

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 23RD - 24TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

LOVE FEASTS (1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-22) NOW FOR THE HARD PART...

In the first half of chap. 11, Paul praised the church in Corinth for the majority of them following his instructions on authority, but the second half of this chapter is another story.

- Paul "[would] not praise" the church because their worship services were doing more harm than good due to the abuse of communion and spiritual gifts (12-14).

HEARING AN INCRIMINATING REPORT

Paul had heard that divisions and abuses were taking place in worship services, but he also **looked into the accusation before fully accepting it.**

- "It is necessary that there be factions" means that **we must establish what is true and false, not that one group of people is better than another.**

LITTLE LOVE AT THE "LOVE FEASTS"

When the church was small, the Lord's Supper was observed much differently than today. They would typically do huge dinners that lasted for hours and at the end remember Jesus and the cross.

- Two problems arose in the Corinthian church over communion. The first was **an inconsideration for other people.**

SELFISH AND FLIPPANT

The community that the "love feasts" were to emphasize and the seriousness of observing Jesus' death was replaced with selfish rushing to eat the best food first and not leaving enough for the less fortunate.

- Basically, **the love of others and reverence for God had been replaced with a self-serving and flippant attitude about faith.**

THEY ALSO FAVORED SOME PEOPLE OVER OTHERS

During this time, it was common to ridicule and look down on the poor. Unfortunately this mindset had crept into the church as "one person is hungry while another gets drunk."

1. **We're to welcome everyone equally.**
2. **We're to be generous with what we have.**
3. **We're to not follow, but set the example for the world.**

"DON'T YOU HAVE HOMES...?"

Paul basically tells the inconsiderate and selfish people that if they are going to act like that in church it would be better for them to just stay home. **One cannot love Jesus if they don't care about the souls of all people.**

- **We may not always respond perfectly, but we must humble ourselves and pray for a love of people.**

COMMUNION (1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26) BEING PRESENT AND ENGAGED

The problem hinged on the church getting too comfortable with a ceremony and forgetting how vital the gatherings were.

- The weekend service is a time to not only hear the Word and worship, but to **escape the chaos of the world for a moment and intently focus on what Jesus has done for us. We need this sanctuary time!**

SIMPLE, YET PROFOUND

Taking communion isn't supposed to be complicated, but a **solemn and humbling time to repent of sin, reflect on Jesus, and thank Him for what He has done.**

- Paul taught the Corinthians to simply recite or remember the words of Jesus when He was with His disciples.

WE DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE

We're not only remembering the cross during communion, we're also remembering the "new covenant." Jesus' blood being shed was the transaction that paid off the spiritual debt of mankind for those who accept it.

- **The blood of Christ also seals a new promise that forgiveness and salvation are available at any time to anyone.**

THE GOSPEL MADE TANGIBLE

Communion is a physical reminder of the most important message that one can hear: Jesus loves us so much He gave His life for our souls to be redeemed.

- **Christ is the way, truth, and life.**
- Communion is part of the announcement to the world that **the only path to salvation is through Jesus.**

EXAMINE (1 CORINTHIANS 11:27-34)

IF COMMUNION IS SERIOUS, WE MUST BE TOO!

Whenever we partake in communion in "an unworthy manner we will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord."

- This sobering statement was written so we know that **participating in a ceremony meant to remember the cross while consciously doing things that put Christ on that cross is dangerously sinful.**

THE REPENTANCE OF SIN

Repentance is more than just asking for God's forgiveness, it is a conscious turning from sinful actions and thoughts. When we live in sin yet take communion, we are dishonoring Christ and His work of salvation.

- In other words, **when we approach communion, we must do so with serious examination of how we are living.**

RIGHTEOUS LIVING OPENS UP DOORS

Communion should be a time of celebration in which we **connect with Jesus, celebrate the good news of salvation, and think about the unity of the church.**

- Though it is always good to self-examine before communion, **if we're obediently living in relationship with God it frees us up to experience joy and community.**

NOT PERFECT, BUT SANCTIFIED

We can live righteously without having to be perfect. When we're saved, we're put on a new path and are no longer slaves to sin (Rm. 6). Though we will occasionally fall, we are **constantly being refined and sanctified.**

- **When we sin, we repent and take steps to move away from that sin because we want to honor and be used by God.**

THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES TO IRREVERENT "FAITH"

Though Paul is talking about communion, we are to take all aspects of our faith seriously. **When we take the instruction, grace, and provision of God for granted by living carelessly or irreverently, we place ourselves in a position of being judged by God.**

- This means both unnecessary hardships now and eternal judgment later.

DISCIPLINE IS A LOVING ACTION

Paul writes that "we are disciplined, so that we may not be condemned with the world."

- In our culture, we often view discipline as a negative thing, but **proper discipline is one way God keeps us from self-destruction.** In Revelation 3:19 Jesus says, **"As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline."**

SO, DO IT THIS WAY... (V 33-34)

To avoid judgment they needed to do 2 things.

- First, they needed to **put other people first.** This was talking about the communion feast, but it applies to all things in life. **Honoring others honors Jesus.**
- Second, if the people had enough, they were to **be generous** and let others eat at the table.

INTENTIONALLY LIVING HOLY LIVES

- We are to approach our worship gatherings, and our lives in general, with an aim to **honor Jesus, love all people, respect other Christians, welcome and respect non-Christians, and proclaim and live out the gospel.**

AN HONEST EXAMINATION

- Are we considerate of others? Do we strive to put other people before ourselves?
- **Do we love all people?** Do we favor certain kinds of people over others? Can we say we are **altruistic**?
- Do we acknowledge God's provision? **Would we say we're generous people?** What is our definition of generosity?
- Has our faith become flippant?
- Has church or our Christian walk in general become mundane or something we just do on the weekend (if we have time)?
- **Do we casually engage in communion and other deeply symbolic and spiritual things without reverence or understanding of their magnitude?**

A LITTLE LEAVEN...

- Have we addressed the evil that may be in us? Are we remorseful when we sin?
- Are we open to discipline for the sake of salvation, improvement, and change?
- **Do we understand that knowing the path to salvation and freedom but choosing to live in bondage (sin) dishonors God and eventually condemns us?**

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF SANCTUARY

- We have been given the opportunity to commune with God and touch the lives of people around us. But, **we must live aware and intentional.**
- We must learn to occasionally **pause, reflect, repent, know that we're loved and valued, and consider Christ and others because God has considered us!**