

Jesus Christ Is Lord

by G.W. North

The Lord's Supper is a law that must be obeyed, and its purpose is to remind us of the Lord's bounty and presence.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:20

Topics: "Church Discipline", "The Lord's Supper"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the significance of the Lord's Supper as established by Jesus, highlighting the serious issues within the Corinthian church, where rebellion against God led to disorder and a lack of true communion. Paul rebukes the church for their egotistical behavior and failure to recognize the sacredness of the ordinance, which had devolved into gluttony and chaos. North points out that the Lord's Supper should be a reflection of obedience and reverence, not a platform for self-indulgence. He stresses that the elements of bread and wine are not merely symbols but a command from the Lord, and any deviation from this is an affront to Him. The sermon calls for a return to the true purpose of the Lord's Supper, free from the influences of paganism and ritualism.

Transcript

The second title, the Lord's supper, is used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11.20. The emphasis here is laid not so much upon the manner in which we partake of the ordinance as upon the nature and timing of it; it is the Lord's supper: it is the Lord's supper. A thorough reading of the chapters surrounding this section will be sufficient to convince every heart as to why Paul mentions the ordinance at this point. It is part of a lengthy and necessary rebuke to the church at Corinth.

In the first pamphlet of this series it was shown that much of the trouble which existed in the church there was caused by open rebellion against the Lord. This was quite blatantly displayed in their meetings; all authority was flouted, division promoted and love destroyed. As may be expected in these circumstances, when they came together carnal, egotistical demonstrations of powerless 'gifts' ruined the meetings. Instead of true communion, their gatherings became orgies of eating and drinking; weakness and sickness was prevalent among them, and a spirit of deathly lethargy hung over everything like a cloud. The result of this was that where formerly spontaneous life and ministry had flourished, heavy, monotonous ritual ruled the meetings. To make things worse, on one hand poverty abounded and on the other riches were callously and ostentatiously paraded; complete disorder reigned and the Spirit of God was grieved. They had sunk so low that they could no longer distinguish between their own gluttony and the Lord's supper.

It was to this vitiated condition that Paul addressed himself when he wrote this letter. Therefore he did not hesitate to rebuke them sharply and to inform them plainly what he had received about it from the Lord. Strongly reproofing, he reminds them that when Jesus originally established the ordinance, He did so as Lord of the table, and that all He provided then was bread and wine. This therefore must be considered as law, and any refusal on their part to accept those bare elements could only be interpreted as an insult to their Host. They must understand that their action was nothing other than an open rejection of the Lord and His bounty.

Surely they knew that He not only commanded and provided the means of the feast, but was also present at it Himself. Their behaviour was inexcusable; they were acting like brute beasts. They impudently substituted self-will for obedience, and denied and destroyed the purpose of the ordinance. Their suppers had become their greatest testimony to their profoundest ignorance. Paul's correction and instruction reveals that the feast is no more to be thought of or made an excuse for pagan orgies than to be thought of or made an excuse for the Jewish Passover. By it the Lord has outlawed and displaced both.

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