

March 14, 2021
I Corinthians 11:17-34 “Prepare Your Hearts”

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The worship with the bread and cup came to be called the “Eucharist” from the Greek word for “thanksgiving.” The communal meal was called the *Agape*, a Greek word for love. What bothered Paul about all going on in Corinth was that the purpose of the celebration was no longer one of love for fellow believers but one of self-centered indulgence. The experience meant to build up the church was actually having the opposite effect. Divisions developed along economic lines within the church. The very thing that was supposed to bring love and unity within the body was actually being so perverted that it brought out not God’s approval but disapproval. There is a lesson to be learned here. *Verbrugge, V. D.*

The sorry state of discrimination and disunity among the Corinthians has been resulting in sickness and death. This passage brings out the need for personal reflection. Examine your heart. *Verbrugge, V. D.*

This meal became the ongoing sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, for Jesus instructed his disciples to keep on doing this “in remembrance of me” (v. 24). It is appropriate to note that this is the earliest recorded retelling of the Last Supper. (Most scholars regard the Gospels as written at least ten years later.) *Verbrugge, V. D.*

Paul refers to these divisions as “differences” (or “factions”; *hairesis*, GK 146). The only other place Paul uses this word is in **Galatians 5:20**, where it is one of the works of the sinful nature in contrast to the fruit of the Spirit. Here the apostle suggests that there will, sadly, always be such factious people in the church, but such differences help to point out those who are approved by God. While this may sound shocking to our ears, v. 19 would resonate with the apostle John, who recognizes that there are often antichrists and false prophets in the church and that believers must thus “test the spirits” to see whether they are from God (**1 Jn 2:18–19; 4:1–3**). These “church splitters” can do their nasty work either in theology (as in **1 John**) or in practice (as here in **1 Corinthians**), but we should recognize that until the end comes, Satan will try to infiltrate the church with his henchmen. We must watch out for them. *Verbrugge, V. D.*

If these would examine (*dokimazetō*, “test to approve,” **1 Cor. 11:28**) themselves, they would see that they lacked God’s approval (*dokimoi*, v. 19) in this behavior. They should seek out the wronged brother and ask his forgiveness. Only then could a true spirit of worship flourish (cf. **Matt. 5:23–24** and *Didache* 14. 1–3). Coming to the Lord’s Supper without that sin confessed brought judgment on the guilty participants. Only by recognizing (*diakrinōn*, “properly judging”) the unity of the body of the Lord—and acting accordingly—could they avoid bringing “judgment” (*krima*) on themselves. 11:30–32. What that judgment entailed was then explained by Paul. In brief, it was sickness and death (cf. 10:1–11). The solution was self-examination (*diekrinomen*, 11:31; cf. vv. 28–29; 5:1–5; 10:12), self-discipline (9:27), and promoting of unity. The alternative was God’s judging (*krinomenoi*, 11:32), which was a discipline that they were then experiencing. This was not a loss of salvation, but of life (cf. 5:5). *Lowery, D. K.*

APPLICATION:

Beloved, it is a privilege to partake of the Lord's Supper. By doing this we remember the Lord's sacrifice of His life for our salvation. In our text today one learns that it is important to approach this ordinance of our church with reverence. One is to examine one's heart to see if there is any thing displeasing to the Lord. One must approach this with clean hands and a pure heart. If one finds that there is "something" out of order one should go immediately before the Lord with this and confess it, if necessary go to a person whom you realize you have treated disrespectfully in any fashion and make it right. In our text today some of the Corinthians were guilty of showing partiality by not treating everyone in the congregation equally, but with bias, showing favor to those "like themselves" mostly in a socioeconomic sense. Be aware that favoritism has no place within the body of believers and in this case some were sick and even died because of their actions that were causing disunity within the church. So, examine your heart before partaking of the Lords' Supper, and by the way, it is a good thing to examine your heart before the Lord everyday. "Search my heart, God, and know my heart, test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23-24 NIV). (Meditate on Psalm 24:1-6.)