



BEACON

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The Lord's Supper Observed *Lester Kamp*

We recall the words of Paul in Galatians 1:6-7:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

Notice carefully that deviation from the pure Gospel of Christ is removal from the "grace of Christ." There is **not** another Gospel, a Gospel by which we can be saved by God's grace (Rom. 1:16); there is only one Gospel! Everything else is a **perversion of the Gospel**. Some perversions of the Gospel occurred in the first century, and inspired writers addressed them. One such perversion involved the Lord's Supper in the Corinthian church. The inspired Paul responded to their erroneous manner of partaking of the Lord's table. Many of the same errors from that day and time are being advocated by change agents in the church today.

Reverence and godly fear should pervade our lives and worship as Christians. Hebrews 12:28 reads, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Pause to reflect upon the significance of this. Reverence for God and respect for Him and His Word should guide our worship. Bear in mind also that Jesus clearly told us that we must worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). We have properly emphasized in times past the

need to worship God according to the revealed truth, which is the Word of God, and we will continue to do so. We should also realize that acceptable worship also depends on the proper spirit, attitude, and demeanor of the worshiper. In Matthew 6, Jesus discusses some God-ordained acts which were not pleasing to God because of the wrong motives and demeanor of those people involved. Surely, we must not only realize that the acts must be authorized, but also that the proper spirit of the worshiper is also essential.

Some time ago a *mainstream* church had a series of sermons regarding the observance of the Lord's Supper. This series was described in their bulletin as follows:

"The main point of the series is that the Lord's Supper is a table, not an altar. This has significance for the **form** and **function** of the Lord's Supper. It is a communal event of joyous **celebration** at a table rather than a **somber, sad** moment at an altar." The series would encourage revisioning the table along the lines of table fellowship (where joy, **interaction, and fellowship** are highlighted) rather than maintaining an "altar" **atmosphere of subdued somberness and silence....** While not forgetting Calvary, this meal celebrates its outcome and **sees life rather than death** as its intention.... Jerusalem and Corinth were taught to be serious about the Lord's Supper as "**communion**" (i.e. **fellowship**)

rather than insulation. So why should we abandon the former for the latter?

The “unworthy manner” of participation in the communion at Corinth was **not that they were eating in the context of a larger meal**—something that appears to have been customary for the earliest Christians—but according to the above named church they were eating by social strata. The wealthy were gorging themselves, while the poor went hungry. The Lord’s Supper originally was a “supper” **rather than a mere token of food**. And it was a time for togetherness, affirmation, and love. The “unworthy manner” at Corinth was **not noise, movement, and intrusion**; to the contrary, **it was the silent treatment** of some toward others and their failure at “discerning the body” in one another. If we eventually learn to do this supper “in remembrance of” our Lord, we will more nearly **abandon stillness and introspection** for the kind of worship heaven experienced at the sight of the once-slain Lamb of God now alive and standing [emphasis added, LK].

It is obvious from this quotation that the practice in partaking of the Lord’s Supper in that congregation is about to change radically, that they are trying to justify this radical change by “wresting” the Scriptures, and that some basic terms are redefined and given meanings which are radically different from that which is commonly accepted. There, the Lord’s Supper will be a meal and not just “a mere token of food.” In that congregation, there will be an atmosphere of “noise, movement, and intrusion” rather than silence during the Lord’s Supper, and they will “abandon stillness and introspection.” No longer will there be “subdued somberness and silence,” but instead “interaction” among the participants because it is “communion,” which to them means “fellowship,” which apparently does not mean “joint participation” but rather conversation, laughing, and eating a meal. The problem at Corinth, according to the preacher of that “mainstream” congregation, was not mixing a common meal with the

Lord’s Supper, but only “social strata” (i.e., the overeating of some and the hunger of others).

There, the Lord’s Supper is about the Lord’s resurrection and not about His death. Brethren, this is not what the Scriptures teach—this is a perversion of what the Scriptures teach—it involves the same perversion which Paul specifically condemns in 1 Corinthians 11! Let us look again at what Paul said there: Verse 20, “When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord’s supper.” The latter part of this verse means that they could not eat of the Lord’s Supper because of the way (manner) they were eating. That is why Paul told them that if they were coming together to eat a meal, they had houses where they could eat a meal (11:22). It was not just that they were not showing proper concern for one another; it was that they were confused about their purpose for being together in the first place. Paul then recalls the Lord’s institution of this memorial. He noted that Jesus gave thanks and broke the bread and told them, “this do in remembrance of me” (11:24). Similarly, He gave the apostles a token of His blood (11:25). If the records actual institution of the Lord’s Supper is also consulted, it will become obvious that there is a distinction made between the meal and the memorial that Jesus said would be in the kingdom.

In verse 26, Paul tells the brethren at Corinth that “ye do shew the Lord’s death.” The memorial was not meant to emphasize Christ’s resurrection. This is a time to think (meditate) on the death of Jesus on the cross and the significance of His death for Christians today. “[T]ill he comes,” in that same verse, suggests the permanence of this institution. There will be no new supper; there is no need for another. This memorial will remain until Jesus comes in judgment. In verse 27, Paul goes on to emphasize the possibility of partaking “unworthily.” Note that this is an adverb of manner. Paul is saying that the manner which one partakes of the Lord’s Supper can bring condemnation or approval upon him. We need to be care-

ful in the way we partake. Damnation comes upon those who fail to discern the Lord's body (11:29). In that *mainstream* church, they think that this was a failure to recognize the Lord's body in one another.

Certainly, the church is the Lord's body in some contexts, but notice here that, in this context, Paul referred to the bread as "my body" (11:24). In this context, the body is primarily referring to the bread as part of this memorial. These brethren at Corinth were failing to discern the significance of the Lord's body in the Lord's Supper. Why? Because they were not distinguishing the bread of the Lord's Supper from the bread

of a common *fellowship* meal. There is nothing in this text encouraging conversation (interaction) among the participants at the Lord's Table. In fact, in this text, Paul emphasizes the very thing that is condemned in the previously quoted *mainstream* bulletin article—silent, somber, self-reflection! Note Paul's words: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup" (11:28). Shall we *revise* the Lord's Supper? Absolutely not! Let us take the *vision* (i.e., the pattern) given to us by inspiration and "learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written" (4:6—ASV).

Aurora, CO

Gospel Meeting with Gilbert Gough

Lessons available on the website.

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

"I'm Gonna..."

Tim Smith

Little Bill was a good boy. He loved his mother, obeyed his father, and respected his elders. He was in Bible Class almost every time the doors were opened. He seemed to enjoy himself, while always paying attention and working his lesson.

As he reached the time in his life when he knew the difference between right and wrong, everyone expected him to obey the Gospel. There was even some talk that he might be a preacher. At the least, all expected him to teach Bible class and maybe lead singing. We knew he was gonna...

A year passed, and he still had not obeyed the Gospel. It was a bit troubling, but the age of accountability is a hard thing to determine; everyone was sure he was gonna...

When he turned fifteen and still had not obeyed the Gospel, one of the elders and the

preacher went to see him to talk to him about his soul. They learned that he was involved in football and baseball and was active in a music group. He also had a part-time job. They told him that they believed he was old enough to become a Christian. He assured them he was gonna...

He got his drivers license at the age of sixteen and was terribly excited! He had saved most of his earnings from the part-time job he worked and took the savings to the local car lot and purchased a used car. How free he felt! His grandfather spoke to him about obeying the Gospel. He said that he was gonna...

The funeral home was full—the line was all the way out to the parking lot. He was gonna...but he never did. He did not live long enough.

Deceased

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Beacon

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Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Linda Parks

Please Remember

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together for October has been canceled because of Hurricane Isaias.

Weekly Services

Sunday

Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley
Michael Hatcher

Minister: Bill Busch
Tim Cozad