

The Main Focus of the Lord's Supper

by Francis Chan

This sermon emphasizes the importance of the Lord's Supper, highlighting the early church's devotion to it as a central gathering point. It delves into the mystery and sacredness of partaking in communion, urging reverence and self-examination before partaking. The sermon also touches on the unity and oneness of believers through the body and blood of Christ, calling for a return to the first-century church's spirit-led worship and ministry.

Scripture: Acts 2:42, 1 Corinthians 11:27, 1 Corinthians 10:16, John 12:32, Exodus 19:16

Topics: "The Importance of the Lord's Supper", "Unity in Christ"

Description

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Transcript

I'm sure when you came in you saw the room was much different. Mama Grace asked me to lead us in communion tonight and to teach about communion. And I have been so convicted about the way we celebrate the Lord's Supper.

I have been wrestling with this for years. And the last month or two it's like all I can think about is the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is something we are supposed to be devoted to.

In Acts chapter 2 verses 42 and 43 it says this. It says they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers and awe came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. We all love Acts chapter 2. That's when the spirit came down and dwelt the believers.

But the bible describes the early church. It says they devoted themselves. They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching.

They devoted themselves to the fellowship. And they devoted themselves to the breaking of bread and the prayers. This is what the early church gathered for.

Think to yourself why did you come today? What were you hoping to do in this room? Sometimes we want to come and hear a message. And that's a good thing. And some of you come because you want to worship and that's a great thing.

But the early church when they came together it was to devote themselves to the Lord's Supper. And this has been bothering me for a while because I don't meet many people that are excited about the Lord's Supper anymore. Did you know in the early church when they gathered they would gather to partake of the Lord's Supper? In fact the bible says that they did it every day.

They would gather in homes to take of the Lord's Supper. I always found it bothersome that the early church went house to house breaking bread and most Christians in America have never broken bread in a home. This is so different than the early church.

It says the early church devoted themselves to the taking of the body and blood of Christ. Can you say that you have devoted yourself to the taking of the body and blood of Christ? We love Acts 2.43. Don't you love that verse where it says awe came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Oftentimes in charismatic churches we get excited about the signs and wonders.

Oftentimes in charismatic churches we get excited about the signs and wonders. We want God to do signs and wonders but we forget that the early church devoted themselves. One of the things they devoted themselves to was the Lord's Supper.

As a result of their devotion God was pouring out his miracles. A lot of times we want Acts 2.43 without obeying Acts 2.42. A lot of times we want Acts 2.43 without obeying Acts 2.42. You have to understand the early church when they gathered the communion was central. I mean you have to remember for the first three to four hundred years they did not have a bible.

I mean you have to remember for the first three to four hundred years they did not have a bible. So when Jesus left the earth what did people do for hundreds of years? And even after they had a bible most people could not read. Today we have millions of Christian books.

Back then they had none. And even if they had them people could not read. And the poor could never read.

But Jesus came to preach the good news to the poor. That was the beautiful thing about the Lord's table. It did not matter if you were rich and educated.

Or if you were poor and you could not read. Everyone could break a piece of bread and eat it. Everyone could drink of a cup.

And participate in the body and blood of Jesus. The communion table was always at the center. For fifteen hundred years after the death of Christ the communion table was always the center.

Did you know that it was only less than five in fact almost exactly 500 years ago there was a man that moved the communion table from the center and he put a pulpit in the middle. And he might have had some good motives. He saw the lack of truth possibly in the church and he wanted to preach the truth.

But in so doing he moved Jesus to the side and put himself in the center. And what happened over the years is the communion table kept getting pushed further and further away from the center. And then

pastors like me I would get on a stage and have everyone stare at me.

And now all across our nation you have pulpits at the center of churches. And people choose which church to go to based upon who is standing behind the pulpit. And it's become almost a competition of who does the best job behind the pulpit.

This afternoon when I came in I saw the communion at the center of the church. I just began to weep. I got so excited.

Because Jesus was at the center of the church. And the way they set it up where it was on a table and it was lifted up higher than everyone. I just couldn't stop crying because I thought this is the way it's supposed to be.

We're supposed to walk in and Jesus and his body and blood are supposed to be lifted up. And as I bowed before the body and blood of Jesus I just could not stop weeping. As I was praying and worshiping Jesus a verse came to mind.

I didn't tell the powerpoint people but if you could find John 12 verse 32. In John 12 verse 32 this is when Christ was having his last supper with his disciples. And right before that special time with his disciples in chapter 12 verse 32 he says, I when I am lifted up from the earth will draw all people to myself.

Now Jesus was saying this talking about the type of death he was going to die. How he's going to be lifted up on a cross. How he's going to be lifted up into heaven.

But a lot of times we use this verse talking about we have to lift Jesus up and then he'll draw all men to himself. And I was so convicted about this verse. I was repenting before God.

Because early on in my ministry I began preaching and people would come to the church to hear me preach. Then pretty soon the internet started really taking off and social media started rising. And there were these things called podcasts.

I didn't even know what they were. I just knew that our video team was filming me and making these podcasts. And I didn't know that people were watching these podcasts.

One day I asked a pretty well known pastor, I said, hey can I meet with you, I have some questions. And when I got to his house, he invited me to his house and when I got there I just said thank you for letting me have some time with you. And he said, of course I would make time for you.

You are one of the top 20 podcasts in the nation. But then he says to me, you are number 19, I am number 2. And he says, did you know you can go online to iTunes and check what number you are? I was like, no I didn't know that and he showed me how to check. Okay, I am a very competitive person.

So suddenly, because I was called number 19, I thought, okay, we'll see who's number 19. And my competitive flesh started to kick in. And I will just confess to you that I began checking my ranking every week.

Pretty soon I got to number 2. And there was only one guy in front of me, it was Joel Osteen. And I still remember the week when I beat him. And I would get texts from my friends, congratulations, you're number 1. And in that day, we kept thinking, well, I want to be number 1 so that people will hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And today there are lots of pastors that think, well, I need more followers because then more people will hear about Jesus. And we have this mindset that when I am lifted up, I will draw all men to Jesus. But that is not what the verse says.

Jesus says, you lift me up when I, Jesus, am lifted up, then I, Jesus, will draw all men to myself. This world is filled with people like me in the early days that we're lifting ourselves up. Thinking that if we are more popular, then we can lead more people to Jesus.

And that's why I was weeping at the cross. I was saying, Jesus, this is right. You should be lifted up.

And as we lift you up, you will draw all men to yourself. We live in a time when there are these celebrity pastors. And people argue about who's the best.

It was the same thing that was happening back in the Apostle Paul's day. But I have a dream. What if in our generation, we could put Christ back at the center of the church where he belongs? What if people got excited about the body and blood of Jesus? You have to understand this is a sacred thing that we are about to do.

I am very excited about tonight. Because the last few weeks, I've been taking communion with different groups. And we've become more and more sacred and reverent towards the body and blood of Christ.

And as we have done that, we have had amazing experiences. What we are about to do is something so sacred. Do you remember when Moses went to the mountaintop to meet with God? It's in the book of Exodus.

I want to put those verses there and I want to read them to you. In Exodus 19, verses 16-17. On the morning of the third day, there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain.

And a very loud trumpet blast so that all the people in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. And they took their stand at the foot of the mountain.

Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke. Because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln.

And the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Moses spoke and God answered him in thunder.

And the Lord came down on Mount Sinai to the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain. And Moses went up.

Could you imagine being at the base of that mountain? Could you imagine being at the base of that mountain? As you're looking, you see fire come down from heaven. And you see the mountain on fire and smoke everywhere. The Bible says there was a sound of the trumpet and everyone was trembling.

And Moses had warned the people, do not touch the mountain or you will die. I don't know what you would do, but I would be pretty far away from the mountain. I wouldn't dare walk onto that mountain.

Because God said I would die. But he calls Moses and says, Moses, I want you to come up to the top. And he says, whenever Moses spoke, God would answer him in thunder.

Imagine if we were at the base of Mount Sinai right now. And imagine, pretend I'm Moses. And God tells me to go up to the top of the mountain where the fire is.

And every time I would say something like, Lord, I'm coming. He would answer in thunder. Can you imagine how you would tremble? And you would probably be terrified for me because I'm going up to meet with God.

This is similar to, if you remember, the Holy of Holies in the Old Testament. Later, when the temple is built, they are to build this place called the Holy of Holies where they place the Ark. And God says, on that Ark, I'm going to have my presence dwell somehow.

And he says, don't you dare walk into that room casually because you will die. Once a year, the high priest was allowed to go into that room. Just like Moses, he was somehow walking into the presence of God.

But the Bible explains in Leviticus all the things that the priest had to do to prepare himself to go into God's presence. Because if he went in in the wrong way, he would die. I tried to imagine, what if I was the high priest today and it was my turn to go into the Holy of Holies.

Put yourself in the shoes of the high priest. Imagine you are the high priest. And let's say that black curtain behind there is the Holy of Holies.

Let's pretend the Ark of the Covenant is behind that curtain. Somehow, the presence of God is behind the curtain and it is your turn to go back there. How would you feel right now? What would you be thinking right now if you knew you had to be up there in five minutes? And you've heard of people who have died because they did not go there in the right way.

It's the most terrifying and most exciting thing you could do. It's like Moses walking up that mountain. That must have been the most terrifying walk and the most exciting walk he ever took.

He's walking into the presence of God. God and man were going to be in the same place. Just like in the Holy of Holies.

If you had to walk in there, you're thinking, I'm going to walk into the place where God's presence is dwelling. You would be so scared, but also so excited. There were warnings against going into God's presence casually.

In the New Testament, God gives us a warning. There was something very sacred about the body and the blood of Jesus. That's why in 1 Corinthians 11, starting in verse 27, I want to read these verses to you.

He says, That is why many of you are weak and sick, and some have died. This is like the Holy of Holies in the New Testament. You don't have this kind of warning about anything else in the New Testament.

He doesn't say, hey, some of you are weak and sick because you're looking at pornography, and that's why some of you have died. He doesn't say, some of you are having sex outside of marriage, and that's why you are sick and you are going to die. He doesn't even say, hey, if you murder someone, then you're going to die right here on earth.

But he says, some of the people in your church died because they took of the bread and cup without examining the body properly. Do you understand? This is sacred. Jesus is talking about us communing with him.

This is why the early church gathered. There was something about the whole body coming together. We are all parts of the body.

Maybe an arm, maybe a leg, maybe a finger, we're all parts of the body. Maybe an arm, maybe a leg, maybe a finger, we're all parts of the body. But Christ is the head of our body.

So when the early church came together, they saw themselves as all parts of the body coming before the head, who is Christ. Just like that Old Testament priest would walk into the presence of God, this is what they were doing when they took of the bread and the cup. There was something deeper even going on because you were eating this bread and drinking this cup.

And Jesus says, this is how I want you to remember me. And he says, this is the way I want you to proclaim my death until I come. For years I was obsessed with preaching the gospel better and better.

I kept thinking if I could say the right words, I could convince people to fall in love with Jesus. But he says the way you're supposed to proclaim my death is by taking the bread and the cup. This is the way we were supposed to preach to the world.

If you are here today and you have never decided to follow Jesus, it is so good that you are here. Now don't take of the body and blood of Christ. There's a real warning that you need to examine yourself before you take of this.

So if you yourself, you don't think you need the forgiveness of Christ, please do not take the body and blood of Christ. But it is so good that you are here because you get to witness what we are about to do. And the Bible says this is the way God wanted you to learn about what he did.

That you see that Christ on the night that he was betrayed, he took a piece of bread and he broke it. He was explaining that this was his body that was broken. And then after supper he took the cup and he says this is the cup of the new covenant.

That it was about his blood being shed for our sins. So when we eat the bread and drink the cup, there's a oneness with Christ. You're surrounded by people who are desperate for the body and blood of Christ because this is the only way we could be forgiven.

Someone had to pay for our crimes. But observe as we do this. Don't take of this unless you truly have become a follower of Jesus Christ.

It amazes me that people are so rarely warned about how serious this is. I think this is one of the biggest mistakes we have made in the church today in America. Because we don't warn people about the seriousness of entering the presence of Christ.

How many of you have your kids over at the child care right now? How many of you have your kids over at the child care right now? Okay, good, good, good, good. What if I told you there is a giant hole right by the children's classrooms and they need to be careful because if they fall in that hole they will die. What if I told you there is a giant hole right by the children's classrooms and they need to be careful because if they fall in that hole they will die.

Would you tell your kids, go, go, go, go, have fun? Would you tell your kids, go, go, go, go, have fun? You would walk your child to their classroom and warn them, don't ever go out of this room. You would walk

your child to their classroom and warn them, don't ever go out of this room. There is a giant hole and I don't want you to die.

I probably wouldn't even take my kids over there. Just stay away from there. I probably wouldn't even take my kids over there.

Just stay away from there. Why? Because you want to let the people you care about know that there is danger there. Just like in Moses' day, when they were at the base of the mountain, They warned their kids, don't you go touching that mountain right now.

Just like you would warn your children or your friends, you don't go into the Holy of Holies. You remember the story of Nadab and Abihu and how that fire killed them. In the same way, we need to warn people that some people have died because they took the bread and the cup in the wrong way.

At the same time, this is the greatest honor I believe we have on earth. It's a mystery. The table was supposed to bring us together.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 10, if you could put that verse on the screen. It says the cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. This was supposed to unify us.

That's why it was at the center. It was supposed to be the most important thing we do, the climax of the service. It brought us together.

Sometimes people come to a church and they want to hear about other things. So we start preaching about all sorts of different things. But a lot of times those things divide us.

Look at what has happened in the last two years. Should we raise our hands for those who have gotten the vaccine? No, we're not going to do that. Right? If we talk about that, what's going to happen? Division.

Should we wear masks? Should we... How many voted for Trump? Don't put your hands up. Don't do that. Don't put your hands up.

These are hypothetical. OK. These are the things that divide us.

But this was to remind us we're all a part of one body. And we've come together with the great honor of being a part of the body of Christ. It's like we're locking arms and walking

into the Holy of Holies together.

It's like God saying, you can lock arms and walk up the mountain into my presence. In fact, that's the only way you can come up this mountain, is if you do it together. Because you don't want to take this bread and come if you're holding bitterness towards someone in this room.

That shows that you don't really understand the grace of God that was placed on you. One of the saddest things that has happened is how the table that was supposed to unite us over time began to divide the church. Because people couldn't leave this as a mystery.

He says, this is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Paul says, I don't want you to lift me up like some super apostle. He goes, all you need to know is that I'm a servant of Christ.

And my job is to steward the mysteries of God. When we stare at the bread and the cup, it's supposed to be a mystery. But the mystery was not, when does the bread become the body, or if it does, that's not the mystery.

The mystery was not, hey, does that juice actually become blood, and when does it? Of course, that is mysterious. But there's something far more mysterious that we're supposed to be thinking about. This was supposed to remind us that God Almighty became flesh and blood.

This is the mystery. How could that God that Moses walked up to on that mountaintop How could all of that power and fire and trumpet blast become an infant in the womb of the Virgin Mary? So you're saying there's a God who spoke the whole universe into existence. And then he became a baby implanted in a woman's womb? And he was born into this world as flesh and blood? How does all of that enter into a human body? And what exactly was happening on the cross when he died? As his blood was being shed, how does that make me clean? So we're supposed to all stare at these mysteries.

And we humble ourselves before the body and blood of Christ. I have read a lot of books about the Lord's Supper. From different denominations that all claim they know how we're supposed to do this.

And I'm just telling you, I don't know who's right. I'm learning so much from our brothers and sisters throughout history. But to this day, I don't know the perfect way to do it.

I'm just convinced that we need to treat it with much more sacredness. That we don't casually do what we are about to do. Just like I would not casually walk into the Holy of Holies.

I do not casually take of this bread and this cup. Tonight I ask you to examine yourself. Because you don't want to miss out on this.

This is the most exciting thing you can do this week. There's some mystery that happens when you take of the body and blood of Christ. And for 2,000 years, people have believed in the grace that was imparted to them as they took of this bread and cup.

This is your participation in the body of Christ. It is the greatest honor. But let's do this with honor.

Some of you have taken this hundreds of times. And I'm saying tonight, try to have more reverence than you've ever had. Try to be more excited than you've ever been.

I know I had an amazing experience when I walked in the room tonight. And as I knelt before the elements, I felt like I was kneeling before Christ himself. And God was communing with me.

Those of us who believe in Jesus and want to take of this bread, take some time to examine yourself right now. Confess your sin before God. Confess if there's any bitterness against another member of the body of Christ.

He wants us to honor each other in this room. Because we are all sons and daughters of God Almighty. So don't come to the table believing that you are more important than someone else.

These are sons and daughters of God himself in this room. Recognize the body. Recognize that you are not just about to eat a normal piece of bread in a normal cup.

We are going to do this together to honor the body and blood of Jesus. So some of the ushers will be coming around with the elements and just take it and hold on to it if you want to take it. We are going to take the bread and cup with us today.

Right now we recognize our brothers and sisters in China and Taiwan that are taking up this bread. We are all a part of the same body. Some of you have family members and friends who have passed on and are in the presence of God right now.

Some of you have family members and friends who have passed on and are in the presence of God right now. They are in the presence of Christ saying, worthy is the Lamb. Recognizing the body means we recognize our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan that are breaking bread and taking up the cup.

All around the earth and in heaven we are one body, those of us who believe in the cross. What joins us together is that the body of Christ was broken for all of us. Some of your friends are in heaven in the presence of God because this bread was broken for them.

So let's join with all the worshipers of Jesus on heaven and on earth as we take and eat. Let's take the body of Christ. In the same way after supper he took the cup.

He says this is the cup of the new covenant because the blood of the bulls and goats was not enough. Only the blood of the Son of God. What can wash away our sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Think of his blood that was shed for you as we drink of it together. Let's drink of it together. Imagine yourself inside the Holy of Holies.

Imagine yourself on top of Mount Sinai. We are abiding in Christ right now. Christ is in us.

We are his temple. Father in heaven we believe we have access to you because of the blood of Jesus. Thank you for your forgiveness.

Thank you for your holiness. You are so good. We worship you tonight.

Thank you that we could be one with you. I was trying to imagine what was it like for Moses when he was on the top of the mountain. He was in the presence of God.

I would think it would have been so horrible to walk away from the mountain to be in the presence of God. To be on the top. Because you're leaving the presence of God.

Or the high priest when he leaves the Holy of Holies and how he's walked away from the presence of God. I was thinking how I don't want to just walk away from the presence of Christ right now. But that's the beautiful thing about the New Testament is he says I will live in the presence of God.

I want to live in you and I want you to remain in me. Just like that bread and that drink remains in you now. It's a part of you.

God says I want you to remain in me and I want to live in you. So when we sing to him we are not walking out of his presence. When you go and eat dinner you are not walking away from his presence.

Because he says I knock on the door. He says if anyone hears my voice I'll come to him. When someone hears my voice I'll come to you.

I'll eat with you. God, thank you for reminding us that you are always with us. You are such a good father.

We are in the blood of Jesus tonight. There's no place we would rather be. Hallelujah.

Amen. We need to remain in this reality of his grace. And the enemy will attempt to steal away what God has given you.

So you need to proclaim that the life of Jesus has already restored health in me. Reject every weakness and disease. Anytime if you experience any weakness physically just take the bread and drink the wine and just repent to the Lord.

You will live in the spiritual health that God has given you. So it's not a casual thing that we take of the bread and the wine. We are full of thanksgiving for we can share the life of Jesus.

So if you want to offer up your thanksgiving go ahead and release your thanksgiving to the Lord. Just simple few phrases. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Encourage you to specify which part of your body is right now as you proclaim it you are receiving the healing right at this moment as you proclaim. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Offer up your thanksgiving as you pray. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Jesus thank you.

You became flesh upon the earth and brought all our sins on the cross. Every strife you have bore is for us to receive healing. Every strife that you have endured and every punishment you have received is to replace all of our weakness.

You forgive all our sins and heal all our diseases. You break open your bodies to open up a new pathway for us. That through your blood we have the boldness to come before your throne of grace.

We rejoice and hope for your glory Lord in this land of grace. Thank you for your love. Wonderful grace.

How great is your love. We will keep giving our praises before you. We will continually live in the glory of your light.

We will continue to live in your holy presence. And we will continue to live in your supernatural health. We love you.

We belong to you. Every day we live, we live for Christ. Thank you Lord.

In Jesus name. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you. This kind of meeting is what I have hoped for for many years. I keep desiring that we will restore back to the first century church.

We come not to listen to a sermon. And it's not waiting for the worship team to lead us. But everyone is an instrument of worship offering our praises to him.

Through communion we receive the power of his death upon our bodies. With full thanksgiving. Coming from the inside offering up our thanksgiving.

Holy Spirit ask this one and this one just stand up and speak in tongues. Holy Spirit moves another person and he interprets the tongues. And someone stand up, Holy Spirit moves another person and prophesy.

And say that in our midst there is somebody who God wants to heal. Or say someone else who is living in sin and if you repent God is going to release you. Just like this signs and wonders amongst us.

So everyone who enters into this house, they know God is not missed. Someone else just move by the Holy Spirit and start singing a spiritual song. And when the person sings a spiritual song then the Holy Spirit fall upon us.

Many are filled by the Holy Spirit. This is the first century church. Every saint becomes an open vessel for the Lord.

We become open vessels of God's power and great and love. And we are not waiting for one person to preach. It's every one who tune in to God and just let Holy Spirit lead us.

This is the first century house church. How I desire God will restore back in among us. So as you come to the meeting keep following the Holy Spirit.

You are not waiting here to follow orders. It's not a meeting of formality but led by the Holy Spirit. This is what I desire for many, many years.

So everyone in your house you can start like this. And in your home group you can do that also. So when we gather in a big meeting like this, we can freely led by the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit is the main director. And when he points to this one, this person rise up to sing. He points to another and the other prophesies.

Isn't that great? This is the presence of heaven. Just like living in heaven. So starting this week, why don't we try starting from your household and your home group.

I want to make an announcement. Last night when we were gathering here to pray. In the parking lot.

Cross many different races. Many languages. We gather together like family.

As we hear the sharing of everybody, we felt so much love and connected to each other like family. And this is what I desire for a long time too. God is working speedily.

In these recent days, God is fulfilling the promises he has given us so fast. As we were praying for Afghanistan last night. If you are led by the Lord, you can make offering to Afghanistan.

Yesterday I heard that the most people in Fremont are Afghans, Indians and Chinese. So now we can start to spread God's love to Afghans. As a family to pour out our love to the Afghan people.

So if you are led by the Lord, go ahead and write your check and memo offering to Afghanistan. We will give all the money we received to the Fremont and Sacramento Afghan churches. So our gathering today ends here.

Bless everyone. May the Lord bless everyone here. We thank Pastor Francis.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/RwtsbVvJGrQ.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/francis-chan/the-main-focus-of-the-lords-supper/>

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