

## 1 Corinthians 11 17-34

Good evening and thank you for joining us. Would you please turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 11? We left off last week in verse 16, so we'll pick up verse 17 and finish the chapter.

Well last week was thanksgiving, and I hope you got to spend some enjoyable time with family. But as you likely know, family get-togethers can be stressful. Ask any police officer, and they will tell you family fights become more frequent around the holidays.

It's not uncommon for disagreements to bubble up into arguments, and full-blown conflict to occur.

And sadly, this is what was occurring at the dinners hosted by the Church at Corinth! When the Corinthian Christians came together to eat and share a meal the results were ugly! Rather than a celebration - their church-wide pot lucks had become a time of tension, greed, and division. This is what Paul addresses in the second half of 1 Corinthians 11...

The title of tonight's message is The Lord's Supper

Let's pray

**17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.** Paul has been answering questions and addressing troubles in the Church at Corinth, and beginning in verse 17 here of Chapter 11 he discusses problems involving their gathering for church meals and communion. And Paul gives the diagnosis-their gatherings were doing more harm than good! They needed to get it together at their get togethers!

**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.**” Back in Chapter 1 we saw how divisions had already taken place in the

church at Corinth because certain church members had camped around their favorite teachers. Some said, “I am of Paul...” Others said, “I am of Apollos...” They had rallied around a style and an emphasis. But the divisions went even deeper than that...

**19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.** Here Paul adds an interesting note. To a degree he expected “factions.”

There would be a big difference in those who were mature Christians, whose faith was evidenced by their walk, and those who had just left the pagan, idolatrous world of Corinth. As time would go on, it would be easy to spot those who are truly disciples of Christ.

And it’s the same in our day isn’t it? There are lots of folks who proclaim to love Christ, but in time their actions reveal otherwise.

**20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper.** Because Jesus so often ate with His disciples, both before His death and after His resurrection, it made sense to the early church that eating together went together with celebrating communion, otherwise known as the Lord’s Supper. But look how verse 21 describes the Corinth pot luck!

**21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk.** This is unbelievable. If what they were doing wasn’t so diabolical, it’d be almost comical. Could you imagine next month when we have our agape feast that there suddenly becomes a mad rush, folks pushing each other, and hogging all the food?

And then when the shoving is done, the food is gone, and the folks at the back of the line don’t have any food to eat? Then imagine you look around the room to see other folks totally

sauced-drunk at the church dinner? This is what was happening at Corinth.

Now a little background would be helpful to understand why this was happening.

In the early church, believers, both rich and poor, gathered on the first day of the week for a church-wide pot-luck. Sunday was still a work-day in the pagan world, so they met in the evening after business hours. They called their feast the agape-feast or love-feast. "Agape" is the Greek word for God's love. The same love the Corinthian Christians supposedly shared with each other.

Yet, the Corinthians were guilty of sloppy agape at best. There clearly wasn't much love for one another taking place.

The agape-feast was intended to be a communal meal followed by a communion service. But the way the Corinthians behaved at their meal betrayed the idea of communion. Amongst all the greed, and selfishness, and rudeness how could they ever call it, "the Lord's Supper." If you dusted it for fingerprints, the Lord wouldn't be anywhere near it.

There was nothing loving about their feast. The feasts in the pagan temple to the gods of Bacchus or Aphrodite usually included drinking to excess and gorging oneself with food. In a sense these new Christians had simply carried over their former pagan practices into church-life.

**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.** If all they wanted to do was to hang out with friends and enjoy some barbecue, they should've stayed at home. The Christians at Corinth failed to realize the church's get-togethers were far more than just a meal!

When the church sponsored a pot-luck it was an opportunity to show not only each other, but the entire community their love and caring. These meals were to be a wonderful display to the unchurched world that a social revolution had begun in Christ.

In Christ, everyone has been elevated to the same status.

Our society divides and categorizes every person. Republican or democrat. White collar or blue collar. Rich or poor. Car person or truck fan. Ohio state or Michigan.

But as believers, everyone is to get treated with the same compassion, love, and care regardless of their social standing or economic ability.

This is a timely reminder for us for when we have our meals, that it's more than just the food. In fact when the body of Christ gets together it's never really about the food, but the fellowship. The food is an excuse to gather. We're coming to break bread together, to express our love, to enhance our unity, to be encouraged... not just to feed our face and family.

So at these wild feasts the Corinthians also partook of the Lords supper, or communion. Yet clearly their hearts weren't in the right place to do it. So Paul sets them straight on the events of that night in the upper room.

**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;** In order that we might remember Him, Jesus didn't ask for a monument to be erected or a holiday to be established. He asked that a meal be enjoyed.

And this shouldn't surprise us, for we often see Jesus eating in scriptures don't we?

Mark 2:16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, “How *is it* that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?””

To the disciples out on the Sea of Galilee, John 21:12 Jesus said to them, “Come and eat breakfast.” Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, “Who are You?”—knowing that it was the Lord.

The Lord is into eating! So it shouldn't be surprising to us that He would say, “To remember Me, break bread, drink the fruit of the vine, and share a meal together.”

At what is called the last supper, in the upper room, Jesus' heart was heavy. In mere hours, He would be bruised and beaten. The Roman executioners would pluck out His beard, and crown Him with thorns, and readied His body for a crucifixion.

Not only was Jesus faced with this daunting task of bearing the sins of the world, He went to the cross knowing even His friends would betray and forsake Him. It was a sober, somber, serious night to say the least.

Yet somehow the Corinthians managed to turn the celebration of Jesus into a gluttonous, boozy brawl.

Once a little boy took part in his first communion. As he looked at the tiny wafer and tiny cup he asked his dad to explain what it meant. Dad whispered, “Son, this was Jesus' last supper.” The little guy was puzzled. He said, “They sure didn't give Him much, did they?”

Actually, what we take as the bread and cup was a small portion of a larger feast... Jews would gather on the night of the Passover to remember their salvation from Egypt. Unleavened bread spoke of faith. Their forefathers left Egypt before the bread had time to

rise. And the cup spoke of their pardon. The blood of a sacrificed lamb was spread on the header and doorposts of every Hebrew entryway. So when the Death Angel saw blood he “passed over” the house.

Today, Jesus is our Passover. When His blood is applied to our hearts, God’s judgment passes over us.

At His Last Supper Jesus took the ancient symbols and assigned them new meaning. What for centuries had spoken of the body and blood of a sacrificed lamb, now represented His body and blood sacrificed for us!

And notice carefully what Paul recounts of that night, look at the beginning of v **24 and when He had given thanks**, Pause here.

Jesus knew what He was about to endure, when we’re told, “He took bread, and when He had given thanks...” Jesus knew the serious suffering this would cause Him, and He did what? “He gave thanks!”

Jesus was thankful for the cross; for He knew it meant our salvation. Look at **Hebrews 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

For the joy of seeing you and I forgiven, and changed, Jesus endured!

Lets read all of verse 24

**24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat;[fn] this is My body which is broken[fn] for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”** ” Imagine being there, watching the Lord’s own fingers break the bread as easily and as deliberately as the Romans would tear His flesh away from His body the next day. In

the upper room the bread was passed from person to person, each disciple tearing off a piece.

It all spoke of their collaboration in the crime. Truth is, we're all guilty of breaking His body. He died for each of us. Even as we hold the torn bread today, it's proof that none of us are innocent!

Over the years, the Roman Catholic Church has manufactured a heresy known as transubstantiation - that the bread instantly, and magically changes into the literal flesh of our Lord.

If this were true, it would mean Jesus is crucified every time communion is observed. That somehow He's sacrificed again and again. And if the sacrifice is repeated over and over, it means that Jesus' death on the cross was insufficient for forgiveness of sin!

But the bible says Jesus' died once for all!

**Romans 6:10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.**

and

**Hebrews 7:27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.**

and

**Hebrews 10:10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

According to Catholic dogma when the priest repeats the words of Jesus "This is my body- in Latin it's "hoc est corpus meum" - at that moment the magic occurs.

But that's obviously not what Jesus meant. How could it be? The bread couldn't be Jesus' body, if His body was standing there holding the bread in its hands.

Over the years, the detractors of transubstantiation took the priest's incantation "hoc est corpus" and contracted it and turned it into a derogatory phrase, "hocus pocus" - a magical formula. Anything fanciful or not grounded in reality, is just a lot of hocus pocus.

It's clear what Jesus meant when He said, "This is My body." Look at what he says- "do this in remembrance of Me." The composition of the bread doesn't get altered either actually or spiritually.

We eat the bread "in remembrance..."

Remember Paul's point and context of these verses. If the Corinthians had only wanted to eat bread and drink wine they could've done it at home. But in coming to the Lord's Table the bread and the cup take on a different meaning. It brings to remembrance what Jesus has done!

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." Notice, it's the bread and cup, not bread and wine. Even though I am sure Jesus and His disciples drank wine the night of the Passover...

Traditionally, the Passover Seder involved wine. But in the Gospels, and here, it says "cup" not "wine." It's as if God knew there would be occasions when it was best to drink juice not wine - or there would be believers who couldn't afford wine, only juice.

In specifying "cup" over "wine," Jesus gave His followers some useful latitude. The Lord's Supper is to unify us, not further divide us over non essential issues.



When it comes to communion whether it's wine, or it's juice, or it's kool-aid for that matter what's important is the focus-that Jesus shed His blood for us.

And notice in v 25 Jesus was careful to describe the blood He shed as a "new covenant."

A covenant is an agreement. It's the terms of a relationship. This is what Jesus' blood bought - a new relationship between you and God. See our relationship with God is no longer based on our performance, how we fair in regards to the OT commands, no our relationship is built solely upon His work on the cross, and our faith in its sufficiency.

**26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.** Notice, Jesus doesn't tell us "how often," just "as often." He leaves it up to each person, each group, and His Spirit to determine its frequency.

I like an old quote I once heard, "The world drinks to forget, but the Christian drinks to remember." Communion is to be a perpetual remembrance. Until the trumpet sounds we should remember and proclaim to the world the liberating truth of the cross.

Now in verse 27 Paul issues a stern warning...

**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[fn] of the Lord.** Paul warns the Corinthian Christians to treat the Lord's Supper with reverence, and to celebrate communion in a spirit of self-examination. We're to be prepared for communion with a reflective heart.

Being guilty of Christ's body and blood means being guilty of treating them in an unworthy manner, guilty of profaning them. It

does not mean that a person is in some special sense is solely responsible for the death of Christ.

See we don't take communion like we take a BicMac-grab it unwrap it and wolf it down. Partaking of the Lord's supper is serious business.

**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<sup>[fn]</sup> eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's<sup>[fn]</sup> body.** Eating and drinking in an unworthy manner results in divine judgment.

See judgment is inevitable at the Lord's Table. We must judge ourselves before we partake, and then participate in a worthy manner, or else God will judge us.

**30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.** It's not that we need to be worthy to take communion, we just need to take it in a worthy manner.

If I'd just beat out a brother for the last sandwich, or cut to the head of the dessert line, or gorged myself on barbecue, or even sipped chardonnay until I was a little tipsy... If that's how I behaved at the communal meal; then I had no business at the communion table.

Remember on our best day, no one is worthy of the body and blood of Jesus, but we can come humbly and grateful, joyful and expectant. Let's come in a worthy manner.

Evidently in Corinth, God was judging some of the Christians with sickness and death due to their thoughtless participation in the communion service.

**31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.** Alan Redpath, the well-known British evangelist and pastor told the

story of two boys who were left at home while their parents went with him to a special meeting at their church. When Redpath and his hosts returned home, they found a note from the boys, “Dear Mom and Dad, we broke your vase. We are very sorry. We have put ourselves to bed without any supper. Signed Jimmy and Johnny.” Redpath asked the question, “What did this Dad do? Drag the kids out of bed and give them a spanking? No!” In light of this verse, Redpath concluded, “They had judged themselves and judgment was disarmed.”

And this is what happens if we repent of our bad attitudes and misbehavior.

**32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.** This makes it clear it’s not referring to anyone who “lost their salvation.” They were chastened so that they would not be condemned with the world.

**33 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.** It isn’t just good manners, it shows love towards others. If you wait for one another, then everyone gets enough to eat, instead of some being gorged and others going home hungry.

**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.** Put the other guy first, even if it means you have to wait in line. And if you’re so famished that you have to eat right now, he tells them go eat at home!

There were other issues to be addressed, but Paul had dealt with the most pressing... The need to love each other and treat the Lord’s Supper with respect.

Recently, I ran across a list of the World’s Most Expensive Foods...

**SHOW PIC** Densuke Black watermelon in the island of Hokkaido in Japan. A harvest will typically yield only a few dozen fruits. What makes it special, aside from its rarity? Its hardness and crispness are just perfect, plus, the level of sweetness is just incomparable. A fruit that weighed 17 pounds once went for \$6,100.

**SHOW PIC** Almas Caviaris is now running \$34,500 per kilogram

**SHOW PIC** And of course, the Italian White Alba Truffle. These items have become difficult to cultivate, thus explaining the exorbitant price. A huge white alba truffle that came in at around 1.51 kilograms was once sold for over \$160,000. A retail investor from Hong Kong and his wife brought home the truffle.

But there isn't a dish more valuable, or more costly, than what's being served today at the Lord's Table... The body of Jesus was broken. His blood was spilled. And amazingly, He was thankful for both! Then He ordered us to remember - really remember. Today, He's no longer on the cross. He's on the throne... and He's coming back. In the meantime, we're to remember why we love Him... why we follow Him... and why we're committed to doing it together

## DISCUSS COMMUNION SETUP

After His illegal arrest, Jesus was beaten mercilessly. The book of Isaiah tells us His beard was ripped away. His face was swollen and disfigured so you couldn't even recognize Him as a man.

His back was torn to shreds from the scourging!

isa 53:5-6 He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities....6 and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

The punishment that we deserve for our sins was being put upon the innocent Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world.

After they beat Jesus they next took a crown of thorns-these thorns would be about an inch long. And thrust it into His scalp. Can you imagine the blood flowing into His Eyes?

I was thinking about the thorns. (spiny, prickly, sharp, stinging)

Reminds me of the consequence of sin!

The consequence of sin is also thorny and painful! Each of us here can declare the consequence of sin is painful too can't we?

Yet, Jesus had never been cut by the thorn of sin..  
Jesus never felt the pain of sin ...(until that day)

(later on the cross He would cry out)

"my God, my God, why have You forsaken me?"

That day... my sins (yours too) were placed upon Him

That's what makes Jesus so amazing & wonderful!

By now a whole garrison of Roman troops had gathered around Jesus.

Taunting and mocking him! (hail king of the jews)

Slapping Him, pushing Him, beating Him!

Surrounded by all those soldiers Jesus may have looked like a helpless victim...

Yet in reality.... He wasn't was He?

HE WAS A DETERMINED SAVIOR!

In the garden of Gethsemane He had prayed.

“Father if it be possible let this cup pass from me,  
Nevertheless not my will be done.... But yours”

And without a struggle Jesus was led away!

Beaten, bleeding, carrying a cross!

Arriving at Golgotha-the place of the skull Jesus was shoved to the ground!

His feet pressed together, And a spike was driven through them both.

Then the soldiers stretched out his arms against the cross beams.  
And with spike in hand the soldier was ready!

I wonder, did Jesus turn his face toward the nail just as the soldier lifts the mallet ready to strike?

The mallet slams down!

The sound rings out through the silenced crowd

His flesh rips, the blood begins to gush.

His hands viciously pierced!

And these.... No ordinary hands!

These were the hands of God!

All through the Bible we see that the hand of God is a mighty hand!

But why didn't He resist? Because He loves us!

The force behind the mallet was not  
That of a vicious soldier!

The spike that was held in place....  
was not secured by the wood of the cross!

The death sentence was not decided  
By a petty group of jealous Jews or even a corrupt governor.

Jesus himself chose the cross and the nails!

**Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

Had the soldier hesitated to swing the mallet...I think Jesus  
Himself would have shouted the command to drive the nail into  
his flesh!

**(that's why we worship Him)**

As John the Baptist said "Behold the Lamb of God that takes  
away the sins of the world!"

The same hands that CALMED the seas....  
can CALM your heart!

The same hands that CLEANSED the temple...  
Can CLEANSE your heart!

The hands that HEALED the sick can now  
Make WHOLE!

The hands pierced and bleeding are the hands that welcome you  
into the family of God!

**...by his stripes we have been healed.**

As the hands of Jesus opened to receive the nails  
The doors of heaven opened to receive you and me and  
countless millions of people. This is..... The salvation of the Lord!

And this... is what we Christians remember with communion!

**John 3:16 God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten  
son that whosoever believes in Him will never perish  
But inherit eternal life!**

From the whipping post to the cross.  
Even to the spear in his side!

It was all done for you!  
His blood was shed for the forgiveness of all of your sins.

Don't ever listen to the devil who will try and convince you that  
you're all alone, that you aren't loved, that you're of no value.  
That is a lie straight from the pit of hell in the name of Jesus  
Christ you must rebuke the devil and say Get Behind me Satan!  
It cost God EVERYTHING to send His son to die for you.

This evening, as we take communion

We remember that day! We remember Jesus!

We remember his death, the cross and the blood.