

“For The Better!”
1 Corinthians 11:17-22

Introduction:

1. This Morning, We Are Going To Head Back To 1 Corinthians!
 - After Spending The Last Couple Of Weeks Remembering The First Coming Of The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - His Life, His Triumphant Entry Into Jerusalem, His Death, His Burial, His Resurrection!
2. And As We Head Back To 1 Corinthians 11:
 - We Will See That One Of The Reasons For The Church:
 - Is To Remember His First Coming & To Look Forward To His Second Coming!
 - This Chapter – Chapter 11:
 - Deals With What Christians Are To Do While Jesus Is In Heaven! How We Are To Deal With Each Other & Handle The Affairs Of The Church!
 - And The Issue That Paul Is Dealing With This Morning:
 - Has To Do With This Question:
 - What Is Church Really For?
 - What Are The Services Of The Church Really About?
3. And This Is A Good Question For Us To Consider This Morning As Well:
 - Because So Many Churches Have Lost Their Way!
 - There Are So Many Different Kinds & Different Varieties Of Churches Today!
 - **IE:** It Is As If You Were To Go To Dairy Queen, Like Our Family Did Last Week - And Look At All Of The Options - Each One Of Us Wanted Something Different - And Then Got Something Different!
 - Many Churches Are Purposefully Trying To Be “Different” – Just To Be “Different!”
 - Like The Church Whose Trademark Is This: “Your First Impression Of [Our Church] May Be, ‘This Doesn’t Seem Like A Typical Church.’ And We Think That’s Good!”
 - Or The Church That Described Itself As A Place “Where There Is No Pressure Or Guilt!” (OutOfUr.com)
 - How Many Churches & Christians Should Hear What Paul Says Here In 11:17-22?
 - Read Text!
 - These Churches, Like The Church In Corinth At This Time, Are Doing More Harm Than Good!
 - And They Have Forgotten What The Church Is Really For! And Especially What Their Gatherings & Meetings Are For!
4. To Remind Us Of What Church Is Really For:
 - Look Back To The First & The Earliest New Testament Church!
 - In Acts 2:42 - “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers!”
 - And Through These 4 Elements:
 - The Christians & The Churches Were To Grow!
 - And They Did Grow!
 - They Grew In Spirit! Acts 2:46-47a - “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people!”
 - They Grew In Number! Acts 2:47b - “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved!”
 - In The Words Of 11:17:
 - The Services Of The Church Were: “For The Better!”
 - And Not “For The Worse!”
5. So Let’s Look This Morning:
 - At What Church Is For!
 - In These Verses, It Is Primarily Talking About The Public Fellowship & Worship Of Christians!
 - Not Just About The Place Where Christians Gather, But The Purpose For Which Christians Gather!
 - And This Includes The Lord’s Supper, Which We Had The Privilege Of Participating In Last Sunday Night!
 - So: When We Gather Together As Christians:
 - For Fellowship & Worship:
 - Like What We Are Doing Here This Morning!
 - What Is Church For?

- "For The Better" – Not – "For The Worse!"

1. ***The Plan For Our Church!***

- Was: "For The Better!"
- See This In 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!"
 - Here, Paul Identifies A New Problem / A New Issue That The Corinthian Church Was Facing!
 - And He Was Not Happy With What He Was Seeing & Hearing!
 - He Says As Both An Apostle & Their Pastor:
 - "I Praise You Not!" / "I Praise You Not!"
 - Why Was Paul So Unhappy & Displeased?
 - Because They Had Forgotten The Plan For The Church – For When They Would "Come Together" For Service & For Worship As A Church!
 - The Plan Was: "For The Better!"
 - But They Made It "For The Worse!"
 - What Was This Plan?
- To Have The Right Instruction!
 - Paul Writes: "Now In This That I Declare Unto You!"
 - Paul Is About To Give Some Important Instructions:
 - On How The Church Is To Handle Itself In Worship, And Here In Chapter 11, How To Handle The Lord's Supper!
 - But He Has To Correct Them:
 - Because They Did Not Listen To His Instructions Before & He Could Not Praise & Commend Them!
 - This Instruction Was: "For The Better!"
 - But Because They Chose To Ignore It, They Made It "For The Worse!"
 - What Is God's Plan For Our Church?
 - To Have The Right Instruction!
 - To Bless & To Benefit Us – To Cause Us To Grow!
 - 2 Timothy 3:16 - "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness!"
 - It Is "For The Better!"
 - Is This What We Come For? Is This How We Use It? "The Washing Of Water By The Word!" (Ephesians 5:26)
- Plan: To Have The Right Intentions!
 - To Come To Church In The Right Spirit / With The Right Heart / For The Right Reasons!
 - The Corinthians Were Not Coming To Church With The Right Intentions!
 - Why Paul Says: "I Praise You Not, That Ye Come Together Not For The Better, But For The Worse!"
 - They Came To Church – Wherever The Church Was Meeting At That Time – For The Wrong Reasons!
 - What Would The Right Intentions Have Been?
 - First: To Give Blessings To God!
 - To Praise & Worship The One Who Saved Them – The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - Second: To Be A Blessing To Others!
 - 11:33 - "Tarry One For Another!" To Exhort / To Encourage / To Help / To Bless!
 - Third: To Receive A Blessing Yourself!
 - Through The Work Of The Spirit Of God & The Lessons From The Word Of God!
 - God Designed The Church To Be A Place Of Blessing!
 - "For The Better!"
 - But When We Don't Have The Right Intention:
 - We Make It "For The Worse!"
 - What Are Some Wrong Intentions?
 - What Is God's Plan For Our Church?
 - For Us To Have The Right Instruction!
 - From The Word Of God!
 - And For Each Christian To Come With The Right Intentions!
 - For The Better & Not For The Worse!

2. ***The Priority For Our Church!***

- Is To Be: “For The Better” As Well!
- See This In 11:18-19 - “ For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. / For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you!”
 - The Priority Then Was For The Christians In That Church To Be Unified Around The Truth Of The Gospel & The Word Of God!
 - True Unity Was To Be The Goal, Not Division!
 - And This Ought To Be The Priority For Our Church:
 - Ephesians 4:1-6 - “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, / With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; / Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. / There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; / One Lord, one faith, one baptism, / One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all!”
 - But This Unity Was Not Found In The Corinthian Church!
 - And It Was Not “For The Better” – But, Instead, It Was “For The Worse!”
 - What Should Be Our Priorities?
- The Priority Of Fellowship!
 - “For First Of All, When Ye Come Together In The Church!”
 - Christians Are To Get Together!
 - Not In Just A Social Way - Like You Can “Get Together” With Friends / Family / Coworkers!
 - But In A Truly Spiritual Way!
 - For Public Worship / Service / Fellowship!
 - But This Is Not Why The Corinthians Were Getting Together!
 - They Forgot The Importance & The Priority Of True Christian Fellowship! Instead, We See:
- The Problem Of Factions!
 - This Is Really What Was Going On!
 - And May Have Even Been Their Intention When , They Went “To Church!”
 - “I Hear That There Be Divisions Among You; And I Partly Believe It!”
 - Not Here Talking About Doctrinal Divisions & Differences, Which We Will Look At In The Next Verse!
 - But Other Differences & Divisions!
 - Like Nationality / Culture / Economic!
 - Their Division Was Not Just In Words!
 - Remember 1:11-13 - “For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. / Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. / Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?”
 - Their Division Was Also In Actions!
 - Separating Themselves Into Their Own Little Groups, Even When They Met For Worship & For The Lord’s Supper!
 - Imagine If An Unbeliever Came To That Church Service! What Would They See!
 - The City Of Corinth Was A Melting Pot!
 - With All Kinds Of Different People!
 - Differences & Divisions Were Common & Expected!
 - But The Church Of Corinth Was To Be Different!
 - 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 - “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. / For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit!”
 - When There Is Division In Our Church:
 - It Is Not: “For The Better” – But – “For The Worse!”
- The Priority Of Faithfulness!
 - But There Is A Division That Is Necessary & Right!
 - And Paul Understood This, And In 11:19, Explains What This Is For!
 - 11:19 - “For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you!”

- Paul “Partly Believed” There Were Divisions In Their Church, Because It Was Expected, Due To The Nature Of The Truth! But The Problem Was, Their Divisions Had Nothing To Do With The Truth! So, If There Is Any Division Or Separation, We Need To Be Absolutely Certain That It Is Right Kind!
- So What Does 11:19 Mean?
 - There Will Be Doctrinal Errors – Heresies – That Will Creep Into The Church!
 - One Of The Devil’s Devices! Mixing A Little Error In With The Truth!
- But Instead Of Bringing Confusion To Christians:
 - It Can & Ought To Bring Clarity To The Truth!
 - As We Dig Deeper Into The Truth!
 - And As We Are Led By The Holy Spirit!
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:21 - “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good!”
 - Eventually:
 - God Will Guide His Church To See The Right Teachers & The Right Teachings!
 - Those That Are “Approved” By God!
- And So: Faithfulness Ought To Also Be The Priority Of Our Church!
 - And Division & Separation From Error & Sin Is Something That May Be Necessary As Well!
 - Just Make Sure That Any Division Is Based On The Truth!
- What Are To Be The Priorities For Our Church?
 - True Fellowship! With Each Other!
 - And True Faithfulness! To God & His Word!
 - Our Priority Is To Be: “For The Better” & Not “For The Worse!”

3. ***The Purpose For Our Church!***

- Is To Be: “For The Better” As Well!
- 11:20-22 - “When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper. / For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. / 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!”
 - In These Verses, Paul Pin-Points The Problem Of Their Church Services!
 - The Problem Was Not ***When*** They Worshiped!
 - “When Ye Come Together!”
 - This Is Something They Were Supposed To Do, But For The Right Instructions & With The Right Intentions!
 - The Problem Was Not ***Where*** They Worshiped!
 - “Into One Place!”
 - It Could Have Been In A Home, Or A Public Hall, Or Even Outdoors, Or Eventually A Separate Building! The Church Is Not A Place, But A People!
 - The Problem Was ***What*** They Where Doing When They Worshiped!
 - “This Is Not To Eat The Lord’s Supper!”
 - This Was To Be An Integral & An Important Part Of Their Worship Services!
 - The Lord’s Supper!
 - But When They Came Together As A Church:
 - What They Were Supposed To Be Doing As A Church!
 - And Even What It Was Assumed They Were Doing As A Church!
 - They Were Not Doing!
 - They Might Have Even Thought They Were “Eating The Lord’s Supper!”
 - But, Because Of The Way In Which They Did It, They Really Were Not!
- The Purpose For The Church: Is To Sow To The Spirit! (Gal. 6:8)
 - Through Spiritual Fellowship & Worship!
 - This Should Have Been Their Aim / Goal!
 - But It Wasn’t!
 - This Is What The Lord’s Supper Is All About!
 - A Solemn, Yet Joyful, Remembrance & Worship Of The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - But In Any Of Our Services:
 - We Ought To Be Rendering Spiritual Service & Worship To The Lord & To Each Other!
- The Purpose Of The Church: Is Not To Sow To The Flesh! (Gal 6:8)
 - Which Is What They Were Doing!

- It Appears From This:
 - That They Came Together As A Church First To Have A Dinner Together – A “Love Feast” As It Was Often Known! As Jesus & His Disciples First Had The Passover Meal At The Last Supper, And Then He Gave Them The “Lord’s Supper” With The 3rd Cup Of The Passover! Felt They Should To The Same!
- But This “Love Feast” Got Way Out Of Hand!
 - And It Displayed Their Divisions In An Even Greater Way!
 - The Rich Would Have More & Better Food!
 - Than The Poor!
 - The Rich Would Get Their Earlier:
 - Than Those Working Long Hours, And By They Time They Got There, Hardly Any Food Was Left!
- 11:21 Tells Us What Was Going On!
 - Remember - This Was To Be A Time Of Public Fellowship & Worship As A Church! Even Taking The Lord’s Supper Together! But What Was Going On Instead?
 - “For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken!”
 - They Were Sowing To Their Flesh!
 - On Full Display: Pride / Selfishness / Greed / Excess!
 - And The One Thing They Were There For:
 - Was Missing! Worship!
 - Matthew Henry - “What was appointed to feed the soul was employed to feed their lusts and passions. What should have been a bond of mutual [fellowship] and affection was made an instrument of discord and disunion!”
- So What Does Paul Say To This Church?
 - And Any Other Church That Has Forgotten What Church Is Really For?
 - Think! Think About What You Are Doing!
 - To The Cause Of Christ!
 - To The Case Of Christians!
 - “What? Have Ye Not Houses To Eat & To Drink In?”
 - Does Not Mean That You Cannot Have A Pot-Luck Dinner After Church!
 - It Means - That You Don’t Have A Pot-Luck Dinner Instead Of Church!
 - When Your Services Are Focused:
 - On The Flesh Instead Of The Spirit!
 - You “Despise The Church Of God!”
 - You Are Bringing Reproach / Shame To The Cause Of Christ!
 - And You “Shame Them That Have Not!”
 - You Are Embarrassing & Hurting The Case Of Christians Who Might Have Needs!
- What Is To Be The Purpose For Our Church?
 - To Sow To The Spirit!
 - Through True, Spiritual Service & Worship!
 - And Not To Sow To The Flesh!
 - Our Own Wants / Desires / Lusts!
 - Our Purpose Is To Be: “For The Better & Not “For The Worse!”

Conclusion:

1. Paul Concludes These Verses In A Negative Way:
 - He Asks: “What Shall I Say To You? Shall I Praise You In This? I Praise You Not!”
 - Could He Say This To Many Churches In America Today?
 - Because They Have Forgotten:
 - God’s Plan For The Church!
 - For The Better, Not For The Worse!
 - God’s Priorities For The Church!
 - True Unity, And Not Division!
 - God’s Purpose For The Church!
 - Sowing To The Spirit, And Not To The Flesh!
 - Are These Churches Better Off For It?
 - But What About Us & Our Church?

- Could He Say This About Us?
 - Turn His Negative Into A Positive!
 - Remember What Church Is Really For!
- 2. It Is: "For The Better!"
 - And It Can Stay This Way!
 - As Long As We Remember:
 - God's Plan / God's Priorities / And God's Purpose For Our Church!

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