

"TRUTH & TROUBLE AT THE TABLE"

TEXT: ***I Cor.11:23-34** For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 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. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

THESIS: To point out the problems in the early church re: The Lord's Table & the exposition of truth concerning this ordinance.

INTRO.: A. The Lord's Table originally meant to unify believers around the central truth of our Savior's substitutionary atonement, has instead spawned heresies & horrible distortions. From the Catholic "transubstantiation" to the over-simplistic "bananas & coconut milk" observance suggested by Dr. M.R. DeHaan, superstition & sacrilege have abounded.

B. Even in the early church Paul had to sort out wrong concepts & set in order the details & proper observance of this sacred symbol. In chapter 11 of I Cor. he deals with **TRUTH & TROUBLE AT THE TABLE:**

I. THE PERSON OF THE TABLE: V.23-25

A. The Source: **V.23** *"I have received of the Lord..."*

1. Paul claims revelation as the source of his information concerning the order & orderliness of the Lord's Table.
2. Paul was not present at the original Table, & here declares that he did not get the info. from the other apostles, etc., but from the Savior Himself.

B. The Savior: **V.23-25** *"The Lord Jesus..."*

NOTE: The most important fact involved in the table of the Lord is the Lord of the Table. He sanctioned it & suffered for it.

1. He states the simple historical fact that Jesus Himself instituted this ordinance, it was not of mere human fabrication.
2. Surely if man had originated it it would more likely resemble the ornate "Eucharist" of the Catholic Church than the simple ceremony Paul presents here.
 - a. The **"bread"** (not wafer, "Host", Eucharist, etc.) was broken so that we would never forget the agony He suffered for us.
 - b. The **"cup"** (not chalice, sacrament, wine, etc.) was poured out to remind us of the price of our redemption.

QUOTE: *"When these you see, remember Me"* is a motto that states simply the symbolic significance of these simple elements.

II. THE PERVERSION AT THE TABLE: V.20-22

A. The Corruption: v.20,21

1. Paul tells them that what the Corinthians were doing was NOT **"the Lord's Table."** **v.20**
2. They had turned the sacred symbol into a disgraceful supper.
 - a. It was never meant to be a meal or a feast.
 - b. It was meant to be a memorial & a symbol.
3. The rich were stuffing themselves & the poor were going away with empty stomachs. **v.21**

B. The Censure: **v.22**

1. There may be a hint here that the Corinthians had a designated place of worship other than believer's homes.
2. Paul gives a scathing rebuke to these professing Christians... **"I praise you not!"**
3. Paul singles out Judas' betrayal in the next verse as if to equate their actions at this event with what Judas did to Christ.

III. THE PURPOSE OF THIS TABLE: V.26,28

A. Look Backward: "*The Lord's death...*"

1. This is the main focus of our attention at the Lord's Table since it is memorial in nature.
2. Jesus used the concept of a "memorial service" for loved ones as the focal point of the Lord's Supper.

NOTE: Instead of a tombstone, He used bread; instead of a photograph, He used the fruit of the vine.

B. Look Inward: "*examine himself...*"

1. This brings up the question of motives as well as discernment.
2. This also brings up the concept of behavior & belief.

C. Look Forward: "*till He come...*"

1. Then faith will be replaced by sight, & the Lord's Supper by the Lord's presence.
2. Without this aspect the others are meaningless.

IV. THE PARTAKERS AT THIS TABLE: V. 28-28,31,32

A. Open Communion:

1. This concept teaches that ALL should be invited to partake.
2. The context shows that only believers are actually invited.

NOTE: Where the unsaved are invited the implication is that they are somehow related to the Lord & in His family. This gives false assurance & no doubt has led many to hell, who thought they were O.K.

B. Closed Communion:

1. This practice excludes all but those who are members of a specific local church.
2. This may be implied in the text since it was written to the church at Corinth, but the passage seems wider in scope.

C. Close Communion:

1. This method of observing the Lord's Table invites all believers who are obedient to other prerequisites to partake.
2. This excludes all non-believers, but includes all obedient believers.

NOTE: Someone noted that the two groups forbidden at the Lord's Table are the Unsaved & the Undiscerning. v.29 God only chastens HIS children. v.32

V. THE PENALTY OF THE TABLE: v.29-32

A. The Problem: "*unworthy...*" v.29

1. The word "*unworthy*" is an adverb, not an adjective.
2. He is not speaking of the person but his actions; "unworthy manner".
3. The word "*damnation*" is the Greek word "krima" & means judgment. cf. v.31,32 (a diff. word is used in these verses)

B. The Punishment: "*weak...sickly...sleep...*" v.30-32

1. The judgment results in these 3 punishments as chastisement from the Lord.
2. Thank the Lord that if we will deal w/our sins & problems He will not have to.

CONCL.: Paul has given us the **TRUTH** about the Lord's Table so we can avoid the **TROUBLE** that may be associated with its abuse.

The decision is ours. Will we believe Him & properly observe this ordinance, or will we disregard the warnings & experience the consequences.

