

(1 Corinthians) Overview to Chapter 11

by Brian Brodersen

The sermon explores the biblical teaching on head coverings, leadership, and submission in the church, emphasizing the importance of being culturally sensitive and submissive to male leadership.

Duration: 43:45

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 11:1-2

Topics: "Communion", "Church Unity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of approaching the bread and the cup with reverence and thankfulness, as they symbolize the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul warns the Corinthians to judge themselves before partaking in communion, so that they may avoid being judged and condemned by the Lord. The preacher also highlights the practical aspects of living the Christian life, such as loving one's neighbor and maintaining unity within the church. Lastly, Paul addresses the issue of divisions among the Corinthians, expressing his disappointment and urging them to come together for the good of the church.

Transcript

As we begin, I want to just remind you, we're going through Paul's epistles to the church presently. An epistle, for those of you that don't know, is simply a letter. And these were letters that were written to the young churches.

Many of those churches, Paul, the apostle, had planted himself. Others had been planted by some of the other apostles. Some of the churches had been planted just simply because people had come to Christ and gone back to their community, began to share Jesus with their family and friends and so forth.

And churches sprang up as a result of that. So the apostles, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they wrote these letters to the churches in order to instruct them on the details of the Christian life. Many times explaining the fuller implications of what Jesus did when he came, what he accomplished by dying and rising again from the dead.

Sometimes the instruction is just very practical, how to live the Christian life in this world. And we've been studying now this first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians for quite some time. And, you know, our method has been to take a chapter in depth or to do an exposition of it, then take a portion of that same chapter and do more of sort of a topical sermon on that.

And we did that pretty consistently up until last week when we suddenly took on three chapters at once. And yet it seemed like the Lord was leading us to do that. And today I had the option of going back into either chapter 8, 9 or 10 and again pulling out a little section and maybe doing a topical type of a study.

But I just felt impressed by the Lord that we ought to move on and look at chapter 11 today. So that's what we're going to do. We're going to look at chapter 11, picking up in verse two.

And let me say from the onset that a portion of this chapter, the first half of this chapter is one of the most difficult chapters to exposit in all of the Bible. And there's a lot of controversy centered around it. And I don't know if we're going to solve that today or not, but we're going to try.

So let's see what the Lord will do. Verse two, Paul says, Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you. Now, Paul is the founder of this church.

And as many of you know from being here since we've been studying it, there was a bit of a conflict going on between the man who founded the church and some of those who are in leadership now. And this epistle is largely a corrective epistle. Paul is seeking to correct some of the misunderstanding and some of the things that are going on in the church that are not consistent with the message that he preached to them.

Now, as we move on into the next verse and into the next half of this chapter, I want to preface my comments by saying this. This is going to be in many ways similar to some of what we looked at in our last study. In the eighth chapter in particular, we saw that there were certain things that Paul addressed that had a specific application to the culture that he was addressing.

But we saw that there was also a broader application by way of principle to us even today. And you remember from chapter eight that the particular thing that Paul was addressing was idolatry. And of course, for most of us living in Western culture, we don't have so much of a problem with idolatry today in the sense that they did eating meat, sacrifice to idols and so forth.

Therefore, in a sense, the chapter in a specific sense that that chapter isn't relevant to us, but the principle in the chapter is relevant. And I believe that's the same thing that we're going to find as we go now into the 11th chapter. There are certain things that are said that really are not relevant to us.

They were relevant to the culture that Paul was writing to. But still, there's a principle that comes out in what he said that has relevance to us today. And so we will look ultimately at the principle and concentrate on that.

But let's look at the particular issue that Paul addressed beginning in verse three. He said, But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ. The head of woman is man and the head of Christ is God.

Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered, dishonors her head, for that is one in the same as if her head were shaved. For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn or shaved.

But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man, nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.

For this reason, the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man in the Lord. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman.

But all things are from God. Now, needless to say, we're probably all wondering, what is this all about? Let me try to help you here. I believe, and this is my opinion, some of you will differ with me and that's fine, but I do believe that what Paul is addressing here is primarily a cultural issue.

That this culture that Paul was addressing was a culture that demonstrated a woman's subordination to a man by a woman wearing a veil or having a head covering. Now, it's interesting that Paul, of course, was a Jew and yet the things that Paul mentions here were not really consistent with Jewish culture. Now, the two issues that seem to stand out here are the issues of head coverings and also length of hair.

Now, the interesting thing, if you look at it from a Jewish perspective, among the Jews even to this very day, of course, the Jewish men do cover their head. You can go to Jerusalem today and if you make your way to what is called the Wailing Wall, you will see many a Jewish man there with his prayer shawl over his head, his head being covered, and he's there giving his petitions to God there at the Wailing Wall. You'll find in the synagogues that men will wear what is called a yarmulke or a skull cap.

So, as we look at what Paul's saying, we're seeing that this isn't really a Jewish thing that he's addressing. Also, with the length of hair being addressed, we find that among the Jews there wasn't anything mandatory about the length of a man's hair. As a matter of fact, I can think of two Old Testament figures who had long hair.

Samson, of course, is the most obvious, the one whose strength was derived from his commitment to God, but his commitment to God was evidenced in the length of his hair. But then also, one of David's sons, a man named Absalom, we're told that Absalom had long, beautiful hair and there was nothing inconsistent in the Jewish culture with that. So, Paul is addressing the Corinthians.

I believe he's addressing issues that had to do with their culture. And it seems that in that culture, a woman showed her subordination, especially in places of worship, by wearing a head covering. And some commentators speculate, some stated as fact, that I don't know if it can be totally substantiated, but they state that during that time in Corinth, the prostitutes went without head coverings and for a woman to go without a head covering, it was a sign of her rebellion against male authority in society.

So, that's probably true. Again, I haven't been able to substantiate it, but many reputable Bible commentators have alluded to those things. So, I would think that that might very well be the case.

But as you look at what Paul's saying here, as you look at the whole tenor of the thing, you find that Paul isn't making dogmatic statements or really laying down hard commandments. He's actually bringing up the issue and then he's even asking them questions about it. He's posing questions.

He's asking them about whether or not a woman ought to be covered and things like this. So, the whole tenor of what he's saying here isn't that of a commandment, but what I think Paul is doing is he's trying to show them that it's important to be culturally sensitive. And in a culture where a woman is seen to be rebellious by refusing to wear a head covering, he's saying to the women in the church that they need to be sensitive to that cultural issue.

Now, another thing I want to point out is that Paul specifically refers to a woman praying or prophesying. It doesn't say anything about them attending a congregational meeting, although that would have happened, the praying, the prophesying would have happened in that context. But what he's forbidding in this particular case is for a woman, or what he's suggesting rather, I think, that they do not do in this particular case is pray or prophesy with their head uncovered.

Because what it was, in essence, was it was disrespectful. It was a failure on a woman's part to acknowledge that God, in his wisdom, has set a divine order where the man would be the head of the woman and Christ would be the head of the man. And, you know, as you go on, there are some, you know, verse 10 in particular is probably the most difficult one where Paul even makes a reference to angels.

He says, for this reason, the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels. Some commentators have said that this refers to the fact that angels are present invisibly, but yet nevertheless present in the assembly of the saints. And angels are very much concerned with a proper order and submission to authority because they know where rebellion leads to having seen the chief angel rebel against God.

Of course, that would be a reference to Satan, Lucifer's fall, originally. So, as we go on now, verse 13, again, here we see Paul posing questions. Listen to what he says.

He says, judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? He's posing questions to them again. He's not making dogmatic statements.

He's just in light of the cultural situation. He's asking them, is this proper? He's implying that it's improper. It's inappropriate under those cultural circumstances.

So he says, then does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him. But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given to her for a covering. So Paul makes an allusion to nature.

Apparently in in that culture, men wore shorter hair, women wore longer hair. I think it's significant that he doesn't appeal to scripture, but he appeals to nature. Now, verse 16, in my opinion, sums up what Paul is actually doing.

He's making some suggestions based upon the culture that they find themselves in and actually calling them to be culturally sensitive. So he says this, but if anyone seems to be contentious. We have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

Now, that's the translation that I have here in the New King James Version, and that's an identical translation to the authorized version of the King James Version. But some of the newer translations, maybe you're using an NIV or a revised version, the newer translations read, but if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no other custom, nor do the churches of God. And that radically changes the meaning of the whole of the whole text, really.

If we have no other custom, then Paul is saying to them, look, you need to come in line with what the rest of the churches are doing. But I personally think that the King James is the better translation. We have no such custom.

For one, this issue is never brought up to any other church. This is the only place in entire New Testament where it's ever alluded to. Therefore, I will opt to go with the translation in the King James Version.

If anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom. And this word custom, I think, is very important to the whole subject as well. You see, a custom was not a commandment.

When you talk about commandments in the Old Testament, for example, you have you have commandments, you have ordinances, you have statutes, but you never have a reference to a custom as being something that God has established. Customs are things that people establish. A custom is a habit.

A custom is a way of doing things. It starts at some point in time and then it becomes a habit. People do this.

This is our custom. We're told about Jesus that he got up and he read in the synagogue as was his custom. It was a customary thing to go into the synagogue and read from the scriptures there.

So again, I think that the fact that Paul even refers to these things as a custom imply that this is not a mandatory requirement within the churches. What he's saying to them is be sensitive to the culture. And in a culture where head coverings are proper because they signify a woman's subordination to a man, then you ought to follow the custom.

But in a culture where that is not the custom, then I don't believe that we are under any obligation to require this kind of a thing. Now, as I said a moment ago, you might agree with me and you might disagree with me and you have the right to do either. You can you can agree or disagree.

And if you disagree and you feel that it's proper to wear a head covering in the church, you have that prerogative and we will allow you to have that prerogative and we'll never encourage you to take off your head covering. But the thing that you have to be careful of is to not impose your convictions on somebody else or judge somebody else who doesn't agree with your conviction. You know, there are there are certain things that God, you know, God might.

In some cases, you know, emphasize something to one person and yet to another person, it's not really an issue. We always have to be careful that we do not impose our convictions when they're not clearly biblical. We have to be careful that we do not impose our personal convictions on other people, because if we do, we end up judging everybody else around us, thinking we're more spiritual than they are and things like that.

And of course, that creates a problem in the body of Christ. It causes division. You see, as Christians, we all have a corporate relationship with God, but we all have an individual relationship with God as well.

And when the Bible doesn't speak clearly on things, that's where we can be confident that God will speak to us individually, clearly on things. We talked a lot in our last study about Christian liberty. Some Christians have liberty to do things that other Christians don't do.

And those who have the liberty are not to be judged by those who don't. And those who have the liberty aren't to judge those who don't have the liberty and think less of them. You see, because God deals with us all on an individual level as well.

And so, again, if you if you have the conviction, if you're not convinced that this chapter is dealing more with cultural issues and you feel an obligation to abide by the things that Paul stated here, then you ought to do that. But don't stand in judgment of those who don't follow you on that. So.

So. I hope that at least helped you to have maybe a little bit of a better understanding of what the apostle is saying here. But now let's get to the real issue that is that is pertinent to us, regardless of the culture, regardless of what's going on in our culture.

The point that Paul is making is that in the church, God has ordained that the woman is to be subordinate to male leadership. We've talked about this in some of our previous studies, kind of touched on it. Women certainly have a place in the church.

And Paul goes out of his way to tell us that in Christ there is neither male nor female. God doesn't love men any more than he loves women. He loves all of us equally the same.

A woman is is equally as precious in the sight of God as is a man. But God has set up an order in creation. God has set up an order for leadership in the church, and God has established that men are to have the primary role of leadership in the church.

Paul deals with it at length in his epistle to Timothy, his first epistle. He says, I do not allow a woman to teach or to usurp authority over a man. And then he gives the reasons for that, because man was not deceived, but the woman was.

Paul also refers to the woman, or Peter does actually, as the weaker vessel, implying that the woman is more vulnerable to spiritual seduction than is the man. Now, ladies, I hope this isn't hurting your feelings or anything like that. But that's just the way it is.

This is the way God has set it up. And I know there's a large movement, you know, that's all for putting women in charge of the world and things like that. And, you know, quite honestly, women have a lot to complain about.

Men have really been abusive over the centuries. But, you know, honestly, Jesus Christ is the greatest liberator of women that ever has come along. It's not the National Organization for Women or any of those that have brought true liberty.

It's the Lord bringing liberty to women now. But yet, honestly, yes, in the church, women have also been oppressed. But any Christian man who believes that he has the right to treat a woman like a doormat or something doesn't have the slightest idea about what the Christian life really is.

When the Bible calls a woman to submit to her husband, you know, right away some ladies cringe, oh no. But you see, the Bible then says, husband, love your wife as Christ loved the church. Submitting to a man who loves you like Christ loves the church is really not a problem at all.

It's joy. It's the natural response. That's what you would do.

So you see, God sets it up perfectly. It's perfectly balanced. And unfortunately, even in the church, as there have been so many things that have been wrong throughout the centuries, this has been one thing that has been wrong.

Women have been abused in the Christian church and mistreated and not given the sensitivity and all that they ought to have been given. And that's a very unfortunate thing. But the solution is not to go to the other extreme and exalt the woman to the position of dominance and crush the man under her heel and all of that kind of a thing.

It's coming to the biblical picture of the relationship between men and women in the sense of husband and wife, but also here in the context, it's the relationship between men and women in the congregational setting, the relationship between men and women in the church. In the church, the primary leadership is to go to the man. Paul makes that clear in his epistle to Timothy as well, that the bishop and the bishop is the overseer of the church.

That the bishop is always a man, the bishop is not a woman. The position of deacon, and these are the only two offices in the church, according to the New Testament. Now you have apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers and so forth, but the apostles and prophets and so on, they are included under the heading of bishop.

These are the only two positions in the church, bishop and deacon. Women can hold the office of deacon. Deaconess would be the proper way to refer to a woman who holds that office.

But the position of a bishop, the overseer, the one who has the spiritual oversight of the fellowship that is reserved for the man. So all of the debate that's going on in the church over whether women should be ordained and all of this. If the Bible was opened up and simply used as the guideline for Christian life, then there really wouldn't be any debate.

Women, of course, have a position. They can serve as deaconesses. Women, of course, are called by Paul himself in his epistle to Titus.

The older women are to teach the younger women how to love their husbands and take care of their children and things like that. Women, of course, have a ministry to one another. And of course, a woman can stand up and address a mixed crowd.

Did you know that you can do that? That's allowable. It would not be at all wrong for me to, as the pastor of this church, invite a woman, say who's a missionary to come and address the entire congregation on the work that God is doing through the ministry that she's involved in. That's not what Paul is forbidding when he makes the kinds of statements that he makes.

But people have taken that to an extreme. Actually, years ago, I had a friend. He wasn't my friend then.

He's become my friend since because he was so legalistic in his thinking process. He refused to send his kids to Sunday school because he had a boy and the Sunday school teacher was a woman. And so he said, oh, my son is getting taught by a woman.

That's unscriptural. Well, it says a woman is not to teach or usurp authority over a man. I'm sorry, that is not a man.

That is a boy. But you see, all of these kinds of things have come up. That's not what the apostle is talking about.

Women can address a mixed audience. Women can share what God's doing in their lives. But.

A woman is not to hold the position of bishop, not to be the overseer of a church now. There are churches throughout the world where women are in that position, and I've even known of churches where a woman is the pastor and God is blessing. But.

I would imagine that it was just because he couldn't find a man to do the work. Now, we don't rewrite the book and say, oh, God's blessing that woman's minister over there. So it must mean that this is got there are at times exceptions to the rule, but it never changes the rule.

Just because God blesses the endeavors of a woman, even in a position that she shouldn't be in, doesn't mean that we then say, oh, yes, this is what we ought to do. No, God has laid down the rule. But in his grace, he sometimes allows exceptions to that rule.

My wife had a an aunt, very precious lady. Back years and years ago, the denomination that she was involved in, they actually allowed ordination of women and they were looking for a man to go and establish a church in Phoenix, Arizona, which at the time was was really nothing but a cowboy town, just a lot of saloons and a lot of gunfight type of things. And and no men wanted to go.

A little scary, you know, kind of a rough place. Well, this woman said, I'll go. And, you know, God took this woman and used her life.

And there are probably 100 men today who are in the ministry as a result of her ministry to them. So, again, we can't rewrite the book. We can't say, well, that proves it right there.

Let's ordain the women, get them up here and send them out to start churches. No, we can't do that because that's contrary to what God has clearly revealed in his word. And even as wonderful as as as her ministry was, if I was the one to decide on ordination, I would have to say no because of what the Bible says.

So we want to understand what the Bible says and what it doesn't say. So, again, it doesn't forbid for a woman to minister in a variety of ways. It just it just does not allow for the woman to be in that position of bishop.

So that's that's the primary teaching here of this part of the 11th chapter. That's what Paul is emphasizing that in in the church, a woman is to be in subordination to the man's leadership. And if the culture uses a head covering to identify the subordination, then the woman needs to also be culturally sensitive and and go ahead and do that.

But since that culture is not really dominant among us, I don't think it's anything that we have to strictly abide by. Again, you're free to abide by it if you choose to, and that's your prerogative. So let's move on now in giving these instructions.

Now, in giving these instructions, he's going to move on now to another subject and giving these instructions. I do not praise you since you come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you and in part, I believe it.

Now, the thing that we've probably noticed as we've been studying this epistle is that this church had some problems. And, you know, quite honestly, there's not a problem free church on the face of the earth because churches are made up of sinners. The more sinners you get together, potentially the more problems you have.

But by the grace of God and through the power of his spirit and obeying his word, of course, we can live a life that's much different than the life of people who don't know the Lord and who are practicing sin. But this Corinthian church, they were all excited about a lot of spiritual things, but they were not seeing that God wanted to not only give them spiritual gifts and spiritual blessings, he wanted to change their lives on a practical level. They missed that so often.

They were all caught up in the, you know, the ecstasy of the spiritual moment. But they weren't thinking in terms of just simply loving their neighbor as themselves and some of these very practical things. Christianity is, of course, a spiritual thing.

And we have a beautiful relationship with God and we experience the power of God working in our lives. And we have encounters with God and we get those kinds of feelings and things like that. But Christianity is also an extremely practical thing.

It works itself out into better relationships between one another, demonstrating our love toward one another and things like that. So here again, Paul is going to say, look, there's problems. I'm not I'm not going to praise you in this area.

You're coming together, but it's not for the good. It's actually creating a problem. So he says, I hear that there are divisions.

I believe in a part for there must also be factions among you that those who are approved may be recognized among you. Therefore, when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. Listen to what he says.

He says, for in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others, and one is hungry and another is drunk. So the Lord's Supper, he's going to go on to explain exactly what that is. Most of us are familiar with what he's talking about.

It's the it's the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup in remembrance of what Jesus did for us when he died and rose again. Now, they were coming together to do that, but they were turning it into a feast, which then led to, you know, sort of a drunken orgy. And that's what Paul is rebuking them for.

He says, you're coming together and one person sitting over there hungry and another person has a whole plate full of food and you're not even willing to share. And some of you are actually drinking too much and getting drunk. And then he says this.

Paul is so practical in some areas. What? Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? You want to do that? Stay home and do it, he says. He says, or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

So Paul is really rebuking them for this kind of behavior. He says, for I receive from the Lord that which I also deliver to you that the Lord Jesus, on the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, take eat. This is my body, which is broken for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. In the same manner, he also took the cup after supper, saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes. So what Paul does right now is he reminds them of the solemn occasion that this is a solemn occasion. It's a serious occasion.

It's an occasion where they should not be in this frivolous mood as they come together eating and drinking and, you know, just in a party kind of a spirit. He says, no, when you come together to partake of the body and the blood of Christ, it's a solemn moment is to remember what Jesus did now in churches like ours, for example, we are, you know, what you might call a free church in the sense that, you know, we don't have a liturgy and we don't have a lot of, you know, rigid guidelines. And, you know, it's we're a fairly informal fellowship.

The thing we have to guard against in being an informal fellowship is not seeing the seriousness in certain things that we do. Now, you walk into a high church setting and it's more serious than most people ever want to get. You know, it's frightening in some senses.

And that's sort of going to the other extreme where, you know, God is just this, you know, he's there and you kind of just, you know, you're gently walking along because he could strike you dead any moment. And, you know, you're, you're afraid. Well, that's certainly a misrepresentation of who God is.

But. To go to the other extreme and, you know, maybe to say, well, you know, we couldn't find any bread and wine this week, so we've got some Coca-Cola and some crisp up here, you know, come on up and we'll share in the body and the blood of the Lord. That is to miss the seriousness of the occasion.

And I use that as an example because I know that that has happened in certain places. So you see that that's that's wrong. Paul says this this thing that we do, this eating of this bread and this drinking of the cup, this is reminding us of the Lord's death till he come.

And it's a solemn thing. It's a serious thing. And we need to approach it in a serious manner.

Therefore, whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Now, listen to what he says. This is serious. Verse 30.

For this reason, many are weak and sick among you and many sleep. Paul refers to sleep. You know what he's talking about? People have died in the fellowship.

People, Paul said in the Corinthian church, some have died because they haven't discerned the Lord's body, because when they came together to break the bread and to drink the cup, they were gorging themselves on food. They were getting drunk. They were having no regard for the less fortunate among them.

And Paul said this is actually brought God's judgment upon you. So how do we avoid that? Well, he told us already. He said, let each man before he approached the bread in the cup, let him examine himself.

He needs to examine himself. We all always need to go before partaking in the bread in the cup. We need to go through a moment of self-examination.

We need to ask the Lord to search our heart. We need to ask God to cleanse us of our sin. And we need to approach this moment in a solemn manner.

And he says this, for if we judge ourselves, we would not be judged. That was the problem. They weren't judging themselves.

They weren't recognizing their failures and the sin in their own life and coming to Christ and asking for forgiveness. Now, again, when we think about these kinds of things and when we ourselves meet together to share in the bread in the cup. We don't ever want to refrain from the bread in the cup because.

Of condemnation. You know, sometimes when we start getting self-analytical, we can become convinced that we're not worthy to. To even approach the Lord at all, and that's not what Paul is calling us to not to live in this this sense of guilt and condemnation, but simply to acknowledge that, yes, there are areas in my life where I've sinned and God, I ask forgiveness and I receive forgiveness.

I thank you for your grace. I thank you for the blood of Christ that washes away my sin. And then I can go ahead and freely partake.

We're all unworthy and we always will be, won't we? I don't have fellowship with Christ because I somehow became worthy enough. If fellowship with Christ was contingent upon my worthiness, then I could never have fellowship. But it's contingent upon my faith and his worthiness, believing that he is who he said he was and did what he said he came to do.

And when I trust in that, that gives me the right standing. And so I can I can approach him. I can have fellowship with him.

We commonly call this drinking of the cup and eating the bread. We commonly call it communion. And that's very accurate because that's what it's all about.

The whole reason why Jesus came into this world, lived as a man, died on a cross and rose again from the dead 2000 years ago was so that you could have communion with God. I think it's one of the most tragic things of all time to think that Jesus came into the world to start another religion to compete with the existing religions. He didn't do any such thing.

And any church today that claims to be the church of Jesus Christ, but does not let people know that they can come into fellowship with God, has missed entirely the whole purpose of the coming of Jesus. He came to bring individual people into a relationship with God. That's the purpose of his coming.

And that's what that bread and that cup are all about. Jesus on the night that that he shared that bread and that cup with his disciples, you know, he said to him, he said, with passionate desire, I have longed to share in this meal with you. With passionate desire, I've longed to share in this meal with you.

I want you to think for a moment about who it was who said that it was Jesus Christ, God in human flesh. You know how long he had been desiring to share that meal for thousands of years. From the moment that that first man and woman broke their relationship with him.

There was that longing in his heart for communion to be restored. And so when Jesus said on that night, I have longed passionately to share this meal with you, it was thousands of years of longing now culminating in this one moment, because in sharing this meal and breaking that bread and in pouring out

that cup, he was saying the fellowship that was lost is now restored. That's why he came.

He came to do that. So when we approach the bread and the cup as his people, we need to approach it with reverence and with thankfulness, because it was all for us. That the body was broken and the blood was shed.

It was so we could know God in this life, discover his will and live in it. And then when our life is finished, spend eternity with him in heaven. How wonderful it is.

And so the apostle gives the strong warning. But he says, judge ourselves. If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

But when we are judged. We are chastened by the Lord that we may not be condemned with the world. Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat.

Wait for one another. And if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home. Lest you come together for judgment and the rest I will set in order when I come.

So Paul appealing to them in a very personal manner. Now, once again, we've we've sort of come to the end of. Of a section.

Paul, again, as we go through this epistle, he's just addressing a variety of issues in the church. The next issue that he's going to address is the issue of spiritual gifts. And so we'll probably spend a little more time.

Discussing these things, because there is so much confusion. Over spiritual gifts and the ministry of the Holy Spirit and all that. So we'll probably spend quite a bit of time trying to give you a good biblical understanding of the gifts of the spirit so that you might know.

What they are and that you also might have the benefit of of experiencing them. In your life.

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