

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

The Lord's Supper; Communion

1 Corinthians chapter 11, verses 17-34 contain the earliest records of the Lord's Supper in the Bible: Paul's second letter (what we know as 1 Corinthians) to the church of Corinth was written earlier than any of the Gospels.

It is revealed in this passage the account of what happened at the Last Supper.

²³ For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread:

²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

²⁵ After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.

²⁶ For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

The Last Supper is 1 of 2 sacraments given to the church, the other being baptism.

The Last Supper is meant to commemorate the shedding of blood and death of Jesus Christ as our substitution for the penalty of sin, and His return for those who remember Jesus in the Lord's Supper.

In contrast, Resurrection Sunday or, Easter, celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus.

THE GOSPEL-GOOD NEWS of Jesus!

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that;

- 1. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;*
- 2. and that he was buried,*
- 3. and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

THE THREE "TENSES" OF SALVATION

- 1. Saved: Past tense.** Regenerated by the Spirit. Already done in the past. Once and for all. Spiritually linked to Jesus.
- 2. Being Saved: Present tense.** Growing as an instrument of His Grace. We need to apply our salvation to our lives. You may be saved, but ***what have you done since?*** It is possible to believe in vain. It is not and cannot just be an "insurance policy" against going to hell.
- 3. Will be Saved: Future tense.** The resurrection. Receiving glorified bodies.

The next 2 Sunday sermons we focus on:

1. **What the Remembrance IS** in the Lord's Supper,
2. The death of Jesus and what that means for us in **justification**.
3. What "**Till He Come**" means for those who remember Jesus in the Lord's Supper.

We will try and understand just exactly what does Jesus' death on **April 14th, AD 32** or as the Jewish calendar indicates, **The Day of Passover, 14 Nisan**, means for us.

The Messiah died for our sins...

- "...first of all": First in importance.
- "Christ" the Incarnate body of the Godman died: Paul uses his official title of the Messiah, our substitute here on earth by God incarnate, the Godman, through and in The Messiah, *Cristos*

According to the Scriptures...

Isaiah 53:5-6, 8-9

*5 But he was wounded for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon
him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

*6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his
own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

*8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare
his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living:
for the transgression of my people was he stricken.*

*9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death;
because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*

Daniel 9:27a *And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself:*

“FOR OUR SINS”

1 John 2:2 *And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also **FOR** the **SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD**.*

Romans 8:32 *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up **FOR** us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

1 Timothy 4:10 *For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is **the Saviour of ALL MEN**, specially of those that believe.*

Titus 2:14 *Who gave himself **FOR** us, that he might redeem us from **ALL INIQUITY**, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

*In these passages the Greek preposition hyper (“**for**”) expresses the idea of Jesus being both our representative and our substitute.

WE preach the Lord's Death until "He Come"

Jesus will come for those who REMEMBER AND PREACH His death at the *Harpazo* – meeting Jesus in the clouds - event, known as the Rapture.

1 Thessalonians 4:14-17

*14 For if we believe that **JESUS DIED** AND ROSE AGAIN, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

*17 then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up** (harpazo-ed) together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord **in the air**: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

However, and as we turn to today's passage, the Church of Corinth was mocking the Lord's Supper, and bringing shame to the REMEMBERANCE of Christ's death according to the Scriptures.

THE PROBLEMS

**17 Now in this that I declare *unto you*
I PRAISE YOU NOT,
that ye come together not for the better,
but for the worse.**

- There was unseemly behavior at their gatherings: some were left hungry; some were drunk.
- This was not a “love” feast or church potluck.
- Paul is intimating here that it would be better for the Church of Corinth to **NOT** gather for church due to the problems occurring at church!

What is supposed to happen at church?

There are 4 things we are supposed to do at church.

ACTS 2:42, 47 And they **CONTINUED STEDFASTLY** (abide)

1. in the **Apostles' Doctrine**
2. and (in) **Fellowship**,
3. and in **Breaking Of Bread**, (implies the Lord's Supper after sharing a meal)
4. and in **Prayers**.
5. **Praising God**
6. and **Having Favour with all the people**.

Apparently, the saints in the Church at Corinth were not doing so well in these areas...

The saints in the Church at Corinth were selfishly treating church as something to personally consume for their benefit.

They wanted church to be a place that placated their selfish need for entertainment, hobby clubs, things to occupy their boredom during the week.

They wanted the big seats, and the best food at the potluck table.

They wanted to catch a buzz on the libations offered at the Lord's Table.

They had lost their first love...their love of Jesus Christ and him crucified

PROBLEM #1

Divisions:

¹⁸ For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

FACTIONS WITHIN THE Corinthian CHURCH

– Different cultural, social, economic backgrounds; Jews, Greeks, Romans, merchants, government officials, professionals living in spacious homes, as well as slaves, laborers and trade-workers living in rented quarters.

*Factions that were identified by personalities: Paul, Peter, Apollos, etc.

– Early translations of the NT Scriptures were in Latin, Coptic, and Syriac, reflecting the different linguistic and geographic developments.

The church at Corinth **was NOT** a church to be emulated.

We should be a church much like the Church at Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 1:2-4

1. *(A church that is mentioned by others with thanksgiving and praise)*

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

2. *(A church that is known for its unwavering faith and dedication to Jesus)*

remembering without ceasing your work of faith,

3. *(A church that has a heart for outreach in the community)*
and labour of love,

4. *(A church that endeavors through the thick and thin, always displaying HOPE)*

and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ,

5. *(A church that is known to love God and the Word of God.)*
in the sight of God and our Father;

6. *(A church that is assured of our eternal salvation in Jesus, not because of what we do, but because of Jesus' crucifixion, death, and resurrection.)*

knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

PROBLEM #2

Heresies:

¹⁹ For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

True believers are tested by spiritual warfare. Folks in church who divide the church, create factions in the church, or fall away due to laziness or unbelief **make known the true and committed followers of Jesus among the church.**

Think of all the people that have come and gone from this church or other churches like it. Sometimes people come, they stay awhile, they may even get emotionally excited and serve for a brief time within the church, but eventually, their **contentiousness** or **non-committal attitude** toward Jesus is revealed and they fall away from the church.

Paul says he can believe the report of the divisions, factions, and reports of some falling away within the church because **these things reveal who is genuine and committed in the practice of their faith in Christ.**

Put another way, divisions, factions, and the falling away of some people over issues of doctrine or commitment **clarify which of them has God's approval for their faithfulness in doing what is right.**

Paul has spent much of the letter
telling believers **to avoid divisions**

(1 Corinthians 1:10)

and to **set aside their own "rights"** for the good of others
(1 Corinthians 8:12–13).

Divisions, factions, and people who are contentious
or get bored and fall away is something to be *expected*, not something to
be appreciated.

Why are divisions, factions, and people who fall away necessary to reveal who is
approved of by God?

Wouldn't unity among all the people show that all were being genuine in their
faith? Yes, it would if everyone was committed to take up their cross daily and
follow Jesus in humility, love, and obedience. Unfortunately, not everyone is on the
same page with Luke 9:23-23 *And he said to them all, If any man will
come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and
follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever
will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.*

In practical terms, divisions, factions, and people who fall away, though never
desirable and often hurtful, **serves the purpose of showing who has the
conviction to endure and stand for what is right even when others are not
doing so.**

2 Timothy 2:15

Study to shew thyself APPROVED UNTO GOD,
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth.

PROBLEM #3

Selfishness-Church Consumerism

²⁰ When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper.

**²¹ For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper:
and one is hungry, and another is drunken.**

- (Sunday) “Agape feasts” were the hallmark of the early church. This is why we have potluck Sunday meals or share a meal together at a local restaurant after church. Is fun fellowship!!

However, the Love Meals quickly degenerated into discriminatory unsavory demonstrations of selfish consumerism.

- The rich, arriving earlier, finished the best (if not all), often satiated and drunk, with the slaves and laborers arriving late and going hungry.

*The rich people would arrive before the poor people and eat all the wonderful food that the rich people brought. The poor people would be stuck with the leftovers, or the simple and small plates of food the poor people would bring.

- They may have been going through the motions by performing the script of the Lord's Supper, but Paul points out here, it is NOT the Lord's Supper they are commemorating due to sin in their life.

**22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?
or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that
have not?**

**What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this?
I praise *you* not.**

– Filling your belly and drinking alcohol and getting drunk is not the main point of the Love Meal. You can do that at home ant any time. **This is a time of loving fellowship!**

-- The main reason for the Love Meal is fellowship and sharing with one another.

Let the “least of these” be provided with a wonderful and full meal with love and compassion!

– Firstcomers, friends of the host, were likely to enjoy the best food, leaving the residue for the late-comers.

– The rich despised the church by humiliating the poor.

By mistreating the Love Meal, the offending people are showing their disdain for the church and for the “least of these” people who need help within the church.

Matthew 25:40 *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

THE WARNING

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.

- Self-examination is **essential**. Never with contempt or triviality.

2 Corinthians 13:5-6

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

Reprobate: unapproved, i.e. rejected; by implication, worthless (literally or morally):—castaway, rejected, reprobate.

Are you an approved worker for Jesus???

Or are you simply fooling yourself or others...??

³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

- We must self-examine ourselves, not become self-appointed judge of others.

Preparing for the Lord's Supper.

Preparing for LIFE in the service of the King!

We can avoid any judgment at all for violating God's intent for the Lord's Supper and for our service to Jesus.

We must judge ourselves first with sincerity.

In other words, we must be brutally honest with ourselves before joining in the Lord's Supper and serving Jesus and change our attitudes toward Christ's death and what he has done for us.

Jesus paid it all...all to him we owe.

If we do this then we will not have to worry about God's judgment afterwards.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

- Distinguishing between what we are and what we ought to be, so that we do not come under judgment. If we don't take care of ourselves, God will do it for you.

Rest assured, God will chasten his children to hopefully make us more into the image of his Son Jesus

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

Be Patient with one another. Wait until you are all gathered in the name of Jesus!

1 Corinthians 13:4b *Charity suffereth long, and is kind.*

34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation.

If hunger is the real issue, have a pre-meal, meal at home before you gather together in love with others so you do not make a fool of yourself by selfish actions within the loving fellowship of the church.

And the rest will I set in order when I come.

Apparently, Paul has more problems to address with the Church at Corinth.

We will witness some of these **admonishments concerning the ill use of spiritual gifts** in the following chapters.

THE CONSEQUENCES

CONSEQUENCE #1

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

The cup represents Christ's blood, and the bread represents His broken body.

The purpose of taking communion is to commemorate and reflect on THE SACRIFICIAL DEATH OF JESUS.

To do so without "discerning the body" results in unworthiness and should prohibit the person from partaking in the Lord's Supper.

What does "DISCERNING THE BODY" mean?

1 Corinthians 10:16b-17

The bread which we break, is it not the **communion of the body of Christ?** For we *being* many are one bread, *and* one body: for we are all **partakers of that one bread.**

"Discerning The Body" means recognizing the relationship between Christ's body and the "body of Christ," **known as the church.**

It is not about food for the physical body.

It is about "doing this in remembrance of me".

Honoring the shedding of blood for our sins.

Remembering the price God paid for us through the death of his Son, Jesus.

We see Christ in our fellowship with fellow believers **in church** and treat them as we would treat Jesus when we come together **in church**.

This is why the Lord's Supper or Communion **is a sacrament of the church**... it is not something you can do on your own with Mountain Dew and Cheetos in your own corrupted version of church.

For us today, the word **Damnation** implies spending eternity in Hell. Perhaps a better word like judgement or chastisement should have been used here. Once saved, always saved...you do not lose your salvation for any reason.

Coming to the Table of the Lord's Supper in an **unworthily** manner brings judgment and chastisement to the participant due to the unrepentant sin in a person's life while partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Purge it out!!

- Failure to submit to self-examination results in God's subsequent judgment.
- The guest at the Lord's table must be blameless, righteous, truthful, morally upright, and obedient to God's law.
- There is a stress on the corporate nature of the church gathering in the service and the responsibility of each to all.

One church, One loaf, One Body.

CONSEQUENCE #2

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, UNWORTHILY, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

The word UNWORTHILY (as opposed to the word unworthy) here means we should not be approaching the Table of the Lord in a careless or frivolous spirit, forgetting that we have here something which in the eyes of God is most sacred, most holy.

What does it mean to eat the bread and to drink the cup unworthily?

A misinterpretation of this term, “unworthily,” has kept some well-meaning people from ever partaking in the Lord’s Supper.

They think they are “unworthy” to partake in the holiness of the Lord’s Table. The word here is not “unworthy,” but is rather “unworthily,” referring not to the person, but to the state of mind in which one comes to the Table of the Lord.

Of course, in ourselves we are altogether unworthy, but we have found acceptance in the worthy One, and **in Christ every believer is worthy** to approach the Table of the Lord.

The Lord’s Supper **IS** for sinners that Jesus died for! That is the whole point of the Lord’s Supper.

1 Timothy 1:14-15 *And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

If I truly feel my sinfulness, I confess it, and put my trust in the Savior of sinners, then in Him I find my worthiness.

But here in this passage it is not an adjective, it is an adverb, “unworthily.” It refers, you see, to manner or behavior.

What is the meaning? If I come to the Table of the Lord in a light, frivolous, careless way, I am coming to the Table UNWORTHILY.

I fail to recognize that in the BREAD and the GRAPE JUICE we have set forth the precious body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and his resulting death for us.

To partake in such a spirit is to do so UNWORTHILY. “Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, UNWORTHILY, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.”

If done unworthily, It is as though we crucify Jesus afresh and put Him to an open shame in forgetting that it was OUR sins that caused His death upon the cross.

WE act as though He had never yet died.

WE fail to realize what these symbols set forth.

CONSEQUENCE #3

³⁰ For this cause:

1. many are weak
2. and sickly among you,
3. and many sleep (have died)

• Spiritual ills can have physical results.

- It applies to those particular cases of sickness which are due to unconfessed and unjudged sin.
- Ignorance of the will of God causes much physical sorrow in the life of the believer.

“My people are destroyed because of the lack of knowledge”

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

The Lord's Supper

In Remembrance of Jesus

²³ For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread:

²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

²⁵ After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.

²⁶ For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do **shew the Lord's death till he come.**

The Phrase “Christ Died For Our Sins” Is The Doctrinal Summary Of The Atonement:

1) As **OUR SUBSTITUTE**, Christ died to appease God and meet the demands of the law.

Romans 3:25-26 *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness **for the remission of sins that are past**, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

2) As **OUR ADVOCATE**, He effected reconciliation and made us righteous before God

2 Corinthians 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

3) As **OUR MEDIATOR**, he established a new covenant and accepted us as partners.

Luke 22:20 *This cup is the **NEW TESTAMENT** in my blood, which is shed for you.*

4) As **OUR SAVIOR**, he grants us eternal life through faith in Him.

John 3:16-17 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*