

“When You Come Together”:
The Lord's Supper & Mound Free Church
Sermon Notes

➤ **In the Lord's Supper, we confirm and nourish our faith through a visible and tangible expression of the gospel**

**Therefore, let us keep the feast and...*

1. Stop acting like such sinners (vv.17-22; 5:7-8; 1 John 2:1)

2. Steep our minds in the sacrifice of our Savior (v.23-26)

3. Strengthen the hands and the hearts of the saints (vv.27-34)

Next Week: *An Overview of the Book of Ecclesiastes*

MEFC Community Group Study Questions

For the week of September 13th-19th

Getting Started

1. Share one or two of your most vivid memories celebrating the Lord's Supper. Make sure everyone who would like to has the opportunity to contribute.

Digging Deeper

2. Though the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ as a sign of unity among his church, it is a meal that from the very beginning has also been at the heart of much division among his people. Just as cold formalism and theological liberalism began to settle over the leadership of many Lutheran churches of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark in the 19th century, the fires of revival began to spark and burn among the people in the pew. Fascinatingly, this period of Free Church history is addressed in a chapter entitled: "The Cup Was the Catalyst" written by early EFCA leader Arnold Olson. Discuss the following paragraph as a group, sharing your reflections with one another:

"Controversy over the Lord's Supper was the catalyst which led to the open break with the State Churches of Scandinavia. This does not minimize the other, and possibly more significant factors such as the rediscovery of justification by personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and the New Testament Church composed of believers only. Nevertheless, the conclusion was that this fellowship of believers should first of all be expressed in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, a celebration which had to go underground because the Church denied freedom to hold such celebrations outside the sanctuary and hosted by anyone except the State Church priest. It was that which accelerated the move towards the organizing of congregations apart from the religious establishment."¹

Open Your Bible to 1 Corinthians 11:17-34...

3. In 1 Corinthians 11:24-25, the Apostle Paul reports the words of our Lord Jesus who referred to the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper as "my body" and "my blood" (see also Luke 22:19 and Matthew 26:27-28). What is your understanding of the presence of Christ in the Supper? This is an area of doctrine in which the EFCA grants some latitude, so feel free to share openly. Do you believe that Christ is present in the elements in a uniquely spiritual way? Is it more of a memorial meal? Both? Something different? Explain.²

¹ Arnold T. Olson, *The Significance of Silence*. Heritage Series 2. Free Church Press: Minneapolis, MN. 1981. pp.85-86.

² "We must beware of the danger voiced by Millard Erickson: 'Out of a zeal to avoid the conception that Jesus is present in some sort of magical way, some have sometimes gone to such extremes as to give the impression that the one place where Jesus most assuredly is not to be found is in the Lord's Supper. This is what one Baptist leader termed 'the doctrine of the real absence' of Jesus Christ" (*Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998] 1130. Quoted in *Evangelical Convictions: A Theological Exposition of the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America*. Free Church Press: Minneapolis, MN. 2011. p.179. Footnote 74

4. One of the more stunning realities on the night Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper with his disciples was that he served Judas the meal as a part of the twelve (Matthew 26:21-25). What sort of influence ought this to have on our practice of serving the Supper? Do our leaders seek to 'fence the table' in any sense when we gather for this meal?³ If so, how? On the other hand, how is our observance of the Lord's Supper best described as an 'open communion'?
5. The New Testament does not appear to give any clear directive as to how often a church ought to observe the Lord's Supper. As you may know, it's our custom to gather for this meal monthly (except during Lent when we come to the table each of the six Sundays during that season). What's your view of how often we ought to celebrate this meal?
6. One truth that is crystal clear in 1 Corinthians 11:26 is that: "...as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." How so? In what way do we proclaim Christ's death as we observe the Supper? One thing we like to say as a church is that the Lord's Supper is an hors d'oeuvre of a greater meal that's yet to come. What meal is that (if you're having trouble, take a look at Revelation 19:7-10)? Discuss this future meal as a group? What do you think it will be like? Where will we observe it? Who will be there?
7. Consider the sober warning the Apostle Paul issues the church in 1 Corinthians 11:28-30. In context, what does it mean to "discern...the body"? What sort of pause does this give you as you participate in this meal? Have you ever abstained from the Supper for any purpose? How come? If you feel comfortable, please share it with the group.
8. As you close your time in prayer, please pray that MEFC would be a fellowship that continues to confirm and nourish our faith through the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner, and that we would solemnly and joyfully observe, protect, and offer this great gift to Christ's people.

³ "Fencing the table" is a term that's been used over the course of church history to describe any public steps a church might take to refrain certain persons from participating in the Lord's Supper (for instance: unbelievers, non-members of that local church, unbaptized persons, unrepentant believers, believers in active conflict with one another, and so on).