

## Church Purity in a Polluted Culture - Part 17

1 Corinthians 11:17-34



### "Social Snobbery at the Lord's Table"

Since the beginning of the church, it was customary for the believers to eat together (Acts 2:42, 46). They called this meal "the love feast" since its main emphasis was showing love for the saints by sharing with one another. The problem was that the Corinthians were using these "agape" feasts, as they became known, as occasions to make social distinctions between rich and poor. Paul is profoundly troubled by this development and argues strongly against it.

#### No Commendation (11:17)

*"In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good." (1 Cor 11:17 NIV)*

- Paul is giving a rather sober indictment concerning something that should be so natural and beneficial to the body of Christ.
- Paul declares that their meetings were doing more harm than good.

#### What Went Wrong? (11:18-22)

*"In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval..." (1 Cor 11:18-22 NIV)*

- In God's providential direction of the life of the church, he allowed controversy in order that the genuine spiritual quality of individual believers would be known.
- Those who had plenty would eat without even waiting to see if those who had little had enough.
- Paul did not suggest that they abandon the feast, but rather that they restore its proper meaning.

#### How Should The Lord's Supper Be Observed? (11:23-26)

*"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night 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 Cor 11:23-26 NIV)*

- Jesus instituted this ordinance during the Jewish feast of Passover.
- The old covenant, the Mosaic covenant that God made with His people Israel was constantly broken because of Israel's sin. This covenant was replaced with the new covenant, which would provide complete atonement for all the sins of God's people, past, present, and future.
- This is a communion with fellow believers with the spiritual presence of Christ and calling to memory the sacrifice He made for us.

#### Back to The Problem At Hand (11:27-32)

*"Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup..." (1 Cor 11:27-32 NIV)*

- The phrase *in an unworthy manner*, is the Greek word *anaxios*, is specifically aimed at treating the Lord's Supper as a common meal, and the bread and cup as common things, not apprehending the meaning and significance of each.
- To be guilty of *sinning against the body and blood of the Lord* is to undermine the truth that Jesus' body was broken and his blood shed for others. Thus the selfish behavior of the Corinthians is not only a sin against others, but it also represents a profaning disrespect for Jesus himself.
- The Greek word for *examine* is the verb *dokimazo*, which refers to testing metals to determine if they are genuine.

#### Let's Summarize The Solution (11:33-34)

*"So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment..." (1 Cor 11:33-34 NIV)*

- *Wait for each other*, or look past your own immediate needs and patiently wait to fulfill another's.

#### Conclusion

- There is an inseparable link between the manner in which we observe of the Lord's Supper and the manner in which we treat our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- If we really, really got it, how could we ever put our selfish needs before the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ!