

When Love Comes to Church (Part 2)
1 Corinthians 14:1

I. Last week and This Week

A. Last Week: The fail

1. The attempt:
 - a. In response to 1 Corinthians 14:1, when love comes to church, love deals with sin
 - b. Attempted to show love's impact on the Body of Christ as we worship at the Lord's Supper
 - c. Unfortunately, attempted too much too fast

B. The intent this week

1. Back up, slow down, and take a smaller bite
2. Paul continually brings us back to the practical impact of gospel love actualized in the lives of the fully integrated people of God
3. Love is the heart
 - a. Of all we are in Christ
 - b. Of all we do in Christ towards others.
4. **Paul wants us to experience in our own lives the impact gospel love has when love comes to the fully integrated people of God.**
 - a. What does real love look like when love comes to church?
 - b. What does love look like when the followers of Jesus follow the command of Jesus to love one another on specific occasions?

C. Examples of Gospel Love for Others in the Fully Integrated People of God

1. Definitions
 - a. Gospel love
 - (1) The condition of devoted affection for God and self-sacrificing concern for one another created by God in us through the working of the Holy Spirit in accordance with God's word as we put our faith in Christ.
 - (2) Gospel love is the result of the gospel applied to us, instilled in us, and expressed through us.
 - (a) Love by definition is no solitary condition.
 - (b) Love flourishes in community
 - i) That community can be God Himself
 - a) ***"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."***
 - ii) That community can be God and creation
 - a) ***For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.***
 - iii) That community can be marriage, family, church, or some other social construct
 - a) ***Husbands love your wives as Christ***

- e. Chs 12-14 Gospel love utilizes spiritual gifts for the edification of believers and the persuasion of unbelievers (especially in public worship) in the fully integrated people of God
 - f. Ch 15 Gospel love anticipates the resurrection and future hope of glory for the fully integrated people of God: no one left behind
 - g. Ch 16 Gospel love esteems the less fortunate in the fully integrated people of God
3. **Paul's singular focus is that gospel love permeate the lives, experiences, worship, and ministry of the fully integrated people of God.**

II. Gospel Love, the Fully Integrated People of God, and Communion

A. Gospel love remains in play when God's fully integrated people gather for communion

- 1. Objection to last week: "Communion is between God and the believer"
 - a. Half right - Paul emphasizes the need for self-examination
 - (1) **1 Corinthians 11:27-28 (ESV)** ²⁷ *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.* ²⁸ *Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.*
 - b. The question is, "Why?" Why does Paul call for this self-examination?
- 2. Clues from the Context suggest it's not only for individual benefit
 - a. 1 Cor 11:18, 20, 33 "when you come together"
 - b. 1 Cor 11:21 "when you eat you don't wait for each other" which doesn't make sense if communion is simply between God and the individual believer
 - c. All of chapter 10 and 12-14 focus on the members of the Body caring for each other as the fully integrated people of God
 - d. **1 Corinthians 11:29 (ESV)** *For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.*
- 3. What body ought we to discern?
 - a. Not the physical body of Jesus
 - (1) He was in his physical body when he initiated the Supper, so he must have been speaking symbolically
 - (2) He went to the cross in His physical body, not as a loaf bread
 - b. The Symbol of the Body on the Bread
 - (1) **Personal Body**
 - (a) The body in which Christ lived His sinless representative life
 - (b) The body in which Jesus died as the propitiation and expiation of sin
 - (c) The body in which he rose alive and glorified

- (d) The body in which He will one day return, take His people to Himself, and establish His eternal kingdom in the new heavens and new earth
- (e) Real life lived in a real body given to real death on a real cross for a real purpose, the real glory of God
- (2) **Spiritual Body: The Church is His Body, the fully integrated people of God**
 - (a) A body, the fully integrated people of God, called out of the world to be separate
 - (b) A body, the fully integrated people of God, called from sin to faith and obedience instructed by the word and empowered by the Spirit
 - (c) A body, the fully integrated people of God, called to a fully integrated existence
 - (d) A body, the fully integrated people of God, called to glory which will one day stand in His presence on no merit of its own, but entirely on the merit of the life and death and resurrection of the Savior

B. Why does Paul set communion insist in self-examination?

- 1. Partly so that we will not bring judgment on ourselves
 - a. **1 Corinthians 11:29 (ESV) *For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.***
- 2. **Partly so that we will not fail to adequately love one another by failing to adequately honor the solemnity, holiness, and integrity of Christ in Whose body and blood we claim through the Lord's Supper to participate as the fully integrated members of His body.**
 - a. God makes every true believer a member of His fully integrated people of God, the body of Christ
 - b. When we come to the table we come as the fully integrated people of God
 - c. So, the reality that we are a fully integrated body has an impact on the love practiced by the body in the Lord's Supper
 - (1) **How each of us relates to the Christ and to communion matters to and for the rest of us.**
 - (2) Love dictates that all of us protect the integrity of communion and the eternal souls that share the table with us
 - (3) Love dictates that we exclude from the table all sin that denies the life and death of Jesus our Savior
 - (4) Gospel love requires we diligently protect the honor of Christ, the integrity of the Body, the reputation of the gospel, the glory of God, and the hearts of our brethren.

C. Some Ways the Fully Integrated Body of Christ Can Love One Another at Communion

1. We should take seriously that the Lord's Supper is a real and spiritual participation in the body and blood of Jesus, which He willingly and faithfully surrendered to the Father on the cross to free us from slavery to sin and death
 - a. If we understand and claim to participate in his body and blood
 - b. Then we claim that we will live our lives and die our death for the reason He did
 - (1) Love for the Father's glory
 - (2) Love the lost and sinful people bound for hell unless they find a Savior
 - c. Communion is more than merely the broken cracker and the tablespoon of grape juice. It is a commitment to love in symbol and in fact.
2. We should, as a practice of love for Christ and one another, disallow from taking communion anyone who does not profess Christ as their Savior.
 - a. Prevents their hypocrisy
 - b. Prevents our hypocrisy
3. We should actively disciple one another in love in the days between communion, dealing with the sin that so easily besets us, so that at communion we may have a clear and clean conscience