

○ SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 (NKJV, ESV)

○ FIRST IMPRESSIONS: *It has something to do with the Lord' Supper (Holy Communion). In fact, a more careful reading will show us that it has something to do with the abuse of the Lord's Supper in the church @ Corinth. The way they practiced it, it is a serious deviation from its original institution.*

○ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

[A] The Passover (**Exodus 12:1-14**)

Among the various things to be done, of importance is the fact that a lamb is killed and its blood shed. The lamb was killed in the place of the 1st born Israelites boy in that family. This means, that boy could eat and drink and enjoy the feast, because another being has died in his place.

We also note that the Israelites are commanded to keep this as an everlasting ordinance. (V14)

How The Jews Keep It

The Passover Meal begins with the host pronouncing the blessing of the first cup. He lifted up the 1st cup, one of the 4 cups that were on the table of the Passover Meal. That cup was full of red wine, and he would pass it from hand to hand after he has drank from it himself. After the 1st cup, they would take bitter herbs, dip in some fruit sauce and then eat it. Then one of them, would stand and give a message about the meaning of the Passover – how God deliver Israel from Egypt with an outstretched arm. The first part of the Hallel (Psalm 113-118) would be sung.

The 2nd cup will be taken, the host drinks from it and then pass it around. Then they would take the unleavened bread, break it, eat and pass it round. After that, they will eat the roasted sacrificial lamb. Then the third cup was passed around and drank. The rest of the Hallel will be sung, then the fourth cup was taken which celebrated the coming kingdom in a day that was yet to be. After it was drunk, they would leave immediately.

[B] The Last Supper (**Luke 22:14-23, Matthew 26:26-30**)

Read the two passages above and see the various parts mentioned that matches the way Jews keep the Passover.

[C] The Lord's Supper

**Acts 2:42, 46
Acts 20:7,11**

**2 Peter 2:13
Jude 12**

The New Testament Church, in obedience to the Lord, kept the Lord's Supper. It would appear that they also have the love feast together with the Lord's Supper. That is, besides observing the Lord's Supper, they would come together to share a meal together.

The order could be: Bread, Meal, Cup
Or
Meal, Bread, Cup

It appears likely that the church in Corinth would have the Love-Feast and the Lord's Supper together.

○ PROBLEM DIAGNOSED (V17-22)

Structure

No praise for you (V17)

Divisions! (V18-19)

This is not the Lord's Supper!! (V20)

Abuses! (V21-22a)

No praise for you (V22b)

Message

- [1] **The two hallmarks of their Love Feast and Lord's Supper are: divisions and abuses. Divisions could be that they would gather in their own groups (rich, poor, free, slaves) and not fellowship with others during the Feast. Abuses would be that they would act in a selfish way, eating their food to the full, while others go hungry. Paul talks about one drunk (not only full, bloated with food, but even going further in indulgences, drinking till drunk) while another is hungry!**
- [2] **This way of observing the Lord's Supper stands in direct opposition to the Cross which the Lord's Supper is mean to commemorate. The Cross would convey the message of unity – Christ's death unites His people as one. The Cross would also convey the message of sacrifice – Christ sacrificing Himself for His people. But in the Lord's Supper observance, disunity is blatant and self-centered rules! This is why Paul says what he said in v17b, v20, v17a, v22b.**

○ CORRECTIVE EXPOUNDED (V23-26)

- * Paul's approach: **He did not tell them to stop observing the Lord's Supper. Instead, he tells them to correct the wrong way they observe it by reminding them of the original institution.**

- * Christ's institution: **He reminded them that the Lord's Supper is not the invention of men nor of the church. It is instituted by the Lord Jesus Himself and hence only He has the right to suspend/remove it. Also, since He is the One who instituted it, we must follow His prescription, not our own ideas.**
- * The Bread: ***Broken for you . . .* A reminded of the substitutionary nature of Christ's death. It was for you, just like the Passover lamb was killed for the 1st born son.**
- * The Cup: ***New covenant in My blood, which is shed for you . .* Again, a reminded of Christ's death being for His people. In addition, it is a reminded that the blood is the blood of the new covenant, pointing to the fact that we are a redeemed community, the New Covenant people.**
- * The act: **As we eat the bread, we are proclaiming that we trust in the death of Christ for our acceptance with God. As we drink the cup, we are also proclaiming that we belong to one another. We cannot belong to Christ without belonging to one another. To eat and drink at the Lord's Table implies not only saving faith but a lifestyle lived under His active Lordship. It is an act of identification with Christ and with Christ's people!**

- **REMEDY REQUIRED (V27-34)**

- [1] **Do not partake in an unworthy manner.**
The word is 'unworthy manner', not 'unworthy'. The truth is that none are worthy to come to the Lord, to partake of the Lord's Supper. Rather, the call is that we must observe the Lord' Supper in a manner that befits, matches the message and purpose. Since it remembers Christ's death for us, we must never partake of the Lord's Supper that negates or ignores or violates this message.
- [2] **Wait for one another**
This conveys acceptance and respect; instead of rushing in and just eat to satisfy yourself, you wait for everyone to be present and then partake of the meal and then the Lord's Supper together. This shows your love and concern for one another.

- **POSSIBLE REFLECTIONS**

- # What have I learnt from this lesson? (Name one)
- # A good thing (LoveFeast&Lord'sSupper) morphed (mutated) into a bad thing (see verse 20). What did it happen? Can the same mutation take place in my Christian Life/our Church Life today? Discuss.
- # How has this study affected my view of the Lord's Supper? What needs to be changed? How can the change take place?

English Standard Version:

¹⁷But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, ¹⁹for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. ²⁰When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. ²¹For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. ²²What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

²³For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

²⁷Whoever, 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. ²⁸Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. ³¹But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. ³²But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

³³So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another— ³⁴if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.