

FBC - 1/2/85
Wed. EVEN.
- From Tape/mc

WEDNESDAY EVENING BODY LIFE
1 Cor. 11: 17-34

We resume our study of the Scrip.; we're out of the holidays and we'll be on regular schedule. You get the word around. Open to 1 Cor. 11 - we're gonna finish this book and then we'll be in another very vital series. Incidentally, this seems to be the book that's being studied throughout the convention this year. In 1 Cor. 11: 17 and following, we have the longest discussion of the Lords Supper found in the entire Bible. We have the oldest account of it.

It's older than the accounts in the Gospels. But Paul is really writing to ~~correct~~ correct abuses which has developed around the celebration of this ordinance and whatever else you get from this Scrip., you see how important the Lords Supper is and how serious it is not to understand it and to celebrate it, in the right manner. I don't think that its' written to discourage us, but it certainly does show that the Lords Supper may be far more serious than non-liturgical, non-sacramental churches have recognized.

If the Roman church and the sacramental churches like the Episcopal put too much emphasis; maybe sometimes the free church (and by that I mean the Baptist Church and those that don't much of a ritual around it) may have treated it too lightly. It's a serious word for us and I'm gonna cover it quickly because I think you are familiar in the main with it, but I do want to go through with it. Dr. Tom Wood, how often do you think we ought to celebrate the Lords Supper in the FBC?

Have you ever thought about it? Well, we don't have that great an order. We probably average every two months; maybe - would that be ten times a year? Hopefully we do it ten times a year. Is that enough for you? Judy Aven, have you ever thought about this? How often would you like to partake of the Lords Supper? You haven't ever thought about it? Bro. Max _____ how often would you like to partake of the Lords Supper _____? O.K. Loretta, how often would you like to partake of it? Anyone have a feeling of the frequency of the taking of the Lords Supper? Bro. Gerald Clark, how often would you like to partake of it?

Bro. Tim FRances, have you ever thought about how often you'd like to partake of the Lords

Supper? You think every quarter is enough? How many of you think every quarter is enough? Well, many churches take it every quarter. That's as often as they take it. Some churches take it once a month. How would it be to take it every Sunday? Bro. David FRagon, would you want to take it every Sunday?

How many of you like for it to be the whole service? Raise your hand. I think there would certainly be a consensus there. Bro. Herb Davis, do you like to take it in the evening or in the morning? Yes. Well, the Bible doesn't really say but you know you wouldn't want it to be a ritual but I think it's a high moment, indeed. And if there's understanding, I think the more understanding you have, the more frequency you could celebrate it.

All right, let's look at 1 Cor. 11,

V. 17 (read) 'this' means 'concerning the Lords Supper'. He says in this verse 'when you come together to celebrate the Lords Supper, it's really not for good. It'd be better if you didn't really come.'

V. 18 (read) he's indicating that the report has probably been exaggerated, but he says there is some truth, I believe, in what I've heard.

V. 19 (read) 'heresies' is the word 'factions'. He says ~~XXX~~ that the factions and the confusion serve a purpose because that which is true; that which has been approved and put to the test and proved to be true, stand out among or in the midst of the confusion.

V. 20 (read) now they said they were coming to take the Lords Supper but he goes on to explain that that really is not their purpose. Because in ~~XXX2X~~

V. 21 (read) you have a picture here of people gathering and some of them having food and others not having food, meeting in little cliques; some of them actually drinking and this, evidently, was the so-called Agape feast or meal that they were celebrating but the Lords

Supper is supposed to stress unity and instead of unity, it was dividing the church because they were meeting in groups and they were showing their social distinctions in the way they were eating. In

V. 22 (read) I knew a man one time who just thought it was a deadly sin to eat in the church and this was his Scrip. and he lived next door to me and I said 'this has nothing to do with eating in the church. This is the Lords Supper'. And when he saw it, he believed it. But he took this Scrip. 'have ye not houses to eat and drink in?' He said 'you should never serve any food at the church'. Next section of this verse (read) and there were people that came that didn't have food, evidently.

Next Section (read) so he's speaking of a real abuse that has developed around the Lords Supper and then, he goes into a discussion of what the Lord told him. It's a beautiful section indeed. He says in

V. 23 (read) 'received of the Lord' (that's Jes.) really 'from the mouth of the Lord'. When did he receive from the Lord? When would you say that he received this message from the Lord about the Lords Supper? Patty Pierce, you have an idea? Anybody want to venture a guess? It's quite possible - we can't tell - I really believe that it would be better to interpret it as in that time when he was in Arabia, he could have received a Heavenly vision, but he says 'I received of the Lord' which indicates a communication from the mouth of the Lord. 'That which I also delivered unto you.....' Just think about Jes. describing this incident to Paul.

No doubt He told him about the betrayal of Judas and He told him about this incident, in which He instituted the Lords Supper.

V. 24 (read) 'given thanks' is the word ^{'eucharist'} ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ and that's the reason sometimes, the Lords Supper is called 'The Eucharist' - it means 'thanks'. When He had given the Eucharist, He broke it and said..... Now our Roman Catholic friends have a view that in the miracle of

the Mass, that the bread and wine are trans-substantiated into the actual body and blood of Christ. Well, this language here would rule out this doctrine of trans-substantiation. He says 'this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me'. Well, He was sitting there before the disciples. Did they eat His body? Why, of course not. 'This is My Body' means 'this represents my body'.

Just like suppose tonight I were to take my billfold and I would say 'now I want to show you my granddaughter' and you know I just happen to have a picture here and I showed you my granddaughter and said 'this is my granddaughter'. Well, not really. This is not my granddaughter. But I say 'I want to show you Laura'. This is not my granddaughter. This is a pictorial representation of my granddaughter and when Jes. says 'this is my body' He is not giving them His body, but He is saying 'this bread represents My body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me'.

Now the word 'remembrance' in our way of thinking is simply 'mental recall'. But the word in the Bible is the Hebrew word and has a far greater and deeper meaning. It really means 'to bring into your presence'. The word 'remembrance' means to 'bring Christ into your presence'. It's not just a mental act and while trans-sutstantiation is wrong, I believe that symbolism is wrong and I will point this out later on.

V. 25 (read) 'the N. T.' - really the New Covenant - in my blood - or ratified in my blood. In the O. T. the Covenants were always sealed , or ratified, by blood and He says this cup is the N. Covenant ratified in My blood; this do ye as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me'. Now he says in

V. 26(read)'eat this bread and drink this cup' and that's as close as we get to any time frame. He doesn't say how often but he says 'every time (id the way I translate it) that ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show (or ye do preach) the Lords death til He comes.' You see, when we partake of the Lords Supper, we are actually preaching. We're actually re-enactin

the Gospel. Remember a story that Ironsides tells of a man he tried to win to the Lord, through witness and through preaching and teaching and he said 'I couldn't win him'. But then he said 'one day there was a Japanese came to their service and ^{this} ~~he~~ was in California and they partook of the Lords Supper and the H. S. took that and convicted this man and he was gloriously converted'. He confessed his faith and immediately, he said 'now when can I be baptized'.

Ironside said 'well, next Sunday' and he said 'but wait a moment. Didn't you say Jes. is coming'? Ironside said 'yes'. He said 'well, suppose He comes before next Sunday. I would not want Him to come before I was baptized' and Ironside said he was rebuked for delaying this mans baptism and he said 'we'll arrange for this right now'. But he was converted. Have you ever known anyone to be converted through the Lords Supper? Well, they certainly will be converted, if we really take it worthily unto the Lord - people will be converted.

Now, I didn't used to know this and when I would serve the Lords Supper, I would assume 'well, here's kind of a ritual and no one will be saved'. Listen, we've had many wonderful decisions in this church, around the Lords Table. I'm not discouraged when we partake of the Lords Supper; I expect people to walk the aisle and to be saved. It ought to be this way. This is the whole congregation, preaching the Lords death til He comes. It's a powerful service, indeed, if it's entered into with meaning and understanding.

V. 27 (read) this has frightened a lot of people because they said 'well, I'm afraid, because I'm not worthy'. Well, notice the word 'unworthily'? It's not an ^{adjective} ~~adjective~~; it's an adverb. It's the MANNER of partaking. It doesn't have to do with our personal worthiness. Jes. is the only person who's ever declared to be worthy in the Bible. You say 'well, does that mean that any scoundral can take it?' Well, certainly a lost person cannot take it. If I have unforgiving heart, I should not take it until I confessed and got right. Neither you.

But the emphasis here is not on our personal worthiness but the manner. He says 'you - if you partake of it unworthily' - how do we partake of the Lords Supper unworthily? What would be

a manner in approaching the Lords Supper that would be unworthily? Anybody? Being flippant about it - O.K. O.K. What's another? How can we unworthily partake of it? (Well, that certainly would be true but that would be more of the person himself and his worthiness than just the man). How about rushing through the Lords Supper? I REALLY believe - and I think I've been a part of it - I really believe that to tack on the Lords Supper at the end of a service when everybody is tired and ready to go and fidgety - is not good.

Which often is what is done. But I also believe to make it a ritual - to just make it a ritual - is an unworthy way. I think something else and this is not east - we need to pray about what I'm talking about: how about if we're partaking of the Lords Supper and our minds are on everything except the sacrifice of Jes. and the body of the Lord? I really believe that the ancient custom of fasting before the Lords Supper has a merit and you know the Roman church before you can partake of it, you must go to confession. While we don't believe in Priestly confession, that grows out of a ~~type~~ type of Biblical teaching and that is that the Lords Supper is a Special act of worship and that Gods people should not rush in to it.

I have tried, but I have not been consistent here, because I'm so tremendously busy, but I have tried to announce before hand and I think the pastor ought to do this. If we're gonna partake of the Lords Supper - say, first Sunday of February - that ~~xx~~ it'd be good for me to announce two or three weeks in advance and I really believe we ought to prepare for the Lords Supper by confession of our sins and coming in a frame of mind. Now I think this is one reason I like Sunday night, is when you are not as rushed.

But you understand some people can't come on Sunday night and we do it on Sunday morning because we have Senior citizens and members who could not come and we would never deny anyone. If there's ever any problem here, you come to me and tell me because I would not keep a single person from taking it because they couldn't come on Sunday night. We do it on - generally, on Sunday night ~~because~~ because it seems there is a bit of reverence and it was first celebrated on Sunday night. The very word means 'the evening meal'. 'Dacnon' (?) in the Greek. Supper.

'Dacon' means the evening meal. The real Scriptural way to do it is at night, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't take it in the morning for the convenience of those who couldn't come at night. Look at

V. 28 (read) 'examine himself' now that's a very strong word. That really means 'put himself to the test'. It's a word that was used for testing steel. But let a man thoroughly test himself. See? The rest of the verse seems to be a real key phrase here. If we fail to discern, to understand, the meaning of the Lords body. Well, what is the Lords body? Well, the Lords body is two things: the Lords Body would be His very physical body sacrificed for us. When we partake of the Lords Supper, we ought to focus on the sufferings and sacrifice of Jes. Now this, of course, would, immediately, rule out a lost person.

But it seems to me that those who are cold hearted and don't love Jes. and have back-slidden would have a real difficulty in discerning that sacrifice, like they ought to. I would leave that to the conscious of the individual. But the body, in Corinthians, means more than that sacrificial body; it also means the body of the church. What do we do when we discern the body?

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... in oneness and not individuals, and not in cliques. As a matter of fact, that is a tremendous abuse that he's putting down. They have divided in cliques and yet, they've come to say 'we're celebrating the Lords Supper'. YOU take there in V. 23, I didn't point it out - that the Lord Jes, in the same night that He was betrayed, took the loaf - THE loaf - THE artos - the ONE loaf - and the early church ate from one loaf and drank from one cup. Now we have done this and this has great teaching value in it - to indicate the oneness and the unity of the body. All right. How ~~W~~ do we fail to discern this?

If we feel that we partake of the Lords Supper in isolation and if we're not in fellowship with one another and if we are not in oneness, I don't think we can actually partake of the Lords Supper. A group of people who would not be a part of the body, but be a clique over here

fighting the body should not take of the Lords Supper, as I read the Scrip. Here's a very serioius matter. To partake of the Lords Supper is to take it in the fellowship of the people of God and outside of that fellowship, I don't think it can be taken.

I had a neighbor one time who got mad with the pastor or somebody in his church and he quit going. Well, it was the pastor. I wasn't the pastor, but I knew the pastor; so he didn't go. He was one of the best neighbors I've ever seen. Doris is here and, Doris, you remember the Penquiltions (?) - they're in Heaven. I was in New Orleans and he flew me to Greensboro, N. C. to preach his funeral. He was 95 years old. But one day, I came home from church and he was rejoicing and he said 'you know, I haven't partaken of the Lords Supper in ages and I found the solution this morning'.

He said 'I went in my kitchen and I got me a little piece of bread and little glass of juice and man, I partook of my own Lords Supper'. I said 'BROTHER Luther, you don't mean to tell me you DID that'. You'll notice he called me Preacher Bennett. He Said 'Preacher Bennett, what was wrong with that'. I said 'you can't do that. You can't do that at all! You're out of fellowship with your pastor and you are not in fellowship with anybody'. He said 'well, I committed quite a sin'. I said 'you did?' He said 'well, I didn't know this until you told me. I would never do that again'.

I said 'God's gonna forgive you because you were ignorant.' But you don't do that kind of thing. This is a very serious word and I think the heart of all that Paul is saying is in

V. 29 (read) the verses following that indeed concern me. Concern me. I want us to magnify the ordinance of Baptism and the Lords Supper. Our church Covenant calls us to this and I find this is VERY Scriptural and I don't want to discourage anyone and certainly not to place a burden, but this is the Word of God and I do see, in the church at Corinth, a type of abuse that I've never seen in a church. I've never seen people do exactly what they did and certainly come and get drunk and do it quite this way.

But I DO think that we need to be careful.

V. 30 (read) 'for this cause' and that is for not discerning the Lords Body. The word 'sleep' there is the Greek word 'lie in a cemetery'. They had gone so far that they had blasphemed God and judgment, physical illness had come upon them and maybe some other kinds of illness and some people had died. I tell you when we deal with Holy things, we better be careful. You know the Bible says 'if any man defile the Temple of God (1 Cor. 3: 17) and that's speaking of the church, 'him will God destroy'. When you're dealing with Holy things, God will deal with you.

Here is a case and it might seem severe but they were doing things that were really out of order and in the light of instruction - he'd instructed them - and evidently they knew better.

V. 31 (read) notice? He gives here the privilege of 'self-judgment' and that's marvelous. But

V. 32 (read) 'chastened' (disciplined). Of course, our discipline and judgment is in this world whereas the lost man is in the world to come and he's not saying that these people were not believers, but ~~XXX~~ he's saying that God has had to judge them because they would not judge themselves.

V. 33 (read) this seems to have been their tremendous sin. They would not wait and they divided in groups and they ate in little cliques, rather than waiting for the whole body. It does show a tremendous importance in unity and Gods people moving together and this, of course, calls for humility. The key to a church is humility. The Bible teaches that. The second chap. of Phillipians is a great discussion of this and the bottom line of it is that humility is thinking of the - of our brothers and sisters. Don't think on your own things, Paul says, think on the things of others.

This is not easy to do. This is particularly imperative in relation to the Lords Supper, that we be so mindful of one another. You know, there's nothing more beautiful - you know the

meetings that I've attended with pastors across the nation and the Growth Principles as I've shared them across America - I think there's been nothing that has stimulated more interest than our concept of Body Life. Of trying to meet the needs of the body; receiving the offering, which we received tonight. That was a beautiful expression on Christmas Eve, incidentally. That was a service that we've had as much feed back- positive feed back - as any service we've had in a very long time. In that offering, there was about eight hundred and fifty dollars given. We praise God for this because that was given to great need and represented a sense of real oneness in the body.

V. 34 (read) and my neighbor said 'see, there's your Scrip. You're not supposed to serve food in the fellowship hall in a Baptist Church. You supposed to eat at home. You see how you can take Scrip. out of context and make it say anything you want to. Bro. Steve, a text out of context is a what? A pretext. A text out of the context is a pretext! Here is a shining example of where you could really preach a red hot sermon against serving any food, if you didn't put it in it's contextual setting.

There's been many sermons preached on this in country churches and of course, that was false teaching. 'That ye come not together unto judgment'. Paul ends this verse by saying 'this is all I want to say now, but when I get there, there's some other things I'm gonna deal with'.

Well, this is a great section and you think about it and meditate upon it and about three or four weeks from now, we'll be receiving the Lords Supper or celebrating it and I hope that it'll make it more meaningful to you.

Let's stand.