

1 Corinthians Chapter 11 Continued

Verses 17-34: The early church love feasts usually closed with observance of the Lord's Supper. The worldly, carnal church at Corinth had turned those sacred meals into gluttonous, drunken revelries. Beyond that, wealthy believers brought ample food and drink for themselves but refused to share, letting their poorer brethren go away hungry.

1 Corinthians 11:17: "Now in this that I declare [unto you] I praise [you] not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse."

Worse is a comparative Greek word which refers to moral evil.

It seems from this, that the church gathering was in error in many ways. A person must go to church for the right reasons and conduct themselves while they are there to make themselves better Christians. If they are practicing things that are not right in the sight of God, it would be better if they did not assemble.

1 Corinthians 11:18 "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it."

This church was torn by dissension.

This is nothing exclusive to only that day. Even today nearly every church is divided. You remember on the day of Pentecost that they were of one accord. Little things are what separate a church. Whoever had written to Paul had written of the division. They were probably trying to get Paul to side in with them. Paul is saying, I believe it must even be true.

1 Corinthians 11:19 "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

“Approved ... manifest”: Factions revealed who passed the test of spiritual genuineness and purity. This is speaking of different groups in the church separating themselves off from the others, because of some little minor difference.

1 Thess. 2:4 "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."

“Heresies” is defined as: Doctrine rejected as false by religious authorities. In Christianity, the orthodox theology of the church is thought to be based on divine revelation, and heretics are viewed as perversely rejecting the guidance of the church.

1 Corinthians 11:20 "When ye come together therefore into one place, [this] is not to eat the Lord's supper."

One of the worst problems was that they had been taking communion daily, and it had become such a routine thing, that much of the meaning had been lost in the practice. The Lord's Supper was being eaten every time they came together in homes, or wherever they met. It had become habit, and not a true remembrance of what the Lord had done for them. Paul is saying that the reason to come together in one place is not just to take communion.

The love feast and communion celebration had become so perverted that it was a sinful, selfish mockery. They could not legitimately say it was devoted to the Lord, since it was not honoring to Him.

1 Corinthians 11:21 "For in eating every one taketh before [other] his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken."

The abuse seems to be that they had come together to eat and not to take of the communion supper. Possibly, at this time they were using fermented wine, since it speaks of being drunk.

1 Corinthians 11:22 "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."

They were gathering together for the wrong reasons. All of this had nothing to do with worshipping God. They had forgotten that the real reason to come to church is to fellowship with God and learn of His ways. They had made a party out of going to church. It sounds familiar, doesn't it? We hear that we must have all kinds of parties and recreation at the church or no one wants to come.

If they intended to selfishly indulge themselves, they might as well have stayed at home.

1 Corinthians 11:23 "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:"

Now, Paul is giving them what the true communion is all about. Since Paul was not there at the last supper, this had to be a revelation from God. It could however, been related to him by the apostles that were present at the Last Supper.

While the information was not new to the Corinthians, because Paul had previously "delivered" it, still it's an important reminder. This description of Christ's final supper with His disciples is one of the most beautiful in all of Scripture, yet it was given during a strong rebuke of carnal selfishness. If this letter was written before any of the gospels as most conservative scholars believe, then Paul's instruction was the first biblical record of the institution of the Lord's Supper, given directly from the Lord and not through his reading of any other apostles.

1 Corinthians 11:24 "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."

Since they had been taking the communion table so lightly, Paul is reminding them that the bread that they take in this communion symbolizes the very body of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is also, saying that they must remember His great sacrifice for all of mankind each time that they take communion.

1 Corinthians 11:25 "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."

The fruit of the vine that they took in the communion symbolized the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The life was in the blood. The fact that they were handling the communion cup in a manner displeasing unto God was what had really upset Paul. He is reminding them of the seriousness associated with the communion cup.

The Old Covenant was practiced repeatedly by the blood of animals offered by men; but the New Covenant has been ratified once and for all by the death of Christ. "In remembrance of Me": Jesus transformed the third cup of the Passover into the cup of remembrance of His offering.

1 Corinthians 11:26 "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

My own personal belief is, that the Lord should be remembered several times a year, or even more often, if you are doing exactly what this says, remembering Him in the communion. We find that to become repetitious about the communion, can cause us to overlook the true meaning of communion. We start doing this systematically, as these people did here, and forget why we are doing this. When we do this from obligation, we have lost the total meaning of it. Communion should be very special. The Bread symbolizes the very body of the Lord which He gave for the salvation of mankind. The cup of the vine symbolizes the very blood of the Lord which was shed to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.

The gospel is presented through the service of communion as the elements are explained. They point to His physical incarnation, sacrificial death, resurrection and coming kingdom.

1 Corinthians 11:27 "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."

This shows the seriousness of the taking of communion. Without true recognition of what the elements are, means that a person does not believe that they are, in fact, representing the body and blood of Christ. That person would be classifying them as just food for his body. You can see why this would be so dangerous. The Lord Jesus is the Savior of those who believe, not those who doubt.

To come to the Lord's Table clinging to one's sin does not only dishonor the ceremony, but it also dishonors His body and blood, treating lightly the gracious sacrifice of Christ for us. It is

necessary to set all sin before the Lord (verse 28), then partake so as not to mock the sacrifice for sin, by holding on to it.

1 Corinthians 11:28-29 "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of [that] bread, and drink of [that] cup." "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

When you examine yourself, then you do not need to be judged of the Lord for this. If we try our own motives, then we will not take the communion so lightly.

The unworthiness here, is speaking of someone taking communion not really believing. It would be as if you were mocking the communion.

“Not discerning the Lord’s body”: When believers do not properly judge the holiness of the celebration of Communion, they treat with indifference the Lord Himself; His life, suffering and death.

1 Corinthians 11:30 "For this cause many [are] weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

“Sleep” here means physical death. The offense was so serious that God put the worst offenders to death, an extreme but effective form of church purification.

Here are other examples of those who would not or didn’t repent.

Luke 13:1-5 "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." "And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?" "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?" "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Acts 5:1 "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife", as is told (in verses 1-11).

1 John 5:16 "If any man see his brother sin a sin [which is] not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."

1 Corinthians 11:31 "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

He is just saying, consider what you are doing, before you sin against God. If we judge ourselves, then we will do the correct thing and not need to be judged of others.

1 Corinthians 11:32 "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

Paul is speaking here, to those who have made commitments to God. He says, even the judgment of God is for your own good to straighten you out before judgment falls on you from the world. Paul is saying, straighten this out in the church, before you are judged by an evil world.

Believers are kept from being consigned to hell, not only by divine decree, but by divine intervention. The Lord chastens to drive His people back to righteous behavior and even sends death to some in the church (verse 30), to remove them before they could fall away.

1 Corinthians 11:33 "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another."

Christians should not be like the world which is trying to push to the head of the line. Christians have a meek spirit which is patient and allows others to go first, if they wish to. It seems that Paul is having to teach basic Christian principles to these who should already be aware of all this. Why do they have to bring this up to Paul? Why could they not have determined these things themselves? They do not need someone from the outside to determine something that their own consciences should have taken care of.

1 Corinthians 11:34 "And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come."

If you are coming just to eat, don't do it. Eat at home before you come, so that your greediness will not be apparent to all the people. It seems that the communion had been mixed in with the eating of meals which would have been really bad. We do know that they had started taking communion every time they met.

To mix communion with a regular meal would be to discredit the communion. They had even begun to use bread that was leavened at this point which discredits the sinless nature of the body of Christ.

There is no point in gathering together to sin and be chastened.

Paul tells them here, that he will try to straighten out the other things of lesser importance when he comes.

1 Corinthians 11 Continued Questions

1. They were coming together not for the _____, but for the _____.
2. What would be a reason that would be better, if they did not assemble?
3. What had Paul heard that was one of their problems?
4. How did this differ from the day of Pentecost?

5. What does "heresies" in verse 19, mean?
6. What had they been doing that had made them take the communion too lightly?
7. Instead of a true remembrance of Christ, it had become a _____.
8. What makes the author believe the wine was possibly fermented that they were using for communion?
9. What? have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or _____ ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?
10. They had made a _____ out of going to church.
11. What does Paul tell them all over again to make them realize what communion is?
12. Since Paul was not at the last supper with Jesus, this has to be a _____.
13. Where can you find some more Scriptures on the communion?
14. What symbolized the body of Jesus?
15. What symbolized the shed blood of Jesus?
16. When Jesus took the cup of communion, what did He say?
17. As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the _____ _____ till he come.
18. What can repetitious taking of the communion cause?
19. What is wrong with taking communion from obligation?
20. What happens to you, if you eat the bread and drink the cup unworthily?
21. What should we do before we take communion?
22. What causes us to drink damnation unto ourselves?
23. For this cause, many are _____ and _____.
24. What is verse 33 trying to teach about the difference in the Christian and the world?
25. If a man hunger, let him _____ at _____.