

The Lord's Table: A Holy Communion

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

I. The Problem

¹⁷ In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. ²⁰ When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, ²¹ for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. ²² Don't you have homes 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 praise you for this? Certainly not! (11:17-22)

Three major problems that emerged from their meetings:

- The first problem Paul points out is the problem of divisions. (v.18)
- The second problem Paul points out is the problem of selfishness. (v.21)
- The third problem Paul points out is the problem of irreverence. (v.22)

II. The Purpose

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ 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." ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 11:23-26)

In this Memorial Meal:

1. We partake *first* of the Bread.
 - The bread is symbolic of Christ's body.
 - The bread speaks to us both of Christ's suffering and his sufficiency.
2. What does that suffering reveal?
 - It reveals the gravity of sin. "*Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil, and Thou canst not look on wickedness with favor.*" Habakkuk 1:13.
 - It reveals the love of God. John 3:16

- It reveals the provision of God. Romans 8:32 says, "*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*"
- 3. We partake *second* of the Cup.
 - The blood itself is symbolic of life.
 - Christ's blood poured out speaks of the forgiveness for sins.
 - It pictures for us the sacrificial death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:18-19 says, "*...you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.*"
 - The Lord's Table is not only a look back, it is a look ahead.

III. The Preparation

²⁷ 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. ²⁸ A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰ That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. ³¹ But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. ³² When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world. ³³ So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. ³⁴ If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment. And when I come I will give further directions. (11:27-34)

Preparation we must make before partaking of the Lord's Table.

- He gives a warning not to partake "in an unworthy manner."
- He exhorts us to examine ourselves.
- We need to recognize that we are part of one another.
- Is there sin in your life that you need to forsake? If so, turn from that sin and be done with it.
- Do you have broken relationships, especially with other Christians? If so, mend them. Do not let the sun go down today until you have spoken to that person and done your best to make it right.
- If we are not willing to obey God, then we should stop playing games and forgo taking the Lord's Table, because it is a Holy Communion.