

Paul's Purpose
Titus 1:1-3
ABC 11/1/20

How many of us know who we are & why we're here? Of course, we all have names, histories, goals, dreams, & characteristics which give us an identity. But when we think about our reason for being & our meaning in life, do we do so with God & His will in mind? Paul's letter to Titus gives us that challenge today. Much of this letter encourages ordinary believers to consider their lives in every sphere as an expression of God's will. No matter what path God has given us to walk, we're intended to be an important piece in God's plan to reach others with the gospel. Each of us have great value & usefulness to God. This realization is a tremendous source of joy, satisfaction, & peace. But to realize this, we may need to make adjustments in the way we view life. This morning, in Titus 1:1-3, we see how Paul defined his own life. Although he was a **slave** of God & an **apostle of Jesus Christ**, the pattern of his thinking should be ours as well.¹ Paul knows what he's here for. He knows what his purpose in life is. He not only knows his mission & purpose, he's gladly, willingly, & wholeheartedly committed to it. **1-4**

Throughout this letter, we see an emphasis on God's saving work & both God & Jesus are repeatedly called Savior (1:3-4; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6). This greeting sets the theme by centering on the nature of Paul's ministry. In these vss we see what Paul was committed to, beginning with...

1. Committed to God's Mastery² Paul introduces himself as a **slave of God & an apostle of Jesus Christ**. He could've identified himself as a brilliant scholar, an educated Jewish leader who knew Greek literature & philosophy. He could have flaunted his Roman citizenship. He could have boasted of his calling as the apostle to the Gentiles. He could have bragged of being **caught up to the 3rd heaven** (2 Cor 12:2), of his gifting, & of being chosen as the human author of much of the NT. Instead, he chose to identify himself 1st as a **slave of God**. As God's slave Paul must do whatever God tells him to do & be what He calls him to be. He has no other choice. In Paul's case, that was to be an **apostle**, which means *a sent one* & carries the idea of a messenger. If **slave** indicates

¹ Philip Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, vol. 14

² Outline drawn from John MacArthur's in *Titus*, pp 1-14

Paul's humility, **apostle** emphasizes his responsibility & calling. As **slave & apostle**, Paul identifies himself with a humble identity who has a high calling as a representative, ambassador, or messenger of his Lord. **Apostle** wasn't a term used of every Christian like **slave** was. An **apostle** was one of the offices God gave to be part of the foundation of the early church (Eph 2:20). There's an authority that comes when an **apostle** speaks for His Master, but the authority isn't in the representative, but in the One he represents. The authority comes from the Sender, not the sent one who is simply a **slave** obeying His master. Paul, though an **apostle**, considered himself to be a **slave** of his Lord. While none of us are apostles like Paul, God has given us all ministries & service. Whatever our merciful Master calls us to do we must do if we're really His faithful & devoted slave.

2. Committed to God's Mission 1-3

This tells us what God commissioned Paul for, beginning with the faith of God's elect. When Paul says he's an apostle **for the faith of those chosen of God**, the word **for** means *for the purpose of*.³ Paul is given the task of promoting & furthering the faith of God's elect. It includes evangelism but goes beyond to include developing the faith of Christians through the teaching of doctrine. Paul labored as an **apostle** so that God's elect would come to salvation through faith in Christ. Paul's ministry was for the furthering, promoting, & strengthening of **the faith of those chosen of God & the knowledge of the truth which is according to or that leads to godliness**. This purpose statement is similar to Rom 1:5 where Paul writes, **we have received grace & apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles**. There are 3 components of his ministry here: 1) **Faith** of God's elect, 2) **Knowledge** of the truth which leads to godliness, & 3) in the **hope** of eternal life.

A. Salvation Vs 1 says Paul was a apostle **for the faith of those chosen of God**. About a year after he penned this letter, Paul wrote Timothy, **For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus & with *it* eternal glory** (2 Tim 2:10). Paul was called as God's **slave & apostle** to proclaim the gospel in order that the elect might be brought to **faith**. As Paul explained in Romans, **Faith comes from hearing, & hearing by the word of Christ** (10:17). Faith activates justification which is God's gracious act by

³ A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT, Walter Bauer, William Arndt, & Wilbur Gingrich, 2nd ed. pp 406-407

which He considers & declares as righteous those who've placed their trust in His Son, Jesus Christ. Again, in Romans, we read, **To the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness (4:5)**. Yet even **faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe ... is a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus (Rom 3:22, 24)**. When the gospel is proclaimed to those who've been chosen by God, the Holy Spirit awakens them & they'll believe & enter into the full benefit of their election. **Faith** can refer to both saving faith at conversion as well as the ongoing faith of those who are saved. It's a present & continual belief. Saving faith isn't a momentary or one-time decision in the past. It's an active trust in Jesus that changes our life day-by-day & moment-by-moment. The way you know you're one of God's elect, one He chose to save, isn't based on anything you've done. If salvation has taken place, it's because of what God did & continues to do in your life. If you're truly saved, then you trust Jesus is your Lord & your faith is in Him alone & in Him completely for your eternal life. The result of that, as the end of vs 1 says, is **godliness** in your life. If there's no **godliness**, if God's nature isn't apparent in your life, what reason do you have to assume you're His slave & child? Here we see salvation from both the human & the divine sides. From the human side, salvation is evidenced by a living faith that produces fruit to show God is truly at work in the heart. We are saved by God's grace through faith, but as Paul says in Eph 2:8-9, even that isn't of ourselves, all of it (including our faith) is a gift of God, not the result of anything we do, so that none of us can boast. God in His love is keeping us humble not only by the word **slave** but by the word *elect* or *chosen* emphasizing God's initiative in salvation. God the Master, Owner, & Lord comes to the slave market & chooses & purchases slaves & takes them into His house & family. A human master might choose a slave based on how strong or capable he is. But that isn't God's basis in election. It's not because of anything seen or foreseen in any of us that makes Him save us. It's only by His grace. God's election is often explained by saying He chooses people for salvation because He looks into the future & sees that they'll believe & therefore then chooses them for salvation. That's not it at all. If that were the case it would mean God didn't actually choose them but that they chose Him. It would mean God isn't sovereign but is dependent on man to make their choice, & then He plans

accordingly. With that thinking, it makes man sovereign & God just agrees to whatever we decide to do. But the Bible is clear that God doesn't choose people for salvation because He foresees that they'll believe. That would nullify His grace because it would make salvation depend on something good in man, their making a choice to follow God. Instead, dead sinners come to life & put their faith in Jesus because God chose them for salvation. Ever wonder, *Why did God choose to save me?* I don't have a good answer but I do know the wrong answer. The wrong answer would be God chose to save me because of something within me or something I've done or ever would do. It's not because of any innate goodness in the sinner or any inherent ability to make better choices than others. It's not because our hearts have somehow escaped the corruption & depravity of sin. It's not that there's a spark of spiritual life or goodness in us while others were more sinful & more spiritually dead. No, the explanation for our salvation isn't found in our heart or in our will but is only found in God's heart & will. We can't even take credit for our faith because salvation is all of God's choice, from start to finish, so that none can boast & all remain humbly dependent on Him. The **chosen** or **elect of God** identifies those set apart by God as His people. Obviously, not all are **chosen of God** or else Paul's words would make no sense. He's highlighting the sovereign work of God in salvation to Titus who labored among an untrustworthy people. Dishonest, immoral, debauched, lazy, & sinfully self-indulgent people populated the island of Crete, as they do everywhere. Into that setting Titus was to carry out his missionary work. Would he be encouraged by Paul telling him that his personality & verbal skills would motivate the Cretans to change themselves? Not at all; but what great encouragement he found in knowing that even among the wicked Cretans, there were **those chosen of God**. The same is true for Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, Medford, Central Point, Hornbrook, Montague, & everywhere else. There are people you know whom God has chosen to save. We see this in Acts 13:

For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles, That You may bring salvation to the end of the earth.' When the Gentiles heard this, they *began* rejoicing & glorifying the word of the Lord; & as many as had been appointed (chosen) to eternal life believed. & the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region (47-49).

A few chapters later (Acts 18:9-11),

The Lord said to Paul..., “Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking & do not be silent; for I am with you, & no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city” (those He’s chosen). & he settled there a year & 6 months, teaching the word of God among them.

The truth that God has His elect, those He’s chosen for salvation, is a great motivation to our obeying the great commission & being Christ’s witnesses. We aren’t to rely on our human abilities but to trust in the power of the almighty God who chooses to save. Salvation isn’t by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God (Zech 4:6). Our job is to proclaim the gospel. God’s job is to save. So Paul says he’s an **apostle** for the faith of God’s elect, but notice as he continues, his commitment to God’s ministry wasn’t just for salvation but went beyond & included...

B. Sanctification The last part of vs 1 says, **for the faith of those chosen of God & knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness**. Paul used a number of those same words in 2 Thes 2:13-14 where he writes: **God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit & faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel**. For those who are chosen by God to come to faith, they must come **to the knowledge of the truth** (1). In other words, saving faith must rest on the content of the truth as revealed in God’s Word. A person must understand what Scripture teaches about God & about himself as a sinner. He must understand that Jesus, God in human flesh, took the penalty we deserved when He died on the cross. He must know that God grants salvation as His free gift apart from any works or goodness in us & that we must trust in Christ alone to save us. Paul says the natural man can’t understand these truths unless the Spirit of God opens his eyes (1 Cor 2:14; 2 Cor 4:4-6; cf Acts 16:14). This means no one can reason their way to salvation apart from God’s revelation in the Bible. & no one can understand God’s revelation in the Bible unless God opens their eyes to the truth of it. **Knowledge** refers to the clear, full, or deep recognition of a **truth**. Here it’s the truth of the gospel that leads to salvation. It’s that aspect of the truth that Paul mentions in his 1st letter to Timothy, in which he assures us that **God our Savior ... desires all men to be saved & to come to the knowledge of the truth** (1 Tim 2:3-4; 2 Tim 2:25). In 2 Tim 3:5-7 we see this same phrase, **knowledge of the truth**, which makes it clear it isn’t a superficial learning that leads to a superficial **godliness**. He writes there are some...

...holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households & captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning & never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

God's Word says the elect were chosen for salvation but that's just the beginning. Upon salvation, the believer is given an appetite for this **truth**, which causes him to desire to know more & to grow & mature **according to godliness**. Saving **truth** leads through salvation to sanctification as it produces increasing **godliness**. For the **grace of God** has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, Paul later explains, **instructing us to deny ungodliness & worldly desires & to live sensibly, righteously & godly in the present age** (Titus 2:11–12; 1 Tim 4:7–8). Divine **truth & godliness** are closely related. Our **godliness**, our sanctification, our spiritual growth, has a direct relationship with our **knowledge of the truth**. No matter how sincere our intentions might be, we can't obey God's will if we don't know what it is. We can't be godly if we don't know what God is like & what He expects of those who belong to Him. If you don't know God's truth, how can it transform you? By way of application, if you're not hearing, reading, studying God's truth, your spiritual growth & godliness will be short-circuited. Paul directly connects our **godliness**, our growth in Christ, with the truth of God's Word being deeply known. There's no way to exaggerate the importance of knowing biblical truth. If you're struggling in your spiritual life, ask, *Am I hearing God's truth every chance I get?* Plants can't survive without light, animals don't thrive without food, & Christians can't grow without knowing God's truth. Knowing God's truth won't automatically fix all your problems. But if you don't know God's truth it will lead to all kinds of problems. Many Christians need a bigger buffet of God's truth. Is the ear of your heart attentive to listening to God's truth on an ongoing basis? If that's not a priority it's a big reason for the spiritual weakness we often suffer through.

AW Tozer once wrote:

The Christian is strong or weak depending upon how closely he has cultivated the knowledge of God. Paul was anything but an advocate of the once-done, automatic school of Christianity. He devoted his whole life to the art of knowing Christ (Phil 3:8, 10, 14). Progression in the Christian life is exactly equal to the growing knowledge we gain of the triune God in personal experience. & such experience requires a whole life devoted to it & plenty of time spent at the holy task of cultivating God. God can be known satisfactorily only as we devote time to Him.... We may as well accept it: there is no shortcut to sanctity.⁴

⁴ *The Root of the Righteous*, pp 11-12

Paul wasn't satisfied with just evangelism, his ministry was also about education for the purpose of godliness. This **knowledge of the truth** isn't just having more knowledge in your noggin. There must be repentance preceding & permeating the truth & for this we must rely on the Lord again. 2 Tim 2:24-25 tells us, the Lord's slave **must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to what? The knowledge of the truth.** If Jesus isn't your Lord, if you've never given your life to Him as your Master & turned from your sins & trusted Christ alone, I urge you by God's grace to repent today. At the same time, I pray that God will do as this vs says, & that **He may grant you repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth.** God's purpose for choosing & saving us is to make us like Himself. The evidence of our election is found in our justification. The evidence of our justification is found in our sanctification. & one day the evidence of our sanctification will be proven by our glorification.⁵ As we have knowledge of the truth of God, vs 2 has a great security & hope for us.

C. Security 2

Those who repent of their sins & come to the knowledge of the truth are slaves God has chosen & adopted into His family. There's great security & comfort in that. The word **hope** doesn't express doubt or wishful thinking. **Hope** in Scripture is a confident expectation & trust based on God's character & promises. Heb 6:18 says, **it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor for the soul, a *hope* both sure & steadfast.** That's biblical **hope**. It's something that gives us **strong encouragement** that we can **take hold of** as a **sure & steadfast ... anchor for the soul** no matter the storms or waves of life. **The hope of eternal life** is guaranteed by God's own Word. The security we have is linked with the fact that it's **impossible for God to lie**. Biblical **hope** is absolutely certain, but not yet realized. The certainty rests on the character of the God who promises & who is incapable of lying. He always speaks the truth. That would've been a startling concept to Cretans who were

⁵ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Titus*, p 9

notorious liars & the deities they worshipped weren't predictable, consistent, or truthful either. Paul says the true God isn't like that. He **cannot lie**. Whenever God speaks the truth (which is always), He speaks from His own nature because He is the Father of truth. The OT says, **God is not a man that He should lie** (Num 23:19). Humans often lie & break their promises, but God never does. There's a great security in knowing that even when we're faithless God remains faithful (2 Tim 2:13). This should cause all believers to live as more than conquerors in this present age as we fix our hope completely on the faithfulness of the non-lying God. That should be a great comfort to every believer. When does Paul say God gave this promise? The **God of truth promised long ages ago** that those whom He has chosen, have the certain hope of eternal life. **Long ages ago** doesn't refer to ancient human history but *before time began*. Yes, God revealed His plan of salvation throughout Scripture, but the original promise was made & ratified in eternity past, before creation. Our gracious God **called us with a holy calling ... in Christ Jesus from all eternity** (2 Tim 1:9). He **chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy & blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His eternal will** (Eph 1:4-5). The plan of salvation didn't come after mankind fell but before man was even created. The Father showed His perfect love to His Son by promising Him a redeemed humanity who would serve & glorify Him forever (Jn 17:23-24, 26). The Son's role was to be the sacrifice for the sins of the chosen so they could be redeemed & brought to glory. That's the promise Jesus reminded the Father of in His prayer in Jn 17. **Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world** (24). Earlier Jesus declared the promise of the gift of redeemed souls when He proclaimed: **All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, & the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.... For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son & believes in Him, may have eternal life; & I Myself will raise him up on the last day** (Jn 6:37, 40). It's mind-boggling to realize that those who're redeemed are caught up in this magnificent & eternal covenant that the members of the Trinity have made with each other. But that's the clear teaching of Scripture. That makes our hope of eternal life all the more

secure. It's rooted in God's eternal promise! Paul was committed to God's mastery over him. He was committed to God's mission of saving sinful people. He was also...

3. Committed to God's Message 3

Here we see how God has now revealed His message through the proclamation of His slaves like Paul. When did this happen? **At the proper time.** In other words, this eternal plan of redemption, this promise of eternal life before time began, is now revealed. The only source of this truth, the true message about God & the only way of finding Him, & the only hope of being with Him forever are **manifested** in **His Word**. As one translation renders it, **in His own private, strategic sessions** (Wuest), this was *made known, manifested, or revealed in God's own time* (HCSB). This was ordained & orchestrated by God & the fullness of this unveiling of His eternal plan of salvation is completed by the proclamation of the NT apostles & Scriptures. The gospel of Jesus Christ came into the world at **the proper time**, the perfect time when it was uniquely possible for its message to spread rapidly. Greek was the common language of trade, business, & literature. There were virtually no frontiers because of the vast nature of the Roman Empire. Travel was comparatively easy & relatively safe because of the peace the Romans brought. God, at the **proper time** entrusted the apostles, including Paul, with the message of the gospel, which leads to the fact that Paul was also...

4. Committed to God's Method As we've seen, God appointed Paul as an apostle **for the faith of those chosen of God**. He labored so that God's chosen would come to salvation. God entrusted Paul with **the proclamation** of His word, the gospel, which centers in the person of Jesus Christ, revealed at the proper time (3). **Proclamation** is the word used for the message of a king's herald. A herald didn't make up his own message but faithfully proclaimed the king's message. That's our job as we proclaim the gospel. God determined that the means for saving His chosen ones is through the **proclamation** of the good news of Jesus Christ. Paul viewed his calling as a preacher of the gospel to be a commandment from **God our Savior** (1:3; 1 Cor 9:16-17). God's providence is responsible for the gospel going forth as it did, but **proclamation** is the means God uses. God's sovereignty & man's responsibility are both seen again here. God is pleased to accomplish His eternal purposes

through the foolishness of preaching. God has chosen to communicate His message through imperfect slaves like us. Paul was committed to God's message & the method mentioned here that God planned for His message to go forth is **proclamation**, the public telling forth of it. Heralds had no room to ad lib or offer their own opinions or water down the message. They had to relay the message of their lord to his people. We have the same responsibility to relay God's message to those He calls to Himself through the gospel. The term **entrusted** (3) also serves to recap that Paul's authority came only from God. Paul received this responsibility & authority **by the command of God our Savior**, which appears to be a reference to God's commission to him at the time of his slavation (Acts 9:15–16; 22:10, 14–15; 26:16–21; Gal 2:7).⁶ **Command** is a strong word, implying *by order of or by royal command*.⁷ Paul's ministry of the gospel wasn't a matter of his own choice, but was divinely given to him & which he was compelled to complete. Paul showed this divine compulsion in 1 Cor 9:16 when he said, **I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!** Jeremiah said it this way: **if I say, "I will not remember Him Or speak anymore in His name," Then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; & I am weary of holding *it* in, & I cannot endure *it* (20:9).** The early Christians, when arrested for the sake of Christ, said, **we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen & heard** (Acts 4:20). May God gives us the same sense of compulsion, divine urgency, & inescapable responsibility as we committ ourselves to God's Mastery over us & to God's Ministry He's given us by giving God's Message through God's Method of proclamation.

How can we apply these opening vss? Whether you're retired, an empty-nester, a working parent, a stay-at-home mom, or something else, it's important for you to know your purpose in life. In these opening verses of Titus, Paul gives the clear description of his life's purpose. He's been sent out by Jesus to preach the gospel so that others may believe it, be saved, & be transformed by it unto godliness. We can be certain that God will accomplish these purposes because He's promised eternal life to those who believe; & God never lies! As we'll see, Paul will carry out this purpose by

⁶ Thomas D Lea & Hayne P Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, p 271

⁷ Howard Marshall, *International Critical Commentary*, p 130

instructing Titus to preach the same gospel where God had placed him. In fact, this is the calling God's given every believer. We ourselves are God's elect, who've repented of sin & believed the gospel, & who are being transformed by the power of this gospel. & we're called to be witnesses to this gospel (Acts 1:8) & make disciples who make other disciples who love God & obey His commands (Mt 28:19). You can have confidence today in God's purpose for your life, whether you're at work, at home, in the classroom, or anywhere else. He's called you to live a life of faith in Jesus Christ, which leads to a life of godliness. He has called you to reap the benefits of your faith & to testify to others about these glorious realities & help others understand & apply them in their own lives. If you weren't sure what you were supposed to be doing, you now have some clear instructions from God's Word! Proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ with your godliness & with your words. have you been saved by God's grace? I sometimes have people ask, *How can I know if I'm one of God's elect?* The answer is found in how you respond to this question: *Are you trusting in Christ alone for salvation?* If so, that didn't come from you. It came from God, who opened your blind eyes, raised you from spiritual death, & granted you faith & repentance. If you're saved, there will be evidence of that in your life. You'll love God & want to know Him better. You'll hate sin & want to conquer it. & you'll love God's Word & His people. If you've done that, are you seeking to live a life of good deeds because of what God has done for you? Do you live to please Him? Do you seek to be a witness for Christ by your life & by your words? Every one of us has been uniquely designed & gifted with ministry in mind. Paul's calling, to make known the truth of God & the hope of eternal life, is one in which we're all meant to have a part. How are you fulfilling that purpose today? This week? PRAY

COMMUNION

We're currently experiencing a period of strife, turmoil, & division in our country. In the wake of recent events, lines have been drawn & tensions have mounted. We look around & see an angry & fractured society. Perhaps now more than ever, we need this reminder, this memorial, this meal. The truth is, the world we live in is broken & has been for a very long time. It's been broken from the moment mankind embraced the deception of sin in rebellion against their Creator. This is who

we are, a fallen people in a fallen world. A world in need of justice, righteousness, & peace. Look at our culture, at the division, the anger, the distrust, & the political turmoil. It's our natural tendency to draw lines, form groups, & see the world as *Us vs. Them*. But there was One who came to erase those lines & bring people together, even with differences. Today we come together, male & female from different backgrounds, races, socio-economic classes, & political views. But by taking this meal, we come together as a unified family, presenting an enigma to the world. Some 2,000 years ago, a Jewish rabbi went to His death on a cross, accused of blasphemy. The life of this rabbi should've been lost to history. His town was a name of derision, He had a ragtag following, & He stood at odds with the ruling class of His day. He wasn't the 1st man to make Messianic claims nor would He be the last. He wasn't the 1st to die because of these claims nor would He be the last. Yet it was only His death that would make what we're doing right here, right now, possible. If the story of Jesus' life simply ended with His death, as did all the other would-be messiahs of His day, many of us wouldn't know each other. It's only through Jesus that we can cut down the lines that divide us, to build bonds that are foreign to the world, & become a family that isn't based on blood, class, race, or political ideology. This is possible because the story of Jesus' didn't end in death, but in life, in resurrection. Through His death & resurrection, He was vindicated by God & established His people who share this ceremony together as brothers & sisters, awaiting the return of our King. Jesus' death & resurrection brought a people together from all languages & tribes to be one body, His body. Though we're currently in a time of great tension, division is nothing new. Division is the topic Paul addressed in his 1st letter to the church in Corinth. Ironically, it appears their division was most visible when they met together to share the Lord's Supper, the memorial that should've distinctly proclaimed their unity. We often read from chapter 11, but Paul begins his discussion of the Supper in chpt 10.

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; you judge what I say. Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread (1 Cor 10:14–17).

Paul tells them that when they share this meal together, they're participants in the body & blood of Christ, in His sacrifice for us. But he doesn't stop there. We're also participants with one another.

The bread symbolizes the body of Christ, but not just the physical sacrifice, but also the body of unified believers that His sacrifice made possible. When we gather & share this together as the family of God, the body of Christ, in a very real sense we proclaim the death of our Lord until He comes. We proclaim that Jesus' death & resurrection had a true, life-changing effect on history. When people from different walks of life, cultures, levels of education, races, social classes, ages, means, & political parties come together as one, a statement is made to the world. What we're doing here isn't natural. It goes against human nature. What we do here today, proclaiming our unity in Jesus, shines a light to a broken world. & what this world really needs right now is the truth of Jesus. As we share these elements together, let us remember the sacrifice that made it possible & let us recognize the unity we have as the body of Christ.

I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; & when He had given thanks, He broke it & said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor 11:23-24).

Let's remember Him, the salvation & unity He brings us as we eat of the bread together.

In the same way *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread & drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (1 Cor 11:25-26).

Let's remember Him, the salvation & unity He brings as we drink of the cup together.