

SERMON DISCUSSION:

“ONE TABLE; ONE BODY”

1CORINTHIANS 11:17-34

In Corinth, wealthy believers were eating lavishly while poorer members went hungry, importing social hierarchies from the Roman *patron-client* system into the church. Because the Lord's Supper proclaims the sacrificial death of Christ that created one people, their behavior contradicted the very gospel they claimed to celebrate. Paul rebukes the church, reminding them that the meal commemorates the body and blood of Christ and publicly proclaims his death until he returns. Eating “**in an unworthy manner**” does not mean moral perfection but participating in the Supper while disregarding the unity of Christ's body, the church. Failing to discern the body invites divine discipline. The solution is self-examination, repentance, and welcoming one another as equals at the table. Only the gospel, which unites sinners to Christ in the new covenant, can create genuine humility, reconciliation, and unity among God's people.

// GETTING THE MESSAGE

:: What does Paul mean when he says their gatherings were “**not for the better but for the worse**”?

:: Over and over Paul says “**when you come together**”. What does the phrase “**come together as a church**” (*ekklēsia*) imply about the nature of the Christian gathering, and how did the Corinthian behavior contradict this identity?

:: Why does Paul say, “**It is not the Lord's Supper that you eat**” (v.20)? How does the wealthy humiliating the poor contradict the meaning of the Supper?



// GETTING THE MESSAGE

:: What does Paul's rhetorical question "**Do you despise the church of God?**" reveal about how seriously God takes division in the church?

:: How does the Lord's Supper connect to covenant themes from the Old Testament, especially the covenant ceremony in Exodus 24?

:: What does it mean to eat or drink the Lord's Supper "**in an unworthy manner**" (v.27)?

:: What does "**discerning the body**" (v.29) mean in context?

:: In v33 Paul commands believers to "**wait**" or "**welcome**" one another. How does that command summarize the entire passage? What does it mean to "welcome" one another to the Table?



// GETTING TO CHRIST

:: Paul says Jesus took the cup and declared it "**the new covenant in my blood**"—not *behind* or *after* his blood, but *in* it. What does it mean that every blessing of the new covenant is inseparably located in and carried by the shed blood of Christ?

:: Israel failed to keep the covenant and Jesus stood in as the true Israel—keeping the law perfectly and bearing its curse. How does understanding Jesus as the faithful covenant partner produce humility toward fellow church members?

// GETTING TO YOU

:: Paul commands self-examination before eating the bread and drinking the cup (v28). When you examine yourself before communion, what should you be looking for?

:: The text challenges us to find someone in the church in whom we can invest spiritually. What fears or excuses keep Christians from that kind of intentional relationship? How can they be overcome?



// GETTING TO YOU

:: Paul says, "**If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home**" (v34). How might our approach to church gatherings change if we truly came to serve and celebrate others rather than to satisfy our own needs or preferences?

// GETTING TO OTHERS

:: What practical steps can church members do to move from mere Sunday attendance to real spiritual investment in one another?

:: Paul's rebuke was that the church had imported the culture's social stratification into its community. What cultural values or social assumptions are we at risk of smuggling into our church life today that contradict the gospel's leveling of the ground at the cross?

:: If the Lord's Supper is where "pride and individualism goes to die" how should our celebration of communion shape our witness to a fragmented and lonely world? How can our unity across class and cultural lines become evidence for the truth of the gospel?

