

## WORTHY PARTICIPATION IN THE LORD'S SUPPER

In 1 Corinthians 11:27-31 the Apostle Paul writes:

Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.

These are sobering words indeed: "unworthy manner," "sin," "self-examination," "judgment," "weakness," "sickness," and even "death" (spoken of under the euphemism of "falling asleep.")

And yet this message is intended to be a devotional. (A "devotional" is a brief service of worship, or a brief sermon in which loyalty and devotion to God or to Christ are emphasized and enhanced.)

How can this objective be reconciled with a text that emphasizes judgment for unworthy participation in the Lord's Supper? I believe that this is possible by briefly considering four conditions of worthy participation in the table of the Lord.

In the context of verses 27-31, particularly 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, I believe that four such conditions are discernible. What are they?

I. The first condition of worthy participation is saving faith in Christ.

The person who has never come to Calvary; has never stood at the foot of the cross and gazed at those bleeding wounds; has never cried, "Lord Jesus, I am lost; save me!"; and has never by faith received the forgiveness of sins; has no place or right or portion in this memorial of Christ's death. Thus saving faith in Christ is a necessary condition of worthy participation in the Lord's Supper.

This consideration should motivate us to ask ourselves, "Am I trusting in Jesus Christ and His saving work alone for my deliverance from sin and its consequences? Do I have saving faith in Christ?"