

Opening Passage

John 4:24 "God is spirit (πνεῦμα ὁ θεός), and those who worship (τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας) Him must (δεῖ) worship in spirit (ἐν πνεύματι) and truth (ἀληθεία)."

- ✓ New Reality of Worship in (ἐν) realm of Spirit
- ✓ New is not something "now from heart," nor "revelation of spirituality", nor "sincerity."
- ✓ New = in the realm of the life-giving Spirit where is the person is vitalized and motivated by Him. HS is critical.
- ✓ Spirit and truth are closely connected (i.e. ἐν)
- ✓ Truth = Fulness of Truth and divine reality, Bible doctrine, highest level of truth, the substance behind the rites.
- ✓ True worship = vital connection to God (through HS) and vital connection to Reality/Substance
- ✓ 3 words for worship and what they mean: **προσκυνέω;**
σέβομαι; λειτουργέω

The Lord's Supper and the Local Church

The Lord' Supper

1. Nomenclature: Eucharist (εὐχαριστέω, 1 Cor. 11:24); Lord's table (τραπέζης κυρίου, 1 Cor. 10:21), and breaking of bread (τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου, Act 2:42).
2. The Lord's Supper was instituted directly by the command of Christ, 1 Cor. 11:23; Lk 22:19-20. It fulfilled Passover as His redemptive death provided the perfect final sacrifice. Ultra-dispensationalists reject the LS and baptism for CA.
3. The Lord's Supper was practiced by the early church as part of a fellowship meal, 1 Cor. 11:23; Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11. The focus was on remembering Christ's work on the cross and the joyful recognition of His presence and future coming. Picture of Christ and communion of believers in the unity of His body, 1 Cor 10:16.

Four views on the Lord's Supper

1. Roman Catholic View.

- Transubstantiation: literal body and blood are in the elements.
- When the priest utters the formula of consecration over the bread and wine, they are transformed, so that while the characteristics of the bread and wine remain the same, their substance is truly changed into the body and blood of Christ.
- Based on literalness of “this is My body,” and “this is My blood.” The problem is in taking things literal that should be taken as metaphor and taking those things that are metaphor as literal. This cup *is* the New Covenant? I am the Door? That Rock was Christ?
- Concept of drinking blood is abhorrent both then and now. The physical blood of Christ is in His resurrected body.
- Idea of materializing the *physical* presence of Christ and worshipping *it* is idolatrous.
- The problem of superstition filling the vacuum of ignorance.
- The problem with ubiquitous amounts of blood and flesh all over the globe during Mass.

2. Lutheran View.

- ❑ Consubstantiation: the real presence of the body and blood of Christ are present in the elements. However, there is no transformation of the elements.
- ❑ Rather, the body and blood are said to be “in, with, and under” the bread and wine which remain as such. The supernatural, incomprehensible blood and body of Christ are present.
- ❑ Same arguments against literalism for transubstantiation applies to consubstantiation.
- ❑ Same arguments against materializing the body and blood of Jesus Christ apply.
- ❑ Without Bible doctrine and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the believer is unable to move into the substance or reality behind the shadows and rites. He ends up with some form of superstition. Something always fills the vacuum when Bible doctrine is not there.

3. Reformed View.

- Combination of memorial view and transubstantiation view.
- Called the “Calvinistic View.” Calvin believed there was a real communion with the body & blood of Christ and these “are to be understood in terms of Christ’s act of reconciliation, not in themselves.”
- This view is that Christ is present through the Holy Spirit in such a way that His entire person—body and blood—is “enjoyed in the supper.”
- The presence of the body & blood is called the *dynamic presence* in which the efficacy of Christ’s sacrificial death is made effective in the believer through partaking of the elements in faith.
- In the Reformed view, then, the elements of the LS are more than mere symbols of His death. In the partaking of them by faith there is a partaking of Christ in His redemptive presence.
- Elements are visible symbols of the real presence of Christ which invite believers to participate in the salvation of His death.

4. Zwinglian/Memorial View.

- ✓ He recognized that it was commanded for all believers—unlike today’s ultra-dispensationalists.
- ✓ Zwingli absolutely rejected any idea of the real bodily presence of Christ becoming, or in, on, through, or around the elements.
- ✓ Zwingli believed that Christ was *spiritually* present to those of faith. He stressed that physical body of Christ was in heaven—
”Christ’s flesh has done its work on earth, having been offered for our salvation; now . . . it is no longer here.”
- ✓ He recognized that the Lord’s Supper was “food for the soul,” but the ordinance had nothing to do with a salvation the believer already possessed.
- ✓ Efficacy of the Lord’s Supper was through the believer’s faith and consisted of the blessings of the spiritual presence of Christ and His blessings in regard to the ordinance upon the believer who obeys His Word. Christ is always spiritually present w/His Word.

The Early Church

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

FOURFOLD DYNAMICS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

1. Apostle's doctrine (τῆ διδασκίᾳ τῶν ἀποστόλων).
 - ✓ Continued steadfast (ἦσαν δὲ προσκατεροῦντες). Great place for personal reflection in your own life. Where are you? You will never be a strong Christian or happy one until serious about God's Word. This is what all need, not just the 3,000 converts.
 - ✓ Doctrine is the basis for any healthy Christian life. Consider the spiritual ignorance of the Pathians and Medes. Many of them knew no more than Peter's sermon. They believed and now eager for more light, more doctrine. They were unaware of the Gospels or even the basic doctrines of Judaism. There is so much doctrine (theological teaching). How healthy is your spiritual life? Love and enthusiasm for BD is indication of life in HS.
 - ✓ Without BD, the believer will eventually think and live just like the unbeliever, i.e. according to emotions and passions.

2. The Fellowship (τῆ κοινωνία).

- ✓ This refers to the fellowship of all the different believers. They lived in the reality of the new order of the royal family, a true Christian brotherhood, which was much closer than former associations—far stronger than ethnical and cultural influences.
- ✓ HS produced in them “one another” dispositions (cf. Jn 13:34) as they held to the same Lord and realized that they were nearer one another than with those who do not share the faith.
- ✓ This is not a gushy or sickly love. It is the supernatural love of God.
- ✓ Jesus Christ created the institution of the local church for believers to *come together* to learn Bible doctrine and to reflect His light and salt in the world.
- ✓ There is no “Lone Ranger Christianity” in Scripture. Every believer needs to associate himself with a local church.
- ✓ Without the local church both Christians and the already corrupt society in which we live would be more corrupt and wicked.

3. **“In the Breaking of Bread”—the Lord’s Supper.**

- ✓ This includes both communion among believers in the eating of meals together as well as the breaking of bread in the Lord’s Supper. It would also include eating of meals at home and sanctifying them in remembrance of Christ and His sacrifice.
- ✓ Note how this stands in stark contrast to the Mass and the rite administered by the ordained hands of RC priests with their magical formulas.
- ✓ Original Lord’s Supper was not an appendage to a service. It was a communal meal where every table became a memorial of our dear Lord.
- ✓ They were able to blend the domestic with the devout lives.
- ✓ They were able to bring the sacred and secular together as one so that all of daily life was worship.
- ✓ They were able to do everything “in remembrance of Me.”

4. **“And in prayers” (ταῖς προσευχαῖς)**

- ✓ The church that does not continue in prayer will fall victim to the enemy. Satan loves to destroy the visible local church. Without the visible local church our corrupt society will continue to sink.
- ✓ Absence of prayer is simply a sign of lack of dependence on God as well as lack of appreciation of life, God, and the matchless, marvelous plan of God.
- ✓ Absence of prayer for others is indication of lack of concern for others. As society becomes more narcissistic and self-centered, the believer is likely to follow the same route.
- ✓ Prayer keeps us oriented, balanced, and protected.
- ✓ Neither the gnostic Christian nor the libertine Christian gives a hoot about other believers—least alone their spiritual lives.
- ✓ All prayers are to be focused on the spiritual lives.
- ✓ Prayers were never designed simply for “comforts” sake.

The Lord's Supper and the Local Church

1. **The local church—the pillar and support of truth.**

- ✓ 1 Tim. 3:14-15 I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; ¹⁵ but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar (στῦλος) and support (ἑδραίωμα) of the truth.

2. **Where does the local church fit in a crumbling culture?** One that is rapidly breaking down and decaying within? We see the decay everywhere. It is undeniable. We are experiencing the breakdown of the family and the breakdown of moral structure. Note the corruption of our government, and the increasing threat of loss of liberty due its encroachment. We are like the Titanic, still bobbling along for a while after it hit it iceberg. If this culture continues in its present direction this “Titanic” will sink.

3. Should the church “just get along?” Should we be careful not to offend, and provide a God who is merely moralistic, therapeutic, and deistic? Are we to send out flyers to those in the neighborhood with sensational messages about prophecy, wealth, prosperity, sex, marriage, etc. ad nauseum? Are we to portray Jesus as a Mr. Rogers? Consider the modern messages with the ancient creed of Nicaea of 325.

4. The Nicene Creed – 325:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth, of things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the begotten of God the Father, the Only-begotten, that is of the essence of the Father. God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten and not made; of the very same nature of the Father, by Whom all things came into being, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Who for us humanity and for our salvation came down from heaven, was incarnate, was made human, was born perfectly of the holy virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. By whom He took body, soul, and mind, and everything that is in man, truly and not in semblance. He suffered, was crucified, was buried, rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven with the same body, [and] sat at the right hand of the Father. He is to come with the same body and with the glory of the Father, to judge the living and the dead; of His kingdom there is no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, in the uncreated and the perfect; Who spoke through the Law, prophets, and Gospels; Who came down upon the Jordan, preached through the apostles, and lived in the saints. We believe also in only One, Universal, Apostolic, and [Holy] Church; in one baptism in repentance, for the remission, and forgiveness of sins; and in the resurrection of the dead, in the everlasting judgement of souls and bodies, and the Kingdom of Heaven and in the everlasting life.

5. There is a shocking amount of neglect of the local church today—not only among the unlearned but also among scholars, teachers, and professors in seminary.
6. The local church is the only visible divine institution specifically designed by and for the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. the others: volition, marriage, family, government, nationalism—all designed for believers and unbelievers).
7. Failure of the local church has led to the creation of other “spiritual” institutions—which become corrupt over time.
8. Christ promised that even the gates of Hell would never destroy His church—and this includes the visible local church, Mt. 16:18.

9. As a visible institution, the local church has been designed to have a certain amount of governmental life, 1 Cor. 14:40.
- ✓ Christ provides pastor-teachers to local churches, Eph 4:11.
 - ✓ Church officers—two tiered system of PT/elders and deacons, Acts 14:23; Philip 1:1; I Tim 3; Titus 1:5-9.
 - ✓ Church meetings are commanded, Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7
 - ✓ Records were kept, 1 Tim 5:9; Rom 15:26.
 - ✓ Church discipline was expected, 1 Cor 5:1-13; Jude 4; Acts 20:29; 2 Pt. 2:1; Mt 18:15-17; 1 Tim 5:20.

10. Is the church today “holy/ἅγιος” Eph. 5:27? Invisible and visible:
- ❖ Distinctly set apart from the world? In what way?
 - ❖ Do believers even think of it as special, set apart by God?
 - ❖ What about the scandals in the church?
 - ❖ Divorce rates among evangelicals are significantly higher than other faith groups.
 - ❖ 90% of divorces among believers occur after salvation.
 - ❖ Christians have just as many abortions as non-Christians.
 - ❖ Only 19% of Protestants believe that salvation is by faith alone.
 - ❖ 54% of evangelicals believe that a person can be saved apart from JC if he is a good person.
 - ❖ Prevalent = do your own church mentality.
 - ❖ Atheists often have more Bible knowledge than Christians.
 - ❖ Worship has become entertainment—silly and immature.
 - ❖ Moralistic, therapeutic, deistic view of God
 - ❖ Narcissistic, hedonistic, syncretistic, secular orientation

- ❖ Sensate Christianity to the point where non-Christian cultures actually have better Christian “ethics” (they demand more from kids, teach delayed gratification, education, respect, and hard work, capitalism).
- ❖ The dumbing down of Christianity where believers are not challenged the people to think—doctrinally, theologically, and philosophically about God and life. Ugh!!!
- ❖ Christians on blogs and in books bragging about why they stopped going to church! Books such as *Why the Faithful are Fleeing the Church* (where Christians are encouraged to leave).
- ❖ Discrediting the local church is at a fever pitch—even by doctrinal believers. Idiots slamming the local church.
- ❖ Leaving the local church has become the latest “thing to do.” Even doctrinal believers, no longer choose to be part of a local church—as if the church is not really that important.

- ❖ Arguments used to justify deserting Christ's church: Jesus never created institutional structures, hierarchical structure in the church is unbiblical, no point to it. True?
- ❖ New Age Churchianity: Techno hipster churches in living rooms and at Starbuck's; online streamed sermons; TV church with baptisms, and communion. No need to interact and gather with believers. Why do we need a local church? Should we just abandon the local church for a electronic version of it?
- ❖ Is it a sin to desert the local church? Heb. 10:25. Why? What if all of the churches are teaching heresies? What if the local church does not feed you or challenge you?
 - ✓ **Hebrews 10:25** not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

11. How did Paul feel about the local churches? Remember, all his epistles are to local churches. What did Paul value the most, outside of his spiritual life with the Lord? Why are there qualifications and standards for the *local visible* church?
12. Why did Christ give pastor-teachers to local churches? Eph 4:11-16.
13. What about Christ's attitude to the local churches in Rev 2-7? Didn't He admonish and encourage them? What about the fact that we have 7 stages of local church history right up to the tribulation? The local church is here to stay.
14. What does Christ say about the church in Matt. 16:18?
15. What two ordinances did Christ give for the *local church*?

16. How does Christ feel about the church?

- **Revelation 19:7** "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." ⁸ And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹ And he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."
- **Hebrews 12:23** to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect,
- **Acts 20:28** "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

17. What is the foundation of the local church? The Cornerstone?
✓ **Ephesians 2:19-20** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, ²⁰ having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*,
18. What about the local church and the spiritual gifts, and the “one another commandments”? Cf. Jn 13:34; 1 Cor. 12:21. Again, the Bible knows nothing of a solitary Christianity.
19. The issue in the church is making disciples, not numbers. The church must not change in the essentials; change has corrupted and made the church irrelevant.

20. The church is the pillar and support of truth, 1 Tim. 3:15.

- ✓ Without the local church: there would be no missionaries to send out or anything to plant; no Sunday schools, no Bible doctrine taught, and the loss of a lot of Christian schools who are attached to a local church
- ✓ Which institution is best for the teaching of the spiritual implications of national, moral, political, governmental, social, and ethical issues? Which even pretends to have answers?
- ✓ Without the local church who is going to teach and challenge believers regarding the spiritual life?
- ✓ Where would you get face-to-face-tell-it-like-it-is teaching about the SL, your marriage, your family, your MAS, and the SL? Where are you going to get sound biblical teaching? Even most Christian scholars are messed up in certain areas.
- ✓ Which institution transcends this earth and will last for all of eternity?

- ✓ What institution has God designed to address false teachings, false gospels, false ideologies as per the emergent church, prosperity gospel, narcissism, paganism, postmodernism, baseless philosophical presuppositions, materialism, apathy, ignorance, selfishness, cults?
- ✓ Which institution has God provided to teach the sound doctrines related to JC (who controls history), the Godhead, the matchless grace of God, and the spiritual life?
- ✓ What institution is the earthly headquarters for the universal church?
- ✓ If the local church is the pillar and support of truth to guide the believer into maturity in Christ, how could the local church not be a priority?
- ✓ Why would Satan want to destroy the local church? If he cannot destroy it, how can he neutralize it? What kind of church would he like to establish (cf. Anton LaVey).

21. Church faces powerful enemies.

- ✓ Church faces powerful enemies. Leftists attempt remove anything that negatively impacts their liberal or gay agenda.
- ✓ Satan would love to destroy the local church to neutralize the SL of the believer and to establish his kingdom.
- ✓ Islam would love to destroy the local church. You do not hear about them leaving the mosques to have their own type of Islam. The very moment when the local church is weakening, the mosques are growing. People becoming more radicalized as Americans compromise. What institution do you think is most effective in teaching the true nature of Islam?
- ✓ Progressive dispensationalism distorts the true nature of the church.
- ✓ Ultra-dispensationalism distorts the true nature of the church.
- ✓ Covenantalism distorts the true nature of the church.

22. Faith Bible Church and 1 Tim 3 :15; Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:42; and 1 Cor. 11:23-26.