

I've never been to an Alcoholic's Anonymous meeting before, but I have seen them represented on TV and movies. Someone stands up and introduces themselves this way: "Hi. I'm Dave, and I'm an alcoholic."

"I'm an alcoholic." Why do they introduce themselves that way? Are they trying to make sure they're at the right meeting? Maybe they think others need to know some background information. Surely they're not doing it for themselves—they haven't forgotten their alcoholic past and the problems they have encountered because of it.

But it gets said every time at every meeting, probably by every person: "I'm an alcoholic." They say it because they need to remind themselves of something very important. No matter how sober they are today, it only takes one drink to put them on the same self-destructive road they once traveled.

Identifying one's self as an alcoholic strips away any pretenses. It avoids the attempt to look good to others, to seem like they don't have this disease. It's a truthful admission of a painful reality: they have a life-long problem. If they choose to ignore it or treat it lightly, they will suffer negative consequences. Reminding themselves of who they are is one of the best ways to avoid problems. They understand George Santayana's famous quote: "Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it."

Every Sunday when we participate in the Lord's Supper, we do something very similar to the alcoholic. We are saying to ourselves and to each other, "I'm a sinner." Why say this? Have we forgotten our sins from this past week or month or year? No way. We say it because we need to remind ourselves of a painful reality: we have a life-long problem. We have a sin nature. We choose each Sunday to remember that we are a flawed people. We choose to remember Jer. 17:9, which says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" We choose to remember that each sin we commit puts us in the category of "sinners", that same self-serving lifestyle that we dislike about ourselves. This recognition of this flaw in our character is likely what lead most of us to come to Jesus.

If admitting that we are sinners was all the Lord's Supper was about, it would be depressingly incomplete. The big difference between this morning and an AA meeting is that we aren't just admitting our condition to ourselves and each other, but to the Lord Jesus Christ. He died on the cross to offer us forgiveness from our sinful actions and nature, and to offer us a better life now as well as after death. Romans 5:6-11 describes what he did for us:

## Romans: 5:6-11

When we admit the truth that “I’m a sinner” and ask for Christ’s forgiveness, he gives it to us. It’s why he went to the cross, to provide a way for sinful man and sinless God to be reconciled. We then submit ourselves to His Lordship over our lives. Instead of being doomed to repeat sinful actions for the rest of our lives with no hope of removing them, we receive “the gift of God, eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

As long as we remember who we are, sinners saved by Christ’s sacrifice, and avoid any pretenses about how well we avoid sin without Christ, we keep ourselves on the road to life. My name is Dave, and I’m a sinner. I am reminded of this truth weekly, and need to be reminded. My salvation comes from what Jesus did for me on the cross, and my acceptance each week of God’s forgiveness through Jesus’ shed blood as I confess my sins and take part in the Lord’s Supper.

Prayer