

## 1. Introduction

### a. The text is appropriate for today, given the occasion

- i. Communion - the observation, remembrance, and proclamation of the death of Jesus
- ii. Fellowship Gathering of the church as the church
  - (1) The church gathered with purpose
  - (2) The purpose
    - (a) To worship Christ - Communion
    - (b) To love one another: Appreciation dinner for Ben & Beth

### b. Paul's concern

- i. **Their coming together is not coming together.**
  - (1) Meetings not for the better but for the worse (NIV = Do more harm than good)
  - (2) Meetings marked by divisions (schisms)/splits
  - (3) Meetings not in keeping with the heart of the Lord's Supper
- ii. The situation: meeting in homes of the wealthy (as a church) to eat fellowship meals that centered on the Lord's Supper
  - (1) Socially
    - (a) Wealthy would host
    - (b) Most homes would not hold everyone in the same room or at the same table
    - (c) People would be separated, probably by social class, and treated accordingly
      - (i) The wealthy would indulge
      - (ii) The poor would "starve"
  - (2) Spiritually
    - (a) Pride -
      - (i) Self-love is the enemy of sacrificial love
      - (ii) "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."
      - (iii) The wealthy excused themselves by noting Corinthian social custom
    - (b) Shame -
      - (i) Those who came later (servants) or those less economically dominant were sent to the "other room"
      - (ii) Not just a second venue but a "second class" treatment
  - (3) Ultimately:
    - (a) everyone loses since these attitudes and experiences undermine the very nature and purpose of Christ's sacrifice on the cross which is celebrated and proclaimed in the

Lord's Supper

- (b) **Paul insists that when it is the Lord's Supper, the dynamics of this meal are determined not by the household, the host, or favored guests, but by apostolic tradition and by scriptural and ecclesial arrangements**

## 2. The Lord's Supper

- a. Jesus was "betrayed" / "handed over" -**
- i. the injustice and lovelessness of this is personified in Judas
  - ii. When we treat worship in a purely selfish manner, we follow not in the footsteps of Jesus but of Judas!
- b. Jesus "took . . . and broke" as a symbol of the taking and breaking on his own body on the cross**
- i. Jesus took and broke his own body
  - ii. When we treat worship in a purely selfish manner, we break the body that was already broken
- c. Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me"**
- i. The focus of worship is the love and glory and truth of God in Jesus Christ His Son
  - ii. When we treat worship in a purely selfish manner, we deny the sovereign grace of God which he fully displayed in His Son
- d. In the Lord's Supper, and the fellowship meal that surrounded it, the attitude of heart was to be the attitude of Jesus:**
- i. God's glory to be loved and obeyed, even to death
  - ii. God's glory manifest in the loving sacrifice of the Son for those loved by the Father
  - iii. How then can we love one another less than God in Christ loves us?
    - (1) If by our participation in communion we declare our participation at the cross
    - (2) If by our participation in communion we pledge our loyalty to the terms of the new covenant
    - (3) How can we, in our treatment of others, act as if there never was a cross and a covenant, never was a divine mercy toward the sin that destroys all of us equally?

## 3. Recommended responses

- a. Self examination -**
- i. Where is your heart toward those others for whom Christ died
  - ii. Where is your heart toward those who, by faith, have entered into covenant with Him, and through Him, with you?
  - iii. Even if you don't actively dismiss others, treating them as if their presence is of no concern to you also begs the question, where is your heart?
  - iv. Who does Jesus treat as if their presence is not a personal issue?
- b. Self-preparation**
- i. "Guilty" = answerable to God for the prevailing heart attitude

- ii. Judge yourself.
- iii. Hold your heart and your attitudes to the royal law of love and test whether you are guilty of lovelessness.

**c. Self-surrender**

- i. Discerning the body
- ii. Seeing in the broken bread the intended symbol
  - (1) Recognizing the reason and attitude for which Christ gave His body to be broken on the cross
  - (2) Recognizing Christ's commitment to God's glory
  - (3) Recognizing Christ's commitment to divine love
  - (4) Recognizing that our voluntary participation is
    - (a) not just a spiritual act of worship
    - (b) but is a personal commitment to action
      - (i) Commitment to covenant love for God in all His glory
      - (ii) Commitment to covenant love for others

**d. Self-sacrifice**

- i. Practical Advice: In the church, love one another
  - (1) Wait for one another
  - (2) Eat at home
- ii. Ramifications
  - (1) Be, from your whole heart full of love, sensitive to Spirit of Jesus
  - (2) Be, from your whole heart full of love, sensitive to one another

**4. The providence of today**

**a. Communion -**

- i. Real recognition of participation by faith in the death of Jesus
- ii. Death to self and selfishness

**b. Fellowship meal (application) - Three Observations for Application**

- i. Make room at the table
  - (1) No one should have to eat alone or search for a seat
  - (2) Enthusiastically include one another (tables set for 6 can seat 8)
- ii. Help others before your help yourself
  - (1) Some are physically unable to serve themselves
  - (2) Have from time to time suggested their own departure and absence so no one else has to be bothered
  - (3) Look for those who need to be served and serve them as Jesus does
- iii. There will always be enough, even when there is little, if our attitude is the benefit of others rather than ourselves.
  - (1) Unsupervised children arrive at the table first and fill their plates with food they do not eat, while slower moving adults at the end of the line find less
    - (a) Not a crime
    - (b) Adults might not even care

- (2) But!
  - (a) Where this represents selfishness (taking care of me without thought for others)
  - (b) This attitude should be considered and disciplined
  - (c) Make sharing and watching out for one another the focal point of your fellowship meals
  - (d) **Let your attitudes toward yourself and others be the attitude of Jesus who, willingly and lovingly, gave his life on behalf of others (you!)**