

Sunday, September 10, 2017—I Corinthians 11:26-29 Not Discerning the Lord's Body

Introduction

- Last Sunday we studied I Corinthians 11:23-25. In doing so we observed the following points:
 - *Verse 23*—the first phrase of verse 23 ought to take the reader back to verses 1 and 2.
 - Paul follows Christ.
 - Christ “delivered” “ordinances” unto Paul for the body of Christ to follow.
 - Paul “delivered” the “ordinances” to the Corinthians.
 - The Corinthians “remember” Paul by keeping the “ordinances” that Paul “delivered” unto them.
 - When the Corinthians follow Paul by keeping the “ordinances” he “delivered” unto them they are in fact following Christ.
 - Paul could “praise” them when they remember him by keeping the ordinances.
 - I Corinthians 11:17, 22—Paul can't praise them because they aren't keeping the ordinances/traditions in the way Paul delivered them unto the Corinthians. In the context, this would include the Lord's Supper.
 - Paul says that he received the information regarding the Lord's Supper from the Lord and then delivered that information to the Corinthians. The risen and glorified Jesus Christ gave Paul information regarding the Lord's Supper as part of the body of truth given to the Body of Christ. Just as Christ gave Paul other revelations about the present dispensation of Grace included within that information was the issue of the Lord Supper.
 - Galatians 1:11-12—Paul received the contents of his gospel by the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - I Corinthians 15:3—Paul delivered unto the Corinthians that which he also received. The language is the same.
 - *Verses 23-25*—the reference here is clearly to what transpired in the upper room between the Lord Jesus Christ and his Apostles the night before the crucifixion. Therefore, the meaning of the Lord's Table transcends the significance of what happened in the upper room on the night before Christ's crucifixion. The elements are the same but their significance is now fully understood through the revelation committed to Paul.

- According to verses 24 & 25, the Lord's Supper is meant to be a remembrance of what Christ did. We learn through the message and ministry of Paul, the due time testifier, the Christ gave himself a ransom for "all" not merely the "many" that were mentioned in the upper room the night before his crucifixion.
- When believers today observe the Lord's Supper they reinforce the truth of the mystery. The fact that God is today in the dispensation of Grace forming of body of both Jews and Gentiles that are being reconciled to God equally in one body by the cross. Observance of the Lord's Supper as Paul delivered it not only reflects upon what Christ did on our behalf and in our stead; but also reaffirms before the principalities and powers in heavenly places the basis upon which God could for the body of Christ, the cross work of this son our savior the Lord Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 11:26

- **For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.**
- How often is an assembly supposed to observe the Lord's Table? As oft or often as that assembly deems necessary. There is no set pattern for how often or when the Lord's Supper should be observed.
 - I Corinthians 11:17-20—recall from the context that the Corinthians were observing their unordered version of the Lord's Supper every time they came together. Paul does not rebuke them for their frequently but the manner in which it was being conducted.
- This verse also touches on the duration of the Lord's Supper during the current dispensation of grace. How long is this practice to be observed in verse 26? "Till he come."
 - I Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-18
 - Philippians 3:20
 - Colossians 3:4
- Has the Lord come yet to catch away the body of Christ unto himself? No. So is the Lord's Supper still for today? Yes, according to I Corinthians 11:26.
- *Ye do show*—the verb here is a present active indicative which means that observance of the Lord's Table shows the Lord's death in the present. This showing of the Lord's death in the present is to continue until the Lord comes.

- The Lord's Supper is to serve as an outward testimony of the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ for the duration of the dispensation of grace. The Lord's Supper not only reminds the believer of the great love wherewith Christ loved us but is also serves to remind the principalities and powers in heavenly places that their goose is cooked i.e., they are put to open shame via the cross work of Christ.

I Corinthians 11:27-29

- **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. 26) But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. 27) For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.**
- These three verses have been the source of much confusion in the body of Christ even among Pauline grace believers. We need to understand these verses in light of the context we have already studied.
- I Corinthians 11:20-21—we already know that the Corinthians had been making a mockery of the Lord's Supper through their conduct. They had turned the remembrance of the Lord's death into a gluttonous/drunken party.
- Based upon these verses would you say that the Corinthians were eating and drinking in a worthy or an unworthy manner? I would say they were behaving "unworthily" as verse 27 states.
- Is drunkenness a sin? Yes.
 - Galatians 5:19-21
 - Ephesians 5:18
- So, where the Corinthians sinning in their observance of the Lord's Supper? Yes. What is the Lord's Supper designed to commemorate? Christ's death for sin. So, the Corinthians through their conduct, are acting in a manner that is contrary to event they are commemorating. They are sinning in their commemoration of Christ's payment for their sins.
- *Verse 28*—note the contrast "but" at the beginning of verse 28. The verb "examine" is a present active imperative. Paul is commanding the Corinthians to be examining their own conduct. Paul should not have needed to tell them to stop sinning during their observance of the very event designed to commemorate Christ's death for sin.
 - I Corinthians 2:15—Paul is stepping in in I Corinthians 11 to judge the Corinthians on the matter of the Lord's Supper because they had failed to judge the matter for themselves.

- Paul does not forbid these carnal Corinthians from eating the Lord's Supper he tells them to eat and drink after they have examined themselves on the matter. This verse has a specific meaning in this context.
- *Verse 29*—those who were eating and drinking “unworthily” i.e., were gluttons and drunken were damming themselves. Does this mean that they were damming themselves to hell? No, it means they were damming themselves to the natural consequences of their actions.
- Note once again the Corinthians problem in verse 29 is a lack of discernment. It never occurred to them that it wasn't becoming of them as saints to be sinning during they commemoration of Christ death for their sins.
- The context and content of this passage is very specific to what was going on in Corinth. The point of the passage is not to lord over all saints throughout the dispensation of grace whether they are partaking in the Lord's Table “unworthily.” The Corinthians were partaking “unworthily” therefore Paul addressed them accordingly. His rebuke of their conduct would most certainly apply to believers today who were conducting themselves similarly to the Corinthians i.e., turning the Lord's Supper into a gluttonous/drunken feast.
- The damnation of verse 29 is not coming upon them from God. Rather they are bringing it upon themselves via their own conduct. If they are going to eat, drink, and be merry to the excess are there going to be natural ramifications of that behavior? Yes.
- Are there any believers who are unworthy to partake in the Lord's Supper? No! If you are in Jesus Christ are you worthy to partake of the Lord's Table. If you have some sin in your life are you worthy? Yes, because the issue is not your worth or merit but the imputed merits of Christ to your account. We have a complete and perfect position in Jesus Christ that is unchanged by our faults and failure in this life.
 - Romans 3:24—we who have trusted the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the only total and complete payment for our sins are justified and have God's very righteousness imputed to our account.
 - Romans 5:1—because we are justified and have God's very righteousness imputed to our account we have peace with God.
 - Ephesians 1:7-9
 - Colossians 1:14, 2:13—we have the total and complete forgiveness of all our sins in Jesus Christ.
- I Corinthians 11:27, 29—while every believer is worthy to partake in the Lord's Super based upon the finished work of Christ the Corinthians were doing so in an “unworthy” manner in terms of how they were conducting themselves.

- The very fact that the Corinthians were sinning in their conduct proves that their behavior was a sin for which Christ died for and for which the Corinthians had already been forgiven. Therefore, the damnation spoken of in verse 29 is not from the Lord with whom the Corinthians were at peace it was from themselves. They were reaping the fruit of their won sinful conduct.