

Studies in 1 Corinthians

Lesson XXX: Honor at the Lord's Table (part two)

TEXT: 1 COR. 11:23-34 (NLT)

23 For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread **24** and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. ^[a] Do this to remember me." **25** In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it." **26** For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.

27 So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against^[b] the body and blood of the Lord. **28** That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. **29** For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, ^[c] you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself. **30** That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died.

31 But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way. **32** Yet when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

33 So, my dear brothers and sisters, ^[d] when you gather for the Lord's Supper, wait for each other. **34** If you are really hungry, eat at home so you won't bring judgment upon yourselves when you meet together. I'll give you instructions about the other matters after I arrive.

FOOTNOTES

a Greek *which is for you*; other manuscripts read *which is broken for you*.

b Or *is responsible for*. c Greek *the body*; other manuscripts read *the Lord's body*.

d Greek *brothers*.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. REVIEW: The Christians at Corinth allowed the Lord's Supper to become an empty ritual. What three missteps caused this to happen?

- vv 17-19: D_____
- vv 20-22: S ___ f _____ n _____
- vv 29-32: Lack of s_____ e _____

2. According to the context of chapter 11 (and the main problems at Corinth), how does one know when he is partaking of the Lord's Supper "in an unworthy manner"? (vs. 27, cf. vv 28-34)

3. What are some ideas to help us (individually and collectively) get the most spiritual benefit from weekly communion? (vv. 29) How can we keep it from getting "stale" and ritualistic?

Various Views on the Lord's Supper

- A simple meal shared by Christians in honor of the Lord's sacrificial death and as a reminder of their oneness in Christ.
- Partaken of weekly on "the Lord's Day."
- Partaken of periodically, on special occasions, any day of the week.
- Nicknamed "eucharist" as an act of *thanksgiving* to God for salvation in Jesus (as early as the 2nd century).
- It is a sacrament which imparts grace necessary to maintain one's salvation.
- Jesus is present (physically-speaking) in the act of communion, which becomes the real body and blood of Jesus (known as "transubstantiation").
- Jesus is present (spiritually-speaking) in the act of communion and partaking becomes an act of "spiritual nourishment" (known as the "pneumatic presence")
- Surrounded by specific liturgy and ritual in the storage, presentation, and distribution (i.e. a "mass" which involves prescribed readings, kneeling at an altar, and receiving the "host" from the hand of a "priest")
- Must be partaken of by everyone in one cup and single, unbroken loaf.
- May use any means of sharing the bread and grape juice.