

The Lord's Supper

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Text: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Introduction:

- I. The Lord's Supper was instituted as a **memorial** to the body and blood of Jesus given as a sacrifice on our behalf. As we eat the bread and drink the cup we are brought closer to the Lord through the memory of His love and grace toward us. But in addition, as we break bread together, we are likewise reminded of **our oneness** in Christ through our sharing in the body and blood of the Lord.
- II. The Corinthians by failing to properly remember the Lord's sacrifice also failed to grasp the consequent unity of the Lord's people implied in the supper. Ironically an activity that was intended to **declare the unity and mutual love** of believers for one another became the occasion for **the manifestation of divisive and unloving attitudes**.
- III. In this lecture we will explore Paul's remarks to the Corinthians concerning this problem and the implications for believers today in the face of numerous divisive issues connected with the Lord's Supper.

Body:

I. Background to the Exegesis

A. Historical context (Theissen)

1. Paul established the church at Corinth on the **second preaching journey** when he came into Achaia (Ac. 18).
 - a. Luke reports that through Paul's preaching "*many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized*" (Ac. 18:8).
 - b. Paul continued working with these new disciples for "*a year and six months*" during which time he "*taught the word of God among them*" (Ac. 18:11).
 - c. Later **Apollos**, having been brought to a full knowledge of the details about Jesus, was sent by the church at Ephesus to Achaia to teach and work among the people there. Luke reports that "*he helped greatly those who had believed through grace...*" (Ac.18:27).
2. In the meantime Paul, having begun his **third preaching trip** had come to **Ephesus** to follow up on his previous brief visit there.
 - a. He was to work with the church there for two to three years spreading the word throughout Asia (Ac. 19:8,22; 20:31).
 - b. During this period **Apollos** had worked among the Corinthians for a while and had subsequently returned to Corinth (1 Cor. 16:12). He may have passed along to Paul the evidence of changing attitudes in Corinth (1 Cor. 4:18).
 - c. Paul appears to have written an epistle to warn the Corinthians concerning association with the immoral (1 Cor 5:9ff).
 - d. In addition, Paul had sent **Timothy** to the Corinthians to "*remind them*" of his ways (1 Cor. 4:17); however, it does not appear that Timothy had arrived before the writing of 1 Corinthians (Cf. Ac. 19:22; 1 Cor. 16:10).

- e. During this period, reports came to Paul that there were **problems in Corinth** (1 Cor. 1:11ff; 5:1; 11:18). In addition, **a number of issues** had been raised among the brethren that needed clarification or answers from Paul (1 Cor. 7:1). These may have been delivered to Paul by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Cor. 16:17).
3. Motivated by these factors Paul wrote this epistle to **respond to the reports** of the Corinthian's conduct as well as **answer the questions** they had posed.

B. Cultural Context

1. Other lectures may point out features of the cultural landscape relevant to the topics under consideration; but for our purposes it might be helpful to know a little about **feasts** in the Greco-Roman world.
 - a. In the Corinthian society **communal dinners** with religious overtones were common.
 - 1) **Idolaters** often ate meals together in the temples in honor of the gods (1 Cor. 10:19-22).
 - 2) Likewise **trade guilds** meeting in honor of their patron gods also had dinner meetings.
 - 3) The **imperial cult** appears to have been established in Achaia with special feasts and sacrifices to the emperor and his family.
 - 4) The **Isthmian games** were conducted with festivals under the aegis of the patron gods of the games.
 - 5) The **Jews** had benevolent meals as well.
2. In the larger Greco-Roman culture there were **social dinners** of various kinds.
 - a. Some dinners were **provided by a host** who might either apportion an equal part to all or in other cases allow the food to be distributed on a first come, first served basis.
 - b. Some dinners were financed by a **combined payment** by each of the guests.
 - c. Others were "**private dinners**" where each attendant brought his own food and ate it (Winter, p. 154-158).
3. As in every age God's people must resist the tendency to **adapt spiritual practices to the culture**.
 - a. It is possible that the Corinthians' conduct may have been influenced to some degree by these cultural practices.
 - b. Winter suggests the possibility that the Lord's Supper in Corinth might have been influenced by the customary "**private dinner**" where a person brought his own portion and consumed it all. In some settings such behavior was socially acceptable.

C. Literary Context

1. There are clearly **structural markers** in Paul's "**now concerning**" statements at 7:1, 8:1, 12:1, and 16:1. Consequently some writers have suggested that this section fits within the larger theme of the proper use of Christian liberty (8:1). However Paul does introduce two other sections with a briefer "now" introduction (11:2; 15:1).

2. It seems more likely that this chapter is a **new section** in which Paul discusses how the Corinthians have responded to **the "traditions"** that he handed down to them.
 - a. In general he can "*praise*" them for their compliance (11:2). However there are two areas that need additional instruction, both introduced by the contrasting word "*but*" (11:3, 17).
 - b. This section then might be seen then as the second part of a discussion of Corinthian behavior related to the traditions handed to them.

II. Exegesis of the Text

A. *But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse. (1 Corinthians 11:17)*

1. The first phrase "*in giving this instruction*" translates παραγγελλω
 - a. (Note: I will try each time to give the lexical form and not the actual word as it appears in the Greek text).
 - b. It is used at least 30 times in the NT and conveys the idea of an authoritative instruction.
 - c. The KJV translates it most commonly by the words "**command**" or "**charge.**"
 - d. In this text Bauer suggests the meaning "give orders, command, instruct, direct, of all kinds of persons in authority, worldly rulers, Jesus, the apostles" (BAGD).
2. The expression "***I do not praise you***" provides the contrasting rhetorical link to Paul's earlier words of praise in v. 2; but here he must make exception to the general statement made previously, viz. "*you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions as I delivered them to you.*"
 - a. Lenski affirms that "*I do not praise you*" is a **litotes**, and is perhaps more diplomatic than "I am blaming or rebuking you."
 - b. However, Bullinger calls it a **tapeinosis**, the lessening of a thing in order to increase it.
3. The reason for not praising them is clearly stated: "***you come together not for the better but for the worse.***"
 - a. People can "*come together*" for various purposes; but this coming together was ostensibly for spiritual purposes.
 - b. Farner notes, "The verb συνέρχομαι occurs five times in 11:17-34 (v.17, 18, 20, 33, 34) and again in 14:23, 26. This verb refers here to the gathering of the church to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Collating the occurrences of the term with its modifiers results in the composite phrase 'as you are coming together as a church at the same place to eat the Lord's Supper.' Thus, the supper itself is a formal gathering for worship with a special significance beyond mere eating and drinking." (391)
4. The worship assembly is intended for the **spiritual betterment** of those assembling; but improper worship will have the opposite effect (cf. 11:30).
5. Again Paul's mode of expression amplifies the seriousness of the charge -- "*not for the better, but for the worse.*"

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- a. Disciples everywhere need to reflect on whether their worship results in **“edification”** (cf. 1 Cor. 14:26).
 - b. By edification we do not mean a superficial spiritual high, but an **increased appreciation** of God's character, a **clearer understanding** of His will, and a **greater motivation** to do His will.
 - c. Paul explains what he means by his statement *“for the worse”* in the following verse.
- B. ***For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part, I believe it. (1 Corinthians 11:18)***
1. ***“First of all”*** translates *prw`ton me;n*.
 - a. BAGD comments, “We notice anacoluthon in enumerations, either if they are broken off or if they are continued in some manner that is irregular in form: in the first place Ro 1:8; 3:2; 1 Cor 11:18.”
 - b. Perhaps Paul is thinking of several reasons why their assemblies could be said to be *“for the worse”* including reasons he will expound in the discussion of spiritual gifts or that are a part of the *“remaining matters”* that he would later arrange (cf. 11:34).
 2. ***“As a church”*** (NASV) translates *ejn ejkklhsiva/* (in assembly).
 3. The word ***“divisions”*** translates *scivsmata* (cf. Jn. 7:43), a word derived from the idea of a something rent or torn.
 - a. Were these divisions shaped by those mentioned earlier in the book based on teachers (cf. 1:12) or upon sociological differences, the “haves” vs. the “have nots” (cf. 11:22), or both? It would not be the last time that sociological considerations caused a church to polarize into cliques.
 4. Paul's modifies what he “hears” by the phrase ***“in part I believe it.”***
 - a. The expression ***“in part”*** translates *mevro" ti* which has been variously interpreted.
 - 1) It may convey the idea of a part of a greater whole. The expression is also found in Ac. 5:2 (bring *“a portion of it”*) and Lk. 11:36 (with no dark *“part in it”*), and in both texts refers to a portion or part of something *“brought”* or *“had.”*
 - 2) Lenski suggests Paul's reluctance to believe the worst even when the source of a report is credible. Or, does Paul mean to say that the scope of the divisions are far beyond what he could reasonably believe to exist in Corinth?
 - 3) Bruce Winter translates “I believe a certain report” (perhaps distinguishing it from various things Paul was hearing).
 - 4) Another approach would be to affirm that Paul gives partial credence to the reports given him based on a spiritual principle of the gospel. Some divisions are the inevitable result of improper attitudes toward God and others (Mt. 10:34ff).
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C. *For there must also be factions among you, in order that those who are approved may have become evident among you. (1 Corinthians 11:19)*

1. The use of *dei* suggests that it is a **moral necessity** (Expositors).
2. Interestingly Paul changes words from *scivsmata* to *aiJrevsei*", a word meaning "dissensions."
 - a. It is listed in Gal. 5:20 as a work of the flesh. Of course, we have our word "heresy" derived from it; but the idea would be a division that grows out of an opinion.
 - b. Trench quotes Nevin: "Heresy and schism are not indeed the same, but yet they constitute merely the different manifestations of one and the same disease. Heresy is theoretic schism; schism is practical heresy. They continually run into one another, and mutually complete each other. Every heresy is in principle schismatic; every schism is in its innermost constitution heretical." (*Synonyms of the NT*, p. 391)
3. The word "**approved**" translates *dovkimo*i a word conveying what has been tested and found to be genuine.
 - a. BAGD documents applications to men and money. The Septuagint uses it of coins and metals (Vines).
4. "F. B. Hole writes: Paul was prepared to give at least partial credence to the reports of the divisions at Corinth, since he knew that, owing to their carnal state, there were bound to be these opinionated factions in their midst. Here Paul reasons forward from their state to their actions. Knowing them to be carnal and walking as men, he knew that they would certainly fall victims to the inveterate tendency of the human mind to form its strong opinions, and the factions founded in those opinions, ending in the schisms and divisions. He knew, too, that God could overrule their folly and take occasion to make manifest those that were approved of Him, walking according to the Spirit and not as man; and consequently eschewing the whole of this divisive business (*Believer's Bible Commentary*).
5. Paul's statement contains an important idea. God's revelation is designed to bring unity of thinking; but when and where fleshly attitudes exist, they are revealed in diverse opinions or factions.
 - a. The "**approved**" are made manifest or evident through their loyalty to truth in times where divisions manifest alternative thinking to the gospel's teaching.
 - b. Thus, Paul regarded it inevitable that churches experience divisions that grow out of fleshly attitudes toward God and one another. Those divisions serve as an indicator of those who are approved, separating out the spiritual from the carnal.
 - c. For this reason Paul could believe "*in part*" the report given him about the Corinthians.

D. *Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. (1 Corinthians 11:20-21)*

1. Clearly the original purpose of the meeting of the Corinthians in obedience to the teaching Paul had handed down to them should have been "*to eat the Lord's Supper.*"

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2. However, now the Corinthians could no longer be said to gather “*to eat the Lord's Supper.*” Each was taking “*his own supper*” rather than “*the Lord's Supper.*”
 - a. Instead of, as in our assemblies, the supply for the Lord's Supper being provided by the church as a whole through a common collection to purchase the elements, it appears that, in the Corinthian assembly, each person brought with them bread and fruit of the vine for the Lord's Supper.
 - b. It would be reasonable to expect that those who were more well-to-do might supply out of their abundance for those who were poor.
 3. *Expositor's* comments, “Instead of waiting for one another, the Corinthians as they entered the assembly room bringing their provisions, sat down at once to consume each his own supply like private diners at a restaurant.”
 - a. Thus, there is a clear contrast between “**own**” and “**Lord's.**” If the Corinthians might be said to intend to eat the Lord's Supper, what they were really doing could no longer be called such.
 4. The verb Paul uses is *prolambavnei* and its meaning is critical here (cf. Mk. 14:8; Gal. 6:1 for other NT uses).
 - a. The NASV translates “*takes...first*” to convey the temporal sense that some Corinthians were eating before others arrived.
 - b. However, BADG suggests that in this text the temporal sense is felt very little, if at all and cites contemporary uses where the temporal force has vanished.
 - c. Likewise, Winter after a lengthy discussion of possibilities affirms that “the pejorative sense of ‘devours’ best fits the context” (Winter, p. 148).
 - d. Of course, one's decision on the meaning here may depend also on the meaning of the command to “**wait**” in v. 33. On the whole, I believe the translation “takes first” is defensible and that the temporal element is significant here.
 5. This individualized approach manifested **the need of some** (i.e. they were hungry because they did not have wherewithal to bring) and **the excess of others** (i.e. they drank even to the point of drunkenness).
 - a. Does the word “**drunk**” here convey **intoxication**?
 - 1) There are fifteen usages of the “*methuo*” word group in the NT (Mt. 24:49; Lk. 12:45, 21:34; Jn. 2:10; Ac. 2:15; Rom. 13:13, 1 Cor. 5:11, 6:10; 11:21; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:18; 1 Thes. 5:7 (twice); Rev. 17:2, 6).
 - 2) Ordinarily the word means “**drunk**” and here it appears to show the extreme contrast between the haves and the have nots.
 - 3) I had resisted the idea that disciples would allow themselves to become inebriated in a church service; but it appears that this is what was happening in Corinth.
 - 4) Drunkenness at dinners was common in the Greco-Roman world among the unbelieving; and it is not unreasonable to believe that some of the carnal among the disciples had resorted to such behavior.
- E. *What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? 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 will not praise you. (1 Corinthians 11:22)*
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1. **“What”** translates the Greek word *gar* which may have various meanings [“often in questions, where the English idiom leaves the word untranslated, adds then, pray, or prefixes what! or why! to the question”, (BAGD)]. Paul’s answer to those who cannot wait for the others is two indicting questions.
 2. ***Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink?*** This question clearly shows that Paul had not expected the church to eat a common meal together for the satisfaction of hunger and to observe the Lord’s Supper in that context.
 - a. However, many sources offer the suggestion that, in the early church, the Lord’s Supper was a part of a communal meal called **“the agape.”**
 - 1) It is suggested that historical evidence points to the practice of the church gathering for a dinner and then at the conclusion of the dinner having the “eucharist.”
 - 2) Here is a typical presentation of the idea: “By the time Paul wrote, the Lord’s Supper was celebrated in two stages, which consolidated the partaking of the bread and cup at the end of a communal meal. The worship with the bread and cup came to be called the “Eucharist,” from the Greek word *eucaristew*, ‘to give thanks.’ The communal meal was called the *agaph* (cf. Jude 12), a Greek word for “love.” (Lowery)
 - b. However, church historian Everett Ferguson conveys some of the difficulty in determining the exact relationship of Christian benevolent meals to the Lord’s Supper saying that “it is dependent upon the discovery of new sources.” (*Early Christians Speak*, p. 135).
 - c. As for myself, having read the various quotes in the church fathers I have serious doubts about this commonly asserted construction.
 - 1) Clearly early Christians met for **social meals** and at times with a **benevolent purpose** in mind. The early church fathers spoke about these meals urging that they be conducted appropriately, with pure conversation and modest consumption of food and not as the drunken social meals among the Gentiles.
 - 2) Even these gatherings had an appropriate **spiritual tone** created by the giving of thanks (which also could be called a “eucharist”) and **spiritual songs**. In this sense, they may have well been like similar get-togethers among Christians today.
 - 3) However, it seems doubtful to me that these gatherings were the occasion of the Lord’s Supper; and the contextual evidence of 1 Corinthians 11 seems to argue against such a construction rather than for it.
 3. Paul’s second indicting question: ***Do you despise the church of God, and shame those who have nothing?***
 - a. **“Despise”** translates *katafonew* meaning “to look down on, despise, scorn, treat with contempt” (BAGD).
 - b. What is the object of the despise? **“The church”** could here be the assembly itself or the people who make up the congregation. The second phrase adds the effect on the poor.
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- 1) Eating in excess while others remained without bread or fruit of the vine would “*shame*” (kataiscuvnw), or humiliate the poor among them.
 4. Because this kind of eating is not what Paul had charged them to do, it could not really be said that they were coming together to eat “*the Lord's Supper*.”
 - a. The “*Lord's Supper*” was in fact something quite different. Consequently it is necessary that Paul restate the tradition that he had passed down (cf. v. 2) and which they had not kept and for which he could give them no praise.
- F. ***For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”*** (1 Corinthians 11:23-24)
1. “***For I received from the Lord***” indicates that what he had imparted came from the Lord Himself, probably by direct revelation (cf. Gal. 1:12; 1 Cor. 15:3). This account he had “***delivered***” to them (cf. 11:2).
 2. The phrase “***in the night in which he was betrayed***” not only identifies the time of the institution of the Lord's Supper, but also poignantly conveys the sharp juxtaposition of the **Lord's love** in giving his disciples this feast and the **callous disregard of Judas** toward the Lord in giving him over to the authorities.
 - a. The Corinthians needed to reflect upon that contrast between the loving and unifying attitude of the Lord toward the disciples and the divisive and selfish ends of Judas Iscariot. In one sense, the same attitudes were being demonstrated at Corinth and may continue today.
 3. The expression “***when he had given thanks***” remind us of the Lord's custom before eating (cf. Jn. 6:11; Lk. 24:30 and the accounts of the Lord's Supper in Mt. 26, Mk. 14, and Lk. 22). It is from this verb for giving thanks that the term “**Eucharist**” is derived.
 4. “***...He broke it.***” In Jewish culture, bread was made in flat loaves that were commonly broken to be shared with the family.
 - a. This was the practice of Jesus when presiding over meals (Mt 14:19; 15:36; 26:26; Mk 8:6, 19; 14:22; Lk 22:19; 24:30; 1 Cor 11:24).
 - b. Similar language is used of Paul when he ate a meal with the crew on his voyage to Rome (Ac. 27:35).
 - c. By extension, the expression “**break bread**” was idiomatic for **eating a meal** with someone, the context determining whether the meal was an ordinary one or the Lord's Supper (cf. Ac 2:46; 20:7, 11; 1 Cor 10:16). Here in Paul's account “*broke*” refers simply to the custom of breaking the bread before distribution.
 5. It is necessary to supply a verb for the expression Τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν. It might be literally read “**this is my body, the on-behalf-of-you (one).**”
 - a. The phrase gives emphasis to the fact that the bread represents **Jesus' body** and secondly that His body was “**given**” (cf. Lk. 22:19) in their behalf as a sacrifice.
 - b. The preposition “for” translates ὑπὲρ meaning “for, in the behalf of, for the sake of.”
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6. The word **“remembrance”** translates *ajnavmnhsin*. The object of remembrance is, in general, Christ (cf. “of Me”) and in particular *“my body”* which He gave in death.
 7. The expression **“this do in remembrance of me”** is a clear commandment to eat the Lord’s Supper as a memorial meal with spiritual ends (spiritual edification) and not as a common meal with physical ends (satisfaction of hunger).
 - a. One cannot truly honor the authority of the Lord and neglect the command to remember Him in the Lord’s Supper (cf. Heb. 10:24-25).
- G. ***In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”(1 Corinthians 11:23-25)***
1. Paul adds the note that the institution of the cup as the memorial of Jesus’ blood was done **“after supper.”**
 - a. Many commentators have discussed the commonly practiced liturgy of the Passover with the various cups poured out, etc. It is possible that Jesus followed these conventions, but the evidence of the Gospels does not allow us to assume that He did. If Jesus followed the pattern taught by the Rabbis as a matter of tradition, **several “cups”** were poured out in the course of the Passover meal.
 - b. This may be why Paul clarifies by saying “after supper.” It is parallel to Luke’s statement *“after they had eaten”* (i.e. the Passover meal, and not the bread, cf. Lk. 22:20).
 - c. It was not one of the “cups” ordinarily taken and drunk during the Passover. Paul may in 1 Cor. 10 allude to this cup in contradistinction to the “cup of blessing” poured out during the Passover meal. The “cup of blessing which we bless” (1 Cor. 10:16) is the one drunk in memory of the blood of Jesus.
 2. The **“cup”** by metonymy refers here to what is drunk, the fruit of the vine (cf. 11:26, 27, 28).
 3. The word **“covenant”** translates *diaqhvk*. In Greek it referred to a “last will and testament” executed at the death of the testator (cf. Gal. 3:15, 17; Heb. 9:16).
 - a. This was the word of choice the Septuagint translators used to translate the Hebrew word “berith”, meaning a covenant.
 - b. BAGD comments on the NT term, “As a translation of ‘berith’ in LXX d. loses the sense of ‘will, testament’ insofar as a d. decreed by God cannot require the death of the testator to make it operative. Nevertheless, another essential characteristic of a testament is retained, namely that it is the declaration of one person’s will, not the result of an agreement between two parties, like a compact or a contract. This is without doubt one of the main reasons why the LXX rendered ‘berith’ by d. In the ‘covenants’ of God, it was God alone who set the conditions; hence covenant can be used to trans. d. only when this is kept in mind.”
 4. The word **“new”** translates *kainh*; in contrast to the old covenant with its obsolescence (cf. Heb. 8:13).
 5. The **“new covenant”** is that prophetically promised covenant between God and Israel announced by Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31ff) that involves the knowledge of God’s grace,
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love and mercy in the forgiveness of sins as the pre-condition of its acceptance by man. In short, it is the gospel promise of a **new relationship** with God grounded in the shed blood of Jesus as a sacrifice for sin (Heb. 9:24-28).

6. The gospels give a slightly different phrasing -- "**for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.**" (Matthew 26:28).
 - a. The language of the gospels closely parallels the typological application of blood by Moses for the cleansing of the earthly tabernacle and the people (cf. Heb. 9:19-22). Since **the bread** was said to be **the body of Jesus**, it seems reasonable to say by way of parallel thought that **the "cup" is the blood**.
 7. How then can we explain the different phrase in 1 Cor. 11:22 -- "**this cup is the new testament...**"? It is simply a difference in emphasis.
 - a. The expression "**blood of the covenant**" emphasizes that which ratifies the new relationship.
 - b. The expression "**new covenant in my blood**" emphasizes the relationship that resides in the sacrifice of Jesus. The two are inseparable.
 8. One message conveyed by the symbolism of partaking of a sacrifice was the acceptance of those who dined at His table (cf. Paul's parallel between the church, Israel, and the pagans in 1 Cor. 10:14-22). Our sharing at the table of the Lord is a constant reminder not only of **our acceptance by God**, but also of the basis of that acceptance, the sacrifice of Jesus.
- H. ***For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26)***
1. The primary purpose of re-stating the Lord Supper tradition was not to clarify what the elements were, i.e. the bread and the cup. The Corinthians apparently had not ceased to use the proper elements.
 2. The focus appears to be on the expression "**as often as you drink it.**" Jesus words establish two important truths:
 - a. The implication is that this tradition was to **last in perpetuity**
 - b. It must always be **in remembrance** of Jesus' body and new covenant
 3. This understanding had an important practical application to each believer. If at any time, they ate and drink without this remembrance they were in disobedience to the Lord.
 4. By the action of remembering Jesus' body and blood, his death is being **proclaimed until He comes**.
 - a. It appears that the emphasis here is upon **the death** and not the coming of Jesus; however, the Lord's Supper may be said to look forward as well as backward.
 - b. This might be a good time to discuss the solemn pledges of Jesus that he would no longer drink the fruit of the vine until the kingdom comes or until He would drink it new in the kingdom of the Father (Mt. 26:29; Mk. 14:25; Lk. 22:18).
 - 1) Some on the basis of these texts have concluded that Jesus in some way drinks of the fruit of vine with us in the present kingdom as we assemble from Sunday to Sunday.

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- 2) Others have pointed out that the Lord's Supper has an eschatological import and that Jesus' solemn pledge that he would not drink again of the fruit of the vine "until the kingdom of God comes" (Lk. 22:18) might refer to the "eternal kingdom" (2 Pet. 1:11) rather than the present one.
 - a) If so, then the fellowship we have in "the body and blood of the Lord" anticipates the time when we shall be with Him again, and along with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, "reclining at table in the kingdom of God" (Lk. 13:28-30).
 - b) The phrase "until He comes" may reflect this understanding of the Lord's Supper as a meal of the Lord's disciples eaten in His absence in anticipation of His coming.
 5. But however one understands Jesus' words, the Lord's Supper **looks both backward and forward** -- backward to the sacrifice, forward to His coming again. However, "the pathos and the glory of the Table of the Lord were alike lost on the Corinthians" (*Expositors*).
- I. **Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:27)**
1. Stress in this verse is upon **the manner** of the eating and drinking.
 - a. Paul uses a form of the Greek adverb ἀνάξια" which means in this text "in an unworthy or careless manner" (BAGD).
 - b. The adverbial form is found only here; the adjectival form is found only in 1 Cor. 6:2. To fail to eat and drink in remembrance of Jesus was to eat and drink "in an unworthy manner" and in so doing was to become "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."
 2. The person who eats unworthily is said to be ἔνοχος, a legal term meaning "guilty, liable" (BAGD) and is here coupled with the person or thing against which one is found guilty of transgression.
 - a. To eat with disregard for what these elements memorialize is to show disregard for the body and blood of Jesus itself. Such disregard places one at least in spirit with those who crucified Him. Thus Paul urges the Corinthians not to let this happen, but instead to eat "worthily." Here's how.
- J. **But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. (1 Corinthians 11:28)**
1. If one is to eat "worthily" he must "**examine**" (dokimazw) himself, that is, look within and test his own heart.
 - a. The primary stress of this text is to urge each person to **self-inspection** as a means to prevent unworthy observance. *Expositors* notes that the present imperative "enjoins a practice" of self-examination on each occasion where the bread is broken.
 2. "**So**" translates οὕτως" meaning "thus, or in this manner" and refers to the Lord's exhortation "do this in remembrance of me" or the implied need to do it in a worthy manner.
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- K. *For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. (1 Corinthians 11:29)*
1. As an incentive to proper observance Paul urges each disciple to understand **the consequences** of an unworthy observance.
 - a. If improper eating makes one **“guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,”** then it follows that when someone does that, he eats and drinks **“judgment” to himself.**
 - b. **“Judgment”** seems to be used in the sense of **condemnation.** If the callous disregard of the Jews toward Jesus brought judgment upon them (Lk. 21:23), then surely those who imitate their spirit will also be judged.
 2. But this **“judgment”** (krivmā) can be avoided if one **“judges”** (diakrivnwn) the body rightly. There has been much discussion about whether “the body” here means “the church” as **“the body” of Christ** (Eph.1:18) or the reference is to **Christ’s physical body.**
 - a. Charles Grant quotes F.F. Bruce: “The Western additions (from verse 27) ‘unworthily’ after eats and drinks and ‘of the Lord’ after body, are epexegetic in intention. In the word of institution ‘This is my body’ [Paul] sees a reference not merely -- perhaps not even primarily -- to Jesus’ ‘body of flesh’ (cf. Col. 1:22), but to the corporate unity of all who share his life: ‘we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread’ (10:17). But for certain members of the church to eat and drink their fill, in unbrotherly disregard of their poorer fellow-Christians, as some were doing at Corinth, was to eat and drink without discerning the body, without any consideration for the most elementary implications of their fellowship in Christ.” (Grant).
 - b. Bruce later adds: For the Christian the “context implies that his self-examination will be specially directed to ascertaining whether or not he is living and acting ‘in love and charity’ with his neighbors.” (Grant)
 3. The word **“judge”** (KJV, “discern”) is variously translated in different contexts -- discern, doubt, contend, make a difference, stagger, judge, be partial among its translations (See Wigram’s Greek Concordance).
 - a. BADG assigns the meaning **“recognize”** in this text. The unifying idea of the various usages seems to be the idea of making a difference or distinction.
 - b. So the question is, **“What is differentiated?”**
 - 1) If **“the body”** is **the church**, then other believers are differentiated from the outside world as having access to the table of the Lord. If so, then this provides the connecting link from the proper observance of the Lord’s Supper as a memorial to the proper treatment of brethren.
 - a) The idea would be that the proper observance of the Lord’s Supper causes the worshipper to lovingly “recognize” as brothers all those who have been purchased by that sacrifice. Thus the Lord’s Supper declares the unity of all believers, a point Paul had already made in the epistle (1 Cor. 10:17) as well as the access of all to His table. Failure to do so brings condemnation upon the one who fails to recognize the body redeemed by Jesus’ sacrifice.
 - 2) However, to this point, the focus has been on the bread and cup and the proper partaking of them as memorials of **“the body and the blood of the**
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Lord.” Thus, one might reasonably understand “*the body*” as a continuing reference to **the Lord’s body** in keeping with the previous verses and a shortened form of “*the body and the blood of the Lord*” from v. 27.

- a) By “*judging the body*” Paul may refer to the spiritual act of distinguishing the bread of the Lord’s Supper which represents Jesus’ body from common bread eaten without any such thought. In other words the worshipper “discerns” the true significance of the bread and what it represents.
- b) If so, then the point is that if one does not properly “*discern*” the body and blood of Jesus in the eating of the bread and cup, then his eating and drinking brings condemnation upon himself by eating the bread in such a thoughtless way. But in addition, failure to engage in this proper judgment has personal spiritual consequences.

L. ***For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. (1 Corinthians 11:30)***

1. “**Weak**” translates *ajsqenei`* meaning to be sick or weak.
2. “**Sick**” translates *a[r]rwstoi* meaning “sick, ill, powerless.”
3. “**Sleep**” translates *koimw`ntai* meaning “sleep.”
4. The three words Paul uses have both a literal and figurative use in the Scriptures.
 - a. Many commentators treat the first two terms literally and the third figuratively contending that God disciplined the person who did not judge the body rightly with **physical punishment** by way of weakness, sickness, and even physical death!
 - 1) McArthur even makes this astounding statement that reflects his unwavering commitment to perseverance of the saints: “Even if the Lord were to strike us dead for profaning His table, it would be to discipline us, to keep us from being condemned. The thought is powerful. We are kept from condemnation not only by decree, but also by divine intervention. God chastens us to keep us from falling from salvation, and will even take our life, if need be, before that could happen.” (MacArthur)
 - 2) Similarly, the writer of the *Believer’s Commentary* resorts to the idea that God’s judgments of the believer may even take his life, but not his salvation. “As someone has said, ‘It is possible for the saints to be fit for heaven (in Christ) but not fitted to remain on the earth in testimony’.” (*Believer’s Commentary*)
 - 3) This is once saved, always saved gone to seed!
 - b. It seems better to treat all these descriptions as **spiritual** and **figurative**.
 - 1) This would make a fitting contrast to the earlier statement that the church came together “*not for the better but for the worse.*”
 - 2) A coming together for the worse would surely produce **evil spiritual consequences** rather than good spiritual consequences.

- 3) The failure to worship properly brought about **spiritual weakness** rather than spiritual strength, **spiritual sickness** rather than spiritual soundness, and **spiritual sleep** rather than spiritual watchfulness.
- M. *But if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:31-32)*
1. Making proper spiritual judgments of ourselves such as those involved in the command that each man *“examine himself and so let him eat...”* will result in not being the object of God's condemnation. That is, if we differentiate within ourselves a proper observance of the memorial as opposed to an improper one, then we will not *“drink condemnation”* to ourselves (11:29).
 2. However the Christian can take consolation in the fact that, if and when he is *“judged”* (or condemned) for wrongful observance of the supper, his judgment need not be eternal but temporary. As God's child he can expect the heavenly Father to “discipline” him in order that he might not be *“condemned along with the world.”*
 - a. In his reference to discipline, Paul uses the common word for parenting—*paideuw* (cf. Eph. 6:4). It conveys the idea of the parental training that comes through instruction, correction, and punishment.
 3. But in what way does the Lord *“discipline” His people?*
 - a. Hebrew 12 explains that such discipline may come through the persecution of the wicked; but perhaps the best answer is to be found in what Paul is doing. Through strong statements of rebuke and patient correction he is God's agent to “train” the Corinthians into the holiness God seeks.
 - b. It was not a pleasant process, but necessary for their correction. By saying this, Paul may soften a bit the strong words he has used and give emphasis to the “fatherly” relationship he has to them (cf. 1 Cor. 4:15), preparing them for a willing reception of his final exhortation.
- N. *So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you may not come together for judgment. And the remaining matters I shall arrange when I come (1 Corinthians 11:33-34).*
1. *“Tarry”* translates *ejkdevcomai* a word meaning to “expect or wait” (cf. 1 Cor. 16:11). This “waiting” would result in the proper sharing of the bread and fruit of the vine among all who attended.
 - a. Winter suggests that *ejkdevcomai* should be translated “receive” in the context of the “concept of hospitality”, the sharing of food and drink, citing usages in the LXX and the papyri.
 2. Again we can see that the Lord's Supper was not intended to be a **common meal** designed to satisfy physical hunger, but a **spiritual meal** that declares our common access to the sacrifice of Jesus and its blessings.
 - a. If *“each takes his own supper”* then there is no waiting at all; but if the supper is seen as a shared meal, then *“waiting for one another”* assures that the poor will not be shamed and that the church will experience a *“sharing of the body and blood of the Lord”* (1 Cor. 10:16) as they remember together His sacrifice. By waiting on each other and by sharing with one another as they together

remembered Jesus' sacrifice, they would be vividly reminded of God's love in Christ for each one and the need to care for each other. This was "agape" indeed.

3. Those Christians who were motivated by hunger in their rush to eat without others who might come later are instructed to "**eat at home**" so that hunger is no longer an issue. Consequently such a Christian will not rush to fill his stomach forgetting the intended purpose of the meal and showing disregard for both the assembly itself and the poor who might attend.
4. Farner gives this thoughtful summary: "In summary, the Lord's Supper is a meal which included the memorial of the bread and cup. It is an apostolic tradition perpetuated by Paul on the basis of the upper room model and the revelation to him from the Lord (1 Cor 11:17-34). It is a ceremonial meal which has a purpose beyond satisfaction of hunger (11:34). It is the source of the bread and cup which is shared in order to declare and memorialize the redemptive work of Christ. It recognizes the fellowship of believers worshiping the Lord Jesus for his sacrificial death. It involves the ceremonial fellowship of Christians looking forward to sharing a supper with the Lord when he returns."
5. Apparently there were **other "matters"** involving the "traditions" that Paul had given that he chose not to address by letter. Instead he chose to leave them unaddressed until he could talk with them personally about them.

III. Numerous issues have grown out of the attempts to properly understand and apply the NT teaching on the Lord's Supper.

- A. There is a **real irony** about the incredible number of **divisions** centering around the observance of the Lord's Supper.
 1. The institution that the Lord gave to remind us of **our unity** with him through His sacrifice has itself become the occasion for **numerous divisions**.
 2. It is important that we seek to **understand the true meaning** of all Christ has said and to **be obedient in every essential**. However, it is also important to **seek the unity** which our sharing in the body and blood of the Lord makes vivid and real and not allow misunderstandings and opinions to result in divisions.
 3. Let's briefly address and treat some of the issues commonly discussed in connection with the Lord's Supper. Please keep in mind that these are not intended to be exhaustive treatments of what are at times complex questions. Hopefully we can help each other in these areas of disagreement.
- B. **The issue of the proper day and frequency**
 1. Some commentators suggest that the expression "*as often as you drink it*" leaves the time of observance of the memorial a matter of human judgment.
 - a. *Expositors* comments, "Our Lord prescribed no set times." The denominational world generally has left the frequency a matter of church policy rather than divine revelation.
 2. This of course is where **one's hermeneutics** becomes critical.
 - a. Our traditional understanding of "**apostolic example**" as an illustration of the Lord's authority suggests that what Jesus left indefinite in the institution, the Holy Spirit revealed to the apostles (Jn. 16:13) resulting in a uniform practice of a "**first day of the week**" observance.

- b. This practice of weekly breaking of bread was among **Paul's "ways"** which he "*taught everywhere in every church*" (1 Cor. 4:17). We can see this emerging pattern by comparing Ac. 20:7 and 1 Cor. 16:1-2.
 - 1) The churches in Galatia, Troas, and Corinth, though widely separated geographically, were all meeting together on Sunday to eat the Lord's Supper.
 - 2) The evidence suggests that this pattern was produced by the Holy Spirit through Paul's teaching.
 - 3) The external testimony of the early church corroborates the practice of breaking bread each first day (Justin Martyr, *Apology* I. 67).
 - 4) As Ferguson also points out, "The Lord's supper was a constant feature of the Sunday service. There is no second-century evidence for the celebration of a daily Eucharist" (*Early Christians Speak*, p. 96).
3. The Christian's participation in this observance is **not optional** or to be observed whenever he pleases. Biblical evidence points to a **designated "day"** of observance which more specifically defines the "as often as you eat and drink" of Jesus' command.

C. The issue of the nature of the bread and fruit of the vine

1. There have always been debates on whether **the bread must be unleavened** or whether **the fruit of the vine should be wine or grape juice**.
2. Some judgments about the nature of the elements themselves depend upon the chronology of Jesus' final week and some difficulties in harmonizing the language of the Gospels.
 - a. Some argue for a **pre-Passover "Last Supper"** and thus make the Lord's Supper a memorial instituted in the context of an ordinary meal.
 - 1) This viewpoint depends most upon the idea that Jesus' prophecy of "**three day and three nights**" (Mt. 12:40) in the tomb demands a longer time period than the traditional Friday to Sunday entombment.
 - b. Some argue for a **day-early "Passover meal"** from which Jesus took elements for the institution of the Lord's Supper.
 - 1) This view rests primarily on the idea that the Jews were preparing to "eat the Passover" on the evening of Jesus' crucifixion (Jn. 18:28).
 - 2) Others solve this discrepancy by suggesting that there were two ways of reckoning the beginning of a day resulting in a slight difference in time of observance between Jesus and some of the Jews or that the expression "eat the Passover" is a general term for either a sacrificial meal or a more general expression for the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
 - c. But however those difficulties are resolved the most defensible view is that Jesus did indeed observe a **Passover** with His disciples on Thursday evening and took from the Passover table elements that would be given new significance in the Lord's Supper (bread and fruit of the vine).
 - 1) Thus, it is clear that **the bread of the Passover feast was unleavened** (cf. Mk. 14:12).

- a) In the Passover the unleavened bread had a memorial significance connected with the haste with which God had brought deliverance. It does not appear to have any material significance in the Lord's Supper as "unleavened" bread; however I know of no evidence that would suggest that the church ever used anything other than unleavened bread in the observance.

3. **Was the "cup" unfermented juice or wine?**

- a. As for the expression "**the cup**," the gospel parallels define it simply as "**fruit of the vine**" (Lk. 22:18).

- 1) The argument that the "fruit of the vine" cannot be fermented grape juice because it would violate the Feast of Unleavened Bread is probably overreaching with the leaven argument.

- a) Fermentation yeasts are a part of the grape product from the moment it is pressed out until the fermentation process is completed with the destruction of the yeasts by the alcohol.
- b) Of course grape harvests took place months before the Passover festival; so freshly squeezed grape juice would be all but eliminated as a possibility.
- c) Only either by complete fermentation or by sophisticated cannery would all yeasts become inactive.

- d) Historical evidence seems to point to the use of "**wine**" in the Passover.

- 1] ISBE points out the customary **mixing of wine with water** for the Passover: "This dilution is so normal in the following centuries that the Mishna can take it for granted and, indeed, R. Eliezer even forbade saying the table-blessing over undiluted wine (Berakoth 7 5). The proportion of water was large, only one-third or one-fourth of the total mixture being wine (Niddah 2 7; Pesachim 108b)." (ISBE, Orr Edition)
- 2] Thus it would appear that "wine" in the Passover meal was used by the Jews without being considered a violation of the "no leaven" principle.
- 3] I would suggest that the early church probably used wine mixed with water in keeping with the common custom of using diluted wine in the Greco-Roman world; but whether fermented or not, either would satisfy the language of Jesus' statement "fruit of the vine."
- 4] Justin Martyr has an interesting phrase in describing the universal practice of the second century church: "On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place. The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits ... Then someone brings bread and **a cup of water and wine mixed together** to him who presides over the brethren ... When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the 'eucharisted' bread, wine and

water and take them to those who are absent" (Emphasis Added, *Apology* 1, 65-67).

4. Our typical practice of using **unleavened bread** and **grape juice** fully conforms with the terms Jesus used -- **bread** and **fruit of the vine**.

D. The issue of whether the bread must be ceremonially or symbolically broken before distribution.

1. Alexander Campbell taught the importance of the symbolic breaking of the bread and some groups still stress the need for this custom (*Christian System*, p. 273).
2. Some have suggested such due to the KJV rendering, "This is my body which is broken for you" (1 Cor. 11:24) or the importance of imitating every detail of the Lord's actions as recorded in the Gospels.
3. The reading of "**broken**" in 1 Cor. 11:24 appears to be a later addition and probably not present in the original autograph.
 - a. The UBS committee omits with only a small degree of doubt about the decision any of at least three additional participles found in the varied readings in the manuscript tradition. (See Metzger's Textual Commentary)
 - b. In addition, the Gospel affirms that, at the least, **Jesus' bones were not broken** (cf. Jn. 19:36). Also the parallel text in Lk. 22:19 supplies the implied word here: "This is My body which is **given** for you."
4. It does not appear that the breaking of the bread has **any material significance** to the Lord's Supper, that is, that there should be some mandatory deliberate ceremonial breaking of the bread.

E. The issue of the "real presence" of Christ in the elements and the sacramental nature of the Lord's Supper

1. The expression, "**This is my body...this is my blood**" has resulted in the historic debate over the meaning of these statements in the institution.
 - a. The Catholic position depends upon a completely literal understanding of Jesus' statements in Jn. 6:53ff and in the institution in the gospels. It affirms the doctrines of "**real presence,**" "**total presence,**" "**transubstantiation,**" and "**the adorableness of the Eucharist**" (*Catholic Encyclopedia*)
2. When Jesus was personally present, it seems clear that the disciples could not have understood him to be saying that **the "bread" in His hands was literally Him**. In fact, he explicitly **identified the cup as "the fruit of the vine"** (Mt. 26:29). The most natural understanding would have been to treat the statement as **a metaphor** with the sense, "**this is a representation of my body...blood.**"
3. Likewise in Jn. 6:52ff Jesus used present indicative verbs that suggest that the life that came from eating his flesh and drinking was blood already available to His hearers. The reference is to **the teaching** that Jesus brought to them (Jn. 6:63).
4. The evolution of the concepts of real presence and change in substance occurred over many centuries. Catholics often contend that the early church understood the language of the Lord's Supper to convey the idea of change in substance.
 - a. After reading some of the quotes of the early church fathers, I'm inclined to conclude that they were using the terms "sacrifice" and "offering" in connection with the Lord's Supper in the sense that as "priests" in the NT "temple" the

worship of the Christian could be seen as a “sacrifice” to God. However, latent in their speech were concepts that over time would evolve into the full blown Catholic teaching.

5. The Catholic mass is said to “offer” **Jesus’ body and blood repeatedly**. The Hebrew writer clearly teaches that an “offering” need be made **only once for all time** (Heb. 9:23-28).

F. The issue of open, close or closed communion

1. Churches in the denominational world hold various views about access to the table by those who attend a service.
 - a. Some hold that those of similar faith (i.e. belonging to the same denomination such as “Primitive Baptist”) may partake of the table wherever those churches may meet. This is sometimes called “**close communion.**”
 - b. Others hold that only members in good standing of a particular local church may partake of the Lord’s Supper. This is called “**closed communion.**”
 - c. Some groups accept to the table anyone who wants to participate. This is called “**open communion.**”
2. Two historical sources suggest that **the second century church did not include unbelievers** in the observance of the Lord’s Supper.
 - a. The Didache urges, “No one is to eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptized in the name of the Lord. For also concerning this the Lord has said, ‘Do not give that which is holy to the dogs.’” (*Didache*, chapter 9)
 - b. Likewise Justin Martyr affirms, “It is not lawful for any other one to partake of it than the one who believes the things which have been taught by us to be true, and was washed with the washing for the remission of sins and for regeneration, and lives in the manner Christ taught.” (*Apologetica* 1, 66)
3. Our practice in the churches seems to me to be a bit conflicted.
 - a. On the one hand our teaching suggests that **the Lord’s Supper is for Christians only**, not unbelievers or children.
 - b. However, we typically **object to closed communion** on the basis of the Biblical statements concerning self-examination.
 - 1) It seems however a bit of a stretch to make 1 Cor. 11:28 function as “the” answer to close or closed communion. In this verse Paul is not discussing the issue of **who can partake** of the Lord’s Supper, but rather **how it should be done**.
 - 2) The decision as to who should partake with us seems to be grounded in the larger principles of **covenant responsibility** along with the principles of fellowship governing the disciple’s joint participation with the unbelievers.

G. The issue of one container

1. In “**one cup**” teaching there are actually three elements: **bread, fruit of the vine, and “the cup.”**
 - a. **The container** is set forth as if it were a third element in the Lord’s Supper, a symbol of **the new covenant**.

2. In Paul's application there are two elements: **bread** and **cup**. The NT uses the "cup" by metonymy for **the contents**.
 - a. In 1 Cor. 11 "the cup" is what is **drunk** (cf. v. 26).
 - b. In Luke 22:29 "the cup" is what is "**poured out.**"
 - c. The cup of the Lord's Supper is the "**fruit of the vine**" and not the container.
3. As for the Passover meal, it appears that **multiple cups** were available to the participants of this meal. In Jewish sources like the Talmudic tractate "Pesachim" we can see that the host did pour out various "cups" of wine in the course of the dinner.

H. The issue of "one loaf"

1. Some groups stress the need for **one loaf** from which the whole church is served based on the statement of 1 Cor. 10:17.
2. This seems to miss the point as to how "fellowship" exists. The sharing of "one bread" is not the result of **eating from one piece or loaf**, but by **eating what is one substance, viz., bread**.
3. It appears that the scope of participation or sharing Paul mentions includes at least the Corinthians as well as Paul who was in Ephesus at the time.

I. The issue of multiple assemblies for observing the Lord's Supper

1. In more recent years some brethren have questioned the validity of a "**second serving**" of the Lord's Supper at an evening service. This viewpoint depends primarily on two concepts: 1) **the purpose of the assembly** (Ac. 20:7); 2) the application of the exhortation to "**wait for one another**" (1 Cor. 11: 33).
2. The critical point in this discussion seems to be how to apply the apostolic command to a church that apparently met only once on Sunday to a church that meets twice on Sunday.
3. The intention of the command "**to wait**" was to insure **the participation of all** in the supper during a single meeting. It seems to be in keeping with that principle for a church that meets twice on Sunday to offer the Lord's Supper in the assembly to those who have not been able to partake at the earlier meeting so that they too may be included in the fellowship of the body and blood of the Lord. It is **not simultaneous action** that produces this fellowship but the eating and drinking of the same element in view of what it represents. Our traditional practice is in keeping with the apostolic principle to "wait", that is ensure that no one is excluded.

J. The issue of whether other activities may take place during the Lord's Supper such as group singing or teaching through visuals, etc.

1. More recently there is has been some departure from the single activity of eating without other simultaneous activities during the Lord's Supper service. Those activities might include **singing** or **reading presentations** of messages on a projector screen that are focused on the Lord while the elements are distributed or eaten. Some object to this on the basis that it adds additional elements to the Lord's Supper.
2. It would seem that an activity that **aids** in remembering Jesus as we eat and drink would be authorized, since it implements the general command of Jesus, "**Do this in remembrance of Me**" (1 Cor. 11:24).

K. The issue of whether the Lord's Supper should be eaten more as a meal in a household setting

1. Some brethren are now stressing the idea of **an extended meal** of bread and fruit of the vine in memory of Jesus in a household setting.
2. This concept involves a discussion of the meaning of the expression "*the church that is in your house*" (1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Phile. 2).
3. I see no reason to believe that NT churches existed under **one leadership** but met in **separate homes** for the Lord's Supper. One does not get the impression that the Corinthian meeting took place in multiple gatherings in private houses.
4. A memorial of Jesus' body and blood can take place whether we consume **a pinch** or **a much larger amount** of the bread and fruit of the vine. Since the meal is symbolic and **not for the satisfaction of hunger**, it would not be necessary for the eating and drinking to be extended.
5. Moreover the household setting for the Lord's Supper observance, though perfectly Scriptural in terms of being an expedient location, could lend itself to the very abuse Paul was seeking to rectify.

Conclusion:

- I. It is **ironic** that this institution designed to proclaim **the unity of believers** has **divided so many professing believers**. It is interesting to me that one of the principle points of emphasis to churches in times of division was to point them to the sacrifice of Jesus. **The cross is the answer** to human pride and self-exaltation, to divisions around men, to unloving attitudes toward others.
- II. This makes even more important the question that is often not asked: How can we assure that we personally do not fall into **the mindlessness of the Corinthians**? How can we make this observance **more meaningful** for those who correctly understand its meaning?

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