

# 1 Corinthians 11

Sunday 12/21/2003

If you have your Bibles, please turn to 1 Corinthians 11. Last week we finished up the study on the judgment seat of Christ. Let me just say, if there ever was a time in your life when you did not understand what the body, soul, and spirit was and how to break that down, you need to get last week's sermon. I do not know that I could ever explain it any clearer than I explained it last week. So much was talked about your mind, your heart, your soul, and your spirit. We went into the Bible last week as our final question on the judgment seat of Christ, whose spirit came from me, and we defined those things. We showed you how there are four spirits on this earth, and man can be affected by three of them, and how that figures into the judgment seat of Christ. So we talked about that.

Today we are going to have our time of communion this morning, and we are going to take that and observe the death of the Lord with the broken bread and the cup. I wanted to take the opportunity again and really define some more biblical concepts. I try to take every opportunity we can, whatever we are talking about, not to waste any time. I do not want to just give you a little sermonette about something when we have an opportunity. We have so little time anyhow. I want to focus every chance we can on hard, fast biblical principles and doctrines.

We are in a study on how to build a relationship with God, and very frankly, 90% of building a relationship with God is simply understanding the basics. So we are going to talk about some things today built around the Lord's Supper, which, much like the body, soul, and spirit, is something that most people really do not understand why we do it. That is a real tragedy today in God's people's lives.

Years ago, when I was a kid growing up, I was in the baby boomer era. When I was growing up, it was the aspect of World War II; it was very exciting. As kids, we played Army, and on television, there were all kinds of things. I remember there was a series called Why We Fight. It was a documentary on World War II, and it talked about why we fought World War II. I thought it was good looking back on it because it not only showed you the battle but it gave you the philosophy as Americans why we fight.

I have often thought since that time that there ought to be a set of tapes for Christians on why we believe. Just like today in America, God's people, Americans, have forgotten why we fight. God's people have forgotten, or maybe never knew, why we believe. Much that we do as God's people is because somebody told us to do it. We do not really understand what the Bible says. I want to correct that, at least in this church. That is why I am willing to take whatever time it takes to help you figure out the Word of God and put it all together because there is much misinformation taught about the church today.

It is much like I said, it is much like the spirit and the mind and the soul and the heart. When you stop to think about the church, the first question that comes to your mind is:

- What is the church?
- How does it all figure in?

- How does it all lay itself out?
- What does it mean?
- Why do we take communion?
- What is communion?
- What is the Lord's Supper?
- Are they the same?
- Are they different?
- How come I hear it taught this way all these years?

We are going to set the record straight on some things today, especially for you who are members of this church, so you understand why we do what we do. But let us go to the Lord this morning before we get into this and just ask God's blessing.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus Christ. We love You. We thank You, Father, for all that You do for us. We ask You to bless our time today. Give us a good time in Your Word. We thank You for those that are here. We pray You continue to bless us in all that we do. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

## I. Understanding the Church's Foundation

When you start to talk about the church, for me, I am a pretty simple guy. I have to look at everything in its complexity and then break it down for me in its most simple form. I call it the lowest common denominator. That is the way I approach life. When I see something that is complex, the only way for me to understand it is to get in and look at it and see it in its basic form. That is why when I used to get something for Christmas, or my kids got something, I never bothered to read the directions because that just complicates it. Just look at it and fix it, and then after three or four hours, and your wife yells at you a lot, and the kids are crying, then you can get the directions. Maybe it does not always work that way, but at least when you approach life that way, in time you get the ability to break things down to see it.

For me, here is the church in a very simple form. I am going to talk to you about the church and then some things that go along with it. So you understand it, and I have told you this before, this is not new, but this is how I understand it and how I broke it down.

When God went back to heaven, you remember the Lord was here in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. He presented Himself to the nation of Israel. He laid out all the things to the nation of Israel, and then He went back to heaven. When He went back to heaven, we found that the literal, visible body of Christ is no longer here. Jesus is back in heaven. But when He went back, He replaced Himself with three things. These three things that He replaced Himself with make up the New Testament church.

The first thing that He replaced Himself with was the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit of God in the New Testament is totally different in its operation than He is in the Old Testament. We have talked about that in Bible study on Thursday night. In the Old Testament, He comes and He leaves. He is an influence in seven different aspects of the Old Testament, not in the New Testament. Something happened when the New Testament started and the church began to be in

being that never happened before. Now, the Holy Spirit of God lives and dwells inside believers, never to leave again. That is the first thing that He replaced Himself with.

The second thing that He replaced Himself with was the Word of God. Up to this point, the Word of God was incomplete. All they had was the Old Testament. When Christ goes back to heaven, there is a period of time in the book of Acts where He writes all the rest of the New Testament books, other than the books John writes. When John caps it off in 90 A.D. by writing the book of Revelation and the Gospel of John and 1, 2, and 3 John, the Bible is now complete.

Now, the Holy Spirit of God lives inside us; that is the first part of it. Now, we have the completed Word of God, the revelation of God, the roadmap of life, so to speak. We have the Holy Spirit of God that will lead and guide us into all truth in that roadmap, but there is a part missing. God has a plan for us. That plan is found in the Word of God. You will never understand that plan until God's Holy Spirit opens up your understanding and gives you that plan. So that is why He gave you the Holy Spirit of God to lead and guide you, and the Word of God that you could find what God wanted you to do in your life.

Now, all you need is a car, or a motorcycle, or an airplane. What you need now is a vehicle by which you can get where you need to go to accomplish what God wants you to accomplish. The Holy Spirit of God is your guide. The Word of God is your roadmap. The third component that He replaced Himself with was, or is, the local church. The local church is the vehicle by which you get where you need to go and do what you need to do, based on the roadmap and the Holy Spirit of God to guide and lead you into all truth.

In a nutshell, that is the local church. It is the vehicle by which God expects us and gave us to accomplish what God wants us to accomplish. What is the church? It is not a building. I know you go down the street and you see this church or that church, and they all have little names on them. We have our little name. We have our long name, and we have our name on it. We do not have it out here. But the truth of the matter is, people over time tend to think that the church is something holy. Therefore, they go to great expense to put stained glass in it, and things on spirals and steeples and crosses and murals and all those things because they want to. I am not saying that is wrong, but I am saying it is wrong to the point where you start to think that some building is the church.

Hey, if it was nice, we could meet out in a park someplace. We could meet in a warehouse. We could meet in a broken-down gas station. We could meet in somebody's house. We could rent a back room of a bar someplace that was closed on Sunday. It is not where you meet. It is the people who are the church, and you need to understand that because it is taught today that the church is a building. We always think of the church that way. If it is not kept clear, and is not preached on, and is not taught right, and new Christians are not educated, they grow up in four or five generations to think there is something special about a building, that we have to give it a holy look. We have to have some kind of special look in the church that when you get in there, you feel holy, like you are in the presence of God. That is wrong. You ought to be in the presence of God and be holy, for I am holy. Not because you have windows, not because you have a steeple, not because you are in a building that looks like the little thing, "Here's the church,

there's the steeple, open the door and there's all the people." It is not like that. It is a concept that you realize that you are the church, and it does not matter where you meet, because you have to know that concept because of what is coming up here that we are going to talk about.

All right. So we know that He replaced Himself with the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and the local church. We know now that the church is not a building as such. It is not a building; it is the people.

## II. The Meaning of "Church" and Its Historical Manifestations

Now, what does the word "church" mean? It means "called out." Here is another misconception. We think the local church, as we know it, starting in the book of Acts, is the local church and is the church, and there is not any other church. That is not true. There are at least five churches in the Bible, starting all the way back in the Old Testament and then coming all the way through. We have a misconception. We think that the local church is exclusively us, and that in the Old Testament, God was dealing with Israel, He was dealing with the kingdom, so the church is not back there. No, you are wrong. Any place in the Bible where somebody is called out is a church.

The first church in the Bible is Noah. Noah was called out. The second church in the Bible would be Abraham. He is called out. The third church in the Bible would be the nation of Israel. In fact, in Acts 7, the nation of Israel in the Old Testament is called "the church in the wilderness." People do not know what to do with that. You know what they do? They say, "Ah, that is a mistranslation." So we will change it. It is not a mistranslation. It is a doctrinal concept that the word "church" simply means "called out," and through the Bible, different groups of people have been called out. In that sense, they are a church.

I will show you the next one. In Matthew 10, the twelve apostles, they are called out. They are a church. Then in the book of Acts, you find us. We are called out. But there is a difference between us and the rest of the churches. We are the only church that is indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit of God. Therefore, we are different than the rest, but they are churches in every sense of being called out. They are just not churches in the sense that we are, of being indwelt with the Holy Spirit of God.

Now you have to understand that because if you do not, it gets real confusing when you try to figure things out, and you come to Acts 7 and it talks about the church in the wilderness, or you get into Matthew and it talks about the church. Then suddenly you are scratching your head. So the only thing you can do with it, if you do not deal with it in the Bible, is get rid of it. You do not want to do that.

What sets us apart from the rest of called-out people is that we are alive. We are a living church with Jesus Christ living inside us. We have the Holy Spirit of God in us. They did not. That is why you have to realize the church is not a building. It is a body. It is people. The church is, like I said, not with steeples and stained glass and pretty doors and pretty carpet and pretty pews. It has nothing to do with that. Nothing wrong with it as long as you understand the difference.

### III. The Church's Origin and Revelation

The next question always comes up: When did the church start? Everybody and his brother has their own idea when it started. The Bible is very clear when you study the Bible and you learn from history that God never just stops something and starts something. God always has a transition period. Always does. There is not anything that God just did without giving a period of time that God transitions a thing.

When you want to find out where the church started, we know that the New Testament does not come into effect until the death of the testator, Hebrews 9. So then the church goes into effect at the death and burial and resurrection of Christ. But it does not get empowered until Acts 1. So now it is in effect. Now it is empowered. But that is why they are running around in the book of Acts not knowing what to do, because it has not been revealed to them yet.

You have to remember, the church is a mystery in God's mind that God chooses to reveal or not reveal based on what man does with the truth that God gives him. So when you get up to Acts 7, it is a mystery. That is why in Acts 1, He is dead, the church is now in effect, the New Testament is into effect. They are running around in Acts 1. They see Christ. The question is, "Hey, are You going to restore the kingdom to Israel now or what?" He does not answer them. Do you know why He does not answer them? It is a secret in His mind, and He wants to see what Israel is going to do yet before He commits.

So in Acts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and after Acts 7, God has not revealed it yet. Yes, it is in effect. Yes, it has been empowered, but nobody knows it. How do they know it? I will tell you how they know it. They know it when Paul gets saved. He becomes the apostle to the Gentiles, and then he reveals what takes place.

When you see it and you understand it, you realize that again, the church goes into a three-point transition. It goes into effect at the death of Christ. It gets empowered in Acts 1, but it does not get revealed until Acts 9. Then Paul spends the rest of his life as the apostle of the church to the Gentiles, building New Testament local churches built with believers like you and I, who are different from the Old Testament men and women because they are empowered to do the work of God. They have the Holy Spirit of God living inside them. There are no laws. There are no Old Testament scenarios. It is now a whole totally new ball game that went into effect at His death, that gets empowered in Acts 1, and gets revealed in the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul. That is where it comes in.

### IV. Forms of Church Government

As we look at churches, churches have four different forms of government, and you hear these words all the time. From today on, you are going to know what those words mean. It will not be anymore hearing on the radio that the Episcopal church did this, and you saying, "I wonder what Episcopal means."

- The Episcopal form of government means that the church is under the control of bishops. The word "Episcopal" is not really a church; it is a form of government that many churches call themselves because that is how they are governed.
- The second form that you have is called a synod or a presbytery. We think of the presbytery in church, and the word "presbytery" or the word "synod" simply means that it is run by ordained elders.
- Then we have the third form of government, which is called papal. That is like the Roman Catholic Church. They have one man that controls everything.
- The fourth form of government is called congregational. That is where we are. Do not confuse that with somebody saying, "Well, I go to a congregational church." Not the same thing. That is another whole deal. These are not names of churches; these are forms of government by which the church operates.

The congregational form is not run by anybody. There is no one man that tells us what to do. We are not run by a board somewhere in Missouri that says, "Okay, this is what you have to do. Send your money here. Do this, do that. Teach this, preach this." We are not under that. We are self-governing. We are the purest form of the New Testament church. The New Testament church had no board of elders. They were not run by any bishops. They were a self-government within the body because they believed that the Spirit of God and the Word of God was their declaration by which they operated. God indwelt men and women just like He did the pastor. There was no need for one guy to dictate to everybody else what they were supposed to do. Collectively, the mind of Christ of us as a body in the Word of God could prayerfully and faithfully, in fellowship in the Word of God and loving each other, solve any problem that came up.

Certainly, somebody has to be in charge. It is a nasty job, but somebody has to do it. I have to decide how many rolls of toilet paper we buy, or what kind of thing we do this or that. Somebody has to decide. Somebody has to take responsibility and take charge as the pastor. But I want to tell you right up front, do you think I am the only pastor here? I may be the head pastor. I may be the leader. I may be the one that God has chosen at this time to do this. But there are men in here and women in here that are every bit as knowledgeable in the Word of God as, well, almost. Always keep the edge.

That is why I told you when we started, if you think I am going to do all the preaching, you are crazy. That just stifles everybody. You need to preach. You need to learn how to preach. Not that you cannot, I am sure you can. You need to preach. Hey, I am talking to you over here. Do not sleep on me. You need to preach. That guy works as many hours as he does, he deserves to take a nap while I am preaching. Everybody, you need to preach. You need to learn how to preach. You need to preach. I am not going to let anybody out. You all need to preach.

Now, I am telling you right now, I am not against women preachers. I do not believe in women pastors. I think every woman ought to preach. I really do. I think every woman ought to be able to preach. You say, "You have a problem with..." I do not think a woman ought to stand up and teach men. Well, I mean, she has to be in submission, but because she gets up and teaches men means she is not in submission? Look, as long as I, the pastor, say, "Go teach this thing over here," she is under my authority. If her husband says it is okay, she is under his authority. People

get weird and whacked out. No, I do not have a lot of women preachers because I know most of them preach better than me, and that is not going to happen. But I am telling you this. Do you know what the congregational form of government is? Well, I will get to that in a minute because I am going to lay some things on you this morning.

## V. The Danger of Tradition

Because the church and Israel are self-governed and run by men, that is really good, and that is the biblical way. But there is a danger in that, and the danger is human nature. This is why the Bible talks so much about loving each other. This is why the Bible takes such a stand on backbiting and gossiping about each other. This is why the Bible takes such a stand on unity, being one in the spirit, being one together, and standing through everything as one.

When you have any other form of government, you do not have to really care because somebody else is in charge. You do not really have to think. You do not have to really worry about this because so-and-so is in charge. They have a bishop or elders, and we have this guy, a group of people. They will make the decision. All I have to do is show up. That does not happen here. It will happen here. I will. One thing I will always do, one thing I will never do. The first thing I will always do is whenever I stand on the pulpit, I will teach you the Bible just the way it is. The second thing I will never do is ever let you come into here to think that you do not have some responsibility in all this. You are as much as me.

You get the idea in the Episcopal form, or the Presbyterian form, or the Papal form, or whatever, that you are just a component. You are not a main part. What you think, what you say, really does not count. Therefore, it is so easy, human nature-wise, just to slough off, not do anything, just go or not go, but really not take it as, "I really have a part of this." If you looked at the things of God and the Church of God from the form that it is the most unbelievable, important, valuable thing in this world, and you guarded it like you would guard the most precious thing you have, you would see it differently.

But human nature is something that we have to guard against. When I go into Revelation 1, 2, and 3, I see seven churches there. The first one, called Ephesus, was fully purposed. The second one, Laodicea, the justice of the people, from point A to point B, the church comes to a point where it just does not care, and the people who started out on fire for God wind up not caring and let somebody else do it. Do you know how that happens? Because of one thing in the church that you have to absolutely nail down and understand and really get tough with, and it is the word "tradition."

When we say the word "tradition," you automatically think of some dead Orthodox church out there that walks around with all their traditions, and you think, "Oh, not us, forget them." Let me tell you something. Baptists are the most traditional people you have ever met in your life, and it is wrong. Now, I am not saying all tradition is wrong. I am not saying that.

*2 Thessalonians 2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*

Those are traditions based on the Word of God. Every church has tradition, but make sure they are based on the Bible. In Matthew 15:2-3, we see the opposite.

*Matthew 15:2-3 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?*

There is no place in the Bible, in the Old Testament, that says you have to wash your hands before you eat. But they had come up with a whole bunch of ideas that have nothing to do with the Bible, that they were corralling people and trying to put them on guilt trips and control them. Do you know what tradition does in its lowest form? It is designed to control you. That is all that it is. It is designed to control you.

When I was growing up, the issue was long hair. If you had long hair, you could not even go to church. The tragedy with that is today, the people that are in the church that are preaching in the churches have longer hair than they did back when I was growing up. What happened? Did God change His standard?

I figured it out one time when I heard a guy preach, and he was preaching at a youth rally, and he was just ripping the kids up about them having long hair. Now, I am not a long hair, short hair advocate. I know my hair is short right now, but it is because I just had brain surgery, and it is growing back. I do not wear my hair down. If you do, that is fine. It is whatever you want to do. But I do not ever judge a man's spirituality. I mean, I have likes and dislikes. You do too. I feel bad sometimes when I tap somebody on the shoulder and say, "Excuse me, ma'am," and they turn around, and he is a guy. "I am sorry, I did not mean it. Nothing personal. I will look better next time." But I do not have a problem with it. If somebody had long hair and he believed the Bible, I would let him preach. I am not hung up on those things.

But I will never forget this guy. He was ripping these kids out, and he was working up a sweat. I mean, there must have been 500 kids there. He was just working the crowd, and he was preaching on teen things, and one of them he settled on was long hair. Then he is preaching, and he is just, he makes his point, and he is sweating. Suddenly, he turned around, and I was in the back, and his hair was all sweaty, and he took his hand and he pushed his hair and pushed it back. Immediately, when he did that, I got the doctrinal content because that guy's hair came all the way down his nose. I immediately got it. This guy combed his hair back. I really found out at that point that the guys he was preaching had shorter hair than he did. It was not an issue of long hair. No, no, no, no. The real issue was the position of that long hair. If that long hair went back, God was pleased. If that same long hair went forward, God shunned. It was not an issue of long hair; it was an issue of placement of long hair.

Most Baptists do not believe you ought to go to movies. I do not care if you do or you do not. I think you ought to be spiritual enough in your mind to know what movies you should go see and what you should not. I remember one time we were having a youth rally, and they wanted to show a movie. Down at the Bible colleges, they were showing Walt Disney movies and other G movies or whatever. They were not showing anything bad. But I made the mistake. I said, "Okay, at the youth rally tonight, we have a great movie for you." The moment I said that, I could see

the faces and all the preachers' disdain. I thought for a minute I slipped and cursed or something because I have a tendency to do that sometimes. I get saying things so fast, one little slip in there, and I thought I said something terrible. Afterwards, one of the bosses called me over and said, "Please refrain from using the word 'movie.' We are showing a film." I said, "Got it. I got it. I got it." That is like the hair thing. What did you say? Well, no, do not worry about it. But it is like the hair thing. When it is forward, God is angered. When it is straight back, God is pleased. When I call it a movie, God goes, "Ugh." When I call it a film, God smiles. I got it. I figured it out. Do you know what that is? That is tradition. That is tradition.

I had a guy preach one time, "You got slacks on. You got slacks on. You got slacks on. Godly women wear dresses." I have heard him say some terrible, vile things to women in pulpits because they wore slacks. I had a preacher one time call women "dirty-legged whores" because they wore slacks. It is preaching. I am telling you what, I read my Bible. "What verse?" The Bible says a woman should not wear that which pertains to a man. Okay. I figured that one out too. That is like the long hair. This is like the movie deal because in the Bible, every man wore a short dress. So if you have a dress on, you have a man's clothes according to the Bible. You have slacks on. According to the Bible, that is not what a man wore. Where does this insanity come from? It comes from tradition. It comes from transgressing the Word of God, not caring what it says, because you want to manipulate people in their spirituality. It has nothing to do with the Word of God.

They said, "Why do your disciples not wash their hands?" Jesus said, "Because it is not in the Word of God to wash your hands. Your move." Most of what you are taught today is done to control you in the Baptist scenario. Control you. They want to put you on guilt. They want to put you on guilt to come to church because they are living in a world where you have to have vast numbers to be successful so they can talk about it with their friends. They want to put you on a guilt trip to give because they have grandiose plans, and they want your money. In most churches, as I was told this last week, "I do not go to that church anymore because they call us now giving units." Well, okay. I like that idea.

They put you on a guilt trip to read your Bible. They put you on a guilt trip to make you spiritual, to conform to some rules. If you do not conform, then you are not really spiritual, but they do not really care what is going on on the inside. Let me tell you something. You can have the right haircut, wear the right clothes, and do everything you want, and be the most wicked person you ever saw in your life on the inside. Most of them are.

Let me tell you how it really is in the Bible. I love you. I have dedicated my life to teaching you the Bible, and I am looking you all in the eye right now. I have dedicated my life to teaching you the Bible. I will give you the Word of God and teach you the Bible as best I can. The last thing I hope I do before I die is close my Bible after we are done in the Word of God together. I would do anything in the world, but the bottom line is, and I want to, we have set this church up for that aspect. We only meet two times a week. I know everything is busy. People have to drive a long way, but I try to cram everything into there to get it done. But the bottom line is, I do not care if you come or you do not. I really do not. I want you to. But I learned a long time ago when it came to the Bible and the Word of God, people do not ever want something more than the person

you are working with wants it. I do not want you to be right with God one step farther than you want to be, because the moment I do, I become vulnerable. I will do something foolish. I will care more about your relationship with God than you do, and that is never going to happen. It is never going to happen.

I will do whatever I can do for you. When you are in my ministry, you are part of my family. When I know you are committed to it, yes, I am concerned when you are not here. I want to know if you are sick. I want to know if you are not sick. I may call and check on you. But if you think I am calling to check on you because I want you here, because I have some thing, I told you when we started this church, it will never grow to be a gigantic church. Not in the day and age that we live. I am telling you, we will find a few people here, some here, a family here that wants the truth and believes the truth, and we will do everything in our power until Jesus comes back to do that.

But if you think I am going to manipulate you so you can come here so I can have a big crowd to preach to, to buff up my ego, to think how great I am, I already know that. My wife tells me all day long, every day, how great I am. My kids send me cards. They call me on Veterans Day saying, "Dad, thanks for being a veteran." I want you here. I want people to come. But I am not going to put you on some kind of pseudo-spiritual guilt trip by manipulating you. I want you to come because I know what the Word of God will do. But you have to choose. You have to choose what is important in your life. If two times a week is too much for you, that is between you and God. I am not talking about now, "Hey, this is the busy time of year," and I am not talking about when you get sick. I am talking about your attitude about the things of God.

Tradition is used to put you on a guilt trip. Tradition is used to put you on a guilt trip to come. It is used to put you on a guilt trip to give. I am telling you, I will teach you what the Bible says about giving. If you are a member of this church, that is your responsibility. I am not going to pass out pledge cards. I am not going to go through and find out who is or who is not. I played those games once with people. I have come to the conclusion that the bottom line is, we are going to do it right, or we are not going to do it. You have an obligation to take care of your pastor and the church. If you do not do it, we will close the doors. I do not care. I will go back with my family and anybody else, and we will scale it down to do whatever God wants us to do. It is not my responsibility. We are in this together. You decide. We either do it biblically, or we do not do it. I am not going to resort to guilt tactics or tricking you or manipulating your emotions so you will give to God. If you do not love Him enough to give Him everything in your life, keep it. It is okay. It is all right.

I am not going to manipulate you to read your Bible or win people to Christ or witness. I am going to teach you the Bible the best way I know how. We are going to take every moment that we do have, and those that are concerned about it, we will build, and we will go from there. I promise you, everything else will take care of itself. You do what is right with God. He will do what is right with you. The tragedy of that is most of the time He still does right with you and me when we do not do what is right with Him. Glory to God.

## VI. The Ordinances of the Church

The church did not get any of those things. But I will tell you what the church did get. That is where we want to focus today. The church got ordinances. Ordinances. God gave the church two ordinances. They are not tradition because an ordinance, defined in the Bible, is a rule established by authority.

*1 Corinthians 11:2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.*

The first ordinance is baptism. That is not an option. I know in our situation here, we do not have a baptistry, so we have to pretty much do it when we can. It is kind of tough right now, but when the spring comes, if anybody needs to be baptized, we will baptize them. That is the issue. That is the thing that was laid out. That is something in the New Testament. It is not something that is negotiable. It is something that is absolutely set in stone. God says, "Be baptized."

Baptism always manifests something. There are seven types of baptism in the Bible, but there is one true baptism. That is the baptism of the Holy Spirit of God, that Jesus came down from heaven. He came through the water in the second heaven, Genesis 1, came down to earth. He died, and He went back up through that water when He was going to glory. That is why we baptize. Buried in the likeness of His death, raised in the likeness of His resurrection. It pictures Him, leaving glory, coming down through the water, coming down to earth and dying, and going back up through the water. He said it testifies to unbelievers and the world that you are in Me and I am in you. That is why we do it.

The preacher says, "Well, we baptize because Jesus was baptized." He was baptized. A man manifests himself. He is a real bozo. John 4, He was baptized to manifest Himself to Israel. That is not why I get baptized. I get baptized because I know from the Bible that He was on the throne. He left that throne, came down through the deep, the water in the second heaven, came down to earth, and went back up through that water, and buried in the likeness of His death, I am raised in the likeness of His resurrection. That is why. That is the first one.

The second one is the Lord's Supper and communion. Every church I have ever been associated with, even growing up, has not done this right. I know why they do not, and I know their reasons why they say they do not. But I just cannot fathom that you would be such a stickler on long hair and not such a stickler on the Lord's Supper and communion. I just cannot believe you would want somebody wearing the right clothes but not doing the right communion or supper. But that is the way it is. Do you know why? Traditions. We put emphasis where we can control people.

But in the Bible, the Lord's Supper and communion are two different things. In 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, he talks about taking the cup and he talks about taking the bread. That is communion. When he comes to the church of Corinth in 1 Corinthians 11, the church of Corinth, you know the stories, is a wild, fleshly, ungodly church. He talks about a supper. He talks about a supper.

## VII. The Lord's Supper and Communion: Biblical Practice

When he comes down through this great passage here, we are not going to take time to read the whole thing. We have been through it a thousand times. You have all read it. You can go back

and read it by the tape, take the tape. If you do not have the money, I will pay for it, but go back and study it on your own. But the bottom line is, he says there is a difference between the Lord's Supper and communion.

Do you know how they did it in the early church? Here is how they did it. Of course, they met at home, and they went to somebody's house. They all sat down and ate. During that time they ate, they fellowshiped. They talked about the things of God. They loved each other. They worked out maybe whatever differences they had with each other. They spent time together, and then they came to take communion. That is what he is telling the church about here.

He is saying some of you were coming, you already ate. Some of you did not like the food they were going to have, so you ate at home and you showed up, and you already had enough to drink and enough to eat. You are not even hungry. Other people came, they did not have anything. You did not bring anything because you ate at home. He gets all over them.

Because of convenience, the church, as long as I have understood it and long as I have been associated with them, has just forgotten the supper. They just go on the bread and the grape juice. Now, we are going to do it that way today. But I am telling you right now, this is the last time we are going to do it that way. From now on, when we meet together, we are going to meet in somebody's home, hopefully the Christies'. But Rosa is running a fast second with the chili. We are all going to bring food. We are going to sit down, and we are going to fellowship. We are going to talk about the things. Do you know why most Baptist churches do not take the time to do the Lord's Supper right before they do communion? Because they are in such a fast-paced society, they just want to get it on, get it over with because they have to do it. That reflects the way most pastors look at their people. "I do not have time for you, but give me your money and give me your time." We are not going to do that. We are going to do it right, or we are not going to do it.

We are going to meet together. We are going to have something to eat. We are going to talk about the things of God. We are going to work out any differences somebody else may have. We are going to enjoy the Lord. It is a time of fellowship. It is a time of eating, which is a picture of the time that we spend in the Word of God together. We are going to fellowship for a time. We are going to talk about the Lord. We will talk about the good things. You realize that we are going to do this New Year's Eve, but you realize the miracles that God has done in our lives that we never hear about because we are just all moving around and going places. God never intended that for the church. God intended the church to be a family. We are as close as a family. I am not knocking it. You would have to look a long way to find somebody that will love everybody like this one does. But I am just trying to make a good thing better, and I want to do it right. I want to do it biblically.

What we will do is one of the men will preach. Another man will do the Lord's Supper, and we will switch it around every time we do it. I am not going to do it. There is no reason for me to do it. This body has to breathe, and it has to eat, and it has to grow. Me taking charge of everything and doing everything, "Oh, he does not do it like I do it. Remember that time I did the Lord's Supper, honey? Nobody ever did it that way." Oh, give me a break. As true as that may be, that is

so asinine. That kind of attitude breeds the attitude that he is in charge, and I am not. That is not going to happen.

Let me tell you something. If this thing is successful, if the judgment seat of Christ, we will all take the bow for it and say, "God, we did it because we loved You." If it goes down the tube, we close the doors because nobody cares. It will be all of us going down the tubes. Simple as that. Because it is just too much pressure for me. It is not right. I am not letting you off the hook. God saved you like He saved me, and He called me like He called you. If He has called you here, then He has called you here like He has called me here to be laborers together. We all share it. We share the good. We share the bad. We take our lumps. We take our blessings. We go through the tough times because of the good times. We love each other when somebody is hurting. We praise each other when something happens. We learn how to give. We learn how to sacrificially love God and give because we love Him, not because of some guilt. We come to the study of the Word because we love the Bible more than anything else in life when we go home.

In the Bible, in the New Testament, it was done that way. That is what he is saying. Look at verse 25. He says, "And after this," now he is talking about the communion now, "after the same manner also he took the cup when he had supped." They had eaten. He is saying over here, in verse 20:

*1 Corinthians 11:20-21* When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

Not drunken in the sense of drunk, drunk, but drunken in the sense that you came and you already had enough to drink. It was not that way. The church had called it just like us. The way it was set up was that everybody met together. They ate. They fellowshiped. There was a oneness. There was a communion. There was a bond. There was a love. They enjoyed the fellowship around the food, just like they enjoyed the fellowship around the Word of God. It was a time when God's Spirit could unify, stop the world from going around for a little minute, and just enjoy the things of God, and then come into, without a doubt, the most spiritual, holiest place in God's mind in all the Bible, and brings you and I to the closest point that you will ever get to the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ: communion.

We are not in our busy schedules running all around and, "Oh, come to church, give me the wine, give me the bread, Lord died for all of us, oh yeah, let's thank You, oh, go thank You, every night." And on your way, God, it is more important to God than that. We are talking about the day God's Son came down and died, shed His blood, and got people to stop, think about it, and remember it, before we just run and do it like we do everything else in life. We are going to do it right, or we are not going to do it at all.

He says in verses 23 and 24, the bread is a picture of the broken body. He says in verse 25, the cup is a picture of the blood of Christ. He says in verse 26, "as often as you eat and drink." You see, there is no set time for communion. God knew human nature. He knew that if He said, "You do it every week," or "You do it every month," that man would make it a tradition, just like he does everything else. That is why Jesus, when He talked about Mary, His mother, never called

her "mother." He called her "woman." Why? Because He knows human nature, and He did not want somebody down the line calling Mary "the mother of God" and going to the Bible to prove it. So He never called her "mother." He called her "woman."

Oh my goodness, Numbers 21, Moses is told to make a brazen serpent because fiery serpents are biting the people, and they are dying, and they hold it on a pole, and he says, "Look and live," and it is a picture of Christ. Do you know what? A couple hundred years later, in 2 Kings 18, they have taken that brazen serpent, put it on a pole, and they made a god out of it, and they are worshipping it. Human nature.

So God says when it comes to the Lord's Supper, "as often as you eat and drink," you decide. No rule of thumb on it. You decide as a local church, as your own governing body, you decide when you are going to do it, but understand you are showing the Lord's death till He come.

Therefore, verse 27, if you eat or drink unworthily, you drink and eat damnation to yourself. You get right at the supper before. Any difference you have with somebody, straighten them out. When you start to sit around in fellowship and feel that sweet communion of God with the believers, if it does not do something to want to bring you back to God, then you better check your original salvation certificate to see if it has been punched.

He says in verses 28, 29, and 30, "Examine yourself." I am telling you, folks, once you have the supper and you have the communion, you are at a point where you will never get any closer to feeling the heart of God in the death of His Son. You have to be clean. In the Old Testament, before the Lord would come through the camp, everything that was unclean had to be taken out. Everything. Before God will come into the union, everything that needs to be cleaned, needs to be cleaned.

Who can take communion? Anybody saved in the body of Christ. Some churches have what they call "closed communion." That means if you are not a member of this church, you cannot take it. That is junk. You see that old thing? "If you are not a member of this building, you cannot partake." Hey, you are a member of the church. This building is not the church. Any born-again, saved believer can take the Lord's Supper. Somebody says you should be baptized. Yes, you should. But on top of that, I am going to give you a little extenuating circumstance in a situation where there are special circumstances. If you do not have a baptism like this and you want to get baptized, but you have not yet, go ahead and take it. If you have an attitude against baptism that you do not want to do it, I would not take it. You see, it is not about what you do or what you do not do. It is about your attitude. "Yes, Lord, I want to be, and I am going to be." Well, we just have not had the right situation to get it done yet. It is not like I can go every day. We can fill up the baptistry back here and do it on Sunday. We do not have that luxury.

## VIII. The Importance of the Fear of God

Then he says in verse 29:

*1 Corinthians 11:29-30 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

Do not take from that that every time somebody gets sick it is because they have a spiritual problem in their life. That is not what it is saying. Do not take it to the fact that because somebody dies who is a Christian, it means that God killed them because they were not doing right. Do not take it that way. Do not think that because we are Christians, you just cannot... Do not take it to that extreme in every case.

But know this: it is talking about the Lord's Supper and communion here. The bottom line is this: the thing that is missing in God's people's lives today, and it is why they live their life so flippantly, and why they say some of the stupid, flippant things they do, and why they do the things that they do, is because in God's people—and this is true of every one of us, if one thing we need to work on in our lives, I know it is true of me, and so I know it is true of you—is that we as God's people have no fear of God today.

We have no fear of who He is and what He can do. We think He is like our big old marshmallow Santa Claus someplace that just sits up there and loves everybody and really is not writing things down and paying attention. Wrong career move. That is why the Lord's Supper is so absolutely important. That is why it is the job of this church. Someday, one thing that is different about me and you is someday, because I do stand up here, I will give an account for what I taught you about the Bible and how I declare it, plentifully declare the thing that it is. Let me tell you something. There will be a lot of things in my life that I will have to give an account for, but this preaching you the Word of God is not going to be one of them. I will tell you what the Bible says. I will lead you lovingly. But the bottom line is, it is your move, Charlie. You do as you see fit because in the bottom line, in the final analysis, at the end of the day, every man rises and falls with his own master. I have no control over you. I do not want any control over you. I am your pastor, and I will preach to you the Word of God in truth and love, and love you with all of my being, and take whatever time I have the rest of my life to give you the Word of God in any shape or form you need it, at any time you want it. But the bottom line is, when the ball is snapped, you have to run. I love football analogies. The bottom line is, guys, this is your church.

## IX. Administering Communion and Closing

With that today, we are going to have our communion. This will be the last time we have it this way. Next time we do it, we will be at somebody's home, or maybe we will do it here and bring the food. I do not care. But we will do it the way it needs to be done.

At this point, Chris Fender is going to come, one of our men, and he is going to administer communion. The next time we get together to have it, one man will preach, another man will do the communion. We will work around in rotation. Everybody gets a chance at it who wants a chance at it. Do not feel bad. Nobody is going to force you to do it. When you feel you are ready, you come to me and say, "Bob, I am ready to do either," and I will put you in the deal. Chris.

Okay, everybody, I am sure you are at 1 Corinthians 11 right now. Guys, come forward, and we might as well go ahead and pass the bread out, and we will get ready on that. Bob just about covered it all here on 1 Corinthians as far as the Lord's Supper and communion. It is not a time to get down and just have a big meal unworthily and not even thinking about the Lord or anything, but it should be a time. It is kind of a memorial to God at this time. It should be the purest and cleanest time of our lives, and it is just kind of a time out. A time to take a moment and confess your sins before God, and that is exactly what we are going to do here in a minute. Before we eat anything, we are going to just pray and bow our heads, and everybody kind of purify your hearts because that is exactly what you want to do. The reason you do that, and Bob covered it, is the fact that it is a time of self-examination. It is a time of self-judgment of your own self. The reason you do that is just like he said in verse 29:

*1 Corinthians 11:29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*

You do not want to be unworthy. "Not discerning the Lord's body" simply means you are not recognizing what Christ did for you, the sacrifices He made for you. This is supposed to be a time of remembrance and remembering Him. That is why he says, and Christ said these words in verses 24 and 25, in both those verses, He said, "Remember me." That is what we are supposed to do. It is a time of remembrance, a time of remembering His sufferings and the fact of what He did for us when He died for us on the cross. So with that, we will go ahead and start here in verse 24. First of all, what we want to do is pray to yourself. Pray and confess any sins that you may have to the Lord, and just purify and cleanse your heart, and remember this time and what Christ did for us. So go ahead and take a moment.

Okay, if everybody is through praying and purifying yourself before God, and just remembering His suffering that He did for us, the broken body, the shed blood for our remission of sins. In verse 24, we are going to give thanks. I am going to ask Phil Christie to go ahead and pray, and then I will read the passage, and then we will be to the bread. So, Amen.

*1 Corinthians 11:24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

It is a picture of His broken body for us. Go ahead and eat.

Then in like manner, verse 25, after we pass out the blood, or the juice as we are using, it is a picture of His blood, the fact that He shed His blood for the remission of our sins. Go ahead and pass it.

Okay, if everybody has their cup, we are going to do it in like manner. Jimmy Stymets, I am going to ask you to pray before I read this second passage in verse 25. Go ahead.

*1 Corinthians 11:25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*

*1 Corinthians 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

John, would you like to say a prayer before Bob takes over? Okay.

We are going to be dismissed in just a second. I wanted to, I told you I had a little something for you. A long time ago, I have always been into astronomy, but when I got saved, I really started getting the thing put together in the Word of God. As I have said many, many times, there are only two things in all the world that declare God's, well, really three. There are only three things in the world that declare God's glory: one of them is the Word of God, the other one is you and me as a believer, and the last one is the heaven declared the glory of God.

So I have put together some bookmarks that we are going to not only give out to you today because this is the first day, I want to give you something for Christmas that I put many, many, many hours in because I took all these pictures by myself. Valerie, the reason why I said it is such a special thing, is because we are going to give one to all the visitors from now on when they come to the church because it has our church time. You are our first visitor, so they are going to escort you up in just a minute. First, you get to pick of all the others. Anyway, here they are, and on the back, they have all the times of our church. We are going to use them to give out to people, let them know about our church.

This is the Edge-on Galaxy here, a hundred million light-years from planet Earth. This is the Ring Nebula. This is Jupiter. This is the four moons; it has a little moon transiting it. This is another Edge-on Galaxy. Mars was at opposition this year, the closest it ever came in 60 billion years, and I photographed the four or five faces of Mars, all the surface features on it. So you have that one. This is a great galaxy, M31, with each spiral. Of course, the planet Saturn needs no description. And then the Whirlpool Galaxy, which is another galaxy. So I want you to take them. Everybody gets one. Down the line, we are going to make them up about all this stuff to do them ourselves, but we are going to use this as a promotion. I can even make them up and put the magnets on the back and put them on the refrigerator with your favorite verses on them, so I will do special orders. Excuse me, sorry. Jason and I will do. Ask for them too. Jason, me, my wife Kelly, Jamie, and Danny, we sat up family nights for three nights cutting all the backs out and trimming them and putting them together and everything. So we love you. It is not much, but you know what you can do with it? Keep it in your Bible, but we want to underline your verses. You can use it in this. I will put a little bit on one side for that. They are a thousand dollars apiece.

Anyway, we are going to be dismissed. I love you so much. Four o'clock today at your house. Maps, please come, and we will have a great time, and we will go from there. Okay, we are going to be dismissed. I want to ask Jan Hill to come up and dismiss us in prayer. So Jan, come up. No, I am joking. But Jan Hill, come up and preach. Come up and ask us in prayer. I feel bad doing it. Please do not do it. I have somebody else. I will not do it.

Would you bow with me in prayer, please? Lord, I just thank You for this beautiful group of people, Lord. They are just so precious. Thank You for Bob and for our church and for this body of believers that love each other, Lord. Thank You for Your Son and all You have done for us,

God. We will praise You until the day You come. Lord, come back soon for us. We pray this in Your name. Amen.