

1 Corinthians 11:1-34 - Zac Poonen

by From the Pulpit & Classic Sermons

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living what one preaches and the significance of submission in the church, particularly in the context of the role of women.

Duration: 44:35

Topics: "Radio"

Description

In this sermon on 1 Corinthians 11:1-34, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being worthy examples as preachers of the Word of God. He contrasts the attitude of the apostles, who could confidently say 'follow me as I follow Christ,' with the common notion today that preachers should deflect attention away from themselves and onto Christ. The preacher highlights the need for humble submission and obedience to God's commands. He then addresses the issue of divisions within the church, expressing his disappointment that the church in Corinth was becoming more divided instead of united when they gathered. The preacher encourages the believers to be considerate of one another and to judge themselves rightly in order to avoid condemnation.

Transcript

Welcome to From the Pulpit and Classic Sermons. Each week we bring you a different message from some of history's greatest speakers in the Christian faith, and powerful sermons for modern preachers too. This week, we have Zac Coonan with his message, 1 Corinthians Chapter 11, verses 1-34.

Let's turn today to 1 Corinthians Chapter 11 and verse 1. Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. It's an amazing thing that Paul's attitude in this matter was so different from much that we hear today. Today very often we hear preachers say, don't look at me, meaning don't look at my example, but look at Christ, who is the perfect example.

That sounds like a very humble thing to say, but the interesting thing is that not a single apostle would ever make such a statement, because if our life as those who preach the word of God are not worthy examples for other people to follow, then we have no right to preach to others. The only person who has a right to preach the word of God to another is one who can say to the other, follow me as I follow Christ. Follow my example as I follow Christ.

I may not be perfect, but at least I'm trying to live up to what I proclaim. And it is because people do not live according to what they preach that they have to say, do not look at me and my example. Paul could

say boldly, be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

And in what context is he saying this? It is unfortunate that there is a chapter division between chapters 10 and 11 at this point, because strictly speaking, this first verse should be the concluding verse of that whole section beginning in chapter 10 verse 23. He's telling the Corinthian Christians how they can be spiritually minded. You are carnal, you are babies.

If you want to be spiritually minded, he says, follow my example. And that was not boasting. He was saying that I am practicing what I'm preaching.

I'm only preaching to you what I've done first in my own life. And there's nothing arrogant about that. In fact, that should be the testimony of every preacher.

Like it says in Acts 1 verse 1 that Jesus first did and then he taught what he had already done in the same way Paul first did and then taught others what he had already practiced in his life. He preached what he had practiced. And this is the meaning of verse 1. Don't just hear what I say, but you can do as I do.

You can live as I live. This is in clear contrast to what Jesus told the disciples in Matthew 23 about the Pharisees. He said the Pharisees are different.

In Matthew 23, he says in verse 3, whatever they tell you to do, you can do. But don't do according to their deeds, for they say things, but do not do them. The mark of a Pharisee is that he preaches something and then he says to people, don't look at my example, but look at Christ.

That is the clearest mark of a Pharisee. But an apostle, a true disciple of Jesus Christ, would not say that. He would say, be an imitator of me, because I'm only telling you to do what I've already done in my life, otherwise I wouldn't tell you.

There are a lot of things I can't tell you yet, a disciple would say, because I haven't yet done them in my life, or I'm not even seeking to do them. That is honesty, the opposite of which is hypocrisy, which makes a man a Pharisee. But it is in the context of what we considered in our last studies, from verse 23 to 33 of chapter 10, Paul sought what was profitable, 10.23, and he sought that which would edify other people.

In everything, verse 31 of 10, chapter 10, Paul sought the glory of God, and in verse 33, in everything he sought the salvation of others. He did not seek to please himself, but the profit of the others, how it would help and bless the others, and in this connection he says, be an imitator of me, see how I live, seeking the good of others, seeking the salvation of others, seeking the glory of God, seeking what is profitable spiritually, seeking how this will build a church, and considering all these things, I live my life, and he says, you can follow my example, I'm not telling you to do what I do not do myself, in my own life. What a wonderful example we have in the Apostle Paul, that we can be challenged by, not only to follow his example, but also to be such examples ourselves, to other younger believers, who are looking at us, particularly in this matter of seeking the glory of God in everything, and the building of the church, and the salvation of others, in every single aspect of our life.

There's a great need of self-examination in all areas, if we are to come to the place Paul was in, in chapter 11, verse 1, where we can tell others, be imitators of me, as I also am of Christ. We know in Philippians 3, Paul said, I haven't yet attained, Paul wasn't saying that he'd become like Christ, but he was saying that, I'm seeking to follow Jesus' example, and you can follow my example, as I'm seeking to follow Jesus' example, as I'm walking in his footsteps, you can walk in my footsteps, and this is what makes a man an

elder brother in a church. You can't become an elder by election, or by appointment.

You become an elder brother, a true elder brother, by being an example in your life of following Jesus Christ. And if a man cannot say, be an imitator of me, in my family life, my personal life, my thought life, my business life, in my financial affairs, in all areas of my life, in my eating and drinking, in my sleeping, in my sex life, in everything, be an imitator of me, if a man cannot say that, he is not fit to be an elder or a guide of anyone, any other Christian, and certainly not fit to preach the word of God. And now we come to some other questions that Paul is answering to these Corinthians who had written concerning various matters, and this is concerning the place of men and women in the church.

And he has some very important things to say here. He says, I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions just as I delivered them to you. There were certain traditions that the apostles delivered to the churches which have now become the word of God.

This is different from the hypocritical traditions of the Pharisees which Jesus destroyed and spoke against. Here he is referring to those traditions which have now become God's word. In those days there was no written word of God as we have today in the New Testament, but the apostles delivered certain teachings which were called the apostles' traditions and the apostles' doctrine.

Today it is God's word to us in the New Testament. And he says, I praise you, Corinthians, because you remember me in everything and you hold firmly to the traditions. And he says, now I want to tell you something about the place of men and women in the Christian church.

I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ. Here is a very simple order. God on top, beneath him, Jesus Christ, his son, and our elder brother.

Beneath Christ, man in the church, and beneath man, woman. Now you may say men and women are equal. In one sense they are, just like God and Christ are equal.

But for the sake of a particular ministry that Jesus Christ had to fulfill, he voluntarily took a place beneath God, the Father, as being the body where the Father was the head. And in exactly the same way today, in the church, men and women are equal. But for the sake of the ministry in the church, a God-fearing spiritual woman will take her place beneath the man in the church.

The mark of a carnal woman is that she wants equality with the man in the ministry in the church. This is a mark of a carnal Christian, but a spiritually minded Christian would voluntarily take that place beneath her husband, or her father, or the elder brother, whoever is above her in the church. And man would have the upper place in the church.

But of course, man himself being beneath Christ, who is the head. It's very important for us to see this. And thus we see that there's nothing disgraceful about a woman taking that place of submission to the man, as some women think, because it is not an inferior position.

The example for all women is Jesus Christ himself, who submitted to the authority of his Father. And as he submitted to the Father, a woman is called to submit to the man. And in this connection of submission to authority, he speaks about women covering their heads.

So we need to understand this matter of a woman covering her head with a veil or a cloth as something that symbolizes her submission to the authority of man as God has appointed it in the church. A man should not cover his head, he says, because he disgraces his head if he covers his head when he's praying or prophesying. Who is his head? Christ.

And Christ must be uncovered in the church. This is the symbolism of man's physical head being uncovered, symbolizing thereby that Christ is to be revealed and uncovered, unveiled in the church. But a woman.

And who is the woman's head? We just saw that in verse 3. The woman's head is the man. And since man and man's glory has to be covered in the church, therefore a woman has to cover her physical head while she prays or prophesies in the church. If she keeps it uncovered, then she disgraces her head, which is the man.

She is to be in submission to the man, for that is the same as having her head shaved. In other words, if a woman does not want to put a veil over her head, it's better that she shaves off all her hair. But he says, if it's a disgrace for a woman to have her head shaved, then let her cover her head with a veil.

Verse 6. A woman who does not cover her head must have her hair cut off. The reason is, a man should not have his head covered because he is the image and glory of God. But a woman, verse 7, is the glory of man.

If only a sister could see this, she would see that in submission to God's word here, she is manifesting a tremendous truth that the glory of God is manifested in the man and the glory of the man is manifested in the woman and must be covered, and therefore she covers her head. Let's turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 3. We were considering in our last study something about the reason why the Holy Spirit asks women to veil their heads in the church meetings when they pray or prophesy, and why a man should have his head uncovered, without anything on it, when he prays or prophesies. And the reason begins with the order in creation that God has placed man above the woman in his divine order.

They are equal in one sense, in the sense of being accepted before God, in the opportunity to partake of the life of Jesus and the opportunity to glorify God in every aspect of their life. But when it comes to ministry in the church, the woman is to be subject to the man. This is a very important principle which the devil is seeking to violate in many places and that brings confusion into the church.

And the greatest example for women here is described in verse 3 as Jesus Christ himself, who though equal with the Father, for the sake of a particular ministry, for the salvation of humanity, which was that ministry, he humbled himself and took a place of submission. And if a woman cannot follow that example of Jesus Christ in submission to God as the head, then she is no longer a spiritual sister. In verse 3 it says, God is the head of Christ.

And this is the example for a woman who accepts man as her head. And this is why a woman has to cover her head, because otherwise she is disgracing her head. She is saying that she does not accept the man as her head when she does not veil her head.

The putting of a veil on top of a woman's head is therefore a sign of submission to that divine order that God has placed in creation of being subject to man, that man is the head. And also it symbolizes here the man not covering her head, covering his head, that he is the image and glory of God, verse 7. In other

words, in the church, the man is to the woman as Christ is to the church. Just like in the home, the husband-wife relationship is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church.

And this is why the woman is asked to submit to her husband in exactly the same way as the church is submissive to Christ. That is the meaning of verse 7, that the man reflects what God is. He is the, he represents the likeness and supremacy of God in the church.

And a man not covering his head is a testimony that God is supreme here. And a woman covering her head is likewise submitting to the man and saying, I am submitting to the person whom God has appointed, whether it be in the church or in the home, as above me in order to glorify God in that way. So we see that submission glorifies God.

And a woman, if she does not cover her head, she is disgracing her head because she is the glory of man. Verse 8, it says, A man does not originate from woman, but woman from man. And this is another reason why Paul says submission is right, because God made the man first.

And the first man was not born of a woman, as we see now, but the first man was created directly by God. And then, from that man, a woman was brought forth in the creation of Eve, recorded in Genesis 2. And Paul is saying God didn't make a mistake. He knew whom to make first.

And that symbolizes that man is to be supreme in the man-woman relationship, in the home and in the church. And further, another reason he says is that man, Adam, was not created to be a helpmeet to Eve. On the contrary, the woman, Eve, was created to be a helpmeet for Adam.

In other words, Adam was the one who had a ministry from God, and the woman was to be subservient to him in fulfilling his ministry. Not the other way around. Not that the woman has a ministry, and the man just tags along, trying to fulfill her ministry.

Now unfortunately, this is happening in some circles in Christendom, but it's a complete violation of God's order. And even though there may be blessing, God blesses many things that he's not happy with, yet it is a complete contradiction to the divine order mentioned in scripture. And anyone who has the slightest fear of God will tremble at his word, and will not do that which God says he should not do.

And no spiritually-minded sister would ever violate the order given here in 1 Corinthians 11, verses 2 to 16. And further, continuing on this theme of authority, he says therefore, verse 10, and we have seen that wherever we find the word therefore, we need to see the context, and see what that word is therefore, in relation to the previous verses. Therefore, since all that is mentioned earlier, that the woman is to be under the headship of the man, verse 3, and since the woman is the glory of man, therefore, the woman, verse 10, ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, a sign that she's under the man's authority.

It's a woman's duty to have a sign of authority on her head, an outward sign of man's authority. And what is that outward sign? That is the veil that he's been speaking of. And there again, he says that this veil, the absence of it, would indicate that a woman is rebelling against that God-appointed authority.

And in this connection, he refers to the angels. He says, remember, there are angels. There are angels for every person in the church.

There are angels, evil spirits that are watching. Why does he speak about angels here? Because rebellion was first manifested in the midst of the angels. When Lucifer rebelled against authority, and he says the

angels have seen rebellion, they've seen it in heaven, and those angels of heaven do not want to see that again in the church, with a woman having that same spirit by refusing to cover her head in the meetings.

So he says, for the sake of the angels, because of the angels, cover your head, be submissive to man. And also, we could say, that a woman who does not submit to that God-appointed authority, which is the man in the church, is thereby exposing herself to these evil spirits, to the spirit of rebellion, to possess her, and that can bring ruin in her life, her family, and wherever she is given freedom to exercise her independent authority. However, he says, this is not to discourage sisters, as they have no place at all.

Remember, Jesus Christ is the great example of submission for all sisters to follow. But he says, in the Lord, in the church, in the ministry, we cannot say that a man can do everything apart from the woman. No, a woman is also needed.

For in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. And he uses an example, he says, just as the first woman originated from the man, so also today all men are born through women, and all things, of course, originate from God. And so he says, there is a balance, which means the woman is also needed, her ministry is needed in the church.

It's not that she has nothing to do. For example, it's only a sister who could reach many unconverted women and give the gospel to them. What an important ministry.

But she must always do it in submission to the man who is the leader in the church. This is the important principle. Both are needed in the Lord.

No one is independent of the other. No man can say, I can do it all. He needs the sisters.

And no sister can think that she doesn't need the men. Then he goes on in verse 13 to say, judge for yourselves. He says, just think of it from a merely human standpoint, quite apart from God's word.

Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered, without a veil on top of her head? He says, doesn't even nature teach you that if a man has long hair, it's a dishonor to him? There is a natural principle here, he says, that makes us feel so clearly that long hair is disgraceful for a man. But that same natural principle in nature teaches us that if a woman has long hair, that is an added grace to her. That is her pride.

That is her glory. Her hair is given to her as a covering for her head. And there is a glory in that long hair for a woman, but no glory in long hair for a man.

That is disgraceful. And these verses teach us further that it's wrong for a man to have long hair. Even nature teaches it.

The meaning is, how much more? The Holy Spirit. Likewise, it's wrong for a woman to cut her hair short, because her long hair is given for her by God as a covering and her pride. And now there are people who say that this means that there is no need for a veil.

But that is not the point. This which is her glory must be covered, just like the glory of man which is the woman must be covered, as we saw earlier. In the same way, this long hair which is the glory of the woman needs to be covered.

And this veil covers what is the woman's glory, that is her hair. Therefore a woman is not to show off her hair in the church, it is to be covered. Now concerning this matter, many people can have many arguments about long hair and about covering.

And so he gives a final word in verse 16. If anyone is inclined to be argumentative or contentious, he says, we're not going to argue about this, but we just want to tell you this is a spiritual thing to do and this is what we practice and what all the churches of God practice. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Let's turn today to 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 16. We were considering in our last study the reason why women are asked to cover their heads in the church. As a symbol of submission to authority, as a means of covering their own pride and glory which is their long hair and as a testimony that the glory of man must be covered in the church because woman is the glory of man as we read in verse 7. So there are a number of reasons and it is good for sisters to know why they cover their heads, not to do it meaninglessly.

But also concerning this matter we find particularly in the 20th century there has arisen a lot of contention and that is why we read in verse 16 that if anyone is inclined to be contentious or argumentative about it, Paul says, I'm not going to enter into an argument, I just want to say this is our practice among the apostles and in the churches of God and it's good for us to follow the practice of the apostles even if we do not understand the meaning. For it is far better to obey God even without understanding than to reason and argue and to say I will not obey until I understand the reason. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding.

There are many matters in the word of God which we are called simply to obey. Understanding may sometimes come later but we are still to obey and certainly not to be argumentative. It's very easy to get into an argument concerning many of these things and thus lose out on the spiritual principle that is exemplified through certain actions that the word of God calls us to do.

It's the same in the Lord's table. There are people who feel that the Lord's table is just a meaningless ritual and they have done away with it. This is wrong.

When God has commanded us to do something, it's right for us to obey and that is a mark of our humble submission. In giving this instruction, he goes on to say in verse 17, I do not praise you. Now he's moving on to another subject because he says you come together when you come together for your meetings.

It should be for the better but it's not for the better, it is for the worse. In the sense that instead of becoming more united through your coming together, you're becoming more divided. I do not praise you in this, he says.

When you come together as a church, verse 18, I hear that divisions exist among you. In other words, there were certain people who had reported to Paul that there were divisions in the church and he says in part I believe it. There are divisions.

Now he says in verse 19 that there must be dissensions and differences of opinion among you because it is thus that those who are approved, those who are true are distinguished from the rest. Just like when gold is put into the fire and the dross is melted away, the gold shines forth. In the same way, he says, the existence of differences of opinion is a means by which God sifts out the gold from that which is not gold.

And this is a very important verse for us to understand and this gives us the reason why there are so many doctrines in scripture concerning which there are so many differences of opinion among Christians. One would wish that God had written some of these things a little more plainly so that there would be no difference of opinion whatsoever. But in the great wisdom of God, he has written them vaguely and the clever and the intelligent will be confused, as Jesus said in Matthew 11, 25, for these things are hidden from the clever and the intelligent.

But those who come as little babes, not using their own reason, but in humility seeking the revelation of the Holy Spirit, will not be confused. And thus God is able, through those vague instructions, to sift out those who have the spirit of a babe from those who are clever and intelligent. And this is the reason for the differences of opinion.

Those who have the fear of God and a humble spirit will understand the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit. But those who use their cleverness and their intelligence, lean upon their own understanding in spite of the clear command in Proverbs 3, 5, not to lean on our own understanding, will be led astray. And thus there will be a difference of opinion and thus, as it says in verse 19, those who are approved by God will become evident.

Those who are genuine will become recognized. Those who are true metal, true gold, will be distinguished from the dross. The genuine, wholehearted disciples of Jesus Christ will be recognized in such a situation.

And this is why God has allowed differences of opinion to exist, even among many who call themselves Christians on matters such as baptism, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the covering of women's head, the Lord's table, and many, many matters, church, order and government and so many things. But in the final day, it will be seen very clearly that those who feared God and had a humble spirit were right. And those who were just leaning on their own intelligence and understanding went astray.

Further, in verse 20, he says concerning the eating of the Lord's supper, he says, when you come together, in your eating, each one takes his own supper first. Now, this was a common practice among the Christians of those days, that when they came together to break bread, they also had what they would call a love meal or a love feast together, where they ate lunch together or a dinner together, along with the breaking of bread. And he says, but here, for this love feast, each of you brought your own supper, that's all right.

But he says, you're disgracing the Lord's name in the way you're going about that love feast, because you don't care to share the excess you have with some other poor brother in the church who lacks, then what is the meaning of breaking a bread? That's the point. In your eating, each one takes his own supper first. In other words, you are just thinking of your own food and you rush in to eat your own supper and one has not enough to eat and another has so much and gets drunk at the Lord's table.

He says, what? Are you going to disgrace the church of God like this? Don't you have houses in which to eat and drink, verse 22? Are you going to show your contempt for the church of God by coming there and showing off the grand food you can eat and the drink you can afford and humiliate those poor believers who do not have enough? That's a very searching question. To humiliate those who do not have as much as you. There are various ways in which a believer can come to the church and show off that he is superior to others.

It can be by expensive clothes and saris and fancy things that we can wear and come to church in, to the meeting, in order to despise and show forth that we are superior and better off than others. And this is a very searching word for many Christians today, verse 22. Do you despise, verse 22 middle, do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing or those who don't earn as much as you do? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I will not praise you.

No. He says, you are dishonoring the Lord by coming to the church in order to show off, whether it is food or clothing. We are not to do anything or to dress in a particular way or do anything in the church that makes another brother who is in poorer circumstances feel small and humiliated.

Not even use grandness of speech in the church in order to humiliate others who when they share their testimony are not so grand in their speech. In the church we give honor to those who fear God and who are humble, not to the rich and the great and the well-dressed and the eloquent. In this he says I will not praise you.

These are the marks of a carnal Christian that he glories in those things which have no eternal value, no spiritual value, in earthly things, in his wealth. And then he goes on to speak about the Lord's table and he says do you realize what it is we testify to when we break bread? I received from the Lord that which I delivered to you that the Lord Jesus in the night which he was betrayed took bread, verse 23. When he had given thanks, he broke it, saying this is my body which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. We saw earlier in 1 Corinthians 10 that that was a testimony concerning the one body. In the same way the cup also 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, verse 26, and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. So here is a testimony that must continue in the church right up till the coming of Christ.

There is never a time when we can stop breaking bread. It is only after Jesus comes that this testimony will be ended. So until the Lord comes, this testimony must continue in the church, but it must continue meaningfully.

It must be a proclamation of the Lord's death. And he says in that context, verse 27, if anyone eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, he will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. And what is the context? The context is of humiliating others who don't have as much as you.

In other words, you don't consider them as members of the same body. Let a man examine himself, he says in verse 28, and so let him eat the bread and drink the cup. Let him judge himself to see what his attitude is towards his brother.

For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. And that is the body of Christ, in which there is no distinction between the rich and the poor, the great and the small, the clever and the stupid. All are equal, unless we come to that place of recognizing every brother and sister as equally accepted before God, and we don't want to humiliate them in any way.

We eat and drink damnation to ourselves, for we're not eating and drinking in a proper way. And the word of God here to each of us is, let every man examine himself. Let's turn today to 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 23.

In this passage, as we were considering in our last study, Paul was speaking about the testimony at the Lord's table, the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup. He says, I received from the Lord. In other words, Paul got this as a revelation directly from the Lord, what he had taught the Corinthians to practice.

And that was a practice instituted by the Lord Jesus. In the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread. And that bread symbolized his body, which was broken for us.

And when we realize that Jesus took that bread on that night and said, this is my body which is broken for you, we see that he was not referring merely to that body which was going to be broken on Calvary's cross, pierced. But there was a brokenness in that body which was already existing. He did not say, this is my body which will be broken for you tomorrow morning at nine o'clock.

No. He said, this is my body which is broken for you. There was something in that body which was broken already.

And that was his own will. Jesus came from heaven to earth, John 6, 38, not to do his own will, but the will of him who had sent him the Father. What was broken in Jesus' body, it was his own will that was constantly broken right through his earthly life.

And when he took that bread and gave it to his disciples and said, this is my body which is broken for you. He was referring to that broken will, a body in which he never did his own will, a body in which he did not use his eyes as he wished, his tongue, his feet, or his hands, or anything as he wished, but only to do the will of the Father. This is my body, broken for you.

And finally, there was a culmination to that on Calvary's cross, where his body was pierced for us. And he said, do this in remembrance of me. He never told us how often we were to do it.

There's no command in scripture which tells us whether we are to break bread once a day or once a week or once a month or once in six months. There God gives us freedom. And we are to give freedom to one another lest we become Pharisees.

Where God has given freedom, we must give freedom to one another. But he did say that whenever we do it, that's up to us to decide how often we do it, according to our own situation and circumstances, we are to do it in remembrance of him, the way he lived, and how he gave himself. And when I partake of that bread, I'm testifying, Lord, I want my will to be broken in my body too.

I'm giving my body also, in the same way as you gave your body to the Father. In the same way, the cup, verse 25, after supper, saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood. The new covenant was different from the old covenant in the sense that in the old covenant they could have forgiveness of sins only.

Psalms 103 says, Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgives all your iniquities. That was old covenant. But in the new covenant, there is not only forgiveness through the blood of Jesus, but a deliverance from sin, a cleansing, a clean heart, a heart in which sin does not have power, because we drink the new covenant in the blood.

Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. You're not under the old covenant, but under the new covenant. And this is what it means to share in the fellowship in the blood of Christ, to share His dying, that I enter into the meaning of Jesus shedding His blood, for that blood which Jesus shed symbolized something.

In Hebrews 12, 4, we read about Jesus striving against sin to the point of shedding blood. In other words, He was willing to shed His blood rather than sin. And when we put that into 1 Corinthians 11, 25, we understand something of the new covenant that when I drink that cup, I'm testifying thereby, saying, Lord, I want to have the same attitude as You had towards sin, to be willing to strive unto sin, unto blood, in my fighting against sin, to the shedding of blood, I'm willing to strive against sin.

This is to drink the cup of the Lord meaningfully, and we do it in remembrance of Him who strove against sin unto the shedding of His blood, the blood of the new covenant. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, and that's up to us how often we do it, we proclaim that death of the Lord to sin, in that He died to sin, He died once, and we are testifying through the breaking of bread, our desire also to die to sin and to live unto God, to die to the world, to live for God. And then we understand what it says in verse 27 about eating the bread and drinking the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, just like the cross has two arms, a vertical and a horizontal one, in the same way, there is a vertical and a horizontal fellowship that we testify to in the breaking of bread, a fellowship with God and with His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in our personal walk that we deny ourselves and our own will to do His will, and a horizontal fellowship with our fellow believers with whom we have a right relationship where we recognize each person as a valuable member of the body of Christ.

Now if either of these, the vertical or the horizontal are not in order in our lives, then we are eating the bread and drinking the cup in an unworthy manner, and then we are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, that's a very strong word, it means that I'm just as guilty as those Jews who demanded the crucifixion of Christ. Just as guilty as them, guilty of crucifying Christ, if I don't eat and drink meaningfully. And therefore we are exhorted in verse 28 to examine ourselves before we eat and drink.

Every time we eat that bread and drink that cup, we are to examine ourselves and see that we are in a right relationship with God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and in a right relationship with our fellow believers, otherwise that cup and that bread, instead of bringing blessing to us, verse 29 will bring judgment, because we haven't judged the body rightly, we haven't judged the body which Jesus gave to the Father without spot, rightly as to how He lived in that body, and we haven't judged the church today, the body of Christ, rightly, recognizing each person with us as a member of that body. And it is because we do not examine ourselves aright, He says in verse 30, that many, not just some, but many among you are weak and sick, and a number even die. In other words, a believer can die before his time, because he has taken sin lightly, he has lived in a wrong relationship with his fellow believers, and then he dies before God's appointed time.

It begins with just weakness in the body, and then sickness, and if he still doesn't wake up spiritually, finally God may judge him even with death. And this happened in Corinth, not just to a few here and there, but according to verse 30, many, many believers in Corinth were sick and died before their time, because they took this matter lightly. Then isn't it possible that even today that many believers are sick, because they haven't judged themselves in this matter of their relationship with God and their fellow men? Certainly.

And that's why James says in James chapter 5, confess your sins one to another and pray for one another that you may be healed. Because, 1 Corinthians 11, 31, if we judge ourselves rightly, we will not be judged. If we live in the habit of judging ourselves instead of judging other people, the Word of God has told us very clearly, Jesus' words in Matthew 7, 1, do not judge others.

If we would only stop judging others and judge ourselves, then God would not judge us with weakness, sickness, or death. But when God allows weakness or sickness or death to come to us, verse 32, when we are judged, it is a means by which God is seeking to discipline us, so that we may not be condemned along with the world. It's very easy, even for a believer, according to verse 32, to be condemned along with the world.

Otherwise, verse 32 would be meaningless, if it is impossible for us to be condemned along with the world. Yes, we can be condemned along with the world. In order to save us from that judgment and damnation, the Lord disciplines us through weakness and sickness, through financial hardships, perhaps, and other means.

And if when those chastenings come our way, those disciplines of the Lord come our way, if we do not judge ourselves in that situation, if we become full of self-pity and bitterness against the Lord, and judge other people who cause us suffering, then we will not realize that it is the Lord who is judging us. Then we do not judge ourselves rightly, then we are fit to be judged by the Lord and condemned along with the world. So every discipline of the Lord is meant to make us alert and awake spiritually, so that we are not condemned with the world.

So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, be considerate. Wait for one another means show consideration for one another. Don't just think of yourselves, but consider the other.

If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, verse 34. Don't come here to show off your good food or anything else which would humiliate another brother, so that you may not come together for judgment. And the remaining matters I shall arrange when I come.

It's a very serious warning here in this passage, and we need never fear that warning if we live in a constant self-judgment. This is a verse that we need to put before our minds at all times, verse 31. If we judge ourselves rightly, we will never be judged.

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