

True Communion

How the Body of Christ Ought to Operate

Discovering the Kingdom (1st Corinthians) Series [A] - Part 18

May 21/22, 2022

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Introduction

- **How many blessings of God, even things that we once prayed for, are now the very things that cause our complaints?**
 - **The example of Israel's wandering in the desert** – they prayed for years and years to be set free from captivity only to find themselves in a desert that they hated too. They prayed for food and got manna, but got sick of that rather fast. They prayed for the Promised Land but refused to go in and then resented that they weren't in. Are we any different?
 - **What about us?**
 - **We prayed for a spouse** – but they weren't what we signed up for
 - **We prayed for kids** – but they are consistently breaking our hearts and stressing us out.
 - **We prayed for a house** – but we can't keep up with the bills.
 - **The Difference of Walking in Gratitude vs. Disappointment**
 - **A Spirit of Thankfulness empties selfishness of its power.**

SELFISHNESS Spoils the BLESSINGS of God

- **Recap – where we are at in the series**
 - **We are closing out the first portion** of our 1st Corinthians series today. We are hitting pause after today and holding the rest of the book until later in the year for thematic reasons. Next week is a brand-new series in the book of Exodus!
 - **3 Major Problems** - So far, Paul has been correcting a rebellious church that he had recently planted. As he was wrapping his letter, he sought to correct 3 final major problems of the church: 1.) How some **women were distracting** and disrupting services; 2.) How the **rich were humiliating** the poor during the Lord's Supper; 3.) How the **supernaturally gifted were selfishly pulling** the attention to themselves.
 - **We'll handle just the 2nd one today.** Let's go...

Lesson

- **Necessary Divisions in Church**
 - **Paul Highlights the Separation of True and False Believers**
 - **1 Corinthians 11:17-19** – *“But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together¹ it is not for the better but for the worse. 18 For, in*

¹ The verb “gather together,” repeated five times in vv. 17–22 and 33–34, is one of the key words that holds the argument together. Given its similar usage in 14:23 and 26, it had probably become a semitechnical term for the “gathering together” of the people of God for worship. Thus the concern

the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, 19 for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized²."

- **When you come together, it's terrible –**
 - **There are Divisions** – this is going to be a center focus for Paul in his current rebuke of the church and a major concern for him through much of his writings. He knows the heart of God is that His Body be unified and it's simply not. Satan instigates whatever flesh doesn't. We will never be able to defeat the Gates of Hell alone. God built us to fight together.
 - **Necessary Divisions?** – in a shocking flip, Paul says, 'of course, there has to be some divisions in the church to show who is legit and who isn't.' He's right, but coming from a pastor like Paul who is always pushing unity, it sounds odd.
- **Stinking Rich**
 - **Paul Lashes Out³ at the Selfish Rich**
 - **1 Corinthians 11:20-22** – *"When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat⁴. 21 For in eating⁵, each one goes ahead⁶ with his own meal⁷. One goes*

is with what goes on when they "come together as the church" (v. 18). The Corinthian problem was not their failure to gather, but their failure truly to be God's new people when they gathered; here there was to be neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free (cf. 12:13)." NICNT, Gordon Fee

² In keeping with the teaching of Jesus, Paul expected "divisions" to accompany the End, divisions that would separate true believers from those who were false... Paul, therefore, probably sees their present divisions as part of the divine "testing/sifting" process already at work in their midst. Such "divisions" are not a good thing, but they are an inevitable part of the Eschaton, which has already been set in motion by Christ. Thus by this evil thing, their "divisions," God is working out his own purposes; those who are truly his, the "tested/approved" (dokimoi = those who have passed the "examination") are already being manifest in their midst, and presumably they will escape the final judgment that is coming upon the world (v. 32)." NICNT, Gordon Fee

³ "He noticed that even in the most holy of traditions and moments in the church the selfishness of the church attenders was ruining it. Communion is supposed to highlight the greatest sacrifice the world has ever seen: Jesus Christ's death on the cross to save us from our sins and make a New Way for us. But the church was even being selfish during the Communion Love Banquet. How messed up and selfish do we have to be to act selfish in church of all places. The house of the God who gave His one and only Son for us!" Pastor Brian Kiley

⁴ "The language "the Lord's Supper" is the only designation given this meal in the NT. One cannot be sure, therefore, whether the present language is traditional or Pauline. At least the noun "supper"⁴³ is traditional, reflecting both the "Last Supper" of Jesus and the "suppers" in honor of the pagan deities. The question lies with the possessive adjective kyriakon, which ordinarily means "belonging to the Lord," but here probably comes closer to "consecrated to the Lord," or "in honor of the Lord." This meal is uniquely "his own," eaten by the gathered people of God in his presence (by the Spirit) and in his honor. In this passage the adjective stands in sharp contrast to the idiom ("one's own/private") supper in v. 21. Thus, even though it is intended to be the Lord's Supper that they are eating "in assembly," their carrying over to this meal the distinctions that divided them sociologically also meant that it turned out to be "not the Lord's Supper you eat." NICNT, Gordon Fee

⁵ "Given the fact that "some are hungry" (= "those who have nothing"; v. 22), the pronoun "each of you" can hardly refer to every member of the community; rather, its emphatic position highlights the individualistic (i.e., noncommunal) character of the behavior of the rich as they consumed their own meals, in contrast to Paul's emphasis that they are eating together as the church. The phrase "as you eat," which consciously repeats the verb from the preceding sentence, refers to what takes place in the process of the meal. The implication is that the Lord's Supper is eaten in conjunction with a communal meal.⁵² Although some have suggested otherwise, Paul does not seem overly concerned by this reality, nor are vv. 33-34 to be understood as prohibiting it. His point is that in eating what is supposed to be a meal consecrated to the Lord, some by their actions are actually eating their own private meals. The precise nature of these "private meals" is not certain; most likely they were both quantitatively and qualitatively superior to those of the "have-nots." The picture that emerges from such Roman authors as Pliny, Martial, and Juvenal is one in which even at the same table privileged guests received both better portions and far more than others. Thus, the language some "are hungry" and "have nothing" implies that the "meal" of the latter consisted basically of the bread and wine designated as belonging to the Lord." NICNT, Gordon Fee

⁶ "the question still remains as to what the verb "goes ahead with" means. Ordinarily the compound pro has the temporal sense of "before"; the possibility that it might mean "eat beforehand" would then be supported by one of the common meanings ("wait for") of the verb ekdechomai in v. 33. However, there is no clear evidence of the verb prolambanō's being used in this way in the context of eating. In this case the lack of further description by Paul makes a clear-cut decision impossible. Very likely the verb is an intensified form of "take," meaning something close to "consume" or "devour." But one cannot totally rule out a temporal sense. In either case, it is a clear abuse of some who are unable likewise to eat "their own private meal." NICNT, Gordon Fee

⁷ "At the same time this is the sentence where most of our ambiguities lie. We are told enough to give us some good educated guesses, but not quite enough to give us certainty. The problems are many, and interlocking, having to do with the meaning of every major term in the sentence. They boil down to three basic options: (1) Some place the emphasis on "each one" and suggest that the picture is that of intense individualism, in which "each" enjoys his 'own supper' instead of the Lord's Supper, obviously not only to his bodily enjoyment, but to his spiritual edification." (2) Others emphasize the verb "goes ahead with,"⁴⁷ understanding it to mean "to take beforehand." In conjunction with the verb ekdechomai (translated "wait for") in v. 33, this is understood to mean that some, apparently the rich, ate their own sumptuous meals before others (slaves and poor freedmen) were able to arrive. (3) Theissen has emphasized the word idion ("one's own"), for which he shows evidence that it can mean "private." He posits that the rich were eating

hungry, another gets drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate⁸ those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not."

- **Paul's Really Mad** – the way that the language is laid out demonstrates that Paul is incredibly upset by the behavior he's heard about. It not only breaks his heart but stirs his holy anger. How dare they use the one key celebration about the greatest sacrifice that Jesus Christ made to make His Body One, to be a time that they humiliate and stratify and divide!
- **The Lord's Supper** – How the first church operated their church services is surprisingly unclear. We don't have enough information on how everything ran in the 1st century. Once we get a little distance, we start having things written down and we know a lot more. But what Paul is referring to as the Lord's Supper is still relatively unclear, despite the number of sermons preached on it with assumptions. What seems to be clear is that the early church would combine a mealtime, likely as a fellowship gathering, and a special time of Communion, where they honored the Lord's sacrifice on the cross. It was probably not a specific seder or Passover celebration, since this one seemed to be more common than that. It's possible that it was a regular mealtime they would have together. Perhaps it was like a potluck that they had each week, or monthly and they would combine a special Communion celebration with it at the end. The actual translation is 'the meal set apart for the Lord'. It's not just communion, but it was a church supper.
- **The Problems** – The meal was a mess. Selfishness was rampant and it was gross in how it manifested.
 - **Selfish group meals** – Scholars differ on what they think was happening practically in the room. Some think that it was people eating alone. Some think that it was groups eating together. I will go with what I see in human nature today (we are not that different from one generation to another). People group together and exclude others. So I'm going to guess that it was groups of people would huddle together and exclude the others. But how would they gather? Was it cliques of friends? Kind of, but it was more than that. It was based on money.
 - **Humiliation of the Poor** – It seems that the wealthy would come to the potluck-style meal and would bring their rich food and hang with their rich friends and laugh and enjoy their meals together while the poor people of the congregation ate their meager meals separately. There is even a suggestion (later in in the passage) that some of the poor ONLY had the Communion meal (bread and wine) to eat and look forward to. Historians

their private meals at the Lord's Supper, which included both an earlier starting time and privileged portions not available to the others. A modified version of this position has been offered by Winter, who sees the problem as the rich "devouring" their private meals in the presence of the "have-nots," but more in terms of their simply not sharing with them. Of these options, the first is the least likely since it does not speak to the sociological issue that emerges in "some being hungry" and in "despising those who have nothing." Some form of the third seems most likely, although one cannot rule out altogether the possibility that something like option 2 is also involved. The details of the sentence seem to support this view." NICNT, Gordon Fee

⁸ "it is far more than dishonor or disrespect; they are degrading, humiliating the "have-nots." NICNT, Gordon Fee

from this era talked about how even at the same meal people would be served different meals depending on how important they were, at the same table! How much do you think this carried over to church? Not only did this sadden the poor of the church to not have anything, but it humiliated them by being cut out. The point of the meal was togetherness and it was clearly not that.

- **Speed Eating** – there is another indication that the rich would arrive a bit earlier than the rest of the people and eat their meal BEFORE most of the people would arrive so that they wouldn't have to share. There may have been an element of sharing what everyone had (thus, potluck style), but to avoid that some would get there earlier and eat with their friends so they don't have to share.
- **Drunkenness** – Paul even highlights that some of the wealthy were bringing enough good wine (which would be expensive) and drinking enough of it to get drunk. The point wasn't that Paul was correcting getting drunk (at this point), but that they were gorging themselves with their excess to the humiliation of the poor who had nothing.
- **Despising the House of the Lord** – Paul called their behavior 'despising the house of the Lord' or 'Church of God'. In one fell swoop he condemned how they were treating the church service and the people that made up the Church. They were dishonoring everything the Lord set up by their selfishness.
- **The 1st Communion**
 - **The Institution of the Lord's Supper⁹**
 - **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** – *"For I received from the Lord¹⁰ what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you"¹¹. Do this in*

⁹ The "tradition" of the institution of the Lord's Supper was preserved in the church in two distinct forms, one represented by Mark and Matthew, the other by Paul and Luke... The basic differences between Mark and Matthew are three: (1) Matthew adds the imperative "eat"; (2) he transforms into an imperative the narrative of their all drinking from the cup; and (3) he adds "for the forgiveness of sins." The differences between this tradition and Paul/Luke are considerable. The more significant are: Paul/Luke (1) have the verb "give thanks" instead of "bless"; (2) lack an imperative with the giving of the bread; (3) with the bread saying have the additional words "which is for you; this do in my remembrance"; (4) have the additional words "after supper"; (5) lack a blessing over the cup; (6) do not mention their all drinking from the cup; and (7) have a different cup saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood"/ "This is my blood of the covenant." Two judgments may be made in light of these data: First, both traditions are rooted in the same history since their common features, which are the essential items, are very similar. Second, the most significant differences are in the cup saying and the appearance of the "remembrance" motif in Paul/Luke. The more difficult question has to do with the difference between Luke and Paul as to the conclusion of the cup saying, where Luke's version has similarities to that of Mark/Matthew, while Paul's repeats the remembrance motif without mention of the blood being poured out for many. Without making judgments as to which is more likely the actual form used in the Pauline churches, it is at least arguable that the combination of the repeated remembrance motif with the addition of v. 26, which is Paul's own interpretation of the institutional words, gives us our best clues as to where Paul's present concerns lie." NICNT, Gordon Fee

¹⁰ "Therefore, when Paul says "I received it from the Lord," he probably does not mean that Jesus gave these words to him personally and directly; rather, what he himself "received" had indeed come "from the Lord," but in the sense that Jesus himself is the ultimate source of the tradition. It may also be that latent in such language is his understanding that the Lord, now risen and exalted, is still responsible by his Spirit for the transmission of such tradition within the church. Thus, the Corinthian meals are not truly the Lord's Supper because they do not reflect or proclaim the meaning of that meal as it came from the Lord himself." NICNT, Gordon Fee

¹¹ "The ordinary Jewish meal began with the head of the house giving the traditional blessing over the bread, breaking it, and giving it to those at table with him. Jesus, as the "Teacher," undoubtedly played that role in meals with the disciples. At the Passover meal the blessing and distribution of the bread came during the meal (cf. Mark 14:18; Luke 22:17-19), immediately following the "Passover liturgy," in which the reasons for this meal were expressed. Hence Jesus' action in blessing²⁸ and breaking the bread at the Last Supper would have been in the natural course of things. If in fact this was a Passover meal, then the remarkable thing that he did was to reinterpret the meaning of the bread, as he was distributing it, in terms of his own death.³⁰ "This is my body, which is for you." Several things about this bread saying need to be noted. (1) The identification of the bread with the body is semitic imagery in its heightened form. As in all such identifications, he means "this signifies/represents my body."³² It lies quite beyond both Jesus' intent and the framework within which he and the disciples lived to imagine that some actual change took place, or was intended to take place, in the bread itself. Such a view could only have arisen in the church at a much later stage when Greek modes of thinking had rather thoroughly replaced semitic ones.

remembrance of me."¹² 25 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."¹³ 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

(2) The use of the term "body" has elicited considerable discussion: does it mean "himself" or his "flesh"? Most likely it means neither, but refers to his actual body, which was about to be given over in death. If there is an analogy, it is with the sacrificial victim, whose "body" (carcass) was placed on the altar after the blood had been poured out. (3) The phrase "which is for you" is unique to the Pauline-Lukan version at this point. Whether it belonged originally to this saying is much debated. In either case,³⁶ it links the bread and the cup together, both referring to Jesus' death. The words "for you" are an adaptation of the language of Isa. 53:12, where the Suffering Servant "bore sin for many." Thus for Jesus himself this is almost certainly a prophetic symbolic action, by which he anticipated his death and interpreted it in light of Isa. 53 as in behalf of others. By giving them a share in "his body" in this way, he invited his disciples to participate in the meaning and benefits of that death. (4) Almost certainly Paul also understood the phrase "which is for you" in this way. Whenever he uses this preposition in reference to Christ, it expresses either atonement, his death in "our behalf" (e.g., 15:3; Rom. 5:6, 8), or substitution, his death in "our place" (e.g., Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21). Thus Paul surely understands this bread saying to refer to Jesus' body as given over in death "in behalf of/in place of" those who are now eating at his Table. What is significant, however, is that in his own interpretation of the bread, Paul does not pick up the theme of "for you," but the imagery of "body" itself. Furthermore, even though there is no further interpretation at this point—since Paul is being faithful to repeat the institutional words themselves—this bread saying is the one that will eventually receive his attention (v. 29), even as it did in 10:16–17." NICNT, Gordon Fee

¹² "Also unique to the Paul/Luke version of the bread saying is the command to repeat the action: "Do this in remembrance of me." Because these words are missing in Mark/Matthew, there has been some question as to their authenticity. But in this case that is to place a considerable burden on the silence of Mark. What speaks most strongly in its favor is precisely the fact that the early church so soon after Jesus' resurrection and the advent of the Spirit did just this—remember his death in this way, as "for us." The words may have been omitted in the tradition available to Mark for the very reason that such a command is implicit in the continuation of the Supper itself. The phrase "in remembrance of me" is difficult and has elicited a considerable body of literature. On the basis of Hellenistic parallels, some have argued that the "remembrance" reflects ancient commemorative meals for the dead.⁴¹ The obvious difficulties with this are (a) that this meal, even in its Gentile setting, must be understood in light of Jewish meals, especially the Passover, not pagan meals, and (b) that the meal in honor of Jesus is not for a "dead hero" but for the Risen Lord, through whose death salvation has been wrought for his people. But the greater issue, especially in light of Jewish usage, is the nature of the "remembrance" itself. Does it have a primarily "Godward" reference, in the sense that God is herewith being petitioned to "remember" Jesus' atoning death and thus show mercy to his people, or does it have a primarily "humanward" point of reference, in which his people are to "remember" him and thus reflect again on the mercies of his atoning death? Or is it, as Chenderlin has advanced, inherently ambiguous, so that it can mean either or both? Although one commonly reads that our remembrance of Christ is the plain sense of the words, the issue is not that easy, having to do with (a) a complex range of usage in the OT and other Jewish literature, (b) Jesus' own intent in light of this usage, and (c) Paul's understanding. The Greek word *anamnēsis* occurs only five times in the LXX,⁴⁴ although its cognate *mnēmosynon* occurs numerous times, as does the cognate verb "to remember." Firm examples of both "Godward" and "manward" references abound; however, very few uses are unmistakably "Godward." In the OT "remembrance" rarely carries the common English nuance of simply a mental activity. Very often "memory" and "activity" go together. God "remembers" and "visits" or "forgives" or "blots out." So also Israel is to "remember" by erecting a "memorial" or by reenacting a rite (cf. Exod. 13:9). Of the various possibilities from the OT the most obvious as to what Jesus intended lies within the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, where the rite of the bread is specifically enjoined as a perpetual "remembrance" before their eyes. Thus just as the Passover meal itself was such a "remembrance" to be kept forever in Israel, so Jesus is now reconstituting the "memorial" for the true Israel that will gather around the table in his name to "remember" its own deliverance through him.⁴⁷ That is why he describes it as "my remembrance." It is not simply "in memory of him," but it is eaten as a "memorial" of the salvation that he has effected through his death and resurrection. In the same way, it is very difficult to escape the conclusion, based on Paul's own interpretation in v. 26, that for him the "remembrance" was primarily "manward." After all, that is quite the point in the larger context, where the Corinthians' meal had turned into such a fiasco that the "remembrance" of Christ is precisely what is missing. Thus Paul's great concern in repeating these words is to remind them of the "manward" implications of this "remembrance." By this meal they "proclaim" Christ's death until he comes, that is, they declare the good news of their salvation that makes them all one. To participate unworthily means to come under judgment for the very reason that it fails to acknowledge the meal as a "memorial" of God's saving event." NICNT, Gordon Fee

¹³ "In the tradition of the Supper available to Paul and Luke the transition to the cup saying is made by the elliptical phrase "likewise the cup after supper, saying," for which the NIV has correctly supplied "he took" from v. 24. The words "after supper"⁵¹ indicate that at the Last Supper the bread and cup sayings were separated by the meal itself (or at least part of it); given their continuing but otherwise unnecessary role in the tradition, it seems probable that this pattern persisted in the early church. As noted earlier,⁵³ this does not necessarily mean that this was also the Corinthian practice, but neither is there anything in Paul's argument to indicate that the Lord's Supper took place at the end of their "love feast," as is so commonly asserted. The cup saying is the place where not only Paul/Luke differ from Mark/Matthew, but also where, in the second part, Paul and Luke differ from each other. As with the bread saying, both traditions begin with "this," and in both Jesus identifies the cup with his blood in covenantal terms; but there is no scholarly consensus as to which tradition represents the more primitive form. Arguments and counter arguments can be raised on both sides. Rather than trace that discussion, our concern is to note the significance of the differences. (1) The Markan version, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," is more directly parallel to the bread saying in which the bread signified the Lord's "body." Here the cup signifies "my blood of the covenant." The language "blood of the covenant" is an allusion to Exod. 24:8, where blood, designated by this exact term, was sprinkled over the people to ratify the covenant. To this phrase Jesus added a direct allusion to Isa. 53:12, where the Lord's Servant "poured out his soul to death" and thereby "bore sin for many." In Paul's version the identification is made directly with the covenant, in this case the "new covenant" of Jer. 31:31: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." However, that passage also mentions the covenant of Exod. 24 as that which is being replaced. Therefore, in the one version (Mark's), the Old Covenant is referred to explicitly and the New implicitly, while in Paul's it is the reverse, the New being explicit and the Old implicit. In both versions the point is the same, that the wine of the cup signifies Jesus' blood poured out in death, which ratified the new covenant. (2) In contrast to both Mark and Luke, Paul's version of the cup saying has no allusion to Isa. 53 ("which is poured out for many"), which has already appeared in the bread saying. In the Gospels the tie to Isaiah suggests the additional theological motif of the forgiveness of sins, made explicit in Matthew's version. But in Paul that motif is not tied to the blood as such, but to Christ's death, which point is made in v. 26. (3) In place of the phrase "which is poured out for many/you," Paul repeats "Do this in remembrance of me" (see on v. 24), with the addition "as often as you drink." This addition in particular implies a frequently repeated action, suggesting that from the beginning the Last Supper was for Christians not an annual Christian Passover, but a regularly repeated meal in "honor of the Lord," hence the Lord's Supper. Although one cannot be certain whether Paul or Luke represents the more primitive form of their common tradition, a good case can be made that Paul is now beginning to move from citation back to his own argument, and has adjusted the institutional words accordingly. Three things suggest this possibility: (a) Since Luke's version is otherwise independent of Mark's, there is no good reason to suppose that he has now abandoned his and Paul's common version for that of Mark. Most likely

- **I Got This from Jesus** – Paul says that he received it from the Lord. It is not likely that Jesus taught him this personally. He wasn't one of the original Twelve and didn't walk with Jesus in the flesh. It's more likely that Paul was saying, 'I know this is what Jesus did because I've talked to the guys who were there. This is what Jesus wanted us to do.'
- **The Night the Lord Jesus was Betrayed** – This was what we call the Last Supper which was likely a Passover meal that Jesus led the disciples through one last time. I believe that Paul highlights the betrayal of Judas Iscariot due to the context of what he's talking about (division in the body of Christ). It was the night that Judas went to go rally the Roman troops and greet Jesus in His prayer garden with a kiss and hand Him over.
- **Took Bread** – why bread? Not only was it a staple of the diet of the time and very common to most meals, but it was a powerful symbol of what God does for us. Bread sustains. God sustains. It's the reason why Manna was such a powerful motif as the Israelites wandered through the desert. The point was, 'I am here sustaining you in tough times, even though you are rebellious against Me.' Bread is simple, not expensive, but it's core.
 - **Bread & Body** - Yet there is another element to the bread that commentator Gordon Fee highlighted to me. He reflected on Paul's use of "one loaf" earlier in the prior chapter. Paul was talking about the participation with Christ instead of participating with demons and said in verse 17, 'Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.' The point he was making was unity not just with Christ but unity with one another. What Paul is castigating them for is their division and how badly it was a rejection of the heart of Christ.
 - 1 Co 10:16–17 – *"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?"¹⁷ Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."*
- **Gave Thanks** – Multiple times in Scripture when Jesus is shown engaging with a meal or with food there is the mention of blessing it. Jews were vigilant about giving thanks to the Father for their blessings including food for meals. So it was normal that Jesus would do that. But I wanted to highlight it for a moment because many times we can 'say grace over a meal' with no heart attached to it. The whole point of 'grace' is that we would stop and acknowledge that without God we would have nothing. Meals are opportunities to glorify God and highlight

Luke at this point reflects the unmodified and more primitive expression of their version. After all, his context is that of historical narrative, while Paul's is a vigorous argument with some who are abusing the Table. (b) If that be the case, then Paul repeats the command "do this in my remembrance" precisely because this is where his concern lay—not in the repetition of the words per se, but in their eating the Lord's Supper truly in "Christ's honor," that is, in "remembrance" of the salvation that his death had procured for them. (c) This suggests further that the additional words "as often as you drink," which are not found with the bread saying, are in fact a Pauline insertion into the words of command to bring out his own special emphasis. This seems all the more likely in light of v. 26, where he uses this same language along with an explanatory "for" in order to reinforce his reason for citing the whole tradition in the first place. If this argument for Pauline "redaction" cannot finally be proved, it does highlight the emphases in Paul's argument. Some of the Corinthians are abusing what is supposed to be the Lord's Supper by going ahead with their own private meals in such a way as to humiliate others in the congregation. Paul recalls the words of institution precisely to emphasize that as often as they eat this meal it is to be in the Lord's remembrance. In the next sentence he will go on to explain what that means for him." NICNT, Gordon Fee

a thankful heart. No matter what we get in this life we should give thanks to our Father above whom gives us all good things (James 1:17).

- **Broke the Bread** – The breaking of the bread is the normal way to serve it so that everyone can have a piece, but in the Lord's Supper it takes on a special meaning. It was ONE bread, but yet divided up for the satiation of many. It was one source of sustenance but supplied to many. Jesus was One sacrifice who was killed for the salvation of many. One thing we need to be careful about is saying, 'my body broken for you' in the sense that Jesus' bones were not broken and that was specific to prophecy. Yes, his body was broken, but His bones weren't (Psalm 34:20; John 19:32)
- **This is My body which is for you** – The bread represented His body. No one at that final supper would have thought that the bread actually became Christ's body, because He was right there in the flesh. There was no transubstantiation. It was a symbol of Christ sustaining and saving us through His sacrifice (bread = body on the cross).
- **Do this in remembrance of Me** – Jesus was telling His disciples to continue having moments where they would reflect back on what He was going to do for them (and us) on the cross. He was instituting a new meaning not just into the Passover, which He certainly did, but also instigating what would later be known as the Lord's Supper or Communion. There was supposed to be continual symbolic references so that Christian followers would never forget.
- **He took the cup AFTER Supper** – Notice the delay from one to the next. We take them together in church, Jesus took them naturally separate as you would in the Passover meal. There are multiple cups and I believe it's the third cup of the Passover meal that speaks of redemption. The bread had already been distributed. I wonder if with all the important things that Jesus was saying during the Last Supper that they realized in the moment that He was doing something that should be linked (bread/wine), or if that was put together afterward. After all, it seemed like a relatively normal meal to the disciples at the time. They didn't know that the betrayal would happen a few hours later and their life would be changed forever. There is no additional symbolism of it being 'after Supper' I just wanted to point out that during a Seder it's not all one quick swoop.
- **This cup is the new covenant in my blood** – Just as Christ's body was a sacrifice to pay for our sins (body), so too was the blood shed on the cross for the remission of sins (blood). The blood fulfilled the law (our sacrificial lamb) and thereby instituted a new covenant, a new 'law', a new way of living, a new reality, where we live in the grace of God. It was all made possible by the blood of Christ. The wine represented that symbolically. Again, there was no transubstantiation.
- **Do this in remembrance of Me** – Never forget the grace, never forget the new way, never forget the gospel, never forget that you are not earning your salvation, never forget that He paid it all and we are living in gratitude, never

forget that it cost Him His life, never forget that His blood can wash away the darkest stain of sin.

- **As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes** – One day Jesus will return and we won't need to remind anyone of anything, it will be made obvious. But until that time it is the job of the church to continually put reminders before our people and ourselves to remember what Jesus did for us. It is supposed to be intentional and meaningful.
- **Danger Zone**
 - **A Warning of Judgment¹⁴**
 - **1 Corinthians 11:27-34** – *“Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy¹⁵ manner will be guilty¹⁶ concerning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup¹⁷. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body¹⁸ eats and*

¹⁴ “Because the paragraph has had a long history of being read at the Lord’s Supper independent of its original context, its interpretation has also been independent of that context, a problem that is increased by some inherent difficulties with the language. The entire paragraph is dominated by “judgment” motifs, some of which are wordplays not especially easy to put into comparable English. Furthermore, the crucial term (“body”) in the crucial sentence (v. 29) is ambiguous enough so that the point of the whole argument is frequently missed altogether, or at least in its main emphasis. The argument in context seems to go as follows: Paul begins (v. 27) by picking up the language of vv. 23–26, but now in the form of a severe warning that those who eat as they are doing, “in an unworthy manner,” will be liable for the very death that they are rather to proclaim as salvation at this table. That leads to the proposed remedy: self-testing before eating (v. 28), lest they come under divine judgment (v. 29). The “unworthy” eating of v. 27 that brings judgment is now described as eating “without discerning the body,” meaning the church (as in 10:16–17; this, after all, is the point of the whole section). This is followed by a prophetic pronouncement (v. 30) that some current illnesses and deaths are present expressions of such judgment, brought about by their failure to discern the body. The argument then concludes (vv. 31–32) with a considerable wordplay on “judgment” themes, in which Paul basically repeats the point of vv. 28–30. On the one hand (v. 31), if they were to “discern themselves” (cf. v. 28), they would not be experiencing the present “judgments” of v. 30; on the other hand (v. 32), the present “judgments” mean that they are being “disciplined” so that they will not come under the final “judgment”—condemnation with the world.” NICNT, Gordon Fee

¹⁵ “With the strong inferential conjunction “so then,” characteristic of the argumentation of this letter (see on 3:7), Paul proceeds to apply what he has just said about the meaning of the words of institution in v. 26 to their abuse of the Table: “Whoever eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” Partaking of this meal “in an unworthy manner”⁹ is what the entire section is about. Unfortunately, this adverb was translated “unworthily” in the KJV. Since that particular English adverb seems more applicable to the person doing the eating than to the manner in which it is being done, this word became a dire threat for generations of English-speaking Christians.” NICNT, Gordon Fee

¹⁶ “More likely, therefore, the “guilt” Paul has in mind is that of the crime itself. His point is that those who carry on at the Lord’s Table as the Corinthians are doing have missed the point of the meal, which is to proclaim salvation through Christ’s death, signified in the bread and cup and “proclaimed” in the bread saying and cup saying. To “profane” the meal as they are doing is to place themselves under the same liability as those responsible for that death in the first place. Thus, to be “guilty of his body and blood” means to be “liable for his death.” With this word Paul sets in motion the whole chain of forensic language that is to follow.” NICNT, Gordon Fee

¹⁷ “The problem lies with the imperative “let a person examine himself/herself,” which along with v. 27 has been the cause of untold anxieties within the church. This is not a call for deep personal introspection to determine whether one is worthy of the Table. Rather, it stands in contrast to the “divine examination” to which unworthy participation will lead. Although not strictly a forensic term, in this context the verb seems to pick up some forensic imagery. Ordinarily it means “to put to the test” (cf. 3:13). Usually such “testing” is done by someone else; but in Paul it also takes on the special sense of believers’ “testing” themselves in relation both to their “works” (Gal. 6:4) and to the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). This is the first of such uses, the precise nuance of which is not easy to determine. Probably the verb was chosen in light of the “judgment” theme that runs through the paragraph. Since they will be “examined” by God at the End—indeed their present illnesses are part of that “examination” in the present—they should test themselves now as to their attitude toward the Table, especially their behavior toward others at the Table. This is probably not so much a threat as a call to truly Christian behavior at the Table. It is in this sense that the Corinthians are urged to examine themselves. Their behavior has belied the gospel they claim to embrace. Before they participate in the meal, they should examine themselves in terms of their attitudes toward the body, how they are treating others, since the meal itself is a place of proclaiming the gospel. Although this does not lay a heavy dose of self-introspection on believers, as v. 29 will make plain, it does raise proper cautions about casual participation at this Table by those who are not themselves ready to come under obedience to the gospel that is here proclaimed.” NICNT, Gordon Fee

¹⁸ “The phrase “not recognizing the body” in this passage has often been interpreted to mean either (1) failure to distinguish the eucharistic food from the common food of their private meals,²⁶ or (2) failure to recognize the Lord’s body, that is, reflect on his death, as they eat. The first of these must be ruled out as totally foreign to the context. The second has more going for it. Those who adopt it view it as supported by “the parallelism between verses 27 and 29,” in which this phrase is to be understood as a shorthand form of “the body and blood of the Lord.” But this too seems to miss the argument here, which points in another direction. Most likely the term “body,” even though it comes by way of the words of institution in v. 24, deliberately recalls Paul’s interpretation of the bread in 10:17, thus indicating that the concern is with the problem in Corinth itself, of the rich abusing the poor. All the evidence seems to point in this direction. (1) As already pointed out, it is an illusion to see vv. 27 and 29 as parallels. Despite some similarities, the differences are more striking, especially (a) the absolute use of “the body,” without a genitive qualifier, and (b) the absence of the heretofore parallel mention of the cup. In v. 26, Paul wrote, “as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup”; in v. 27, “eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord,” followed by “the body and blood of the Lord”; and in v. 28, “so let him eat the bread and drink the cup.” That combination, it was argued, refers to Christ’s death, which this meal is to proclaim. But here Paul says only “the body.” One is hard pressed to argue that this is “shorthand” for “the body and blood of the Lord,” since Paul otherwise mentions both when he intends both. Furthermore, the absence of the qualifier “of the Lord” seems purposeful

drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died¹⁹. 31 But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world²⁰. 33 So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another-- 34 if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home²¹-- so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come."

- **Eating and Drinking in an unworthy manner** – Unfortunately this is where so many church services of Communion go off the rails. This passage is read as a warning that if you have unconfessed sin, you may die. That is not at all what Jesus said, nor what Paul intimated. The concept is dire and serious, but it's not a warning about unconfessed personal sin hiding in our heart, as much as it's about outward sin against our fellow believers. The eating and drinking in an unworthy manner means, 'don't engage in a process that highlights the kindness

since that was the pattern in vv. 26–27 when referring to the elements of the meal itself. (2) This sentence now makes sense of what was otherwise an unusual short digression in 10:17, where Paul singled out the bread alone for interpretation and emphatically declared that their all partaking of the "one loaf" was evidence that they themselves were therefore "one body." Although that interpretation played its own role in the argument of 10:14–22, it is certainly arguable that it was intended to anticipate both this argument and that of chap. 12. It should be noted further that 10:17 offers the only interpretation of the bread as such in the NT. In the words of institution, as we have seen, and when used in conjunction with the cup, the bread does refer to Christ's physical body that was given in death on the cross. But the "meaning" of that "body" at this Table is that those who eat of the one loaf are themselves that one body. Why the absolute use of "body" in this sentence should mean something different from what Paul himself says it means is what needs to be explained if he intended something different here. (3) If this usage were the only hint in this passage that the church were in view, one might see it as a veiled hint anticipating 12:12–26, but would have to understand it otherwise here. But precisely the opposite prevails. The whole point of the section, beginning with v. 17 and continuing through vv. 33–34, is to correct a considerable abuse of the church as it is visibly portrayed at the Lord's Supper. In light of this context the question ought to be, Why would one think that this absolute use, set up by 10:17, would mean anything else? The usage comes by way of vv. 23–25, to be sure. The Corinthians are missing the meaning of the "body" given in death; but Paul's present concern is with the further sense, the church as that body. If then Paul is announcing judgment on them for their abuse of the body, why did he use the verb "recognizing/discerning" and what does it mean? The answer to this seems to lie in the wordplays on the theme of "judgment" that dominate the paragraph. No other forms of this verb would be appropriate for expressing the need properly to take cognizance of the whole church that is seated as one body at this meal. The meaning here probably comes close to the English word "discern," meaning to distinguish as distinct and different. The Lord's Supper is not just any meal; it is the meal, in which at a common table with one loaf and a common cup they proclaimed that through the death of Christ they were one body, the body of Christ; and therefore they are not just any group of sociologically diverse people who could keep those differences intact at this table. Here they must "discern/recognize as distinct" the one body of Christ, of which they all are parts and in which they all are gifts to one another. To fail to discern the body in this way, by abusing those of lesser sociological status, is to incur God's judgment." NICNT, Gordon Fee

¹⁹ "With an inferential "therefore" Paul indicates that the verdict pronounced against those who eat the Lord's Supper as they are doing, "not discerning the body," has already begun in their midst, in that "many among you are weak and sick, and a number have fallen asleep"³². This, too, has often been a troubling passage, especially for those who approach the Table with fear lest they partake "unworthily." But this is neither parenthesis nor warning; it is an ad hoc reflection on their own situation. Most likely Paul is here stepping into the prophetic role; by the Spirit he has seen a divine cause and effect between two otherwise independent realities: the present illnesses of many, which in some cases have led to death, and the actions of some at the Table of the Lord who are despising the church and humiliating the "have-nots" by "going ahead with their own private meals." What is intriguing in the passage is what is left unsaid, or what is implied. Most likely Paul does not see the judgment as a kind of "one for one," that is, the person who has abused another is the one who gets sick. Rather, the whole community is affected by the actions of some, who are creating "divisions" within the one body of Christ. Probably the rash of illnesses and deaths that have recently overtaken them³⁵ is here being viewed as an expression of divine judgment on the whole community. The "judgment" of course, as v. 32 makes clear, does not have to do with their eternal salvation, but with the temporal judgment of sickness and death. Beyond that one may only speculate. Is this related in some way to the "present distress" of 7:26? How many people were in the Corinthian community at this time, and how many of them had fallen ill to this "plague" to cause Paul to say "many of you"? In any case, Paul is not saying that sickness among Christians is to be viewed as present judgment, nor that such sickness is necessarily related to an abuse of the Supper. But these have been prophetically judged to be so." NICNT, Gordon Fee

²⁰ "The second sentence (v. 32) responds to the real situation. They are in fact presently being "judged by the Lord" (in the way mentioned in v. 30); but this sentence makes it clear that by "judgment" Paul does not mean that the sick or dead are threatened with eternal loss. Rather, such "judgment" is to be understood as divine "discipline" in which a loving God is correcting his children. The purpose of such discipline is "so that we will not be condemned⁴⁰ with the world," when brought to final judgment being implied. As noted throughout, this paragraph has had an unfortunate history of understanding in the church. The very Table that is God's reminder, and therefore his repeated gift, of grace, the Table where we affirm again who and whose we are, has been allowed to become a table of condemnation for the very people who most truly need the assurance of acceptance that this table affords—the sinful, the weak, the weary. One does not have to "get rid of the sin in one's life" in order to partake. Here by faith one may once again receive the assurance that "Christ receiveth sinners." On the other hand, any magical view of the sacrament that allows the unrepentant to partake without "discerning the body" makes the offer of grace a place of judgment. Grace "received" that is not recognized as such is not grace at all; and grace "received" that does not recognize the need to be gracious to others is to miss the point of the Table altogether." NICNT, Gordon Fee

²¹ "This second piece of practical advice corresponds to the first. As with the rest of the section, it is addressed primarily to the well-to-do in whose homes the church is meeting. To them, not to the "have-nots" who are left hungry at the "private meals" of the rich, Paul says, "If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home." In this context "If anyone is hungry ..." almost certainly means "If anyone wants to gorge..." That is, if you want to satisfy your desire for the kinds of meals that the wealthy are accustomed to eat together, do that at home, but not in the context of the gathered assembly, where some "have nothing" and are thereby humiliated (vv. 21–22)." NICNT, Gordon Fee

and powerful sacrifice of Jesus Christ for you, shedding His blood to free you from your sin, while you are being horrifically selfish and mean to your fellow believers. That would be unworthy of what you are highlighting and it would be offensive.

- **Guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.** – Paul says, such a person would be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. In other words a person who is hateful or selfish toward others would be making a mockery of what Christ did and abusing their grace and casting dispersions on the Church. It's almost as if they were the very same type of hearts that crucified Jesus Christ in the first place. They are partnering with the enemy just like the crowd that shouted 'crucify!'.
- **Examine yourself; discerning the body so you don't drink judgment on yourself** – So, Paul warns them: Before you start highlighting the unity that Jesus Christ created, before you start celebrating His sacrifice and unselfishness, before you proudly walk in His perpetual grace, before you start talking about how great it is that Jesus Christ died for you, stop for a second and reflect on what you are doing. Are you partnering with the Enemy? Are you tearing down your fellow believers? Are you "discerning the Body"? That means looking closely at how the body is operating. Are you part of disunity, part of division, part of condemnation, or accusation? Are you ruining what Christ died to preserve and build? Then you better make it right before you go on. Don't make it worse by being a hypocrite as well.
- **That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.** – No one fully knows the scenario specifically that Paul is referring to but he IS saying that due to their sin against one another, due to their selfishness, God is leveling judgment (decisions, not condemnation) against the church and holding them accountable. Bad things are happening because the blessing of God is being removed due to their terrible hearts and terrible treatment of one another. (whether it's people dying from being mistreated or people that are doing the mistreating are dying, is not clear).
- **Self-Pre-Judgment Removes God's Forced Judgment and Discipline for safety (not condemned along with the world)** – Paul is practical. If you stop and take a look at how you are acting and make corrections, then God doesn't have to come in with the hammer of judgment. If you persist, then it means God has to step into tough-dad role and will bring about discipline on His Church and on His people. And why does He do that? Because if He doesn't they will get worse and worse and eventually it will undo the very thing that the church so desperately needs, the gospel, salvation, love, unity and Jesus Himself! The world is going to be condemned for it's sin, do we really want to destroy our churches so far that they become part of the world and are condemned along with the world? Of course not.
- **Simple Answer Wait for each other (otherwise eat at home)** – And Paul said, there is an easy solution to this: Rich people, knock it off! Quit being jerks. If you

are super hungry, eat at your houses BEFORE you come to the Lord's Supper meal. If you can't handle yourself, figure it out and don't slime everyone else with your selfishness. If you are bringing the food to look good and look fancy, stop it! That's not what church is for. Church is for the glory of God, not you.

- **About the other things I will give directions when I come.** – Then Paul says, 'about the rest of the stuff you asked me about, I'll tell you when I get there.' We don't know what that is.

Conclusion

- **How Are We Doing This Today?** – human nature is human nature. We are not better-quality people.
- **What's more important than food in today's economy?** – Friendship? Attention? Affirmation? Maybe...Do we allow cliques in church? Do we keep to ourselves and ignore those around us? Do we allow the socially poor to remain so while we laugh it up with our friends? Are we hurting in the very place for healing?