

## Sermon Series: Holy Communion

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 For Better or For Worse?

**The Lord's Supper was given for our blessedness, but when abused it brings judgment.**

How can we observe the Lord's Supper with great benefit, being careful not to abuse it?

### 1) Uniting or Dividing (11:18-19)

- a) "come together as a church"—a gathering of one people
- b) "there are divisions among you . . . factions"—seem to have been caused by the wealthier members ignoring those of humble means
- c) "that those who are genuine among you may be recognized"—Paul uses irony. Those who created the division have distinguished those left out as the "genuine" participants of the Lord's Supper. Those who created the division are not even observing the Lord's Supper (v. 20).
- d) **Application:**
  - i) Lord's Supper is fellowship in One Lord, thus a manifestation of a church's unity in Christ.
  - ii) Lord's Table is a place to heal divisions.
  - iii) Factionalism at the Lord's Table reveals deep-seated sin.

### 2) Communing or Carousing (11:21-22)

- a) "in eating"—meals are meant to be times of intimate friendship
- b) "One goes hungry, another gets drunk"—the disparity reveals lack of communion/fellowship; such selfish indulgence of bodily appetite banishes the blessedness of the meal and invites misery instead
- c) "Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?"—assumes that the Lord's Supper is not for filling bellies, but for fellowship with Christ and His people
- d) "Despise . . . humiliate"—revealing heart attitudes and their sad effects
- e) **Application:**
  - i) Our communion is with Christ and with all who are in Christ.
  - ii) Our attitude toward Christ's people reflects our attitude toward Christ Himself.

### 3) Receiving or Abusing (11:23)

- a) "I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you"—you are not at liberty to adjust the Sacrament to your tastes; it is ordained by Christ and to be observed accordingly
- b) Some in Corinth were seeking to please themselves by abusing the Lord's Supper to suit themselves.
- c) **Application:**
  - i) Worship is regulated by God's Word.
  - ii) Beware of the consumer mentality toward worship.

### 4) Proclaiming or Distorting (11:26)

- a) "you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes"—looking backward (the Lord's death) and forward (until He comes)
- b) Can you practice sinful self-indulgence while proclaiming the loving, sacrificial death of Jesus?
- c) **Application:**
  - i) The Sacraments are the visible Word of God.

ii) The Sacraments, like Scripture, should not be twisted to suit sinners.

**5) Discerning or Dismissing (11:29)**

- a) “For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body”—thinking through the meaning of the elements and actions of the Lord’s Table
  - i) Bread and Cup
  - ii) Breaking and Pouring
  - iii) Taking, Eating, Drinking
  - iv) Remembering
  - v) Proclaiming
  - vi) Communing
  - vii) Anticipating
- b) “without discerning”—careless approach to a sacred place, sacred time, sacred objects, sacred Person
- c) **Application:** Preparation for the Lord’s Supper

**6) Exhortation and Admonition:**

- a) Be warned (11:27, 29b)
- b) Examine yourself (11:28)
  - i) Your faith
  - ii) Your love
  - iii) Your hope
  - iv) Your sins
  - v) Your need
- c) Discern the body (11:29)
  - i) Think through the meaning of the elements and actions of the Lord’s Table.
  - ii) Prayerfully meditate on the incarnation, obedience, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming of Christ
  - iii) Pray for increase of joy in Christ and all Spiritual graces.
  - iv) Praise and thank God for giving Himself to you in Christ.
- d) Receive discipline with humility (11:32)
- e) Love one another (11:33)
- f) Remember the love of Christ (11:23-25)
  - i) “on the night when He was betrayed”
  - ii) “My body . . . for you. . . . My blood”

**Doxology:** Revelation 5:12 “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”