

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Insights on Communion

How many of you are google Doctors? What mean?

A) You or someone in your family isn't feeling well or has a physical problem and you go to google doc of Web MD – to try and diagnosis

B) So you Diagnosis the problem – start following the remedy.

1) Doesn't help – so you finally go to a real doctor who tells you everything you are doing is not helping – only making it worse

C) The church in Corinth had a slew of problems – and everything that they were doing was only making it worse.

D) 1 Corinthians is a corrective letter – Paul has been dealing with problems

1) Included Division, gross sexual immorality, suing each other, right and wrong use of Christian liberty /

Paul has been diagnosing the problems and then giving a prescription on how to make it better

A) This time the problem is the abuse of the Lord's table

17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.

B) In verse 2, concerning the ordinances in general, Paul had said, "I praise you, brethren...."

1) But Here in verse 17, concerning the Lord's Supper specifically, he says, **I have no praise for you** - since you come together not for the better but for the worse.

C) Your gatherings are causing more harm than good

1) someone gets saved in Corinth –

2) We are not telling them to go to your church. – It could be detrimental to their faith

D) There were several problems happening in their services as we shall see in coming chapters –

1) but this one had to do with the abuse of the Lord's table.

The problem was stemming from the original problem that Paul dealt with in chapter one –

A) Division and selfish behavior in their gatherings

18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

A) Unfortunately nothing surprises me any more

19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.

B) In Chapter 1 they were divided over leaders – some Paul, Apollos, some Peter

C) But the division that Paul is addressing here had more to do with their relationship and treatment of each other

1) It was being manifested in their "Love feast"

Interesting phrase V.19 - For there must also be factions among you

A) Factions and Divisions in a church are always disruptive and destructive

B) But if not tolerated and dealt with properly they can also be constructive

C) That is really the paradox: It was necessary for there to be factions in the Corinthian church to decipher / godly vs ungodly behavior

D) The worldliness and fleshly disobedience of those who caused the divisions

1) would positively expose and highlight the love, harmony, and spirituality of those who are approved.

Approved (*dokimos*) refers to that which has passed a test.

A) The term was used of precious metals tried in fire and proved to be pure.

B) Church division, ungodly and sinful as it is, nevertheless is used by the Lord to prove the worth of His faithful saints.

C) In the midst of bickering and divisiveness they are separated out as pure gold is from the dross.

1) Trouble in the church creates a situation in which true spiritual strength, wisdom, and leadership can be manifested.

Notice how the division was being manifested.

20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. 21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22 **What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?** Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

When the believers in Corinth came together – to share in the Lord's supper it wasn't just communion like we do today – wafer and a juice

A) They had a full meal – called an Agape feast or a love feast

B) And In that day, at common meals, it was expected that the **"upper class"** would receive better and more food than the **"lower class."**

C) It appears that This cultural custom was carried over into the church, in Corinth.

D) Now it would make sense – that at such meals the rich people who had more – would bring more to the feast than the poor.

E) But the problem was they were not sharing their food fairly.

V.21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk.

V.22b - Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing?

A) The Rich people in the church were acting entitled – they would go through the line first – pile on. (not much left)

1) Potluck – Don't be that guy –

B) The message that was being sent to the poor by their actions was this: you are less and therefore you deserve less- **shame those who have nothing?**

C) This action and mindset was extremely worldly and to top it off –

1) some of the believers were even getting drunk at these gatherings - **Talk about a mess**

D) Note Paul repeats -v.22b **I do not praise you.**

That was the problem the diagnosis now Paul is going to give the prescription

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

What is the prescription to the problem? He takes them to the Cross

Note again - 20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

A) Communion is what we might call a visual sermon – a sermon with props – Sunday – the pot

B) Visual sermons are the best – why I like taking people to Israel – the Bible comes to life –
1) you see things in a way haven't seen before

C) Reading the Bible in technicolor or 3d

D) Jesus walking on water – Visualize the sea of Galilee

1) MT Carmel – Elijah

Jesus is giving a visual sermon this bread represents my body

A) I will Bear the weight of sin on myself

B) The cup is going represent my blood – cleanses from all sin

C) The Cross fixes the problem of Division and partiality for us – why because we all get saved the same way

"Nothing so effectively mitigates against the propensity toward individual autonomy within our culture and within Western Christianity as the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper so enables us to declare and experience our common faith." Gordon Smith

D) Common ground and common faith

Six lessons about communion

#1 Communion is a time to look back

24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; **do this in remembrance of Me.**" 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, **in remembrance of Me.**"

At the table of communion we are remembering what Jesus did for us!

A) He took the punishment that we deserved. – He took the wrath of God upon himself –

B) He became sin for us!

1) Remembering all of that at communion

Pastor Tim Keller shares this illustration. "In the book version of the Lord of the Rings Pippin the Hobbit is about to die, as he's in a city besieged by evil forces. But then, Pippin hears a horn in the distance, and he sees the Riders of Rohan attempt to break through the siege. Many die, but eventually they break through and save Pippin. From that day on, whenever Pippin would hear a horn in the distance, he would break into tears. For when he heard the horn, he relived his time of peril and was moved again by the sacrifice of those who died to save him. It reminded Pippin that every moment of his life was a gift that came at great cost."

C) Keller ends with this insight - The Lord's Supper serves as a horn in the distance for us,

1) reminding us of our great salvation and motivating us to serve the one who gave everything to save us.

D) So #1 Communion is a time for looking back – remembering

#2 Communion is a time to look forward

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

We read where Jesus declared In Matthew 26:27-

29 ²⁷ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is

shed for many for the remission of sins. ²⁹ But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

A) Jesus is coming again for his church - take us to Heaven

B) Jesus looked forward to a future celebration of the Passover in heaven,

1) one that He has not yet celebrated with His people.

C) He is waiting for all His people to be gathered to Him, and then there will be a great supper –

1) *the marriage supper of the Lamb*

Perhaps that is what led CH Spurgeon to declare: "I think the moments we are nearest to heaven are those we spend at the Lord's Table." CH Spurgeon

D) It is a reminder of what is coming – all that the work of Jesus on the Cross and his subsequent resurrection accomplished

E) So we look back/ we look forward -

#3 We look within

27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

What does it mean to partake in an unworthy manner?

A) Not giving worth to the body of Christ – Not honoring the cross

B) How do we do that? One way is When we take it lightly – that was definitely happening in Corinth

C) Why Paul asked the question in V. 20

20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

D)Isn't that supposed to be the focal point of why you have come together

1)Simply Jesus – All to – Worship / All about – Study / All for... JESUS

Jesus and his work on the cross is the focal point of our coming together

A)He is our focus and our example

B)They had forgotten about that – they were more concerned about what they were going to be eating

C)They were taking lightly – Communion – the Lord's body

Another way that one can partake in an unworthy manner is to have no intention of repenting of sin.

A)Living in sin and rebellion and no intention of changing – that

B)I know what this represents but I really don't care – not changing

C)Don't partake – unworthy manner- bring judgment on yourself - Weak sick and even died

Jon Courson insight on this point

“Because you don't value the Lord's Supper,” said Paul, “there are people in your midst who are weak, folks who are sick, some who have even died because they haven't understood the potency or the vitality inherent in Communion.”

Too often, Communion is nothing more than a meaningless tradition or ritual. Thus, many remain in a state of spiritual weakness because they don't give worth to or value the place of Communion.

And because of this failure to give it worth, people are dying physically, emotionally, and spiritually in ways they need not be, failing to discern the power of the broken body, the cleansing of the shed blood.”

D)Giving worth by taking it seriously

1)Jr High Kid at camp -MY SIN

E)So we look back – Cross remember – Look Forward – reminder of Victory and what is coming

1)We look within – our hearts

#4 Look up

A)Jesus died rose – ascended and is at the right hand of the father

B)Hebrews 4 Jesus our High Priest

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

C)Come boldly – find grace and mercy in his time of need

Now let me make something clear –

A)Some have wrongly thought on the basis of this passage, they are unworthy to partake of Communion

B)if they are struggling with a certain sin or wrestling with a particular temptation.

C)Yet this reasoning would be equivalent to—a doctor saying to a sick person, “Get well, and then come and see me,”

1)a loan officer saying to a poor person, “You need a loan? Get some money, and then I can help you”;

D)a cook saying to someone who is hungry, “Starving? Gain some weight, and I'll give you a meal.”

The Lord's Table is the very place for the person struggling with sin, wrestling with temptation.

A)for it is there that he can say, “Lord, I desperately need You in my life.

B)I eat of Your body and I drink of Your blood, knowing I am forgiven.

1)Thank You, Lord. I celebrate what You did for me.”

C)Lord – I need you – grace and mercy – COME BOLDLY

D)So we look back, forward, within, UP

#5 We Look Around

³³ Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. ³⁴ But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together

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

A)We partake of the Lord's body – look around –
1)His body that was given is what makes us a body!
ONE IN JESUS

B)This context – the rich needed to not look down on their poor bros/sisters –
1)Poor not distain the rich

C)Example of Jesus preferring one another above ourselves
1)Valuing one another in the Lord

D)Wait for one another – don't show up starving – eat first at home
1)Especially if you know the supply might be limited

E)So we look back, forward, within, UP, back

#6 Look Out

A)It is great that we are all here – Saved – our lives have been touched by the love and power of Jesus

B)But there is a world outside these doors of people who don't know Jesus – died today – hell
V.26 AGAIN

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

C)Proclaim = declare or preach

D)We have a message to share with the World – Hope in Jesus
1)HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

E)Our mandate until he comes –

Communion should remind us of our mission

A)Saved for a purpose – to declare the WORK OF JESUS

B)Our lives and our words

C)Tonight celebrate communion – that is what we are doing
1)Looking Back, Forward, Within, Up, Around, and Out