

REALIGNING THE TABLE

Coming to the Table as One Body

“So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should eat together.”

— 1 Corinthians 11:33

A table can reveal a lot about us. Around a dinner table, we discover who is welcomed, who is left out, who is serving, who is being served, who is talking, and who is being ignored. The same was true in the church at Corinth. They gathered around a table that was supposed to proclaim the grace of Jesus, yet somehow the table had become a place of division. Some had plenty while others went hungry. Some were honored while others were humiliated.

The problem wasn't the food. The problem was that they had forgotten what the Table represented. The Lord's Supper is a reminder that we all come to Jesus the same way: empty-handed and dependent upon grace. At the foot of the cross, our status doesn't matter. Our bank account doesn't matter. Our background doesn't matter. Our accomplishments don't matter. Our failures don't matter. We all need the same Savior.

Over these five days, we will explore what it means to realign the table—to allow the cross of Christ to reshape how we view God, ourselves, and one another.

DAY 1: YOU HAVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE

Romans 5:10

Imagine being invited to dinner by someone you had spent years fighting against. Not just someone you disagreed with. Not someone who irritated you. An actual enemy. You arrive at their house expecting judgment, punishment, or perhaps revenge. Instead, they open the door and say: “Come in. Sit down. I prepared a place for you.”

That is the picture Paul gives us when he describes our reconciliation with God. We were not naturally God's friends. Sin created a separation between us and our Creator. Yet God didn't respond by pushing us farther away. He made a way to bring us near. The story of Elisha in 2 Kings 6 gives us a beautiful picture of this. Israel's enemy had been captured. The king wanted to kill them. But Elisha told him to feed them. So instead of a battlefield, there was a banquet. Instead of death, there was food. Instead of vengeance, there was mercy.

It is a remarkable picture of what God has done for us. We were enemies, but Christ made peace. We deserved judgment, but God offered grace. We were far away, but Jesus brought us near. And that's what makes Communion so powerful.

When we take the bread and the cup, we are remembering that we have been welcomed to the King's table because of the sacrifice of the King. We didn't earn our seat. We didn't purchase our seat.

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We didn't deserve our seat. Jesus gave us our seat.

That should radically change the way we see ourselves. If I didn't earn my place at the table, I don't have to look down on someone else whose place wasn't earned either. The person sitting next to you needs grace just as much as you do. The person across the room needs Jesus just as much as you do. And so do you.

Communion reminds us that the ground beneath the cross is level. We all come with empty hands. We all need forgiveness. We all need grace. And we all have been invited to the table.

THINK ABOUT IT:

- Have I ever forgotten that my place at God's table is a gift of grace?
- Do I sometimes compare my spiritual life with someone else's?
- How should remembering God's grace change the way I treat other people?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE:

Look at the people around you today and remind yourself: "They are someone Jesus died for."

Then look in the mirror and remind yourself: "I am someone Jesus died for."

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus,

Thank You for inviting me to Your table. I did not earn my place, but You gave it to me through Your sacrifice. Help me never to forget the grace that brought me near. Remove my pride and help me see every person around me as someone You love and died to redeem. Amen.

MY RESPONSE:

Because Jesus has welcomed me to His table, I will:

DAY 2 : DON'T TURN THE TABLE INTO A WALL

1 Corinthians 11:18

The church at Corinth had a table problem. They gathered together for what was supposed to be a celebration of Jesus, but instead, their gathering exposed their divisions. The wealthy had plenty. The poor had little. Some people ate until they were full. Others remained hungry. Some were treated with honor. Others were humiliated.

Paul looked at this and essentially said: "This isn't the Lord's Supper."

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That's a powerful statement. They were using the right bread. They were using the right cup. They were gathering in the right place. But they had missed the heart of the meal. They had allowed the world's divisions to become divisions within the church. And that can still happen today. We may not divide ourselves according to ancient social class, but we can find plenty of other ways to create walls: Age, Income, Politics, Race, Background, Personality, Education, Family history, and Length of time in church.

Even something as simple as who sits where. We can quietly develop our own little circles. We gravitate toward people who are like us. We avoid people who make us uncomfortable. We hold onto old disagreements. We remember past offenses. And before we know it, the Table that is supposed to proclaim reconciliation becomes a place where our divisions are revealed.

But Jesus didn't die to create a collection of disconnected groups. He died to create one body.

Read Ephesians 2:14

The cross tears down walls. So, if the cross tears them down, we shouldn't rebuild them. That doesn't mean every relationship will be restored to exactly what it was. It doesn't mean we ignore abuse or pretend serious wounds don't exist. It doesn't mean we force reconciliation where it isn't safe or wise.

But it does mean we can release our desire for revenge. We can forgive. We can pray. We can stop feeding resentment. We can choose love. We can make room at the table.

The church should be one of the places on earth where people discover: "There is room for me here."

THINK ABOUT IT:

- Are there people I naturally avoid or look down upon?
- Have I allowed a disagreement to become a wall between me and another believer?
- Is there someone I need to forgive?
- Am I contributing to unity or division?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE :

Do one intentional thing to cross a relational or social boundary. Sit with someone different from you. Start a conversation. Invite someone to coffee. Encourage someone you normally overlook. Make room at your table.

PRAYER:

Father,

Forgive me for the walls I have built between myself and others. Help me see people the way You see them. Give me the courage to forgive, the humility to listen, and the love to make room for others. Make Your church a place where people experience the unity and grace of Jesus. Amen.

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MY RESPONSE:

A relationship or barrier I need to surrender to God:

One step toward unity I can take:

DAY 3: REMEMBER THE CENTER

1 Corinthians 11:23–24

Paul takes the Corinthians back to the center. They had become distracted by status, selfishness, pride, food, and division. So Paul reminds them: Remember Jesus.

That sounds simple. But sometimes the simplest commands are the ones we most desperately need. The Communion table isn't ultimately about us. It isn't about how much we have. It isn't about what we bring. It isn't about our position. It isn't about who gets recognized. It is about Jesus.

And notice when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. It was “on the night he was betrayed.” Jesus knew what was coming. He knew Judas would betray Him. He knew Peter would deny Him. He knew the disciples would scatter. He knew the cross was waiting. Yet Jesus took bread and said: “This is my body, which is for you.”

Jesus responded to betrayal with grace. He responded to rejection with love. He responded to the cross with surrender. And then He told His followers: “Do this in remembrance of me.”

That's why Communion is so much more than eating a small piece of bread and drinking a little juice. It is an intentional act of remembrance. We remember the body that was broken. We remember the blood that was shed. We remember the covenant that was established. We remember the grace that rescued us. We remember the Savior who gave Himself for us.

And remembering changes us. When I remember what Jesus has done for me, my pride begins to shrink. When I remember His forgiveness, my resentment begins to loosen. When I remember His sacrifice, my selfishness begins to lose its grip. When I remember the cross, I remember that I am not the center. Jesus is.

Perhaps that's what the Corinthians needed most. And perhaps that's what we need most, too. When the church becomes divided, go back to Jesus. When relationships become difficult, go back to Jesus. When pride takes over, go back to Jesus. When we forget why we're here, go back to Jesus. Remember the center.

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THINK ABOUT IT:

- What distractions have caused me to lose sight of Jesus?
- Do I sometimes make church more about myself than about Christ?
- How does remembering Jesus' sacrifice affect the way I treat others?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE:

Take five quiet minutes today and simply remember. Remember the cross. Remember the sacrifice. Remember the forgiveness. Remember the empty tomb. Then pray: "Jesus, bring me back to the center."

PRAYER:

Jesus,

Forgive me for the times I have made my faith about myself. Bring me back to the cross. Help me remember what You have done for me and allow that remembrance to reshape how I live, worship, forgive, and love. You are the center. Keep my heart centered on You. Amen.

MY RESPONSE:

Something I need to place back at the center:

DAY 4 :EXAMINE YOUR HEART

1 Corinthians 11:28

Self-examination isn't always comfortable. We are usually much better at examining other people. We notice their mistakes. We notice their attitudes. We notice who isn't doing what we think they should be doing. We can become experts at looking around the room.

But Paul says: "Examine yourselves." Look inward. Not to condemn yourself. Not to convince yourself that you're unworthy of God's grace. Instead, examine your heart so you can bring what needs healing to Jesus. Paul's warning about taking Communion in an "unworthy manner" has often caused people to become terrified. Some people hear those words and think: *"I'm not good enough to take Communion."* But if perfect people were the only people allowed at the Lord's Table, there would be no one there.

The Table isn't for people who have achieved perfection. The Table is for people who need Jesus. The question isn't: *"Have I been perfect?"* The question is: "Am I willing to let Jesus deal with what is in my heart?"

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Am I harboring unforgiveness? Am I looking down on someone? Am I allowing pride to control me? Am I treating worship casually? Am I pretending everything is fine when there is something God is asking me to address? Am I contributing to unity or division?

This is why self-examination is actually an act of grace. God reveals things because He wants to heal things.

Think about a doctor discovering a problem during an examination. The doctor isn't examining you because he hates you. The examination is designed to identify what needs attention.

God does the same thing with our hearts. He gently exposes what we would rather hide so that He can begin His transforming work.

And sometimes the result of self-examination is simple: Repent. Sometimes it is: Forgive. Sometimes: Ask for forgiveness. Sometimes: Let go. Sometimes: Make things right. And sometimes the answer is simply: Receive God's grace.

As you approach the Lord's Table, don't be afraid of what God might reveal. Instead, trust the One who reveals it. The hands that expose the wound are the same hands that bring healing.

THINK ABOUT IT:

Take a quiet inventory:

- Is there a barrier of pride I need to tear down?
- Is there someone I have looked down upon?
- Is there someone I need to forgive?
- Is there someone from whom I need to ask forgiveness?
- Have I taken Jesus' sacrifice for granted?
- Am I helping build unity in the body of Christ?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE:

Find a quiet place and ask God: "Search me, God, and know my heart." Then listen. Don't defend yourself. Don't make excuses. Simply ask: "Lord, what do You want to change in me?"

PRAYER:

Search my heart, O God. Show me anything that is keeping me from loving You or loving others well. Give me humility to repent, courage to make things right, and grace to forgive. Help me approach Your Table not in fear, but with a heart that is open to Your transforming work. Amen.

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MY RESPONSE:

God is showing me:

The next step of obedience I need to take:

DAY 5: COME TO THE TABLE TOGETHER

1 Corinthians 11:33

Paul ends his correction with a surprisingly simple instruction: Eat together.

After all the theology. After all the warnings. After all the correction. After all the problems in Corinth. Paul says: “When you gather, eat together.” In other words: Fix your fellowship. Make room for one another. Honor Christ by honoring His people.

The Lord's Table is supposed to be a picture of the Gospel. And what is the Gospel? That people who were far away have been brought near. That enemies can be reconciled. That sinners can be forgiven. That broken people can be restored. That strangers can become family. That Jesus has created one body from many different people.

That's why Communion is a corporate act. We don't simply remember Jesus individually. We remember Him together. The bread and cup remind us that we belong to something bigger than ourselves. We are part of the body of Christ. And if we are part of one body, then what happens to one person matters to all of us.

One hurts, we hurt. One rejoices, we rejoice. One struggles, we come alongside. One is hungry, we feed them. One is lonely, we welcome them. One falls, we help them up. One is hurting, we pray.

The Table teaches us how to be the church. It reminds us that Christianity isn't simply: “Me and Jesus.” It is: “We and Jesus.” Jesus has made us His people.

The book of Revelation tells us, people from every tribe, nation, people, and language will gather around God's throne. Different backgrounds. Different languages. Different cultures. Different stories. One Savior. One Lord. One redeemed people.

The Lord's Table gives us a small taste of that coming reality. So when we gather around the Communion table, we come as one body. We come with empty hands. We come dependent upon grace. We come remembering Jesus. We come examining our hearts. We come forgiving. We come receiving forgiveness. We come making room. We come together.

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The Table has been realigned. Not around status. Not around wealth. Not around politics. Not around personality. Not around preference. Not around pride.

Around Jesus.

THINK ABOUT IT:

- What does it mean for me to be part of the body of Christ?
- How can I help create greater unity in my church?
- Is there someone I need to intentionally welcome or include?
- What would change if I viewed every person in my church as someone Jesus died to redeem?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE:

This week, intentionally make room at your table. Invite someone to lunch. Sit with someone you don't normally sit with. Invite someone into your home. Reach out to someone who may feel overlooked. Encourage someone who serves quietly. Make the Table bigger.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for making me part of Your family. Thank You for the sacrifice of Jesus that has reconciled me to You and brought me into the body of Christ. Help me live in unity with my brothers and sisters. Tear down the walls of pride, resentment, preference, and division.

Teach me to welcome others as You have welcomed me. Help our church become a place where everyone knows there is room at the Table. And when we gather around the bread and the cup, help us remember that we are not separate people simply sharing a meal.

We are one body, redeemed by one Savior, and brought together by one grace.

In the name of Jesus, Amen.

MY 5-DAY TABLE CHECKLIST

This week I will:

- ☐ Remember that my place at God's Table is a gift of grace.
- ☐ Tear down a wall of division.
- ☐ Put Jesus back at the center.
- ☐ Examine my heart honestly.
- ☐ Make room for someone else.

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A relationship I need to restore:

Someone I need to forgive:

Someone from whom I need to ask forgiveness:

Someone I need to intentionally welcome:

A pride or preference I need to surrender:

What Jesus' sacrifice means to me:

Take a moment to pray:

Lord Jesus,

Search my heart. Reveal my pride. Soften my heart toward others. Help me forgive. Help me seek forgiveness. Tear down the walls I have built. Remind me that I did not earn my place at Your Table. You invited me. You redeemed me. You reconciled me. You welcomed me. Help me welcome others. Help me love Your people. Help me remember Your sacrifice. I am part of the body of Christ. Amen.

ONE SAVIOR. ONE SACRIFICE. ONE BODY. ONE TABLE. ONE GRACE.

“Do this in remembrance of me.” — 1 Corinthians 11:24