



## LIVING TOGETHER IN WORSHIP

ALL ABOUT JESUS | 1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-34

FEBRUARY 17, 2019 | PASTOR MATT WHITEFORD



**HOME GROUP LEADERS:** We are encouraging our Home Groups to celebrate Communion in their groups this week. Please see the "Live It Out" section for the details.

### GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER (USE JUST ONE OR ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS TO CONNECT AS YOU START YOUR CONVERSATION)

- 1** What is the most memorable meal you have ever had? What made it so memorable?
- 2** How is the church gathering together for the Lord's Supper an act of worship?

We regularly use meals to spend time with those who are most important to us. What effect would disrespect and division have on these celebrations? None of us would look forward to a meal if we felt left out or disrespected. As we have seen in earlier chapters, the Corinthian church was divided in a number of areas. However, in these verses, Paul takes some time to specifically address issues arising from their celebration of the Lord's Supper. Paul was troubled by what he heard and wrote to remind them that it was all about Jesus and His sacrifice. Paul urged them to be unified when they gathered together in worship.

### QUICK REVIEW (OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE WHAT MOST STOOD OUT FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, encouraged, challenged, or confused you?

### DIG DEEPER (OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURE OR COMPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURES FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

- 1** Someone read **1 Corinthians 11:17-22**

<sup>17</sup> But in the following instructions I do not command you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. <sup>18</sup> For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, <sup>19</sup> for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.<sup>20</sup> When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. <sup>21</sup> For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. <sup>22</sup> What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

**According to Paul, in what ways were the Corinthians missing the mark when they observed the Lord's Supper? What effect did this have on the unity of the church?**

When the Christians in Corinth gathered to celebrate the Lord's Supper, they lost sight of its purpose. There was little unity. The wealthy members refused to share their food. Some had even turned the Lord's Table into a drunken party. Ultimately, the divisions among the Corinthian believers were dishonoring to God. Because real love involves the whole family of God, Paul would not allow such division to continue.

**As followers of Jesus, why is our unity and commitment to the body so important? How have you experienced this personally?**

- 2** Someone read **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, <sup>24</sup> 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." <sup>25</sup> In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." <sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Jesus first instituted the Lord's Supper as a way for His disciples to come together and remember His sacrifice on their behalf. When Jesus died and rose again, He united all believers together under the banner of His name. To help the Corinthians understand this reality, Paul reminds them of Jesus' own words.

### **What do the bread and wine represent? What is their significance?**

**Read Matthew 26:26-28. Why did Jesus choose to institute this meal for believers during Passover? How is the Lord's Supper different from the Passover? What was Jesus trying to teach the disciples?**

Jesus chose to institute the Lord's Supper within the context of the Passover meal to intentionally connect those two events. The Israelites celebrated Passover to remember the Lord's deliverance from the Egyptians. This redemption was only momentary; however, Jesus' work on the cross has an eternal effect.

### **3 Someone read 1 Corinthians 11:27-34**

<sup>27</sup> Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup> Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup> That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. <sup>31</sup> But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup> But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. <sup>33</sup> So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—<sup>34</sup> if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

**Why is it important that we examine ourselves before taking the Lord's Supper? Read verse 29. What is the result of not taking the time to look at your own life before taking Communion?**

Paul encouraged the Corinthians to examine themselves before they took Communion. When the church is unified as they gather together, it shows the world an outward picture of the Gospel. Paul ends this section of the letter with language indicating a family relationship with Corinthian believers. The church is the household of God (1 Timothy 3:15). Regardless of gender or economic status, every believer should be treated with dignity and respect.

**How does the Lord's Supper encourage biblical community? Have you experienced this?**

### **LIVE IT OUT (DISCUSS HOW YOU CAN LIVE OUT THE TRUTHS YOU JUST OBSERVED IN SCRIPTURE)**

#### **1 Knowing what Jesus did to meet our biggest need, how should celebrating Communion help us focus on the needs that others around us have?**

**2** Based on Paul's instructions in this passage, what practices could you put into place to regularly examine yourself for sinful thoughts or desires? What about the sinful thoughts you have toward others?

**3** HOME GROUP LEADERS: Because of the topic of this week's sermon, [we are encouraging Home Groups to celebrate Communion this week](#). This section is designed to prepare you to celebrate Communion with your Home Group. Before group, get a small loaf of bread or pita bread and some grape juice at the store. Please pour the juice in glasses ahead of time.

Matt talked about what it means to examine yourself in preparation for taking Communion. It is not easy, but it is to be done regularly, with humility and the understanding that we create devastating consequences when we allow sin to lead us. As we become aware of the selfishness in our hearts, we have an opportunity to deal with sin before we're tempted to give way to those sins.

Individually, take some time to examine your life in the following areas right now:

- Any attitude or action you need to confess?
- Any person you need to forgive or love?
- Any blessing you need to thank God for?

After some time reflecting in these questions as individuals, have your group pass around the bread, rip off a small piece and make sure each person has a small cup of juice. Read through Matthew 28:26-28 together, and take the elements together as you read, then close in prayer.

## CLOSING PRAYER

Thank God for His sacrifice on our behalf. Ask God that He would make our church into a united church. Pray that He would grant deep relationships among all our members and ask that He would protect us from division and disunity. Also pray that we, in this group, and everyone at CrossPoint would feel a sense of gratitude and honor in being a part of the body of Christ.

## NEXT WEEK'S MESSAGE SCRIPTURE

### LIVING TOGETHER IN WORSHIP: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-13

Prepare for next week's message and group discussion by reading through this passage a few times this week and write down any insights or questions you have before meeting with your home group.

## PRAISE/PRAYER REQUESTS (TRY TO HAVE ONE OR A FEW PEOPLE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME)

Use this space or the back of this paper to record down the requests and find a way to share those with the group so you can be praying for each other during the week.

## How to Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create a healthy environment for Gospel community, growing in friendship, and living like Jesus together. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, please review the guide before your group meets to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content during your group discussion or to hit on all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help your grow in Gospel community.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead. We are praying for you too!

Visit [cpmodesto.org/groupleaders](http://cpmodesto.org/groupleaders) to download the sermon discussion guide every week. Not in a Home Group, but want to be in one? Visit [cpmodesto.org/homegroups](http://cpmodesto.org/homegroups) and use the Home Group Finder!

## COMMENTARY FOR 1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-34

**11:17.** In the preceding section, Paul had begun with words of praise. But here he said, I have no praise for you. Paul's disgust with the Corinthians focused on how their meetings, or public worship gatherings, did more harm than good. Paul did not condemn them absolutely and categorically—he had already praised them for holding to many of his teachings on worship (11:2). Yet, his assessment was that the harm of their worship times outweighed the good. What kinds of things would yield this kind of condemnation? The Corinthians had corrupted one of the most sacred events in Christian worship: the Lord's Supper. They had not given due regard to the honor of Christ, nor had they honored or edified one another in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

**11:18.** Paul began with "in the first place", but never moved on to a second or third matter. His words should be understood to mean "the most important way this is true is." He also added, "I hear." Paul's criticism was that there were divisions among the Corinthians, but he had already addressed this issue extensively in chapters 1 through 4. Here, he focused on the divisions that existed when the Corinthians came together as a church. Paul's chief concern was that divisions perverted public worship.

**11:20.** Paul addressed directly to the issue at hand. When the Corinthian Christians came together to celebrate the Lord's Supper, divisions so corrupted it that it could not be called the Lord's Supper. Although this terminology is common in the church today, this passage contains the only expression of the phrase "Lord's Supper" in the New Testament.

**11:21.** Paul explained his remark by describing the report he had received. As the Corinthians ate, each of them went ahead without waiting for anybody else. This phrase each of you goes ahead may be translated as "each one takes his own supper." Some in the church had lost the corporate aspect of the ritual and had come to focus mainly on themselves. In their meals, the Corinthians favored the privileged and rich. If the Lord's Supper was observed in Corinthian homes, the rich and powerful may have been allowed to eat first. Since one remained hungry while another got drunk, they obviously ate and drank to excess. This would have been bad enough, but they magnified the harm by leaving nothing for the others.

**11:22.** Paul began his correction by asking several questions. First, he asked if they did not have houses in which to eat and drink ordinary meals. Second, Paul expressed the evil of this practice by asking those who abused the poor if they despised the church of God. The church consists of those people gathered out of the world because they belong to God. Third, Paul asked if the rich members of the Corinthian church actually wanted to humiliate those who had nothing. The poor of the ancient world were mocked and humiliated by the wealthy. Sarcastically, Paul asked if they thought he should praise them for their behavior. He then answered Certainly not!

**11:23-24.** Paul explained that he could not praise the Corinthians for their behavior because they had failed to observe the teachings about the Lord's Supper he had passed on to them. Paul next described how to observe the Lord's Supper. These instructions are so simple and straightforward that they appear abbreviated. Paul revealed the proper way to observe the Lord's Supper by recounting how the Lord Jesus Himself had observed it on the night He was betrayed. Four verbal ideas described the activities surrounding the bread: took bread; had given thanks; broke it; and said. Jesus took bread, that is, He picked it up. Therefore, the breaking of the loaf portrayed the breaking of Christ's body.

**11:25.** Paul turned next to the cup. He noted the parallel between the distributions of the bread and of the cup by saying that the latter occurred in the same way. Whereas 11:23–24 mention talking, thanking, breaking, and speaking, 11:25 mentions taking and speaking. Paul emphasized by repetition the one element that was absent from every Gospel account: Do this ... in remembrance of me. Paul saw the honor and remembrance of Christ as central to the Lord's Supper. Paul's record of Jesus' words closely parallels Luke's account. The main point is that the wine represents the New Covenant in Jesus' blood. The expression "New Covenant" derives from Jeremiah 31:31. In this passage the prophet Jeremiah described the covenant arrangement that God would make with the remnant of His people after they returned from exile. Ezekiel and Isaiah called the same restoration covenant the "covenant of peace" (see Isa. 54:10; Ezek. 37:26). Paul also reported that Jesus defined the New Covenant in terms of His blood. Christ's sacrificial death paid the debt for sin. His death made it possible for people to enjoy forgiveness and new life in Him. The expression "in my blood" recalls the importance of blood rituals in covenant-making. Not every covenant in the Bible is connected to sacrificial blood, but blood sacrifice has been the way of good standing before God from the earliest times (see Gen. 4:4; Heb. 9:22).

Echoing what He said about the bread, Jesus exhorted His disciples, Drink it, in remembrance of me. The main purpose of the Lord's Supper is to draw the participants' attention to the centrality of Christ's saving work on their behalf. The importance of this motif for Paul is evident from the fact that Paul repeated it three times.

**11:26.** Paul closed his account of the institution of the Lord's Supper with an explanation of his unique repetition of the remembrance of Christ. Why should eating and drinking in the Lord's Supper focus on the remembrance of Christ? It is because whenever the church participates in the Lord's Supper, Christians proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. The expression proclaim occurs many times in the New Testament to describe the ministry of the church to the unbelieving world. It is the prophetic announcement to those outside the church that Christ is the only way of salvation. When the world sees the church eating and drinking in order to remember the significance of Christ's body and blood, the word of the gospel is made visible.

**11:27.** Whenever people participate in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, they are actually guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. To participate in the table in an unworthy manner has traditionally been interpreted broadly to mean to participate while having unconfessed sin. The unworthiness he had in mind was participating in the Lord's Supper in a way that failed to exhibit the unity of the church in Christ.

**11:28-29.** In general, the Lord's Supper should be a time of celebration in which Christians focus on Christ's honor, the church's unity, and the proclamation of the gospel. The focus should be on others, not on oneself. It is only in the preparation for the Lord's Supper that individuals must turn their attention inward.

**11:30.** Paul continued explaining the seriousness of violating the Lord's Supper by pointing out the judgment the Corinthians were experiencing as a result of their failure to observe the Lord's Supper properly. He wrote, many among you are weak and sick. Paul probably received information about illnesses in the church from messengers sent to him. Second, he remarked, a number of you have fallen asleep. Some in the church had died as a result of God's judgment against them because of their sin against the body of Christ.

**11:31-32.** Paul added the comment that if the Corinthians judged themselves, they would not come under judgment. In other words, if the Corinthians took time to evaluate themselves before the Lord's Supper and changed their actions based on this evaluation, God would not judge them with sickness and death.

**11:33-34.** Paul closed this section with a general summation, giving some final instructions. He appealed to the Corinthians with familial affection by calling them his brothers. Paul yearned for them to turn from this serious sin. To avoid God's judgment, they needed to do two things. First, they needed to wait for each other. Instead of the rich eating first and the poor not eating at all, all participants in the feast were to eat at the same time. Second, in order to eliminate any justification for not waiting for others, Paul added that anyone who was hungry should eat at home.

Why should this practical advice be followed? If the church would gather for the Lord's Supper in harmony and mutual consideration, then their meetings would not result in judgment. The discipline that God was inflicting on the church would cease because the Corinthians would have begun to celebrate the Lord's Supper in a way that pleased God, honored Christ, respected the church's unity, and proclaimed the Gospel.