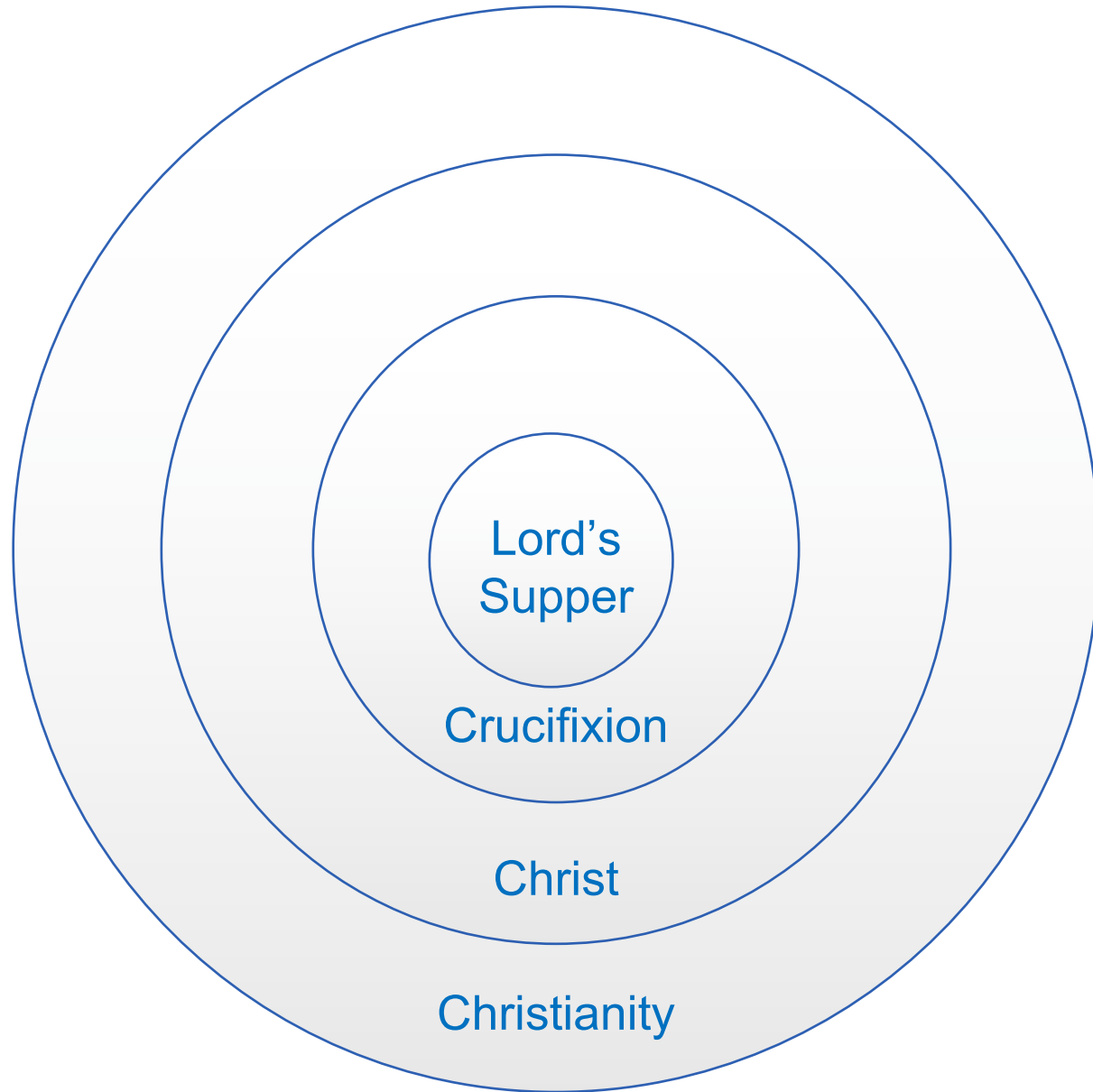
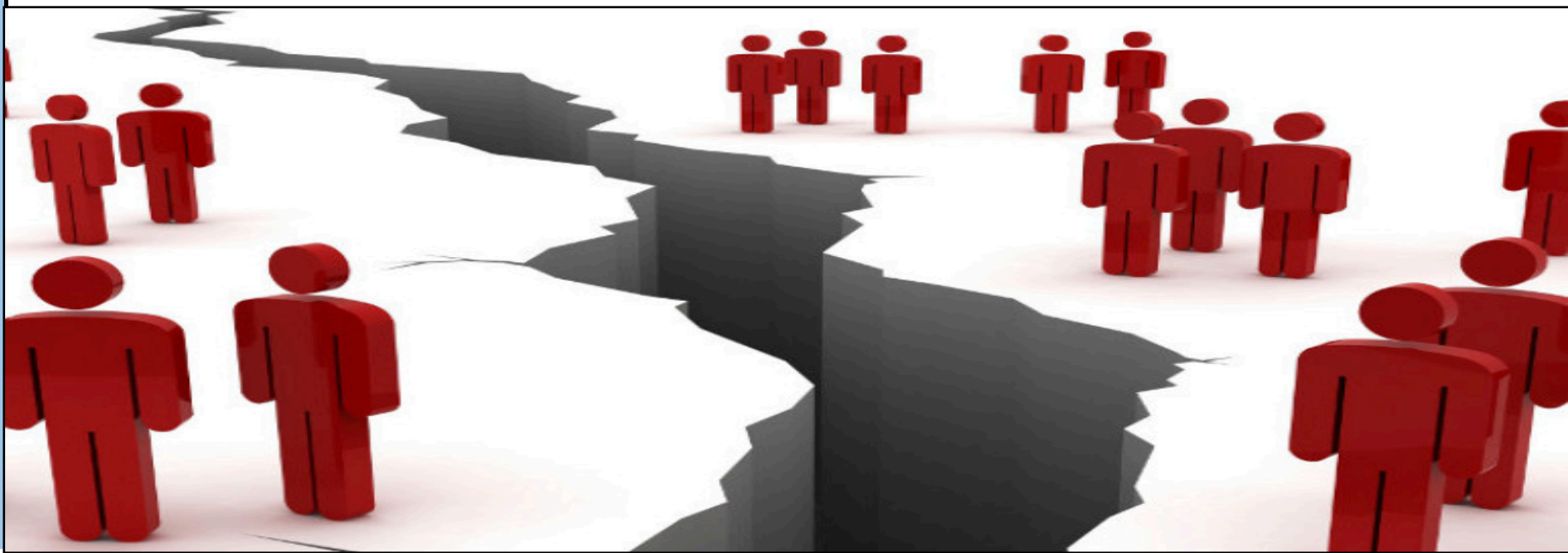


At the Center of Christianity





Divisions over the Lord's Supper



Background



- Need for unity in religious authority
- Inspired scriptures as sole authority
- Command, approved example, forced conclusion
- Expediency
- Word definitions
- Author, audience
- Local/remote context
- Historical context

• G C Our observance of the Lord's Supper reflects of our view of Bible authority

Key Verses

- 1 Cor. 11:17-34
 - *“Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. ... For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”*

Key Verses (cont.)

- The event
 - Matt. 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:14–23
- Acts 20:7
 - *“Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.”*
- 1 Cor. 10:16-17
 - *“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”*

Aspects

- Why?
- Who?
- Where?
- What?
- When?
- How?



Why?

- A remembrance and a proclamation
 - *“This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”* 1 Cor. 11:25-26
- A self-examination
 - *“Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”* 1 Cor. 11:27-29



Why? (cont.)

- Not a common meal/recreation of the Passover
 - *“But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment...”* 1 Cor. 11:34
- Not a “sacrament”?
 - *“a visible sign of an inward grace...instituted by Jesus to symbolize or confer grace...”*
 - *“God loves forgiving sin so much that he literally wants us to eat and drink forgiveness. And that is the blessing we receive from the Lord’s Supper.”*

Who?

- Christians
 - “... remembrance ... proclaim ... But let a man examine himself” 1 Cor. 11:28
- Not children
- Not non-Christians, but also not “closed”
 - “... examine himself...”



Where?

- In the assembly
 - *“when you come together as a church ... in one place...”* 1 Cor. 11:18, 20
- Not in a private place as an individual
- Not in the hospital or nursing home for a shut-in unable to attend
- Not on the lake while vacationing



What?

- Bread and the fruit of the vine
 - *“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread... then... the cup ... the fruit of the vine”* Matt. 26:26-29
- Not common food
- Not just the bread
 - Cup only for priests
- Not Jesus’ literal body flesh/blood
- Not leavened bread (the Passover)
- Strong alcoholic drink
- Not water (Mormonism)



When?

- On Sunday
 - “*on the first day of the week*” Acts 20:7;
1 Cor. 16:2 ← ch.
12-14 ← ch. 11
- Not on the Passover (Witnesses), Easter, Christmas
- Not quarterly, monthly
- Not Saturday, week days, or every day
- Special occasions



How?

- Who may serve?
 - Bible silent (general principle of 1 Tim. 2:8-12)
 - Not priests only
- Containers
 - *“Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you.””* Mat 26:27
 - Not one cup only
 - Acts 2:41-42 +3000



A Newer Division among Churches of Christ

- “Second Serving” or “Sunday night serving”
- Variant responses
 - Offered for those unable to partake
 - Offered for any who desire to partake
 - Personal conscience
 - Offered, but conducted in a separate room
 - Offered and required for all to partake
 - Evening service “downgraded” to a Bible study with Lord’s Supper not offered
 - Even to those unable to partake in the morning
- Large variance among non-institutional, conservative brethren warns against rushing to be dogmatic

Key Question

- Context of the controversy?
 - Corinthians' divisiveness (1 Cor. 1:10)
 - Resulting abuse of the Lord's Supper
 - Not frequency of worship and offering the Lord's Supper on Sunday?
 - Not allowance for servant schedules, shift work, travelers, tending to a sick child, etc.
 - More than once neither prohibited nor required
 - “when you come together”

Lack of information also urges caution

ions

Pivotal Verses in 1 Cor. 11

- v. 20,33 “*Therefore when you come together ... to eat”
 - Significant, but not sole purpose (problem focus)
 - Both collective and individual (“*let a man examine himself...*”)*
- v. 33 “... *When you come together to eat, wait for one another.*”
 - Not as divisive groups, as you arrive, randomly during
 - A specific time during
 - Decently and in order 1 Cor. 14:40
 - Not simultaneous
 - Not prohibited unless everyone is present

Parallel with Passover?

- Instituted during the Passover
- Used elements from the Passover
- Jesus as a Passover lamb (blood)?
 - John 1:29
- Special provisions per Num. 9:10-13
 - A consideration?



Can neither automatically dismiss nor accept – Need to weigh the evidence



One Congregation's Approach

- *“Those who conclude that there is no justification for it, acknowledge that the other group believes they would be sinning if they did not partake on the first day of the week, yet couldn't make the regular time. The participators in the second serving acknowledge that the other group believes they would be sinning by partaking of the Lord's Supper a second time or serving it a second time. So both groups respect the other's sincerely held beliefs.”*
- *“The Lord's Supper is offered if any present wish to partake in the evening. Only those who agree with the practice serve the table. We still hold it in the worship assembly because both sides agree that it is important that it is done as a congregation. ... The point is that those who do not partake in a second serving have done nothing to violate their conscience by being present. Those who do partake have done nothing to violate their conscience.”*

Consideration for Rom. 14?

Aspects

- Why?
 - Remember/proclaim
- Who?
 - Believers
- Where?
 - In the assembly
- What?
 - Unleavened bread & fruit of the vine
- When?
 - Every first day of the week
- How?
 - With other acts of worship (sing, pray, teach, give)
 - At a common time during the service
 - Enable individual self-exam and partaking
 - Decently/in order

Conclusion

- Need for Bible authority in all we say and do religiously
- Importance in following the pattern for the Lord's Supper
- Potential dangers of extremes
- Allowance for conscience

Need for Scriptural Unity Among Brethren

