

**TITLE: WHEN TAKING THE LORD'S SUPPER...**

**TEXT: 1 COR 11:17-34**

**INTRO:** In Exodus 12, God instituted the Passover meal by sparing the firstborn of all the obedient Israelites. This salvation required the killing of one lamb per household, & its blood to be put on the doorposts. Subsequently, on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of each 1<sup>st</sup> month of the year, the Israelites were to remember this by eating the Passover meal. It is this meal that Jesus & his apostles were eating when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, preparing to become the *one* lamb for the whole world. The Lord's Supper then is extremely important, and not to be done carelessly and selfishly, as the Corinthian brethren were doing.

## **I. PROBLEMS WHEN TAKING THE LORD'S SUPPER (v. 17-22):**

- A. (v. 17-19) FIRST problem – Divisions!
- (v. 17) “But in declaring this, I do not praise!” Compare v. 2, “I praise you.” So there’s a subject change here in v. 17. General statement – you come together not for the better, but for the worse.
  - (v. 18) 1<sup>st</sup> of all, there are divisions “when you come together in the church” – this is their assembly, not just the LS. He has already addressed division (clearly forbidden in **1:10-13; 3:3f**). There is **nothing** positive in divisions! When worshipping God, we should be one...in fellowship...in harmony! How can we eat the LS & be at odds with one another? Would Christ approve? **Mt 5:23-24** – “*if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*”
  - (v. 19) “For heresies (division, sect) in you must be, in order that the tried/approved might be made manifest (apparent, public).” The understanding here is that error exists. The existence of division proves it! Where truth and error exist in the same congregation, there must be division! Otherwise, those who hold to the truth are allowing the error to continue and spread, and those who are uncertain but searching have nowhere to turn (they assume that the error must be truth).
- B. (v. 20-22) SECOND problems (possibly results of the 1<sup>st</sup>) – Not waiting; excessiveness; making the LS a common meal.
- (v. 20) “it (your coming together) is not to eat the Lord’s Supper! You may *claim* that it is, but it is not! This is about purpose – your purpose for coming together is not correct.
  - (v. 21) You’re taking your own supper before, instead of eating together. Christ & the apostles partook together! One is hungry & another is drunken (filled excessively) – neither of these extremes is appropriate for the Lord’s Supper!
  - (v. 22) Paul’s rebuke
    - Don’t you have houses to eat & drink in? The Lord’s Supper is not a common meal! Save those for home!
    - Do you despise (think against, disdain) the church of God? The church is to be united. You are encouraging division.
    - Do you shame (dishonor, disgrace) them that have not? Apparently everyone brought their own food. Not only were the poor unable to afford anything, they were singled out and disgraced as being poor!
    - What should I say to you? Should I praise you? Absolutely not! Your actions are against God and His church!

## **II. PURPOSE WHEN TAKING THE LORD'S SUPPER (v. 23-26):**

- A. (v. 23-25) Institution of the Lord's Supper
- (v. 23) Statement of how God’s authoritative message & instructions are passed down to us (“*For I received of the Lord...*”)
  - (v. 24) Body/Bread– **1**) He gave thanks; **2**) He ate it. “*This is my body which is broken (given- Lk 22:19) for you.*”
    - Is this his *literal* body (Catholicism)? Is Jesus a literal door or shepherd (**Jn 10**), or the bread of life (**Jn 6**)? How could Jesus give them bread and say, “this is my *literal* body?” This teaching is foolishness! The bread *represents* his body.
    - Christ’s body wasn’t literally *broken*, but the idea is that, as we *break* the bread, we remember how Christ’s body was given/’broken’ **for us**. It was done “for many for the remission of sins” (**Mt 26:28**).
    - Do this in remembrance. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> imperative (take, eat). Remember me! Specifically, his death (v. 26).
  - (v. 25) Blood/Fruit of the vine– “In the same way” (i.e., giving thanks first -Mt 26:27; Mk 14:23; Lk 22:17), he took the cup:
    - This cup– “contents” (Strong’s) – you drink contents, not cup. “One-cuppers” miss this (cf. **Lk 22:17**-cup was divided)!
    - The content is “fruit of the vine” (**Mt 26:29; Mk 14:25; Lk 22:18**). “Wine”(oinos) is *never* used in reference to the LS.
    - The new testament (will, contract) in my blood. The old covenant (law) required the blood of animals (new = Christ’s).
    - Do this in remembrance – same as with the body (v. 24).
    - “As oft as ye drink it” - this isn’t in the gospel accounts, but we know He said it. Some claim this authorizes taking the LS anytime we want. This verse says nothing about frequency, & would indeed leave it to each congregation’s judgment. However, the apostles were guided into all truth, and their example (Acts 20:7) is our guide.  
\*The point Jesus is making is that, **every time you partake**, it should be done in remembrance of Him!
- B. (v. 26) Purpose of the Lord’s Supper  
Every time we partake of the LS, we not only *remember* Christ’s death, we *proclaim* it! Til he come (LS is not to be forsaken).

### III. PUNISHMENT WHEN TAKING THE LORD'S SUPPER (v. 27-34):

- A. (v. 27-30) The real problem behind their improper attitude about and treatment of the Lord's Supper:
1. (v. 27) Whoever (no exceptions) shall eat/drink unworthily (irreverently) shall be guilty...  
Unworthy/Irreverent: Defined by context (i.e., what the Corinthians were doing – as he is about to explain)
  2. (v. 28) Examine (test, prove – as in **1 Thess 5:21**) yourself, then eat & drink (i.e., take the Lord's Supper)
  3. (v. 29) His actions will bring judgment/condemnation on himself – *because he doesn't discern* (judge/scrutinize)...
    - a. This is the problem - taking the LS in an irreverent way, with no intention of remembering Christ's sacrifice.
    - b. "Unworthy" doesn't mean that we can't take the LS if we've sinned once during the week! Repentance is part of "examining yourself." We get right what we've found wrong (repent), then we can remember Christ's death, that it is the reason we have the forgiveness of those sins! To treat Christ's sacrifice flippantly, is to reject forgiveness of sins!
    - c. *This repentance should be part of our preparation to worship*, not attempted *while* taking the LS. You should be in the right frame of mind before *all* acts of worship. Which brings us to the next point.
    - d. The LS, as important as it is, is *not* more important than the other acts of worship (as I've heard so many say). **Ac 20:7** does say that they came together to break bread, but not *only* to break bread. This particular act of worship is done *only* on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week, whereas other acts (singing, etc.) were (and are) done any day (cf. **Ac 16:25**). But this in no way diminishes their significance. **\*Those who show up only to take of the LS ought not show up at all!** This person has not examined himself, gotten his priorities right, and is not prepared to worship! (This also goes for those who willfully miss Sunday morning worship, thinking they can take the LS Sunday night!)
  4. (v. 30) Weak & sick (synonyms)...sleep (dead). Physical punishment from God (done then, but not now), or spiritual weakness & death (like these Corinthians). Either way, the final punishment is Hell if they do not repent.
- B. (v. 31-34) The solution to the problem
1. (v. 31) **Reproof** - If we judge (same as "discern" in v. 29) ourselves, we won't be judged. The idea includes *correction*. **2 Cor 13:5** – "*examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.*" If you don't, in the end God will!
  2. (v. 32) **Correction** – when we judge (discern, scrutinize) ourselves (by God's Word), we are chastened (disciplined, taught, corrected) by the Lord. This is good because then we won't be condemned with the world.
  3. (v. 33-34) **Application** – When you eat the LS, wait for each other. And don't eat for gluttony or even sustenance!

**CONCLUSION:** In making application, I've never seen any congregation do what the Corinthians were doing (treating the LS as a common meal). But the problem Paul described with this (i.e., not examining oneself and discerning the body) *is* just as big a problem today. If you show up solely for the LS and disregard the rest of worship, or if you are just thinking about other things during the LS, Paul is speaking to you in these verses. Prepare yourself in advance. Examine yourself, discern if you are worthy, repent of any sins, and then come to worship, ready to remember Christ's death for you.