

BEIRUT

Most if not all of you have seen the news this week of the explosion in Beirut, Lebanon. There is a 2-year-old sister church to us in Acts 29, our planting network, mere blocks away. City Bible Church. Their pastor, Marwan, and his family are fine, they were actually out of town during the blast, but their building has been destroyed. Here are some pictures of their facility.

5 SLIDES

We are partnering with Acts 29 to help City Bible Church assist with the essential food, shelter, and medical needs of their members and neighbors and to re-build a church facility from which to minister to their body, neighborhood, and the city around them.

If you’d like to join in donating to this cause, please go to **SLIDE** fathomchurch.org/Beirut and that will take you to a giving portal from Acts 29.

Would you join me in praying for City Bible Church and their ministry in Beirut?

INTRODUCE

BLANK SLIDE

Well, good morning church! If I haven’t met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I’m the Lead Pastor here.

If you’ve got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. 1 Corinthians 11. That’s where we’re going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to 1 Corinthians 11.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-19

[17] But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. [18] For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, [19] for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

INTRODUCTION: GATHERINGS

Now, chapters 11-14 are really a section of this letter about Paul's thoughts on church services, or gatherings on Sundays.

Paul is addressing their worship gatherings.

- And he'll talk about spiritual gifts,
- and relationships,
- and prophecy,
- and he'll critique those speaking in tongues without interpreters,
 - you know who you are...

but he's addressing the gathered church in the next few chapters.

And Paul's first real stab at the church gatherings is what we just read in verse 17: **when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse.**

Those are not the words you want to hear from the guy who wrote most of the New Testament...

- *"Yeah, when you gather as a church, it's really bad..."*
- *You're divided about a whole bunch of stuff!"*

EXPLAIN: WORSHIP

So, hear me here: **we can worship wrongly!** There are prescriptions for what we do when we gather. And we can do it wrongly.

So, real quick, what are we supposed to do when we gather? What are the elements that are supposed to make up a Christian worship service? Well, let me list off some elements.

1 Corinthians 14 says—**When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.**

- So, we have hymns, we sing.
- A lesson, so a sermon.
- A revelation, so a word from the Lord for his people.
- A tongue, we'll get into that in a few weeks.
- But all is done for building up, or edification.
- These are parts of the gathering.

Ephesians 5:19–20 says—**[Address] one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

- So, singing again, is a part of gathering.
 - Anyone love to sing in church? See, it's biblical!
- Also, giving thanks...so, prayer.

Acts 2:42 says—**And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.**

- So, the Apostles teaching...that's the Bible, for us today. Ok?
The scriptures must be present for a worship gathering.
- Fellowship...so, community is a part of worship gatherings.
- The breaking of bread...that's a reference to the Lord's Supper.
- And prayers...

Later in the book of Acts. Acts 20—**On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.**

- So, on the first day of the week, so, Sundays...
- They broke bread...communion once again.
- And Paul spoke until midnight...
 - long sermons! It's biblical, y'all!

1 Thessalonians says—**Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.**

- So, we greet one another...
 - we forego the kiss part...
 - and all the single dudes were bummed!
 - It's like, "I'm going to the kissing church!"

1 Timothy 4:13 says—**Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.**

- So, reading scripture, teaching & preaching the word.

So, there's a lot! I mean, I could go on, but let me sum it up:

- singing,
- lessons,
- revelations,
- tongues,
- interpretations,
- giving thanks,
- teaching,
- fellowship,
- the breaking of bread,
- prayer,
- prolonged speech,
- holy kisses,
- reading of scriptures,
- exhortation...
- and that's not even an exhaustive list!

So, there are lots of things that churches CAN be doing in their gatherings.

But here's my question: based on the churches you've been at in your lifetime, what element on that list is the MOST important?

- Prayer?
- Singing?
- The reading of scripture?
- Long sermons?

It depends on the church...right?

ILLUSTRATION: COMMUNION

But, you see, historically, the center point of the gathering of Christians was actually the celebration of the Lord's Supper, sometimes called Communion or the Eucharist.

And I've told you, but when I visit churches, communion is the wild card. Right? Cause every church does it differently.

- Is it gonna be the rip and dip?
- You know, one loaf and one cup. Rip and dip...
 - Which is gross, unless you're first up! Right?
 - You ever been at a rip and dip church
 - and you get up there
 - and the loaf's all matted down...
 - and there are little floaties in the cup...
 - Like, "I think there's some body still floating in this blood!"
- Or is it gonna be like we do with a little Jesus cracker, a Jesu-it, and a shot glass of juice?

Communion is the wild card in every church...

I actually visited my friend at an Anglican church once, and when it came time for communion we all got in line and started up the aisle,

- and so, I'm assessing the situation...
- like, what am I gonna have to deal with here?
- And I noticed that there was only one cup,
- So, I'm like, "ok, it's rip and dip!"
 - I'm early enough in line.
 - I can handle the rip and dip"

And then, the pastor took a sip from the goblet,

- and no joke,
- as he pulled away from his mouth
- I saw a saliva bridge extend from cup to mouth...
- and then he wiped the rim of the cup with a clorox wipe...
- and let others drink from it, too!

And it wasn't even COVID, but I was like, "I'm not drinking from the cesspool cup!"

So, I'm looking for a way to tap out of that situation.

TRANSITION

Communion. The Lord's Supper. What's Paul going to say about it? Well, let's get into it. Look at verse 20:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-22

[20] When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. [21] For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. [22] What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

EXPLAIN: HISTORY

So, let me describe what's going on here historically.

- The Corinthians would gather on Sunday,
 - actually Sunday evenings,
- and they met in the home of a wealthier church member,
 - so that everyone could fit in.
- And their gatherings centered around the Lord's Supper,
- but there also seems to be a full meal going on...
 - like a first-century potluck.
 - So, they were probably Baptists!
- And the wealthy members provided the bread and wine
 - for the Lord's Supper,
- but each one brought their own food for the meal.

And what we think happened was that the wealthy congregants would start eating early

- because they had more freedom in their schedules
- to block out more time for worship,
- and so, they would eat and drink,
- some getting to the point of drunkenness.

While the later arrivals would likely be the poor:

- slaves or freedmen,
- coming after their day of work.
- And they would not have as much food,
- and often leave hungry.

So, by the time they get to communion,

- the wealthy are full, and even drunk,
- while the poor are starving.

And Paul is painting a picture of the disparity in the amounts people had.

So, Paul says,

- *“No! Eat at your own home!*
- *You are not participating in unity*
- *with the church when you do this!”*

He actually says,

- *“It is not even the Lord’s supper that you eat!”*
- He won’t even give them the credit
- of what they’re attempting to do.

He’s like,

- *“This doesn’t even count!*
- *This isn’t the Lord’s Supper...*
- *you’re eating your own meal.”*

TRANSITION

So, Paul critiques their abuse of the Lord’s Supper.

- Now, he will recite the tradition that
- they should observe in verses 23-26,
- and this should be very familiar to you
- if you’re a part of Fathom...

because I read it every week!

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

[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.

EXPLAIN: PASSOVER

Now, we read this every single week at Fathom. But here's where it comes from:

- The Lord's Supper...
- comes from the Last Supper...
- which comes from the Passover.

So, Jesus is with his followers who are all Jews, and they're celebrating the Passover meal together.

- But what they don't realize is that this is no ordinary Passover,
- but it is Jesus' Last Supper with them before his crucifixion.

Now, in the Passover meal, the leader would take the bread, and lift it up, and say, *“This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt.”*

But Jesus, at the Last Supper, reinterprets the Passover meal, and says, *“This is...my body.”*

- And listen, you don’t change the wording
- of the Passover liturgy...
- after thousands of years of tradition!
- That could get you killed.

But Jesus reinterpreted the Passover into the Last Supper...and now we continue to eat that meal in the Lord’s Supper.

TRANSITION

So, let me give us three words about the Lord’s Supper,

- I could give WAY more,
- But for our time together today
- here are three words
- about communion
- as Paul corrects the Corinthians.

WORD 1: REMEMBER

First word: **SLIDE REMEMBER.** Do this in remembrance of me.

Why? Because followers often forget.

If you’ve ever read through the Bible, you may have noticed that the same stories are repeated over and over and over and over again.

The Exodus:

- God rescuing his people from slavery in Egypt.
- I found 13 references to it in the NEW Testament this week!
- And that's not even exhaustive.
- Why keep bring it up over and over again?

Because followers often forget.

- We forget the goodness of God.
- We forget the grace of God.
- We forget the provision of God.
- We forget the faithfulness of God.

So,

- God gives us the Lord's Supper
- as a sacrament,
- so that when we gather, we REMEMBER.

We REMEMBER his body and his blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

And this is also why we don't believe that the sacrament of communion produces salvation.

- Just like how in baptism,
 - getting in the water
 - and getting dunked doesn't save you.
- Neither does communion
 - give you forgiveness,
 - or cleansing,
 - or pardon,
 - or anything like that.

- You don't come to the table to GET forgiveness...
- you come to the table because you ARE forgiven.

We REMEMBER that we ARE forgiven through the body and blood of Christ.

This is one of the main reasons why we practice this every single Sunday at Fathom.

I need to remember EVERY SINGLE WEEK what God did for me in the cross of Christ. REMEMBER. **BLANK SLIDE**.

TRANSITION

The second word is found in verses 28-32:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:28-32

[28] Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. [29] For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. [30] That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. [31] But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. [32] But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

WORD 2: EXAMINE

The second word about communion is **SLIDE EXAMINE**.
In the Lord's Supper we have the opportunity to examine ourselves.
To reflect, repent, realign, and rejoice.

- We reflect on ourselves...
- We repent of our sins...
- We realign ourselves with Christ...
- And we rejoice in what he has done for us!

And in our hyper commercialized, fast-paced, technologically soaked times:

As a society we have given ourselves over

- to entertainment,
- and stimulation,
- and consumption,
- and distraction...

And one of the ramifications is

- we cannot feel,
 - or stand to feel,
- the quiet
- and the still
- and the inward.

We mute all those feelings out!

But the Lord's Supper is THAT space for the Christian.

It's the space to reflect, to repent, to realign, and to rejoice. To EXAMINE ourselves. **BLANK SLIDE.**

TRANSITION: UNWORTHY

And this doesn't mean you need to get perfect, or clean enough, or worthy of coming to the table. Like I've heard some people say, *"I just don't feel like I've got my stuff in order enough to come to the table..."*

And while I understand the sentiment, and appreciate you taking this seriously...

- You don't come to the table because you're worthy...
- you come to the table because you're not!
- You come to REMEMBER what he did.
- And you use it as a time to EXAMINE yourself.

And then, the third word is in verses 33-34

1 CORINTHIANS 11:33-34

[33] So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—[34] if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

WORD 3: TOGETHER

The third word to write down is **SLIDE TOGETHER**.

- The Lord's Supper is not meant to be done alone,
- but rather, in community.

And this has been one of the hardest parts of CoronaVirus,

- because we can't all be together,
- and thus, we are missing out on an intrinsic part
- of what it means to celebrate the Lord's Supper.
- This is meant to be done TOGETHER.

Now, one of the things that it's forced us to do is to all take communion at the same time instead of on our own, which I have actually liked a lot, and I'm thinking about keeping this practice even after we're back together.

Because, you see,

- often we turn communion into an individualistic thing,
 - it's dark,
 - and it's just me
 - and Jesus
 - and it's reflective
 - and it's somber...
- and, listen to me, it is those things!
- Goodness, I just talked at length about doing self-examination.

BUT **communion is communal.**

- **While it is personal...it is not private.**
- It's for the church.

And while we are forced, in this season, to partake in a less than ideal way:

- in our homes and through our screens.
- I long for the day when we are able, once again,
- to break the bread TOGETHER...
- and drink the cup TOGETHER. **BLANK SLIDE.**

CONCLUSION

So, no big conclusion today, other than this: Let's celebrate the Lord's Supper.

- Let's REMEMBER the Gospel.
 - God created us for relationship with him.
 - But we broke that relationship by sinning against him.
 - And through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ...
 - we can have our relationship restored with God...
 - we need only admit that we are sinners,
 - believe that Jesus died on the cross for us,
 - and confess that he is the Lord over our lives.
- Let's REMEMBER,
- And let's EXAMINE ourselves...
 - Reflect
 - Repent
 - Realign
 - And rejoice
- And then let's partake TOGETHER...as a community.

Let's pray. **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[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.” **TAKE**

[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.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

- Chandler, Matt. *Ordinances*.
- Comer, John Mark. *The Bread & The Cup: Part 1 & 2*.
- Garland, David E. 1 Corinthians. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.