

INTRODUCTION

1. Please take God's Word and turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 11.
2. We completed the section regarding the subordination and equality of women in verses 2-16 and now we're looking at the next section that occurs in verses 17-34 and it has to do with "Abusing the Lord's Supper."
3. As we read this text we are going to hear about the various abuses that occurred during the Lord's Supper.
4. Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.
5. Acts 2:42 tells us that the early church not only continued in the "the apostles' doctrine, [and] fellowship," but also in "the breaking of bread and prayers."
6. In other words, the Lord's Supper was a continual practice of the early church and is so today.
7. That phrase, "the breaking of bread" is only "used by Luke" (Marvin R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies of the NT*, Vol.4, p457) and it "refers either to an ordinary meal or to the celebration of the Lord's Supper" (Fritz Rienecker, *Linguistic Key to the Greek NT*, p.267).
8. "The term deipnon (supper) was the normal word used for the evening meal. The addition of *the Lord's* gives it special and much greater significance" (John MacArthur, *The MacArthur NT Commentary*, 1 Corinthians, p.269).
9. "This was a genuine meal, where the church congregated to eat the 'love feast,' a meal followed by the Communion" (Ibid., MacArthur, p.269).

10. In 1 Corinthians 11:20-24, the apostle Paul refers to this and calls it “the Lord’s Supper.”
11. In fact in vv.17-22 he rebukes the Corinthians for their perversion of it.
12. It seems that problems have always plagued the church regarding the two ordinances she is to observe: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
13. There are those who want to say that baptism saves and those who say that the Lord’s Supper literally becomes the actual body and blood of Jesus.
14. There are 4 views concerning the Lord’s Supper:
15. The Roman Catholic view which is called Transubstantiation, meaning “a change of substance,” teaches “that a miracle takes place at the eucharist (the Mass) in which the elements of the bread and wine are actually changed into the literal body and blood of Christ...The Creed of Pope Pius IV stated: ‘I profess that in the Mass is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead;...there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is a conversion of the whole substance of the wine into the blood.’
16. As the priest consecrates the elements, their substance is changed from bread and wine to the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ. Thus in Catholic teaching, the participant actually partakes of the body of Christ. The Catholic church claims that this is the teaching of John 6:32-58.
17. There are several serious problems with this view.
18. First, It views the work of Christ as unfinished, the sacrifice continuing in the Mass. Yet Christ declared His work completed (John 19:30) as did also the writer of Hebrews (Heb.10:10-14).

19. Second, Christ's human body would have to be omnipresent if this teaching were true; however, Christ's human body is localized in heaven (Acts 7:56).
20. Third, In instituting the Supper, Christ used a common figure of speech — the metaphor ('This is my body....my blood') — in referring to the bread and cup. He was physically present yet distinct from the elements when He referred to them as His body and blood. Similarly, in the John 6 passage, Jesus used a powerful metaphor ('eat my flesh...drink my blood') to vividly picture a saving faith relationship to Himself. To insist that these expressions are literal language is to do violence to fundamental hermeneutical principles.
21. Fourth, It was forbidden for Jews to drink blood (Lev.17:10-16), yet this is what Jesus would be asking them to do if transubstantiation was what He intended. (Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, pp.360-361).
22. The Lutheran view is referred to as Consubstantiation, meaning "Jesus' body and blood are actually present in the elements but the bread and wine remain such; they do not change into literal body and blood as taught in Roman Catholic doctrine.
23. Lutherans also differ from the Roman Catholic view in rejecting the notion of the perpetual sacrifice of Christ in the eucharist (the Mass). Luther insisted, however, 'that by partaking of the sacrament one experiences a real benefit — forgiveness of sin and confirmation of faith. This benefit is due, however, not to the elements in the sacrament, but to one's reception of the Word by faith.'
24. The problem with the Lutheran view of the eucharist is the failure to recognize Jesus' statement, 'This is My body' as a figure of speech. (Ibid., Enns, p.361)
25. The Reformed view (Presbyterian, Reformed) is also called the Calvinist view because its adherents are from the Reformed churches (and others) who follow Calvin's teaching on the subject.
26. Adherents to this view reject the notion of the literal presence of Christ in any sense and in this are similar to the adherents of the memorial view. This view, however, does emphasize the 'present spiritual work of Christ.'

27. Calvin taught that Christ is ‘present and enjoyed in His entire person, both body and blood. He emphasizes the mystical communion of believers with the entire person of the Redeemer...the body and blood of Christ, though absent and locally present only in heaven, communicate a life-giving influence to the believer.’
‘Because of the mystical presence of Christ in the elements; moreover, it is a grace that is similar to that received through the Word and in fact, it adds to the effectiveness of the Word.’
28. A problem with this view is that there is no explicit statement or inference from Scriptures suggesting that grace is imparted to the participant.
29. The Memorial view (Baptists, Mennonites) is also referred to as the Zwinglian view because the Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) is considered a clear exponent of this view in contrast to the other views of his time.
30. In contrast to the Calvinist view, Zwingli taught that there was no real presence of Christ but only a spiritual fellowship with Christ by those who partake in faith.
31. Essential to the memorial view is the notion that the bread and the cup are figurative only; they are a memorial to the death of Christ.
32. While Zwingli acknowledged a spiritual presence of Christ for those who partake in faith, Anabaptists rejected the idea of Christ being present in the Lord’s Supper any more than He would be present anywhere else.
33. The memorial view emphasizes that the participants demonstrate faith in the death of Christ through this symbolic activity. (Ibid., Enns, pp.361-362)
34. I would take the memorial view because of the evidence for it in Scripture.
35. We will see that in a few moments.
36. In the mid 1500's the teaching on the Lord’s Supper being the literal body and blood of Jesus caused that period to be marked by brutality because there were people who said that the phrase “the body and blood of Jesus” is figurative.

37. John Piper makes an interesting observation about that period when he says “It would do well to admit that if their age was marked by brutality, ours is marked by superficiality. They may have weighed things differently than we would, but it may be that we have lost the capacity to feel weighty truth at all” (*Why We Eat the Lord’s Supper* Manuscript, p.3).
38. Why has the church become *superficial* concerning the Lord’s Supper?
39. An even greater question is “Why has the church become *superficial* to many things in the church?”
40. I believe there is a personal answer to that question for each of us.
41. If we are *superficial* with the Word of God then everything else will trickle downward from that point.
42. What does the Bible teach about the Lord’s Supper?
43. There are 5 references to the Lord’s Supper.
44. The first is in Matthew 26:17-30.
45. The second is in Mark 14:1-26.
46. The third is found in Luke 22:1-20.
47. The fourth is in John 13 where the terms “Lord’s Supper” is not mentioned but the account matches the other three Gospels.
48. The fifth is found in 1 Corinthians 11:23-34, which “many conservative scholars agree that 1 Corinthians was probably written before any of the Gospels. If that is true, Paul’s account here is the first biblical record of the institution of the Lord’s Supper, and includes direct quotations from Jesus. It is perfectly consistent with the

gospel accounts, but Paul's revelation most likely was received from the Lord directly, not through the other apostles (cf. Gal.1:10-12), even though the terms here speak of a chain of tradition that had come from the Lord to Paul and then to the Corinthians" (Ibid., MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, p.271).

49. All the gospel accounts tell us that this is the Passover or the Feast of Unleavened Bread."
50. Luke uses those terms interchangeably to mean the same thing (cf. Luke 22:1).
51. The Passover celebration began the day before the feast of Unleavened Bread.
52. The Mosaic law required that sacrificial lambs for Passover be selected on the tenth day of the first month and that the lamb be kept in the household until it was sacrificed on the fourteenth (Ex.12:2-6).
53. During this time over "250,000 sacrificial lambs were slain during a typical Passover in Jesus' day.
54. And because tradition required that no fewer than ten people or more than twenty were to eat of one lamb, the number of celebrants easily would have exceeded two million.
55. Because the lambs had to be slaughtered within a twenty-four hour period, an enormous amount of blood poured from the altar site in a very short period of time" (Ibid., MacArthur, Matthew, p.140).
56. Warren Wiersbe, in his Be-Series on Matthew writes, "Peter and John would have had to secure the bread and bitter herbs, as well as the wine, for the feast. They would have had to find a perfect lamb, and then have had the lamb slain in the court of the temple and the blood put on the altar. The lamb would be roasted whole, and then the feast would be ready."
57. It is also during this time that we read in Luke 22 where Jesus says, "the hand of the one betraying Me is with Me on the table" (v.21).

58. The disciples, according to verse 23 began to “discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing.”
59. Verse 24 says there was also a “dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest.”
60. “In the year Jesus was crucified (whether taken as A.D. 30 or 33), the tenth of Nisan was the Monday of Passover week. Therefore, although the incident is not mentioned in the gospels, the disciples would have selected a lamb on the day of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, perhaps keeping it at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany, where they were staying” (Ibid., MacArthur, Matthew, p.140).
61. Now when Paul writes about the Lord’s Supper to the Corinthians, first, he corrects...

LESSON

I. The Perversion of the Lord's Supper (vv.17-22)

"Instruction" (parangello) "to command," specifically "to give charge or order"

A. It was Not Praise Worthy (v.17a)

"I do not praise you"

B. It was Evil (vv.17b-22b)

"You come together not for the better but for the worse"

The term for "worse" is a comparative of *kakos*, which represents moral evil.

Instead of the celebrations being times of loving fellowship and spiritual enrichment they involved selfish indulgence, shaming the poorer brethren, mocking the Lord’s sacrificial death, and scandalizing the church before the unbelieving world around them.

(MacArthur, John F., Jr. *1 Corinthians*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

1. Divisions exist among you (v.18)

1. "Divisions" (schismata, where we get the English word schism)
2. Paul's first instructions to the Corinthians was regarding divisions (1:10)
3. Their divisions was a display of carnality (3:3)

2. Factions exist among you (v.19)

3. It's not to eat the Lord's Supper (vv.20-21)

1. Each takes his own supper before the poor (v.21a)
2. Another is drunk (v.21b)

4. You despise the church of God (v.22a)

5. You shame those who have nothing (v.22b)

II. The Purpose of the Lord's Supper (vv.23-26)

If we could back up to verses 20-22 we would see with the combination of the love feast and the Lord's Supper, one of the purposes was...

A. Fellowship (vv.20-22)

1. In Verses 20-22, the church came "together" to eat the "love-feast" (Jude 12) or Supper which consisted of the evening meal followed by the Lord's Supper or Communion.
2. The love-feast was a place of fellowship with other believers. But the Corinthians were perverting it. These abuses "eventually forced the two to be separated in order to protect the Communion. The love feast soon disappeared altogether" (Ibid., MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, p.269).

B. Historical (v.23)

"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you."

1. Paul is making a “direct claim to revelation from the Lord Jesus on the origin of the Lord’s Supper” (AT Robertson, *Robertson’s Word Pictures*).

“Received” Gr.paralambano (aor.act.ind.), means, “To take, receive, to take near, or to oneself” (Zodhiates).
2. “That the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread”

This gives “the historical setting, which many of the believers may not have known, because...probably none of gospels was yet written” (Ibid., MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, p.271).
3. “The Passover meal began with the host's pronouncing a blessing over the first cup of red wine and passing it to the others present.
4. Four cups of wine were passed around during the meal. After the first cup was drunk bitter herbs dipped in a fruit sauce were eaten and a message was given on the meaning of Passover. Then the first part of a hymn, the Hallel (which means 'praise' and is related to hallelujah, 'praise ye the Lord'), was sung. The Hallel is comprised of Psalms 113-118, and the first part sung was usually 113 or 113 and 114.
5. After the second cup was passed, the host would break and pass around the unleavened bread. Then the meal proper, which consisted of the roasted sacrificial lamb, was eaten.
6. The third cup, after prayer, was then passed and the rest of the Hallel was sung.
7. The fourth cup, which celebrated the coming kingdom, was drunk immediately before leaving.
8. It was the third cup that Jesus blessed and that became the cup of Communion.
9. 'And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood' (Luke 22:20).
10. After Jesus gave some brief words of warning, rebuke, and instruction (vv.21-38), the meal was concluded with the singing of a hymn (Matt. 26:30)” (Ibid., MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, p.271).

C. Obedience (vv.24-25) [”do this”]

1. This ordinance was instituted by Jesus

2. We are to share it together in obedience to the Lord Jesus
3. This is a “command from the lips of our Lord Himself. Sharing in the Lord’s Supper is therefore not an option for believers.
4. We must have Communion on a regular basis if we are to be faithful to the Lord who bought us through the act we are called to remember.
5. Not to partake of the Lord’s Supper is disobedience and a sin” (Ibid., MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, p.272).
6. The specifics of what Jesus did is found in vv.24-25

7. He first gave thanks

“Thanks” is a participle of eucharisteo, from which we get Eucharist, the name by which some Christians refer to the Lord’s Supper.

8. He “took bread” (v.23)...”broke it” (v.24)

1. The “bread” that had represented the Exodus now came to represent the body of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. To the Jewish mind the body represented the whole person, not just the physical body.
2. The word “broken” does not appear in the best manuscripts or in most modern translations.
3. “Though the Romans frequently broke the legs of crucified victims in order to hasten death as an act of mercy, John specifically tells us that Jesus’ legs were not broken...(John 19:33, 36)” (Ibid., MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, p.272).
4. The best reading is “This is My body, which is for you.”
5. “For you” are two of the most beautiful words in all of Scripture. Jesus gave His body, His entire incarnate life, for us who believe in Him.
6. Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

9. He “took the cup also after supper” (v.25)

The *cup* had represented the lamb’s blood smeared on the doorposts and lintels now came to represent the blood of the Lamb of God, shed for the salvation of the world.

D. Remembrance (vv.24-25)

“Do this in remembrance of Me” is mentioned 2 times.

1. “For the Hebrew to remember meant much more than simply to bring something to mind, merely to recall that it happened.
2. To truly remember is to go back in one’s mind and recapture as much of the reality and significance of an event or experience as one possibly can.
3. To remember Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross is to relive with Him His life, agony, suffering, and death as much as is humanly possible.
4. When we partake of the Lord’s Supper we do not offer a sacrifice again; we remember His once-for-all sacrifice for us and rededicate ourselves to His obedient service” (Ibid., MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, pp.272-273).

E. Proclamation (v.26)

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes."

Who are we proclaiming the Lord's death to?

1. To one another
2. To the world

III. The Preparation of the Lord’s Supper (vv.27-34)

A. Don’t Take It in An Unworthy Manner (v.27)

1. “Unworthy” Gr.anaxios, “in an improper careless manner” (Friberg Lexicon).
2. One can come to His table unworthily in many ways. It is common for people to participate in it ritualistically, without participating with their minds and hearts.
3. They can go through the motions without going through any emotions, and treat it lightly rather than seriously.

4. They can believe it imparts grace or merit, that the ceremony itself, rather than the sacrifice it represents, can save or keep one saved.
5. Many come with a spirit of bitterness or hatred toward another believer, or come with a sin of which they will not repent.
6. If a believer comes with anything less than the loftiest thoughts of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and anything less than total love for his brothers and sisters in Christ, he comes unworthily.
7. To come unworthily to the Lord's table is to become guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.
8. To trample our country's flag is not to dishonor a piece of cloth but to dishonor the country it represents.
9. To come unworthily to Communion does not simply dishonor the ceremony; it dishonors the One in whose honor it is celebrated.
10. We become guilty of dishonoring His body and blood, which represent His total gracious life and work for us, His suffering and death on our behalf.
11. We become guilty of mocking and treating with indifference the very person of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 7:52; Heb. 6:6; 10:29) [Ibid., MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, pp.273-274].

B. Examine Yourself First (vv.28-34)

“Examine” Gr.dokimazo, “to test, prove, scrutinize” (Strong).

A.T. Robertson says, “Test himself as he would a piece of metal to see if genuine. Such examination of one's motives would have made impossible the disgraceful scenes in verses 20ff” (Ibid., Robertson's Word Pictures).

1. Before we partake of the Lord's Supper we are to give ourselves a thorough self-examination, looking honestly at our hearts for anything that should not be there and sifting out all evil.
2. Our motives, our attitudes toward the Lord and His Word, toward His people, and toward the Communion service itself should all come under private scrutiny before the Lord.
3. The table thus becomes a special place for the purifying of the church.

4. The consequences of not examining yourself (vv.28-30)

1. You eat and drink “judgment” to yourself “not discerning the Lord’s body.” (See Heb.12)
2. “Judgment” Gr.krina, “chastisement” (MacArthur)
3. To avoid God’s judgment, one must properly discern and respond to the holiness of the occasion.
4. “For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep” — this is a reference to the types of chastening the Lord may use.
5. “weak and sick”

“sleep” is used here and in several places in the NT to speak metaphorically of the death of believers (cf. John 11:11; Acts 7:60)

C. The remedy for unworthiness (vv.31-34)

1. Judge yourself (vv.31-32)

This involves discerning what we are and what we ought to be. If we confess our sins, our wrong attitudes and motives, God ‘is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness’ (1 Jn.1:9).

2. Wait for one another (vv.33-34)

CONCLUSION

1. John Bunyan said, “Such as are partakers of the Lord’s Supper should inquire after participation what benefit they have received thereby.
2. There are some who, before the duty, take no pains to prepare themselves, and after the duty do not reflect how they went, nor inquire what it is that they got.
3. Reflection after the Lord’s Supper is as necessary as examination before.

4. What good have I gotten?
5. Should be a question we should put to ourselves after every duty we perform.
6. Had I any warmth of affection in it?
7. Have I any more love for God, more desires after Him, more ability to perform duty, to bear affliction, to resist temptation, to walk with God?" (A Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper, 101).
8. It is essential how you answer.
9. Are you a true follower of Jesus?
10. Have you repented and are you now living in a state of repentance?
11. How do you respond when you sin against the Lord?
12. Do you hate your sin?
13. Do you mourn over it?
14. If the answer is no, you may not be a Christian.
15. So I urge you today to examine yourselves and see if you be in the faith.
16. Prove yourselves.
17. James said it this way, "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26).
18. Let's pray.