



What is Memorial Day for Christians?

What is the real Memorial Day for Christians?

- First Clue: It's not the last Monday in May.
- Second Clue: It's not any date selected by humans.
- Third Clue: It's a celebration commanded by Jesus himself to be memorialized.
- Fourth Clue: It's not the Christianized pagan celebration of Easter.
- Fifth clue: It's not the meticulously calculated "Memorial of Jesus' Death", in which few to none partake of the wine and bread, as celebrated by Jehovah's Witnesses.
- Sixth clue: It's not a day to memorialize those who died in wars.

So what is it then?

"Then he took a loaf, gave thanks, and broke it in pieces, and gave it to them, and said, 'This is my body which is to be given for you. *Do this as a memorial to me.*'" (Luke 22:19 Williams New Testament, emphasis added) **"In the same way, after the supper he took the cup and said, 'This cup is God's new covenant, sealed with my blood. Whenever you drink it, do so in memory of me'"** (1 Corinthians 11:25 GNB). **"Do this in memory of me."** (Luke 22:19 NAB) Obviously, this is the unleavened bread, symbolizing Jesus' body, partaken of by true Christians. This is the real Memorial Day for Christians.

"In the same way, he gave them the cup after the supper, saying, 'This cup

is God's new covenant sealed with my blood, which is poured out for you'" (Luke 22:20 GNB). "In the same way he also took the cup after supper and said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'" (Luke 22:20 HCSB) "After supper he took another cup of wine and said, 'This cup is the new covenant between God and his people - an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.'" (Luke 22:20 NLT) Drinking the red wine at this memorial celebration symbolizes Jesus' shed blood in behalf of humankind.

The Apostle Paul said under inspiration, **"I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you."** In verses 24-25 he quotes Jesus' comments and explanation of the meaning of the **"Lord's Supper."** (1 Corinthians 11:23 NIV) In 11:26 he states the purpose of **"the Lord's Supper"** (11:20), namely, **"you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes"** (NIV). This account confirms that the Lord's Supper was celebrated by the early Christians, and should be observed by Christians today. (See also the accounts at Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26.) This is the real Memorial Day for Christians.

When, and how often, should the Lord's Supper be celebrated?

One important question that arises is: "When should the Lord's Supper be celebrated?" No specific date is commanded. The context of the 1 Corinthians 11 discussion implies that it very possibly was done each time the church met. One possibility is that smaller "house churches" met in individual Christians' homes most of the time, but occasionally, for example, perhaps once a month, the entire congregation met together. Notice the expressions in the context:

- **"When you come together as a church" (vs. 18 NIV)**
- **"When you come together" (vs. 20 NIV)**
- **"When you meet together" (vs. 34 NIV)**

While it is implied that whenever the entire church met, they celebrated the Lord's Supper, it is not commanded to be done that frequently. Circumstances governing densely populated

areas as opposed to thinly populated areas obviously are very different. If there are only a very few Christians in an area, one very small group may be the only option for meetings.

We also notice from the expressions, **“when you come together as a church,” “when you come together,” “when you meet together”** (1 Corinthians 11:18,20,34), that there are to be **“no divisions”** (1 Corinthians 1:10), or **“distinctions”** (James 2:4 ESV; NASB; NRSV), among Christians, such as between those who partake of the bread and wine and those who don’t, or those who are called “anointed” and those called the “other sheep.”. **“In Christ you are children of God through faith . . . There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”** (Galatians 3:26-29 NIV). All Christians who can partake **‘worthily’** (1 Corinthians 11:27-32) should do so.

So how about the date, and the frequency, of the Lord’s Supper for modern Christians? Notice how 1 Corinthians 11:26 reads:

“Whenever you eat the bread and drink this cup” (NIV, emphasis added)

“As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup” (HCSB; NAB, emphasis added)

“Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup” (NLT, emphasis added)

This verse implies no certain date, such as trying to set, or figure out, the annual anniversary of the Lord’s Supper, or always the Thursday night before Easter, called “Maundy Thursday” by some. This verse, and the immediate context, imply that it was, and should be, celebrated “often.” Whether that is once a week, once a month, once a quarter, sporadically throughout the year, or once a year, is not specifically stated in the Bible. The point is to celebrate it!

Until when should Christians continue to memorialize Jesus’ death? All the translations of

verse 26 say “until he [Jesus] comes.” So until “every eye will see him” coming again, Christians should continue to celebrate the Lord’s Supper. ([Revelation 1:7](#) NIV)

The real Memorial Day for Christians is a celebration of the fact that **“all are justified freely by his grace that came through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood — to be received by faith”** ([Romans 3:24,25](#) NIV). Jesus died in our place. If we receive this by faith, then our sins are covered by Christ’s sacrificial death of atonement. He atoned, not for his sins, because he didn’t have any ([1 Peter 2:22](#)), but for *our* sins. This is well worth our celebrating, by remembering his sacrifice through a memorial meal in his honor!