



MESSAGE BY PASTOR HERROD:

TAKE THE LORD'S SUPPER SERIOUSLY

PASSAGE: 1 CORINTHIANS 11: 17-34
ESV

17 But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. **18** For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, **19** for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. **20** When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. **21** For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. **22** What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, **24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." **25** In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." **26** For as often as you

eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. **28** Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. **29** For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. **30** That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. **31** But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. **32** But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

33 So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another— **34** if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

MESSAGE GOAL:

The goal of this message is to emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit in maintaining unity within families, relationships, and the church. It highlights the importance of being led by the Spirit, examining oneself, and seeking forgiveness to preserve the unity



created by Jesus. The message draws parallels with the Corinthians who, by neglecting the Holy Spirit, experienced division. The call is for self-reflection, confession of sins, and yielding to the Spirit for the sake of unity and the proper observance of the Lord's Supper.

SERMON

Released in 1997, the film "Soul Food" unfolds the narrative of an African-American family, navigating their experiences through the lens of comedy and drama.

This family had its share of problems and differences, but every Sunday they put their differences aside for a family dinner, and this tradition was started and curated by "Big Mama." Big Mama's tactic to keep their familial bond strong and foster unity was to bring the entire family together at her house on Sunday's for dinner. This tradition lasted for over 40 years, but Big Mama got sick, and when Big Mama got sick, they no longer had the glue that kept them despite their problems and differences, and division ensued.

I am sure that some of us can relate to this reality in our own families, having had a matriarch, patriarch, or someone who kept the family together. For those of you who can relate, you had that person in your family that was the glue, keeping the family together. When they were alive, family reunions were strong, and the entire family

would gather from near or far. Family members that had problems and differences would tolerate one another and love on each other despite their problems and differences when Grandma was alive. Whoever that figure was for your family, they worked to strengthen the familial bond and foster unity within the family despite differences. But now that person is no longer here, the family remains scattered. Others of you can relate because you are that person. You are that matriarch, patriarch, or the person in your family that is working to keep the family together despite the differences. And others of you can relate because you still have that matriarch, patriarch, or person that is dedicated to sustaining unity within the family despite differences.

For the purpose of this sermon, I want to introduce to some and present to others a person.

This person specializes in keeping family together.

This person specializes in keeping relationships together.

This person specializes in keeping marriage together.

This person specializes in keeping churches together.

And interestingly enough, just like Big Mama in "Soul Food," this person uses food to keep people, families, and churches in unity! Lord knows those people in churches can't get along, but this person uses food to keep them in unity. However, it must be noted that the food this person uses is



different food than what Big Mama used. Big Mama used fried chicken; Big mama used Beans Greens Potatoes Tomatoes Lamb Rams Hogs Dogs Beans Greens Potatoes Tomatoes Chicken Turkeys Rabbit, but the food that this person uses are the words that come out of the mouth of God! The bible says, “man and woman shall not live on bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

Here it is: This person I am talking about that specializes in keeping families together, relationships together, and the church together, is the Holy Spirit! It is the Holy Spirit that takes the food, which is the word of God, and uses it to convict the hearts of God’s people so that we as a family will maintain the unity that God the father promised, and God the son made possible!

The bible says it like this: “Jesus is our peace, who hath made the two groups one, tearing down the wall of hostility that separated us” (Ephesians 2:14).

With the same creative power that fashioned the universe ex-nihilo, out of nothing, Jesus dismantled all divisive barriers that separate us, and created unity for us. Therefore, unity is not a goal for us to attain, but it is something we must maintain with the help of the Holy Spirit! Ephesians 4:3 says, “make every unity to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

Here it is: God the son promised us unity, God the son created that unity for us in Him

through his death, burial, and resurrection, and God the Holy Spirit helps us to maintain that unity as we yield to the Spirit, and not grieve nor quench the Holy Spirit! And that is why we must stay in God’s word! That is why we must continually seek God’s presence!

That’s why it is important for each one of us to surrender and allow the Holy Spirit to convict us, correct us, and help us, because without the Holy Spirit, unity will not be maintained!

And this call for you to surrender, seek, and allow the Holy Spirit to help you, convict you, and correct you is not just for the sake of maintaining unity in the church, but for the sake of all your relationships and your own sake!

As a man, you should not be leading yourself, but you should be led by the Holy Spirit!

As a woman, you should not be leading yourself, but you should be led by the Holy Spirit!

Couples, you should not be leading yourselves, but you should be asking the Holy Spirit to help you, to work on you individually, to work on you collectively, to help you to forgive, to help you to discern, to tear down your pride, to cleanse you and your partner’s heart!

You see, the Holy Spirit is able to make two into one flesh, but if that oneness is to truly be actualized, two people who come from two different families, two different traditions, two different ways of thinking, can only remain as one with the help of the Holy Spirit!



We need the Holy Spirit!

It is evident that the Corinthian church had quenched the Holy Spirit, conveying through their actions a preference for their agenda over God's agenda, and the fruit of that decision was manifested in their coming together, which was not for the better but for the worse. This church, established by Paul in Acts 18, was initially united amidst their differences, but by this time they were divided by their differences.

But, you see, the problem was not their differences, but the problem was that they grieved the Holy Spirit, and when you grieve the Holy Spirit, instead of producing the fruit of the Spirit, you produce the fruit of the flesh, giving birth to division and destruction, resulting in an unfruitful and ungodly union. Paul points us to the reality that when we reject the intervention of the Holy Spirit, we are subject to destroy the unity that Christ created, we disregard the shed blood and sacrificed body, we are subject to cause harm to self and others, which will ultimately harm self, which also harms the family, which also harms the church!

You see, the Corinthian church were a divided family, and they were supposed to be coming together for the Lord Supper, which is the ultimate sign of unity, but they show us what happens when people come together, but do not center the Holy Spirit.

This is how it went down: Back then, the Lord's Supper was literally an entire meal that featured partaking in the Lord's Supper as the climax and the ultimate sign of their unity. The rich people, who most likely sponsored the Lord's Supper, would show up to the feast early, eat all the good food, and get drunk. By the time everybody else showed up, they were left with the leftovers. Turns out that the very act that was supposed to be a symbol of unity in Jesus became the occasion for which division was actually produced. They were carrying out the ritual, but their actions show that the meaning of the ritual was not sinking in! See, Unity in the church or in your relationships can never be maintained if some of the people are being led by the Holy Spirit's help to maintain unity, while others have their own agenda and are being led by another Spirit! When we received Christ and were baptized in this body, we were given the same Spirit, but when that Spirit is grieved, the door is opened for division and destruction, which is the agenda of the evil one.

This church had grieved the Holy Spirit, disregarded the shed blood and sacrificed body with their actions, but there is a word from the Lord to fix this situation, and to fix us when we grieve the Holy Spirit and at times let our agenda get in the way of the work of the Spirit.

Read what Paul says in verse 23 and the following verses:

"23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the



The LORD'S SUPPER

night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged[e] ourselves truly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined[f] so that we may not be condemned along with the world." Notice in verse 27, Paul does not say we have to be worthy to take the Lord's supper, but we are to take it in a worthy manner. To take it in a worthy manner is to examine yourself. To judge yourself. I know we live in a time and now where nobody wants to be judged, but I encourage you to judge yourself. I'm not telling you to go around and judge everybody else, but I am saying to judge yourself! I know there are some problems that you can identify around you, and i am sure you can identify some problems in other people, but this exercise is for you to examine yourself! Trust me, this

world will be a better place if you examine yourself and make necessary changes, and you are more likely to change yourself before you change somebody else! Identify the problems within yourself! Identify the ways in which your words, thoughts, and actions are not led by the Spirit, but are led by the flesh! Examine yourself, because what you will find when you look in the mirror is that there are some blemishes that have been caused by sin, you will find that there are some things that need to be fixed! You will find areas that are not in line with God's word, and let me tell you that when you examine yourself, when you judge yourself, being honest about those ways that are not of God, being honest with yourself about the unforgiveness, finding those things that are not of God, then on the other side of that judgment is not condemnation, but grace! God is ready to forgive you. God is ready to heal you! God is ready to help you, but you must repent and turn to God! However, even when you do not examine yourself, there is both grace and correction, because when you do not judge yourself and allow the Spirit to convict you, God will step in and judge you and have to discipline you to correct you so that you will not self-destruct. Friends, let us examine ourselves. Let us confess our sins. By the way, confession of sin is more for your benefit than God's benefit. Let us confess our sins. Let us yield to the Spirit, That the unity in our relationships may be maintained,

A circular image of a communion plate, likely a silver or metal plate, containing pieces of bread. The plate is set against a dark red background. A horizontal rectangular box with a thin border is superimposed over the center of the plate, containing the text "The LORD'S SUPPER".

The LORD'S SUPPER

That the unity in our church may be
maintained,
And so that we may not bring judgment
upon ourselves,
And so that we may not disregard the
sacrifice that Jesus made for us and take the
Lord's supper in a worthy manner.
This is the word of God, for the people of
God, thanks be to God.