

XXIX. The Holy Spirit in Biblical Perspective
Led by the Spirit
“The Holy Spirit, the Lord’s Supper and Thanksgiving”
I Corinthians 11:23–34
Dr. Harry L. Reeder III
November 20, 2016 – Morning sermon

We will be looking at I Corinthians 11 which are wonderful words of institution. Now let’s look at I Corinthians 11:23–26 which says [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, [24] 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.” [25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” [26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

For those who have recently become Christians with your credible profession, the way you have been discipled and publically professed your faith, one piece of the life of the church that is wide open to you now is to come to the Lord’s Supper because you now have the spiritual ability to examine yourself and come in a manner worthy of the Lord. We are never worthy but we can come in a manner worthy. We have the Lord’s Supper ten times every year and we always announce it so you can be prepared to come in a manner worthy. When we do this I will always preach in direction with the Lord’s Supper. In this study we get the chance to unite our theme of being led by the Spirit and the week of Thanksgiving with the Lord’s Supper as you will read momentarily.

We don’t do the Lord’s Supper at every service where it becomes something that is just repeated or added on nor do we do it seldom. We do it often but when we do it we gear the worship service to that point. So we’re glad you have professed your faith. Always be prepared not only each week for the Lord’s Day but you can also prepare your heart for the Lord’s Supper for this is a wonderful gift from God for renewal and revival of your soul every time we come to the Table so that we can go away for the better and not for the worse but coming in a manner worthy of the Lord.

I have had the privilege to serve three congregations of which I’m everlastingly thankful to God and would say so this week. My first congregation was in Miami, Florida. My second congregation was in Charlotte, North Carolina and my third one is here at Briarwood. Briarwood has had a piece of all three because it was Frank Barker from Briarwood who called me to Miami and to send me to Charlotte. Then I was asked to come to Briarwood in 1999 so this church has been a big part of my ministry.

When I was in Miami there was a true story of a man who people called ‘Old Ed’ who could be seen every Friday morning on a beach in Miami carrying a bucket of shrimp being surrounded by myriads of seagulls. He would feed them the shrimp and talk to them. He said the same two words every time he gave the seagulls some shrimp. Who was ‘Old Ed’ and what did he say? I’m going to tell you at the end of this study and you’ll see how it relates to what I will share in this study.

We have been in a series this year of being led by the Spirit of God and we are now in a week of Thanksgiving with a day of Thanksgiving coming and we're at the Lord's Supper so I'd like to pull this altogether in this way for you today. I believe that Thanksgiving is one of the glorious opportunities for us to display to this culture the transforming, life-changing power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I believe the Lord's Supper is an instrument that brings our focus to it as well as worship every single Lord's Day. We live in a culture that is not only in a death spiral but in a as the psychologists would say, a narcissistic culture, meaning life is all about me.

In fact, it has even crept into the contemporary church. The contemporary church today no longer really functionally has the first catechism question which is 'what is the chief end of man, why did God make, save me and sustain me?' The answer is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Functionally, not only in the culture, if they give any nod to God even in the contemporary church it has become what is the chief end of God and the answer is to make me happy because it's all about me. This is the age where everybody gets a trophy, a certificate, entitlement, an award where it's all about me. It's where people think they deserve to go through life without any adversity in anything – family, business, country. That has absolutely penetrated our culture – self-promotion, self-absorption, self-gratification and self-propagation.

Not only can we confront the culture of death with the sanctity of life as we value life, not only a culture disintegrating by showing the unity that Christ brings between people, not only can we develop marriages as this culture is diminishing marriage and attempting to redefine it with fabricated definitions, not only can we say to the world that sexuality is a great gift from God that belongs in a particular place that God has granted it, not only can we imperfectly but consistently make that presentation to the world but in a culture that says it's all about me, we can be in contrast because we become less, God becomes more and the evidence is gratefulness and thankfulness. We are not a people of entitlement that take for granted and presuppose that everything is about us. We realize the only thing that we deserve is the judgment of God. Can you believe what God has done for us – and we give thanks.

Instead of playing the role of cynic in life over everybody else in judgment we diminish ourselves in life. The only people we're really examining is ourselves and the only One we want to exalt is the Lord our God with thanksgiving in our hearts. We will enter His courts with praise and His gates with thanksgiving. The way to get to seeing yourself less is to see how big your God is. When you get God-sized from His Word then we get sized where we ought to be in giving praise and thanksgiving to that God. Less self and more God will be evidenced in gratefulness and thanksgiving. I believe the Lord's Supper is very uniquely gifted to help us here with this.

The Lord's Supper is a divinely designed opportunity to display the Holy Spirit empowered blessing of Thanksgiving in the life of each and every believer. In other words, God is not only the worship service to have thanksgiving all through it but there is an element designed to be incorporated into worship services called the Lord's Supper and embedded in that element is the call to thanksgiving, a model of thanksgiving. In fact, you start off with the Christ at the Lord's Supper and His thanksgiving as He shows us thanksgiving. This Christ is about to sit at this Table for the first Lord's Supper and He is going to break bread and then give it. Then He is going to send the cup. This Savior will give the bread and the cup and in a few moments we are going to follow Him.

We will give the bread and the cup and we will receive it. Then you will give the bread and the cup to each other. He then broke it and we'll do the same. He did eat the bread and so all who know Christ will eat the bread, broken and given to us. He would then drink from the

cup and we will drink from the cup but the first thing He did was something He continually did through all of His life and that was He gave thanks. Interestingly, He gave thanks for the supper that represents what He was about to do and what He was about to do He would rather not do but would earnestly desire to do.

So did He not want to do it or did He earnestly desire to do it? Yes. I know He didn't want to do it because in praying before He goes there as His capillaries are going to burst and He'll sweat blood in anticipation of it as He cries out 'If there be any way let this cup pass from Me' yet He says 'I have earnestly desired to save My people from their sins.' It is written of Me in the Book, I delight to do the will of My Father to save His people from their sins. He is now giving thanks not only for the Supper but for what the Supper will and does point to that He is about to do.

Now will we who will follow Him in breaking and giving will we follow Him with a life of thanksgiving that shows up in a gathered worship service and when we leave the worship service for life worship so that thanksgiving will be noted among God's people? This is not self-absorption but it is self-denial and God-absorption. One way we exalt Him is in giving thanks with a grateful heart. When you have thanksgiving as a hallmark of life there are three areas it will show up in.

The Christian at the Lord's Supper following the Christ at the Lord's Supper in giving thanks as a primary but not exclusive evidence of the Christian life will first give thanks for our glorious salvation. If you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior then there was a time that you were spiritually dead in the tomb of sin. When we were dead in our trespasses and sins God caused us to be born again to a living hope. You needed Him but you didn't want Him. He wanted you but He didn't need you yet He saved you. What a glorious salvation that is ours!

We were blind and helpless. We weren't sin sick but sin dead. We were hopeless and nothing or nobody could save but it says in Ephesians 2:4-7, [4] *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—[6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.* He gave us a new heart in which He has written His law upon.

He gave us a new record where He wiped clean the old record of sin with the blood of Jesus and written to perfections with His righteousness. So we're not only pardoned and forgiven because our sins have been paid for but we're accepted in the beloved because we're clothed with the perfect righteousness of Christ. We also received a new perspective because once we were blind and now we see for He has given us eyes to see and ears to hear. He also gave you a new family for you have brothers and sisters in Christ and God as your Father. His Son is your Savior, Redeemer, Friend and Lord. He also gave you a new life for if any man be in Christ he is a new creation, the old has passed away and the new has come. He has also assured you of a new home and His Son is preparing that place for you so that where He is there you will be also for all eternity.

Please understand this is a glorious salvation that we didn't deserve. We were not pretty good people that needed some religious help. We were rightly under the judgment of God. We couldn't do anything about it and we didn't want to do anything about it but God did something about it. The wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life (Romans 6:23) so why would we not give thanks for our glorious salvation and stay amazed at grace?

Then we give thanks for our gracious situation. We are in an amazing situation in God's providence where He has granted us to live and what He has granted all around us. If you know Christ you are a saved sinner growing in grace. You will grieve the Spirit and then you will repent. You will grow more in grace as you go through this broken world and face adversity. I know what we're going through but I also know Who is going through it with you. I also know that there is nothing coming that He isn't orchestrating from ashes into roses. He also draws straight lines with crooked sticks. He also causes all things to work together for good for those who are called according to His purpose. He didn't say all things were good but that He would work them for good.

He also tells us to give thanks in all things. He didn't say to give thanks for everything but in everything give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (I Thessalonians 5:18). He isn't just the Lord of blessings but He is the Lord of the trials. He has brought these trials so that you and I will know how to trace the rainbow through the rain of God's kindness and grace in the midst of a broken world yet He is relentlessly and unstopably is bringing us to glory.

Thirdly, we have a great Savior! He is unstoppable and He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6). Praise His Name forever for He says that He will be with us always. I love what it says in Revelation 1:5b, *[5] To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.* He has loosed us from our sins and loves us into eternity. He has delivered you (past tense) for there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. The present tense is that He loves you and He will go on loving you even when you falter He'll bring you back from the pig trough because He will not stop the work He is doing in you. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

We have a personal relationship with Him and that is why Paul when he is about to die doesn't say 'I know what I have believed' although he had a lot of good stuff he believed. He didn't say he knew when he believed either yet he had a great conversion experience and a strong faith. He said 'I know Whom I have believed and He is able to guard what I've entrusted to Him against that day' for it is a personal relationship we have with our God who has made you right for Him and who lives right within you and will bring you to glory. So we will give thanks in our glorious salvation, our gracious situation and in and for our great Savior!

So here is your takeaway. Christians give thanks in the Lord's Supper and for the Lord's Supper as it insistently reminds us that giving thanks is both an essential and an evidence of the Holy Spirit empowered life. Do you want to know who the Holy Spirit is working with? It those who say 'no' to narcissism and 'yes' to Jesus and they are not going to refabricate Christianity into another self-help religion. They will see Christianity for what it is. For me to live is Christ and to die is gain for Christ is our life. Christ is our life because Christ has given us life. Thank Him forever. Thanksgiving is the element and evidence of the Holy Spirit bringing us to Christ.

Now back to 'Old Ed.' He had a bridge named after him. It is the bridge you go over to get to the beach where he would feed the seagulls. It is called the Rickenbacker Causeway. Old Ed was at one time young Ed. He was the first ace pilot in United States history during World War I. He was the great Captain Eddie Rickenbacker with many medals that he had received. One day he was shot down in the Pacific Ocean and with his expertise he kept all his men alive as all eight got out of the plane and into a life raft. One the eighth day all their food and water was gone. Eddie called them together and said 'let's worship and call upon the Lord.' When they finished their worship service the men went to sleep to conserve their strength and

Eddie leaned against the life raft and listened to the lapping of the waves to the raft. He had consigned himself to whatever the Lord wanted to do.

He laid back, pulled his hat over his eyes and then felt something on top of his hat. He reached up and caught a seagull. He fed his eight men with it and with pieces left over they used that to catch fish to eat until many days later when they were saved, even as the Lord would bring the rainstorms for them to drink. He also started Eastern Airlines and a few others things as well but the one thing he made sure of was that every Friday he went and gave shrimp to seagulls. When the seagulls would take the shrimp from him he would say 'Thank you.'

Our God has saved us. Enter His courts with praise. Walk into His gates with thanksgiving. He is also using His people in your life. Encourage them and give thanks. Don't be the critic over them. Be the encourager alongside of them and may the world see a people not consumed with ourselves but overflowing with praise and thanksgiving. Let's pray.

Prayer:

God, would You prepare our hearts to come to this Table where You model for us first giving thanks. Would You allow us to give thanks with a grateful heart even as I give You praise for Jesus and pray in His Name, Amen.

Power Point

The Lord's Supper is a divinely designed opportunity to display the Holy Spirit empowered blessing of Thanksgiving in the life of each and every believer.

The Christ at the Lord's Supper

THE CHRISTIAN AT THE LORD'S SUPPER

I. Our Glorious Salvation

II. Our Gracious Situation

III. Our Great Savior

LIFE TAKEAWAY

Christians give thanks in and for the Lord's Supper as it insistently reminds us that giving thanks is both an essential and as evidence of a Holy Spirit empowered life.