

Now, that's what Paul is telling them to do. Have regard for your Christian brethren when you come to worship. Put them ahead of yourself. We're one. We're one family, one body. In fact, the Lord reminds us of that in the Lord's supper itself. There is one bread. There was one loaf when the Lord instituted the supper. And when He broke it on the night which He was betrayed and when He instituted that supper and gave the piece of that loaf to all of those around the table, He indicated their unity in one body. One loaf, one body. We are united.

But we are united through our union with Christ. That's what unites us. And we are united with Him and one in Him because of His sacrifice for us. We are saved because of Christ's death for us, and that is the main object of the Lord's supper: to illustrate His death for us and help us remember it. It is important that we do that routinely, even weekly. That was the custom of the early church. In fact, you go back to the very earliest days, just after Pentecost.

And Luke writes in Acts chapter 2 and verse 42: "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Breaking of bread in that statement is a reference to the bread of the Lord's supper. It's a reference to taking it. They did it daily in the earliest days of the church. Now, that later became a weekly observance. We know that because in Acts chapter 20 and verse 7, Luke wrote that the Christians gathered on the first day of the week, on Sunday, no longer on Saturday but on Sunday, to break bread, to observe the Lord's supper.

But, why so frequently? One day a week is not as frequent as every day, but one day a week is quite frequent. Why so frequently? Because it is vital to our spiritual health that we remember the Lord and His sacrifice for us. It is vital, lest we forget and drift. And if we do forget the Lord, and if we begin to forget about His atonement and the significance of it, and the meaning of it, we will certainly drift.

Now, it's sometimes objected that if we do it too frequently, it will become routine and lose its effectiveness. The mystery, the power of it, will become lost in the routine of it. Well, the person who thinks that way, they should ask themselves: is that true prayer? Should we just pray four times a year? What about Bible study? Would Bible study be more effective if we just did it four times a year? Obviously, that's not the case. We don't pray enough. We're to pray without ceasing. We don't read our Bibles enough. Observing the Lord's supper often, weekly, doesn't make it

too familiar, or commonplace. That's not the reason it is commonplace with us if it is. What makes the supper routine or dull is a dull spirit. And that is a problem.

We don't have a problem here on Sunday nights with gluttony, and drunkenness. If you've taken the Lord's supper, you know that. But, what we do have a problem. But, what we do have a problem with is indifference. And I'll confess that. It becomes a routine, but that's not the problem of having it frequently. That's just a problem of the heart. We could have it four times a year and that's all, and you could come with the same attitude, be indifferent. That's a problem of the heart, and the solution to that is examining ourselves and the meaning of the supper and the reason that we take it. It is recalling who the Lord is and what He has done for us that He has saved us from our sins, that He's made His children of God, and that He has given us a glorious future. And that future is certain. And the Lord's supper reminds us of that as well. We are to do it until he comes, which reminds us that this is going to end someday when He returns, and He is certainly returning. So, we're reminded of that as well, as we take the Lord's supper.

So, while it looks to the past and also looks to the future, and reminds us that there is a kingdom to come, that is our hope. Our hope is not in this world, and that's what we're to be living for. And so, if we're taking it properly and we're really understanding what we're doing, if we're doing it in a worthy manner, that is with a proper understanding, it reminds us: don't be a time surfer. Don't live just for this world. Live for the world to come.

The Lord's supper is important because it gives us perspective. It reminds us of what is important, and it purifies. It encourages correction. It's the right way to begin the week. It is a solemn occasion, but there is nothing in this passage that should make us afraid to take the Lord's supper, to come to the Lord's table as a kind of gloomy experience. Charles Hodge, the great Princeton theologian of the 19th century wrote: "We're not called when we come to the Lord's supper to Mount Sinai covered with clouds and signs of wrath, but to Mount Zion where all is love." And that's true. It's a place where we recall all that Christ has done. It's a place where we are nourished by coming to it. It's a supper. A supper is a place where we're nourished physically. And this is a supper where we're nourished spiritually. And if it's a good supper, we enjoy it, and we should enjoy this act of remembering and worshipping the Lord.

That's important to remember as we go through this text. It's a time to rejoice

and be joyful. But, we will be missing one of the main points here if we don't recognize the gravity of it. The Corinthians got a hard lesson in that, as Israel did in the days of David and Uzzah. It is a solemn time. Years ago when I was in seminary, I decided to read CS Lewis. He was the most popular Christian writer at the time. He was frequently quoted, and I had read little or nothing of his work. So one summer, I decided I'm going to read some of his books, and I read a number of his books. Among the books I read were the children's story, "The Chronicles of Narnia." At the time, I'd never heard of them. They're so popular now. Everybody knows about them. But, you know, the story about the English schoolchildren who enter another world through a wardrobe.

In the first book, when they first come to this land of Narnia, they began to learn about the characters of that land, and of course there are animals who talk. And one of the characters is a beaver. And the beaver tells them about this lion who lives in Narnia named Aslan, and Aslan of course is a picture of Christ. He represents the Lord. The children are curious about this lion and they ask: is he safe? And the beaver answers, "Of course not, but he's good." Now, he is safe. Proverbs 18 tells us he "is a strong tower," and everyone who runs into that tower is safe.

But I know what Lewis meant. The Lord is the lion of the Tribe of Judah. He is God Almighty, the voltage of His power is unlimited, and it could liquidate us in a moment. That's true. He can simply think us into oblivion, in a moment, and we're in His hand at every moment. In fact, Paul told the Athenians that they and he, all of us, this whole universe, lives and moves and exists in Him. We're dependent upon Him at every moment, and He is infinite in His power. He's unlimited in His power.

And yet, all of that power is for us, not against us. This one who is the Almighty loves us and He only blesses us. Even His discipline is a blessing. Even that discipline in Corinth, it was so harsh, so difficult, so hard, so final, was a blessing, ultimately for those who suffered. So, everything about our Lord, his intention for us, His power for us. It's all for us. It's all for our blessing. And if we come to the Lord's supper, and we fellowship with the Lord at the Lord's supper, we will be blessed.

Now, I can't tell you after each Sunday evening how I've been blessed. And do I feel blessed and do I feel like I've progressed a bit? No. I may be able to tell you on some occasions when that happens. Other times, maybe not. But I can say this: based upon the instruction that's given to us: if we come, we will be blessed,

nourished, built up in the faith. Whether it's perceptible or not, we will be blessed. And it is a blessing to come, and it's what the Lord has asked us to do. He wants us to come to this table. He's invited us to come. It pleases Him that we do it, that we come and have fellowship with Him by remembering Him. And He'll bless us and build us up in the faith through that.

But of course, that invitation assumes that the person who's invited is a believer, because it's only for the believer in Jesus Christ. Those are the ones who are blessed. We take the bread and wine. They remain that. They are a memorial, not magic. They're good only for the believer, but they do give a sermon to the non-believer. And the sermon to the non-believer is: this is about salvation. This is a picture of the way the sinner is saved. Salvation is through the person and work of Christ alone. It is through taking Christ as savior, spiritually dining on Him through faith, taking Him in by believing in Him. His death paid for sin, and all who believe in Him are forgiven.

So, if you've not believed, believe in Christ. Trust in Him. The moment you do, you are forgiven completely and you're saved forever. And then worship Him. May God give us a heart to worship and serve the Lord. Do so faithfully. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we thank You for this text of Scripture that Paul has given us. It's a text, really, that came out of a great tragedy in that church, a tragedy that the people brought upon themselves through their indiscretion, their excess, their irreverence, their indifference. They just didn't take things seriously, and worship is serious. The Christian life is serious. Help us to remember that, and to live wisely, reverently before You, and to worship You in that way. Bless us greatly as we do. We thank You for sending Your Son into this world. We thank You for what it is that we remember in the Lord's supper. Your Son, His incarnation, His self-sacrifice for us, and the life that You've given us –