

## **God's Glory in God's Word**

### **1 Corinthians 11:17 - 13:13**

#### **1 Corinthians 11:17-34: Unity in the Lord's Supper**

Recall from last time the "I commend you of verse 2":

*Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. (1Co 11:2)*

Now in verse 17, Paul "does not commend" them:

*But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. (1Co 11:17)*

The actions of the Corinthian church surrounding the Lord's Supper painted the opposite picture of what the Lord's Supper intended. Rather than being united, worldly factions divided the congregation during the time when the Lord was to be remembered. The problems mentioned include:

#### **Division**

*For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. (1Co 11:18a)*

#### **Disorder**

*When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. (1Co 11:20-21)*

*So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another-- if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home--so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. (1Co 11:33-34a)*

#### **Conduct unworthy to the Lord's Supper**

*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. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. (1Co 11:27-30)*

#### **The purpose of the Lord's Supper is not to satisfy one's hunger or go about one's own business. It is to collectively remember the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ:**

*For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In 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." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1Co 11:23-26)*

## 1 Corinthians 12: Unity in the Spiritual Gifts

Chapter 12 points to the unity of the church as “one body”. Each member is gifted with varied gifts that contribute to the overall health of the church. These gifts are called “spiritual gifts”, because they are manifested by the Holy Spirit within us, as indicated in verses 1-3:

*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit. (1Co 12:1-3)*

Consider Romans 10:9 in light of the last words of 1 Corinthians 12:3, and understand that there is a reason why some confess Christ and some don't – and it is not rooted in the decisions of man, but in the giving of the Spirit – regeneration precedes faith.

*because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Rom 10:9)*

Just as our confession of faith is a product of the Spirit within us, the spiritual gifts we possess are a product of the Spirit within us – every single human being has certain talents – but only those who possess the Holy Spirit have spiritual gifts.

*To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. (1Co 12:7-11)*

Within the unity, there is variety. Not everyone has the same gifts. So, for example, regarding speaking in tongues and interpreting tongues, it has never been the case that everyone has that gift – so making it a necessary evidence of salvation is akin to saying that an eye that doesn't behave like a foot is not an eye.

*For the body does not consist of one member but of many. (1Co 12:14)*

*If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. (1Co 12:17-20)*

As we move into chapter 14 next week, we will see the relative importance of tongues to the greater importance of prophecy – a “higher gift”. For now, consider Paul's final words in chapter 12:

*And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. (1Co 12:28-31)*



## 1 Corinthians 13: A More Excellent Way

### **The lack of love renders “spiritual” gifts useless:**

*If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. (1Co 13:1-3)*

### **Love is a characteristic of all disciples:**

*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (Joh 13:34-35)*

### **Love is manifested by the Holy Spirit:**

*Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. (1Co 13:4-6)*

### **Note the similarity between the definition of love provided by Paul here and his listing of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:**

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23)*

### **And the sharp contrast between love and the works of the flesh:**

*Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal 5:19-21)*

Very relevant to our modern concept of love is the phrase: **“it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth”**

The use of the phrase “love is love” to normalize and even celebrate wrongdoing is what love IS NOT according to Paul.

### **Love is greater than both faith and hope:**

*So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1Co 13:13)*

When Christ returns, faith and hope are meaningless. There is no need of faith in the presence of God. There is no need of hope when everything for which we have hope is fulfilled. In the eternal kingdom of God, the love of God for us and our love for Him will abide forever.

*“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (Joh 14:1-3)*

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. (Rev 21:1-3)*

