

The Lord's Disciples Must Break Bread Properly
(1 Corinthians 11:17-34)

Introduction:

1. This morning we showed from the Scriptures how "breaking bread" [eating the Lord's Supper] is an act of Christian worship.
2. This evening we are studying the breaking of bread further by examining these verses written to the Christians in Corinth.
3. These verses:
 - a. show how the Christians in Corinth did not eat break bread correctly
 - b. reveal the mistakes made in the Corinthian church
 - c. emphasize the importance of breaking bread properly.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.17-22) PAUL REFUSED TO PRAISE THE CHRISTIANS IN CORINTH
 - A. He said twice, "*I praise you not*" (vs.17, 22).
 - B. He revealed 3 reasons why he refused to praise the Christians in Corinth.
 1. (vs.17) When they came together, it was "*not for the better, but for the worse.*"
 2. (vs.18) When they assembled, they were divided.
 - a. This letter shows how they were divided over:
 - 1) their leaders (ch.1-4)
 - 2) their spiritual gifts (ch.12-14).
 - b. To make matters worse, they were divided into factions when they were supposed to be eating the Lord's Supper.
 - c. According to vs.19, these divisions served a useful purpose -- those who worshipped correctly were revealed.
 3. (vs.20) Their coming together was not for the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper.
 - a. (vs.21) Each member ate his own supper before the others.
 - b. The poor went hungry while others ate and drank to excess.
 - C. We must understand the situation.
 1. (Acts 2:46) From the earliest days of the church, members enjoyed eating meals together.
 2. Gradually, Christians began bringing their food with them to services.
 3. Either before or after services, a meal would be eaten.
 4. These meals were mentioned in Jude 12 as "*feasts of charity*" [love feasts].
 5. Unfortunately, the church in Corinth allowed this love feast to enter the worship service, and it prevented the members from eating the Lord's Supper properly.
 6. Basically, they came together to fill their stomachs.
 - D. (vs.22) Paul concluded this section by asking a series of questions.
- II. (vs.23-26) PAUL REVEALED THE PURPOSE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
 - A. (vs.23) This information:
 1. was revealed to Paul by the Lord
 2. had already been presented to the Christians in Corinth -- apparently, they had forgotten it.
 - B. The night Jesus was betrayed, He gave instructions for eating His Supper.
 1. (vs.24-25) Jesus taught His followers to eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine in His remembrance.
 2. (vs.26) As often as the Lord's Supper is eaten, the Lord's death is shown.
 - C. The problem in the church at Corinth was that its members were not remembering Christ, and they were not showing His death.
 1. They had forgotten the significance of the Lord's Supper.
 2. They needed to be reminded of its importance.
- III. (vs.27-34) FAILING TO EAT THE LORD'S SUPPER PROPERLY IS A SERIOUS MATTER
 - A. One who eats the Lord's Supper "*unworthily*":
 1. is "*guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*" (vs.27)

2. eats and drinks condemnation to himself (vs.29).
- B. Vs.30 indicates that this was a widespread problem in Corinth -- many were weak, sickly, and asleep.
- C. (vs.28) Because this is so serious, each member is to examine the manner in which he/she eats the Lord's Supper.
- D. (vs.31-34) Instructions are given that are designed to prevent condemnation.
 1. (vs.31) Each member is to judge himself to avoid judgment.
 2. (vs.32) Remember the benefits of the Lord's chastening.
 3. (vs.33) "*Tarry*" [wait] for others.
 4. (vs.34) Those who are hungry need to eat at home.

Conclusion:

1. The Lord's Supper is to be eaten properly.
2. A failure to do so is sin.
3. As we eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine, let us do so in memory of our dear Lord.
4. Eating the Lord's Supper should cause us to be spiritually renewed.
5. Communing with Christ and remembering what He has done for us each Sunday ought to give us the strength we need to face the rest of the week.