

The next problem that Paul addresses in the Corinthian church is the manner in which they were conducting the Lord's Supper. They seemed to be treating the occasion primarily as an opportunity to selfishly feed their appetites and ignore the hunger of the poorer church members instead of remembering and honoring the sacrifice that Jesus made for them on the cross.

Verses 1-16: Paul urges the Corinthian believers to follow his example of following Christ as well as obeying the teachings that they had received from him. He then states that we should respect and honor our "head" (referring to the authority over us). Men should honor Christ and women should honor their husbands just as Christ honors His Father (v. 3 "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God").

17 Now in this that I declare *unto you* I praise *you* not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

"Now in this that I declare *unto you* I praise *you* not" – Paul had praised the Corinthians in v. 2 because they were remembering the ordinances that he had taught them to keep ("Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you"). However, he now addresses the manner in which they were keeping the Lord's Supper and the situation is not one deserving of his praise.

"that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse" – Paul is speaking of the times when the church gathers for worship and fellowship. The time that a church spends together ought to be a time of encouragement and edification so that the members leave better than when they came. However, the members of the Corinthian church were leaving worse off than when they arrived.

18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

"For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you" – Instead of uniform fellowship among the believers, there were groups that did not fellowship with the others due to the differences in opinions and beliefs. Paul had already mentioned such divisions in 1 Cor. 1:10-17 and 3:1-3.

"and I partly believe it" – The "partly" could refer to Paul having a partial belief in the reports that he'd heard or it might refer to only part of the church being involved in the divisions. Verse 19 seems to imply that not everyone in the church was involved in the divisions, supporting the interpretation that Paul meant "I believe that part of you are divided."

"For there must [of necessity] be also heresies [factions] among you" – Paul concludes that the presence of divisions (disagreements) within the church will naturally lead to the formation of "factions," where members of one group refuse to fellowship with members of another.

"that they which are approved [accepted] may be made manifest among you" – The Greek word for "approved" was often used of coins that were not counterfeit. Here the word refers to Christians who have placed the love of Christ above any differences of opinion they might have with others. The presence of these factions in the Corinthian church made it obvious who the "approved" Christians were because they loved everyone and did not allow disagreements to divide them.

20 When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper. 21 For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

"When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper" – Apparently when the Corinthians gathered to celebrate the Lord's supper, they had turned it into a fellowship meal rather than a remembrance of the final Passover meal of Jesus. Paul says that the way they were doing the meal disqualified it from being "the Lord's Supper."

"For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken" – The poor in the church were not able to bring food to the supper and the rich ate the food they brought in front of these poor without sharing. The result was that the poor went hungry while the rich became gluttons. While the word "drunken" could refer to literal intoxication, Paul may have meant it figuratively to picture the gluttonous excess of the rich. Paul is emphasizing the extremes produced by the Corinthians' lack of love for each other.

22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not.

"What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" – The Corinthians had missed the point of the Lord's supper. They were treating it as an occasion to satisfy their hunger instead of remembering the sacrifice that Jesus made for them on the cross. If they were hungry, they should have eaten at home (v. 34).

"or despise [to think little of; disrespect] ye the church of God, and shame [embarrass] them that have not?" – The Corinthians were showing disrespect to the church of God when they embarrassed the poor by making it obvious how little they had in comparison to the rich.

"What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not" – Paul refuses to praise the Corinthians for the way they were handling the Lord's supper. Their gluttony and lack of love for their poor was contrary to the true purpose of the Lord's supper, which Paul describes next.

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread:

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" – Paul states that what he taught the Corinthians about the Lord's Supper was exactly what he received directly from the Lord Himself. Most commentators believe that 1 Corinthians was written before any of the gospels, which, if true, would mean that this passage is the earliest biblical description of the Lord's Supper.

"That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread" – Paul is describing the events of Jesus' final Passover meal on earth immediately before Judas betrayed Him in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:17-20).

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

It was no accident that Jesus was arrested and crucified on the Passover because the Passover meal foreshadowed Christ's sacrifice of Himself on the cross to redeem us from our sins. Jesus tore the bread into pieces and distributed it to the disciples for them to eat, stating that it represented His body that He was giving for them. Although the Bible is clear that none of Jesus' bones were broken (John 19:33, 36), His body was broken by the extensive abuse and trauma that He endured. In eating the bread, the we are to always remember the bodily suffering that Jesus endured to redeem us. The Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation (the belief that the bread transforms into the literal body of Christ and the wine into the literal blood of Christ) is not supported by scripture.

25 After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.

In similar fashion as the bread, Jesus distributed the cup of wine as representative of His blood and of the new "testament" (covenant) established by the shedding of it. The old covenant was signified repeatedly by the shedding of animals' blood but the new covenant based on the blood of Jesus Christ brought redemption once and for all (**Heb. 9:11-12** "*But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*"). We are also to remember the blood that Jesus shed to redeem us when we drink from the cup. If transubstantiation were true, it would mean that Christ is being crucified over and over each time the Lord's supper is taken, which contradicts scripture (**Heb. 9:28a** "*So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many...*"; **Heb. 10:12** "*But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God*").

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

The Greek word for "shew" means "to proclaim; to make known; to announce." Each time we partake of the Lord's Supper, we are declaring to each other and to all the world that Christ died to redeem us from our sins. That is the true purpose of the Lord's Supper – not to feed our belly as the Corinthians were doing.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

Many Christians avoid taking the Lord's Supper because vs. 27-30 scare them. However, we should not avoid the Lord's Supper. Once we understand it, it is an opportunity to show our love and appreciation to Jesus Christ and glorify Him for dying to redeem us.

"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily [in an unworthy manner]" – We can never become worthy of Christ's death for us and Paul is not saying that we have to be worthy before taking the Lord's Supper. Rather, he is saying that we must eat the bread and drink the cup in a reverent manner, recognizing that they represent the body and blood of Jesus. In doing so we remember that He sacrificed Himself for us and honor Him for redeeming us ("discerning the Lord's body" v. 29).

"shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" – What does it mean to be "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord?" The context seems to suggest that it means to be guilty of not respecting the symbolism of the bread and cup representing the body and blood of Christ.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" – We are to examine ourselves to ensure that we are reverently recognizing the symbolism of the bread and the cup and honoring the Savior that they represent.

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation [judgment; condemnation] to himself" – By not recognizing and remembering what Christ did for us, we are bringing guilt of v. 27 upon ourselves.

"not discerning [to separate; to make a distinction] the Lord's body" – Paul's definition of eating or drinking unworthily is to fail to recognize the fact that the bread and juice that you are consuming are not ordinary bread and juice. They are not ordinary in the sense that you are not consuming them in order to feed your body but to honor the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for you.

"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" – The Corinthians had offended God by their gluttony, their selfishness, and for not recognizing that the bread and cup represented Christ's sacrifice for them. The offense had become so extreme that God had punished many of them with sickness and even death.

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

When we judge ourselves by confessing our sins, God forgives us instead of judging us. However, when God does judge us, He is chastening (correcting) us as His children, so that we will not have to suffer the wrath that He will pour out on the world.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

"Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another" – Paul describes the proper way to conduct the Lord's Supper: "wait on" (serve) one another rather than selfishly serving yourself and your appetites.

"And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation" – Don't partake of the Lord's Supper with the intent of satisfying your hunger. Doing so misses the whole point of the ordinance and creates the temptation and opportunity to sin.

"And the rest will I set in order when I come" – Paul will give further instructions when he returns to Corinth.