

INTRODUCTION 引言

Traditions are ways of doing things shared by a group of people. To outsiders, however, those practices may seem unusual or even strange. Quite likely, there are stories behind those traditions. Take a school graduation ceremony as an example. You will notice many familiar elements. Graduates wear caps and gowns. They walk across the stage, shake hands with school officials, and receive their diplomas. As the ceremony begins, a song called Pomp and Circumstance is often played. Have you ever wondered why? The piece was written in 1901 by the British composer Sir Edward Elgar. Four years later, Yale University awarded him an honorary doctorate. To honor his visit, the university orchestra played the song. The audience loved it. Over time, other schools used the song. By the 1920s the song became a tradition for graduation ceremonies across America. Very often, we can discover the meaning behind a tradition when we ask the “why” questions. Today, we will observe Communion. It is a good time for us to ask that same question and better understand this important practice of the church. According to the Bible, the Lord gave Christians two ordinances to observe: baptism and Communion. Believers receive baptism once in their lifetime to testify their faith. However, the Lord asked churches to observe the communion on a regular basis. In this passage, Paul points out the mistakes the Corinthians made when they came to the Lord’s Table. He then teaches them the proper way to do it. This message will be a refresher course for us. By revisiting the meaning behind this church tradition, we can approach it with a proper attitude. Communion is important because it shows that Christianity is not a private religion but a communal relationship. Believers are not only united with Christ. They are also united with one another in the church body.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Respect 尊重 (v. 17-22)

Paul begins with some strong words. He urges the Corinthian believers to treat one another with respect, especially toward the poorer members. Let us listen to the reading from **verses 17–22**. Keep in mind that there was no church building in the first century. Christians usually gathered in homes, and those houses were often owned by wealthier church members. Their meetings typically began with a fellowship meal before they observed Communion. These love feasts were much like our potluck meals today. Everyone would bring food and share it with the whole church. It was meant to be a joyful celebration of unity. Unfortunately, that was not the case in Corinth. Paul says that instead of bringing people together, they had divisions. He tells us earlier in the letter that

church members had conflicts because people followed their favorite teachers. Now they divided because some wealthy folks ignored the needs of the poorer brothers and sisters. They began eating before everyone arrived. They enjoyed their own food without sharing, and some even got drunk. What was supposed to be a public gathering had turned into a self-centered party. Paul rebukes them. If they wanted to hold private banquets, they could do so in their own homes. But they should respect each other in the church. Overlooking other members on purpose is despising God's church. After all, the church is not a social club run by a handful of rich and influential people. It is a community for all believers. How should they correct the problem? Paul writes in Philippians 2:3-4: **3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.** The principles are simple and straightforward: humble yourself so that you will care for others. Just like any church, our congregation is made up of people from various backgrounds. The persons sitting around you may come from different hometowns, speak different dialects and have diverse opinions on certain issues. Besides, the needs of senior members and younger folks may be different too. Before we can appreciate one another, we must first acknowledge that we are not the same. Then we will not insist on our own ways and force others to comply. For example, not everyone loves spicy food as much as you do. Some may prefer contemporary worship songs, while others enjoy traditional hymns. It does not mean who is right or wrong; it is just that God molds us in unique ways. The same is true when we serve alongside one another in ministry. Some coworkers may be more conservative and frugal, while others are more aggressive and creative. Some may be goal-oriented and others may be more sensitive to people's feelings. The Bible is our bottom line. Within that boundary, we can cherish our diversity. Only by binding ourselves together in love and respect can we truly become one body in Christ.

2. Review 回顧 (v. 23-26)

Paul asks the Corinthians to respect one another. That expression of love should be carried over from a fellowship meal to the communion. Both gatherings should demonstrate their unity in Christ. Paul continues by giving them a review of the historical background of communion. Let us look at **verses 23 to 26**. Jesus set up the communion when He was eating a Passover meal with the disciples. Today we call that the Last Supper. During the meal, Jesus took bread and a cup of wine and gave them new meanings. The bread represented His body, and the cup represented His blood. Together, they pointed to the suffering and death He was about to endure on the cross. The cup also symbolized the new covenant that He would establish with all who believe in Him. When believers partake of the bread and the cup with understanding, they affirm their faith and the salvation in Christ. However, the communion itself does not save anyone. Rather, it helps believers remember the covenant Jesus made with them. Communion is similar to a wedding anniversary. The celebration is an opportunity to reflect on the promises a husband and a wife made to one another. In the same way, communion reminds us of our

relationship with Christ. That is why the Lord commanded His followers to observe it regularly. Since then, churches followed His command. In our church, we observe communion every other month. Besides looking back to what Jesus did on the cross, the communion also looks forward to the future glory. Paul says in verse 26: **For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.** Every time we observe the communion, there should be a longing for Jesus' return. At the Last Supper, Jesus told His disciples that He would not drink the cup with them again until He comes back. Soon after Jesus said that, He would go to the cross, rise from the dead, and return to heaven. One day He will come again. The farewell party that evening paved the way for a future reunion in eternity! In light of all this, how should we come to the Lord's Table? First, we should come with gratitude. We thank the Lord for His saving grace that we do not deserve. Second, we should come with joy. Those who belong to Christ have been forgiven and saved. It is all God's gracious work on our behalf. Therefore, communion should be a joyful celebration of God's victory. Third, we should come with hope. This world is not our final home. The pleasures and relationships of this life are limited by time. Yet Christ promises His followers a future and an eternal home that will never fade away. That hope gives us strength to endure hardship and sorrow. Fourth, the communion displays our faith. Paul tells us to use the ritual to "proclaim the Lord's death." The ceremony is our testimony. We tell non-believers that we do not remember a dead religious founder, but we rejoice over a risen Savior! Every time we observe the communion, we invite them to come to know our Lord.

3. Reflect 省察 (v. 27-34)

Paul told the wealthy Corinthians to respect their poorer brothers and sisters. He gave them a review of the meaning and purpose of communion. Paul concludes this section by asking them to reflect their attitude before coming to the Lord's table. Let's finish our reading with **verses 27–34**. In this passage, Paul gives two serious warnings. The first warning appears in verse 27. Paul says that anyone who eats the bread or drinks the cup "in an unworthy manner" will be guilty of their sins. Quite possibly, Paul has unbelievers in mind. They do not know Jesus, nor do they understand the meaning of the bread and the cup. Participating in communion cannot save them. However, it can serve as a powerful object lesson, helping them see their need for the Savior whom the bread and cup represent. The second warning is in verse 29. Paul says that some were eating and drinking "without discerning the body." Notice that unlike verse 27, Paul does not mention Jesus' blood here. It is possible that "the body" refers to the spiritual body of Christ—the church itself. If that is the case, then Paul is addressing those believers who were ignoring fellow poorer church members. They failed to recognize that every believer belongs to the same body of Christ. As a result, some of them were weak and sick, and some had even died. God can certainly use disease as a form of discipline. We find many examples of that in the Old Testament. However, this does not mean that every sickness is the direct result of a specific sin. Paul goes on to distinguish God's judgment on unbelievers from His discipline of believers. He writes in verse 32: **But when we are**

judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. There is a huge difference between condemnation and discipline. For unbelievers, the final judgment results in eternal condemnation. It is a once-for-all verdict. For believers, however, they may experience God's discipline many times throughout their lives. His purpose is not to destroy us but to restore us. He leads us back when we wander from His ways. Every loving parent understands this principle. Good parents discipline their children not because they hate them, but because they love them and desire what is best for them. In the same way, God's discipline is an expression of His fatherly care. To avoid such discipline, Paul offers a practical solution. The Corinthians should wait for one another before beginning the fellowship meal. If they were hungry, they could eat at home first. Their unworthy manner is serious because it will disrupt the unity of the church, which the communion indicates. In some churches, communion is observed with one loaf of bread. Each person receives a piece from the same loaf. Likewise, everyone drinks from a common cup. These practices vividly symbolize the unity of Christ's body. Since the COVID pandemic, however, many churches—including ours—have adopted prefilled communion cups. The method may have changed, but the meaning has not lost. We should never forget the fact that we are one people in the Lord. In fact, the word "communion" itself is a helpful reminder. If you break down the word "communion" you get the prefix "com" which means together and the second part "union." The Lord's Supper declares that we are united with each other as one body. We are more than a collection of individuals who happen to attend the same church. We are one family and one faith community in the Lord.

CONCLUSION 結論

Communion shows that Christianity is not a private religion but a communal relationship. It reminds us the relational aspect of our faith. God calls people from different backgrounds into one family through Christ. God calls to love one another despite our differences. Communion is also a time for internal examination. Those who belong to Christ no longer live under the condemnation of their sinful past. By God's grace, they have become new creations. Therefore, as we come to the Lord's Table, we should examine if our lives reflect the new life Christ has given us. Moreover, the communion is an opportunity for external testimony. Every time we partake of the bread and the cup, we proclaim the gospel that Jesus died for our sins and had risen from the dead. We invite seeker friends to put their trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord. When they do, their sins are forgiven and they also become part of God's family. As we observe the communion today, may we remember three things: we belong to Christ, we belong to one another, and we belong to a Kingdom that will never end.

INTRODUCTION 引言

傳統是一個群體成員共同遵循的做事方式。然而，對局外人來說，這些做法可能顯得不尋常，甚至有點奇怪。許多傳統的背後，往往都有一段故事。以學校的畢業典禮為例，你會發現其中有許多熟悉的安排。畢業生穿上袍子、頭戴方帽，依順序走上講台，與校方代表握手，並領取畢業證書。當典禮開始時，通常還會播放一首名為《威風凜凜進行曲》(Pomp and Circumstance) 的樂曲。你是否曾經想過：為什麼呢？這首樂曲是由英國作曲家艾爾加爵士 (Sir Edward Elgar) 於 1901 年創作的。四年後，耶魯大學頒授榮譽博士學位給他。為了歡迎他的到訪，大學管弦樂團演奏了這首樂曲。聽眾十分喜愛它。後來，其他學校也開始使用它。到了 1920 年代，這首樂曲成為全美各地畢業典禮的標準樂曲。很多時候，當我們提出「為什麼」這個問題時，便能發現傳統背後的意義。今天，我們將一同領受聖餐。這正是一個合適的時刻，讓我們提出同樣的問題，並更深入地了解這項重要的教會傳統。根據聖經，主吩咐基督徒遵守兩項禮儀：浸禮與聖餐。信徒一生只需接受一次浸禮，藉此見證他們對主的信心。然而，主卻吩咐教會要經常守聖餐。在今天的經文中，使徒保羅指出哥林多信徒在來到主的桌前時所犯的錯誤，他接著教導他們應當如何正確地領受聖餐。這篇信息對我們而言，是一堂溫習課。當我們思考這個教會傳統背後的意義時，便能以合宜的態度來領受聖餐。聖餐之所以重要，是因為它提醒我們：基督信仰不是個人的宗教，而是一個群體關係。信徒不但與基督聯合，也與教會的肢體彼此相連。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Respect 尊重 (v. 17-22)

保羅一開始就用了相當嚴厲的話。他勸勉哥林多的信徒要彼此尊重，特別是要顧念那些較貧困的弟兄姊妹。讓我們一起來聆聽第 17 至 22 節的經文。我們要記得，在第一世紀並沒有教堂建築。基督徒通常在信徒家中聚會，而那些房子往往屬於較富有的成員。他們聚會時，通常會先一起吃飯，然後才守聖餐。那些愛筵很像今天的聚餐。每個人都帶食物來，並與全教會的人分享。這應當是一個充滿喜樂、彰顯合一的聚會。然而，哥林多教會的情況卻不是如此。保羅指出，他們的聚會不但沒有彼此合一，反而產生分裂。保羅在前面的經文已經

提到，教會裡有人因追隨不同的教師而產生紛爭。如今又出現另一個問題：一些富有的信徒忽略了較貧窮弟兄姊妹的需要。他們在其他人還沒到齊之前就開始吃喝，只顧享用自己帶來的食物，卻不願與人分享，甚至有人喝醉了酒。原本應該是公開團契的聚會，竟然變成了一場以自我為中心的派對。因此，保羅責備他們。如果他們想舉辦私人宴席，大可以在自己家裡進行；但在教會裡，他們應當彼此尊重。故意忽視其他肢體，就是藐視神的教會。畢竟，教會不是由少數有錢、有影響力的人所控制的俱樂部，而是所有信徒共同屬靈的家。那麼，他們應該如何糾正這個問題呢？保羅在腓立比書 2:3-4 說：**3 凡事不可結黨，不可貪圖虛浮的榮耀；只要存心謙卑，各人看別人比自己強。4 各人不要單顧自己的事，也要顧別人的事。**原則其實很簡單直接：先謙卑自己，才能真心關心別人。我們的教會也像其他教會一樣，是由來自不同背景的人所組成的。坐在你身旁的人，可能來自不同的家鄉；他們說著不同的方言；他們對某些事情也可能有不同的看法。此外，年長弟兄姊妹與年輕人的需要，也往往不同。在我們學會欣賞彼此之前，首先要承認一個事實：我們本來就是不一樣。當我們明白這一點，就不會一味堅持自己的想法，也不會強迫別人按照自己的方式做事。例如，不是每個人都像你一樣喜歡吃辣。有些人偏愛現代敬拜詩歌，有些人則更喜歡傳統聖詩。這些差異並不代表誰對誰錯，只是神以不同的方式塑造每一個人。在教會服事中也是如此。有些同工比較保守、節儉；有些則較為積極、富有創意。有些人注重目標；有些人則比較敏銳別人的感受。聖經真理是我們不能妥協的底線。在這個界線之內，我們可以欣賞彼此的差異。唯有當我們以愛心和尊重彼此連結，我們才能成為在基督裡合一的肢體。

2. Review 回顧 (v. 23-26)

保羅勸勉哥林多信徒要彼此尊重。這種愛心的表現，應該從愛筵延續到聖餐。這兩個聚會都應該彰顯信徒在基督裡的合一。接著，保羅回顧聖餐的歷史背景。讓我們來看**第 23 至 26 節**。耶穌是在與門徒吃逾越節晚餐時設立聖餐的。今天，我們稱那一頓飯為「最後的晚餐」。當時耶穌拿起餅和一杯酒，賦予它們新的意義。餅代表祂的身體，杯代表祂的寶血。這兩樣東西都指向祂即將在十字架上所承受的苦難與死亡。此外，這個杯也象徵祂要與所有信靠祂的人所立的新約。當信徒明白其中意義而領受餅和杯時，就是在表明他們對基督的信心，以及祂所賜的救恩。然而，我們必須明白，聖餐本身並不能拯救任何人。聖餐乃是幫助信徒記念耶穌與我們所立的約。聖餐就好比結婚週年紀念。夫妻透過慶祝紀念日，回顧當初彼此的承諾。同樣地，聖餐提醒我們與基督之間的關係。因此，主吩咐祂的門徒要經常守聖餐。從那時起，歷世歷代的教會都遵守這個命令。我們教會是每兩個月守一次聖餐。然而，聖餐不只是回顧過去，也引導我們仰望未來的榮耀。保羅在第 26 節說：**你們每逢吃這餅，喝這杯，是**

表明主的死，直等到祂來。因此，每當我們守聖餐時，心中都應該盼望主的再來。在最後的晚餐中，耶穌告訴門徒，祂不會再與他們同喝這杯，直到祂再來的日子。耶穌說完之後不久，就走向十字架，從死裡復活，並回到天堂。但有一天，祂必然再來。那天晚上的歡送會，正是在為將來永恆裡的團聚鋪路！有了這些認識之後，我們應當以什麼樣的態度來到主的桌前呢？第一，我們應當懷著感恩的心。我們感謝主賜下我們不配得的救恩。第二，我們應當懷著喜樂的心。凡屬於基督的都已經被赦免並獲得救恩。這一切完全是神為我們成就的功勞。因此，聖餐是一場慶祝神得勝的喜樂聚會。第三，我們應當懷著盼望的心。這個世界並不是我們永遠的家。今生的享樂和人際關係都受到時間的限制。然而，基督應許祂的跟隨者一個永不衰殘和永恆的家鄉。這份盼望使我們有力量面對人生中的苦難與憂傷。第四，聖餐表達我們的信心。保羅告訴我們，要藉著聖餐來「表明主的死」。換句話說，這個禮儀本身就是一個見證。我們向非信徒宣告我們所記念的，不是一位已經過世的教主；我們所慶祝的，乃是一位復活的救主！因此，每一次守聖餐，我們都在邀請福音朋友來認識我們的主。

3. Reflect 省察 (v. 27-34)

保羅勸勉那些富有的哥林多信徒，要尊重較貧窮的弟兄姊妹；他也回顧了聖餐的意義與目的。接著，在這段經文的結尾，保羅要求他們在來到聖餐桌之前，先省察自己的態度。讓我們繼續閱讀第 27 至 34 節。在這段經文裡，保羅提出了兩個警告。第一個警告出現在第 27 節。保羅說，若有人「不按理」吃主的餅、喝主的杯，就要為自己的罪負責。保羅很可能是指那些不信的人。他們不認識耶穌，也不了解餅和杯所代表的意義。領受聖餐本身並不能拯救他們。然而，聖餐卻能成為一個有效的實物教材，幫助他們看見自己需要那位餅和杯所象徵的救主。第二個警告出現在第 29 節。保羅說，有些人吃喝的時候「不分辨是主的身體」。請注意，與第 27 節不同的是，保羅在這裡並沒有提到主的寶血。因此，「身體」很可能是指基督的身體，也就是教會。如果是這樣的話，那麼保羅提醒的是那些輕看較貧窮弟兄姊妹的信徒。他們沒有認識到，每一位信徒都同屬基督的身體。因此，保羅指出，他們當中有人軟弱、生病，甚至有些人已經離世了。神當然可以使用疾病作為管教的方式。我們在舊約中可以找到不少這樣的例子。然而，這並不表示每一次生病都是犯罪造成的結果。接著，保羅區分了神對不信者的審判，以及祂對信徒的管教。他在第 32 節寫道：我們受審的時候，乃是被主懲治，免得我們和世人一同定罪。這裡的「定罪」與「懲治」（意思是：管教）有著極大的不同。對不信的人而言，最後的審判帶來的是永遠的定罪。那是一次性、永恆的判決。然而，對信徒來說，神可能在今生中多次施行管教。祂的目的不是毀滅我們，而是糾正我們。當我們偏行己路

時，祂會帶領我們轉回。每一位愛兒女的父母都明白這個道理。父母管教孩子，不是因為恨他們，而是因為愛他們，並且期望他們得到最大的益處。同樣地，神的管教也是慈愛父親愛的表現。為了避免這樣的管教，保羅提出了一個實際的方法：哥林多人在開始愛筵之前，應當彼此等候。如果有人餓了，可以先在家裡吃飯。他們那種不合宜的行為之所以嚴重，是因為它破壞了教會的合一，而聖餐正是要表明這種合一。在一些教會裡，信徒守聖餐時會使用同一個餅。每個人都從同一個餅上領取一小塊。同樣地，大家也共用一個杯。這些做法生動地表達了基督身體的合一。然而，自從新冠疫情之後，許多教會——包括我們的教會在內——都改用預先裝好的聖餐杯。雖然形式改變了，但其所代表的意義並沒有改變。我們不可忘記我們在主裡乃是一個群體。其實，

「Communion（聖餐）」這個英文詞本身就給了我們一個很好的提醒。它可以拆分為「com」和「union」兩部分；「com」有「共同」的意思，而「union」則是「聯合」。因此，聖餐宣告我們在基督裡彼此聯合，成為同一個身體。我們不只是一些碰巧參加同一間教會的個人而已。我們乃是在主裡的一個家庭、一個屬靈群體。

CONCLUSION 結論

聖餐提醒我們，基督信仰不是個人的宗教，而是一個群體關係。它提醒我們看見信仰中的關係層面。神藉著基督，呼召來自不同背景的人進入一個屬靈的家庭。雖然我們彼此之間存在許多差異，神仍然呼召我們彼此相愛。聖餐也是一個自我省察的時刻。凡屬於基督的人，不再被定罪。藉著神的恩典，他們已經成為新造的人。因此，當我們來到主的桌前時，應當省察自己的生命是否活出了基督所賜的新生命。此外，聖餐也是一個對外見證的機會。每當我們領受餅和杯時，我們就在宣揚福音。我們向世人宣告：耶穌為我們的罪而死，並且已經從死裡復活。我們也藉此邀請福音朋友把信心放在耶穌身上，接受祂成為救主和生命的主宰。當他們願意相信祂時，不但罪得赦免，也成為神家中的一員。今天，當我們守聖餐時，願我們記住三件事：我們屬於基督；我們彼此相屬；我們也屬於那永不衰殘的國度。