LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

1 Corinthians 11 :17-34

The Lord’s Supper

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 27, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Hi everybody, and thank you for welcoming me back to your small group study. We're going to continue going through 1 Corinthians and finish out chapter 11 this time. We're picking it up in verse 17. There's a few verses here to go through, so we're actually going to read the passage, and then we're going to pray, and then we'll go back and unpack them together, okay? It begins this way.

But in the following instructions, I do not commend you, because when you come together, it is not for the better, but for the worse. For in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and I believe it in part, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk—what?

Do you not have houses 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 commend you in this? No, I will not.

For I receive from the Lord 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. Do this in remembrance of Me. 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. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of our Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged.

But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined, so that we may not be condemned along with the world. So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for judgment. About the other things, I will give directions when I come. Let's pray.

Holy Father, as we take time to dig into these verses, we just pray, God, for Your Holy Spirit to lead us. We pray for You to speak to each and every heart, and we ask You, Lord God, to grant us understanding, and we pray it in the name and authority of Jesus our Savior, amen. This passage begins a section of 1 Corinthians that is going to go, frankly, through chapter 13. And it's all about caring about one another in the body of Christ. The topic that he's using to exhort the Corinthians in this section of Scripture is, of course, which, as you can tell, is very different from the way we observe communion today in our modern church.

It was much more of a meal, and might even be similar in some ways to a potluck with some variations. But the whole issue, the whole reason that Paul begins this section of Scripture is, frankly, to rebuke the Corinthians on how they were treating one another, and their lack of concern and care and compassion for the less fortunate. So this is why he begins in verse 17 by saying, as we're getting into these following instructions, he says, I don't really have a whole lot good to say. Because when you guys come together and you observe the Lord's table, he says, it's not for good. It's bad, as a matter of fact.

And then he begins to explain the things that he had been told. He says, and I'm in the middle of verse 18, I hear that, first of all, there are divisions among you. And I want you to notice what he goes on to say, because this has been challenging for some people to understand. He says, I hear that there are divisions, I believe it in part, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. This is a challenging statement.

And people aren't really sure. When I say people, I'm talking about students of the Word, even scholars. They're not sure if Paul is making a statement here, or if he's being sarcastic. In other words, the sarcasm would be something like, yeah, and I guess there have to be divisions so that some of you can come out on top. I have to be completely honest with you.

I think Paul is being sarcastic. Because listen to what he says here. He says, I believe it in part, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. If he were making that as a statement, it would be a difficult statement to lay hold of because when there are divisions and when there are disagreements in the body of Christ, rarely, rarely do people come to a

consensus about those differences of opinion or thought. In fact, unfortunately, and this is kind of the way we've done things, we tend to split over them, to be honest with you.

When we have differences of opinion that become heated, sometimes we separate. And so rarely is it recognized that one side of the equation or division is correct. That's one of the reasons why I kind of think Paul is speaking sarcastically here. You may differ in your interpretation, but that's just the way I see it. He says in verse 20, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat.

And this is interesting. It's possible to come together, according to this verse, to observe the Lord's Supper and have it not be the Lord's Supper because of the motive and intent of the heart of the worshiper. That's what he's going to get into in these following verses. Verse 21 says, for in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. Well, this is where we find out that the Lord's Supper, or these love feasts, as we've heard them called, were an actual meal.

And some people brought food for them, their family, and so forth. The problem was, there were others in the body who did not have the means to be able to bring food for their family. They didn't have any. And so people would come together, they'd just start eating, and others would show up, and they didn't have any, and there was no sharing. There was no concern.

There was no compassion among the people in the body of Christ. And so he goes on to say that one goes hungry, another has so much to eat and drink that they actually become inebriated. That's what he says there at the end of verse 21. And he says, what? Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?

And then he asks this question, or do you despise the Church of God? Now remember, the Church of God is the body of Christ. And Paul is going to make a connection between the elements, which are symbolic of the body of Christ, and the people themselves, the living, organizational body of Christ. And he's going to ask this question again. Do you have any concern?

Do you care about those in the body of Christ? He says, and do you humiliate those who have nothing? I'm in the latter part of verse 22. And so he says, what should I say to you in a situation like this? Is this commendable?

No, this is not commendable, so I can't commend you concerning these things. Now he's going to go on in verses 23 and following, actually through 26, and he's going to remind them of the importance of the elements. This was something, this communion. observance that we do as the body of Christ is something Jesus gave us. It is powerful and highly symbolic and he reminds them of that by saying, listen, I receive from the Lord what I also delivered or passed on to you and that is this, that the Lord Jesus on the night he

was betrayed took bread 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. This whole thing, this whole process, this whole observance is for remembering. It's not for gorging oneself, it's not for drinking too much and it's certainly not for a lack of concern and compassion for one another because that is the antithesis of what Jesus did for you. When Jesus gave himself on the cross he showed us the most incredible, selfless, compassionate love that we could ever imagine. To then come to an observance of that sacrifice and to show a lack of compassion and a lack of concern and a lack of love for others in the body of Christ, these who are brothers and sisters in Jesus, this is the opposite of the meaning that is behind all of this.

He says 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 and then he adds at the end of this, for as often as you eat this bread, this bread of remembrance and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. So Jesus, or excuse me, Paul tells us that this ongoing observance that we perform in the body of Christ, as often as we do it, we do it as a proclamation of his death until he comes. So this is to be repeated until he returns, okay? So now that he has reminded them of the importance and the significance of this incredible observance, he goes on to give some solemn warnings.

Verse 27 and following, whoever therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Now this is the first warning that since the symbols of the bread and the cup belong to and point to the sacrifice and the person of Jesus, to do this in an unworthy manner is first of all an insult to Jesus himself, okay? But he's gonna go on and talk about how it's also an insult to something else. So he says in verse 28, let the person examine himself then and so eat the bread and drink of the cup. So there is to be a time of self-examination.

We're to be thinking about others. We're to be thinking about how the sacrifice of Jesus ought to impact the way I treat others, the way I treat my brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. Have I offended anybody? Is there something I need to take care of? Let him examine himself, he says.

These are the kind of examinations that he's talking about. So in verse 29 he says, for anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, now he's talking about the body of Christ, okay? That's what the theme of this section and the next couple chapters are largely about, the body. So anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. Wow.

This is a warning that God will bring a level of discipline for those who observe communion in a way that is entirely opposite of what Jesus came to show us, which was selfless love for others. He said that could result in fact in judgment. In fact, he tells them in verse 30, this is why many of you are weak and ill and some have even died. Wow. That's a pretty heavy level of discipline that is coming upon these individuals.

And that's why he says in verse 31, if we judged ourselves, and that's, again, he's talking about that self-examination. If we judged ourselves, okay, truly, okay, not just judging ourselves, judging ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, he says, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. Our discipline or even judgment from the Lord is never one of condemnation. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

The judgment or discipline that comes into the life of a believer is always to bring correction, so that, as Paul says, we will not be grouped with those who are condemned, meaning unbelievers. So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, and again, this is where communion was different. The Lord's Supper was different for the first century church. It was a full meal. When you come together, wait, wait for one another, right?

And he says, if anyone is hungry and they're famished and they've just got to eat, he says, let them do it at home. When you're coming together, it's not about you satisfying your hunger. It's about remembering what Jesus did on the cross. He says, do that so that when you come together, it will not be about judgment and discipline. And then he says about the other things, and he's talking about the things he heard that were going on in Corinth, I will give directions when I come.

Let's talk for just a little bit about communion. As we do it today, again, we don't do communion like they did. We either pass a plate or have people come forward for the communion elements. They're often these tasteless wafers or maybe little pieces of bread. Some churches break up saltine crackers.

Honestly, it doesn't matter. I've had people ask me that. Is there something special? Should the bread unleavened, for example? No, there's no.

Yes, in the Passover celebration, when Jesus passed bread around the table, it would have been unleavened bread because of course that went along with Passover. But what we're observing is not Passover. It was connected in the Old Covenant, the Old Testament, with Passover. But it's not Passover. It's communion.

It's the Lord's Supper. And honestly, it doesn't have to be anything specific. I've heard of families coming together and using whatever they had on hand to just remember because this is an issue. This is a matter of the heart. The specifics of what we use for bread and frankly even what we drink in the cup is really not the important thing.

The important thing is Jesus. The important thing is remembering. And when we come together, we are to act in a way that is consistent with what Jesus did for us on the cross. And that means caring for other people. So these are some important reminders.

I think this is an important section of Scripture. I've used 1 Corinthians chapter 11 many, many times. Read from 23, I guess it is, through 26. Many times when serving communion to others. I love this passage particularly because there's a reminder in it that this is the cup of the New Covenant.

The New Covenant that we have with God through Jesus Christ. We'll have some good discussion questions for you. And so let's close in prayer. Father, thank you. Thank you for this time.

Thank you for this opportunity to dig into the word of God. We just really pray for your Holy Spirit to lead us. We pray that you would continue to speak to us. We pray that you would guide us always into all truth. Thank you for your word, and thank you for ministering it to us through the Spirit.

In the name of Jesus, our Savior. Amen.