

“Before We Come To The Lord’s Table”

Luke 22: 14 – 30; 1st Corinthians 10:14- 17; 1st Corinthians 11:17 - 22;

1st Corinthians 11: 23 – 34 (Sermon)

Special occasions are often celebrated by having a special meal together.

Today we are celebrating a special occasion with a meal. It is a special meal because it is The Lord’s Supper.

We are celebrating the death, the burial, and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And today our Lord Jesus Christ invites all who trust in Him for their salvation to come to His table and partake of a meal He has prepared for us.

But like any other meal there are certain things we need to remember before we come to The Lord’s Table.

Before we sit down at the table for a meal we need to have clean hands.

You would not think of taking out the garbage or working in the garden and eating without washing your hands first.

In 1st Corinthians 11:28 Paul warns us to examine ourselves before coming to The Lord’s Table.

In several places The Bible compares the sin in our lives with being dirty and being clothed in filthy rags.

Before coming to the Lord’s Table we need to repent, we need to confess our sins, and we need to ask for The Lord’s forgiveness for the sinful things we have done as well as for the things we have failed to do that we know we should have done.

When we remember that Jesus voluntarily let people spit on Him and beat His face to a pulp for our sins we all should feel ashamed of our sins and we should be really sorry for our sins?

Before we come to The Lord’s table we need clean hands.

For us to enjoy a special meal we need to have a good appetite.

We need to be hungry. If you had been invited to dinner at a person’s house, you would not think of filling up on junk food right before you came.

If you did you would not have an appetite for the healthy food at a special meal.

In 1st Corinthians 10:21 we read, ***“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord’s Table and the table of demons.”***

God offers us a spiritually nurturing meal that will fill us and satisfy our soul.

Psalms 34:8 says, ***“Taste and see that the Lord is good.”***

When we stuff ourselves with the junk food **of sin** we lose our appetite for the banquet of life giving food our Lord has prepared for us.

Jesus said, *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.”*
(Matthew 5:6)

When Jesus is The Lord of your life you will be filled with love, joy, peace, hope, and forgiveness.

We need to have a good spiritual appetite before we come to The Lord’s Table.

For us to enjoy a special meal we need to take the time to enjoy the meal.

You would not think of ordering a \$90 meal at Ruth Chris Steak House if you only had 6 minutes to eat it.

Many times we are guilty of being in such a hurry that we do not enjoy our food.

Meal times are suppose to be times of fellowship, times to enjoy the food and the other people with us, times to reflect, and times to remember the good times.

I admit that sometimes I look at my watch and I think that I need to rush through the Communion Service.

But after preparing this message I am ashamed on that feeling.

We need to take sufficient time to reflect on the meaning of The Lord’s Supper and we need to take time to enjoy our relationship with The Lord Jesus Christ.

When we come to the table to enjoy a special meal we need to be thankful for the people who provided the meal.

All cooks like to be told that you enjoyed the meal and they want to know that you appreciate their efforts.

Think how you would feel if you spent your entire day preparing a special dinner and no one at the table appreciated your efforts?

Well Jesus gave His life for you.

Think how you would feel if you spent a whole week’s paycheck buying the food and no one at the table appreciated the cost of the meal?

You see Jesus voluntarily paid for your sin by shedding His blood.

Remember Jesus voluntarily took your place on the cross.

You and I are the ones who deserved to be punished and we deserve to be put to death for our sins.

Do you feel really thankful when you remember that Jesus voluntarily died on the cross so that you could live?

We all should appreciate the cost of The Lord's Supper this morning.

If you do, you will thank Jesus over and over. Jesus voluntarily gave Himself and Jesus voluntarily died on the cross so you could come to The Lord's Table this morning.

We all need to have a thankful heart when we come to The Lord's Table.

When I was growing up if I was arguing or fighting with my sister during a meal I was told I had to leave the table and not come back until I changed my attitude, made up with my sister, and apologized to everyone at the table for my behavior.

That was really tough because I knew I would not get any food until the next meal because there were no snacks at my house.

When we come to The Lord's Table we need to come in unity and we need to be at peace with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

As parents we know how upset we get when our children argue and fight with each other.

Well, God is our Heavenly Father and we are His children.

We are the family of God. When we argue and fight with each other it really hurts our Lord.

Jesus said ***"If brother has anything against you go and be reconciled to your brother before you bring your gift to the altar."*** (Matthew 5:24)

We cannot expect everyone in our church to agree on every issue.

But we are all expected to respect each other's views and we are to respect each other's customs.

Jesus expects us to get along because we are one in Christ Jesus.

1st Corinthians 10:17 is clear; ***"Because there is one loaf we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."***

What unites us together, as disciples of Jesus Christ, is far greater than our differences.

Before we come to The Lord's Table we need to forgive and to be at peace with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

If your father owned a fine restaurant you would not think of routinely eating at another restaurant across the street that was your father's biggest competition.

Remember; ***"You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's Table and the table of demons."*** (1st Corinthians 10:21)

We are not loyal to The Lord and we are supporting our heavenly father's competition when we talk and act like the rest of the world on Monday through Saturday.

Being a Christian is much more than going to church on Sunday morning.

Christianity is a way of life 24/7.

When we come to the Table we also need to come in anticipation.

When you smell the aroma of fresh baked bread or smell ribs Elder Tanwani Akum is cooking on the grill you can't wait to come to the table because you are anticipating how good the food will be.

So I ask you, what are your expectations as you come to The Lord's Table this morning?

Is this Sacrament of Communion **just** a ritual you participate in once a month?

Or are you anticipating being in communion with our risen Lord?

In this sacrament by the power of The Holy Spirit we are mystically joined with our risen Lord. Jesus is not only with us this morning; Jesus is our host for this meal.

You need to come to The Lord's Table in anticipation of Jesus' special presence with us this morning.

Do you get really excited knowing that one day you and all the other people who have accepted Jesus as their Savior will sit at the banquet table of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords in heaven?

We all need to come to The Lord's Table in anticipation.

You see this sacrament is symbolic of things to come.

You need to come to The Lord's Table in anticipation of our life with Jesus throughout eternity.

For you to enjoy a meal you need to be invited.

If you sneak into a banquet hall without an invitation you will not enjoy the meal.

You will be worried that you will be exposed and embarrassed when you are thrown out.

But thankfully Jesus invites all who trust in Him for their salvation to come to His Table.

This is not a Presbyterian table.

This is The Lord's Table and all Christians are invited and encouraged to participate in The Lord's Supper.

Sadly sometimes people refuse to come to The Lord's Table because they do not feel worthy.

But, the truth of the matter is that none of us are worthy.

This is a meal for the undeserving.

Our Lord invites all who believe that Jesus is God, all who believe that Jesus died for your sins, and all who believe that Jesus will come for you and take you home to heaven so you can live with Him throughout eternity.

Jesus invites all to come to His table who come in repentance, all who come in faith, all who come in thanksgiving, all who come in anticipation, and all who come with a spiritual appetite.

Jesus, The King of Kings and The Lord of Lords invites you to come to His Table.

AMEN.