



A Study of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians

Lesson 17: I Will Not Commend You.... 1 Corinthians 11:17-26

Now the last time we met, we dug into the first half of 1 Corinthians 11 and discovered there a complex discussion regarding the importance of male headship in the church and in the home. We discussed some of the various complexities of the subject and concluded together, I think and hope, that while women are ontologically equal and perhaps even superior to men in every category of human life and endeavor they are positionally subordinate to men in the church and in the home. That does not mean that they are inferior...but it does mean that in God's sovereign design they are commanded to submit to the loving headship of men. Now one of the principle points I tried to make last time was that this design of God was not a byproduct of the Fall. That is, women are not subordinate to men in the church and in the home because of Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden or because the Fall of humankind in general. The fact is that the subordination of women to men in the church and in the home was ordained by God prior to the Fall and has nothing to do with sin or sinfulness and everything to do with God's design and order in creation.¹

Now that does not mean that God's design in creation is in any way responsible for any of the mistreatment or oppression of women in any aspect of life. That *sort of thing* is directly related to the Fall and the depravity of men's fallen hearts. Woe to the man that thinks he can berate his wife or snuff out the fire in her spirit because he thinks his own uncrucified lust for power or control gives him warrant to do so. Woe to the man that thinks that God does not take notice of such things because God does take notice of such things and is storing up wrath and judgment for those who fail to remember that God loves and cherishes women every bit as much as men.

Still, we mustn't shy away from the point that God has granted headship to men in the home and in the church. What God has ordained to be must not be altered or changed in any sort of way that destroys the original intent of design. To do so is risk God's discipline.

Nowhere is that easier to see than in the passage we have before us this morning in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. At first blush the two sections seem unconnected. That is, 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 and 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 seem disconnected. But they are connected...perhaps not so much at the head as they are at the heart. You see while the previous passage makes it transparently clear that male headship is the design of nature. The passage we are going to look at this morning makes it transparently clear that there is no societal hierarchy of any kind at the immediate foot of the cross.

I wanted to make that point clear this morning before we began to look at the passage of Scripture we have before us. I think doing so will prevent us from

making any sort of serious error. Now notice how Paul starts his new train of thought in verse 17.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11:17**...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.

Now the first thing you ought to notice is the obvious connection back to verse two of chapter eleven.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11:2**...Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you.

Here Paul says, “Now should I commend you concerning everything else you are doing?...No, I should not.”

Now what follows in verses 18-22 is Paul outlining the reason he is not going to commend the Corinthians.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11:18**...For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, ¹⁹ for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

The first thing I want you to notice is the repetition of the phrase “**come together**”. It’s used five times in the second part of this chapter. First it is used in verse 17.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11:17**...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.

Then it's used in verse 18.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11:18**...For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part.

Then it's used in verse 20

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11:20**...When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat.

Then it's used in verse 33.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11:33**...So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—

Finally, it's used in verse 34.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11:34**...if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home--so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

Now the term **“come together”** was almost certainly a metaphor for public worship. It is used five times here and twice in chapter 14. Paul takes the term and uses it to identify the reason he cannot praise the Corinthians. Roughly speaking what he says, **“I cannot commend you because of what happens when you come together for public worship.”** In fact what he says is this, **“Normally when you come together for public worship it helps in your sanctification and spiritual growth...but not so with you Corinthians. When you come together you wind going home worse off than before you met.”**

It is an extraordinary thing to say or to have someone to say to a body of believers. Gordon Fee writes this:

The Corinthian problem was not their failure to gather, but their failure truly to be God's new people when they gathered;²

C.K. Barrett is even clearer.

Paul means: I have given you a charge in respect of one matter in the church's assembly for worship. I cannot deal with this subject with any pleasure, because you are worthy not of praise but of blame. So far short of the mark do your assemblies come that instead of building up the community they damage it; you are not better but worse off for having met.³

Now that raises the obvious question, **"What on earth was happening at Corinth during worship?"** I think to answer that I have to make just a couple of historical points to give us some context. First of all most corporate worship in the early New Testament church occurred on Sunday evening. There were lots of reasons for that...namely, that it was for many a regular workday. Slaves for example would have never been able to attend corporate worship in the morning unless it occurred very, very early...and that sometimes happened. But it appears that most gatherings for worship occurred on Sunday night after the market had closed.

Secondly, most churches gathered in local homes...usually in the homes of those saints that the Lord had blessed with larger houses. Now that was good and bad. It was good in that those with larger homes were generally able to provide enough to take care of those poor people and slaves that had nothing to bring. But it was bad in that almost no ancient home had a single room capable of

handling a large group of people and by large I mean thirty or forty people at a time. Invariably, that meant that the congregation got divided up in worship...particularly when it came to fellowship meals.⁴

Finally, I ought to add that in the ancient church it was common, at least as far as we can tell, to meet together for what was called a “**love feast**” which culminated in the Lord’s Supper.

Now with all that in mind, I want you to listen for a moment to Charles Hodge.

Whatever may be thought of these passages, it is clear from the paragraph before us that at Corinth at least, the sacrament of the Lord’s supper was connected with a regular meal...It is also evident that, agreeably to a familiar Grecian custom, the persons assembled brought their own provisions, which being placed on the table formed a common stock. The rich brought plentifully, the poor brought little or nothing. It was, however, essential to the very idea of a Christian feast, that it should be a communion; that all the guests at the table of their common Lord should be on the terms of equality. Instead of this fraternal union, there were divisions among the Corinthians even at the Lord’s Table. The rich eating by themselves the provisions which they had brought, and leaving their poorer brethren mortified and hungry. It is to the correction of these disorders that the concluding portion of this chapter is devoted.⁵

Now I think Hodge has it mostly right. I don’t think that there was any confusion about the nature of the Lord’s Table at least initially. But I do think that there was a common meal that was often shared before the Lord’s Table and that idea may have stemmed in some degree from the Last Supper itself. I also think that in Corinth whatever boundary ought to have been kept between the two things had become terribly blurred.⁶

Now what Paul says in verse 18 is this.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11:18**...For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part...

You can see how deeply ironic Paul's point is, **"When you come together there are divisions...and frankly, I believe it."** You see his point is you cannot come together for the Lord's Table and be divided. He is asking, **"How is it you think you can come together in worship and be divided? Surely you don't think you ought to be divided in terms of social standing."**

Paul will flesh that concern out further in verse 22.

Calvin says of this verse and this is so typical of Calvin...that their sin was almost history making. Listen to his analysis.

It is truly wonderful, and next to a miracle, that Satan could have accomplished so much in so short a time.⁷

Calvin goes on and I should tell you he was not an advocate of having meals that coincided with the Lord's Table by saying that...

It is uncertain, however, what was the origin of this abuse, or what was the occasion of its springing up so soon. Chrysostom *thinks* that it originated in the love-feasts, and that, while the rich had been accustomed to bring with them from their houses the means of feasting with the poor in common, they afterwards began to exclude the poor, and to guzzle over their delicacies by themselves. And, certainly, it appears from Tertullian, that they gave the name of *Agapae* to those common *meals*, which they contrived among themselves, as being tokens of fraternal affection, and consisted of alms. For in it the poor were entertained at the expense of the rich, and the table was open to all. But, whether they had from the very first fallen into this profane abuse, or whether *the* institution...degenerated in process of time, Paul would have them...mix up this spiritual banquet with common feasts. "This, indeed, looks well — that the poor

along with the rich partake in common of the provisions that have been brought, and that the rich share of their abundance along with the needy, but nothing ought to have such weight with us as to lead us to profane the holy sacrament.”⁸

You can see that Calvin thought that the whole concept of the love feast should have never taken place. I think in Calvin’s mind it was adding to what the Scripture taught and Calvin and the Presbyterians that followed him were generally opposed to adding anything to Scripture. Regardless of whether Paul viewed the love feast as appropriate or not, it is clear that he was opposed to any sort of division along social lines at the Lord’s Table at Corinth. He was opposed to that and he is clear about that and it doesn’t surprise me. What does surprise me is what he says in verse 19.

ESV 1 Corinthians 11:18...And I believe it in part, ¹⁹ for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

Do you see the strangeness of what Paul is saying? He is saying that such divisions actually reveal those that are genuine in their midst. Now how is that possible? I think there are a number of ways the passage can be interpreted but the explanation that seems to make the most sense is that God was using the sin that occurred at the Lord’s Table in this sacrilegious behavior of the Corinthians to bring about judgment on those that who dishonored the Him in His appointed sacrament. I think he is saying that that judgment demonstrated who the false professors were.

Still there is an alternative interpretation which suggests that Paul was using the phrase sarcastically and was saying that those divisions, those separate dining parties, revealed who the *elite* were in Corinth. That is that the divisions revealed

who the rich Corinthians *thought were the elite*. If that view is correct then the phrase here is being used a little bit like the phrase in Galatians 2:2 when Paul talks about those who were supposed or reputed pillars of the faith.⁹ I can see that as a possibility but generally I think it is better when possible to understand a passage in its simplest form and that would mean that the divisions revealed who was faithful and who was not.

Now in verse 20, Paul gets very pointed when he says that whatever the Corinthians call what they are doing they ought not to call it the Lord's Supper. You can see that in verse 20.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11: 20**...When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat. ²¹ For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. ²² What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

You see what the Corinthians were doing was eating their own meals and fulfilling their own lustful appetites. They were doing that when the rich ate together and the poor ate alone. They were doing that when they failed to wait for each other to arrive and instead plowed ahead fulfilling their own personal lusts. Most commentators think that the rich had retired to the inner room of the house and had left the poor to fend for themselves in the atrium. Whatever it was they were doing had nothing to do with communion. Rather, it was completely self-indulgent and it humiliated the poor saints in Corinth. Beyond that it despised God's church and Paul makes it perfectly clear that he is not going to praise them in their folly.

Now when Paul finishes upbraiding the Corinthians he starts into the passage that we hear expounded every single Sunday. And you can see with the behavior of the Corinthians being what it was it was important for Paul to remind the Corinthians about the nature of the sacrament. But it is also important for us to continue to hear what Paul had to say.

I think the thing that really surprises most Bible students is the context in which the passage is placed....especially since we omit the lead in section when we read it.

Now look what Paul writes in verse 23.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11:23**...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, ²⁴ 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." ²⁵ 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." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

You see what Paul is doing is stressing the difference between the self-indulgent love feasts of the Corinthians and the original solemnity and beauty of Jesus' words. He is reminding them of that their outrageous self-indulgence has nothing to do with remembering the substitutionary death of Christ for the community of believers in Corinth. What Paul is implying is that the Corinthians are making light of what Christ has done through His atoning work on the cross and that such behavior is going to have devastating results.

I think personally that Paul is alluding back here to the example of those fathers who died in the wilderness...that is the ones he mentioned in chapter ten. But even if he is not, the force of his argument winds up in pretty much the same place. Look at verse 27.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11:27**...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. ²⁸ Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰ That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.

You see what Paul says is that a person who does what some of the Corinthian believers are doing...that is eating the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner...is culpable...guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Now I want to point out that eating Supper unworthily as per the KJV is much different than eating the Supper in an unworthy manner. **"Unworthily"** has to do with having sufficient **"worth"**. None of us ever attain that. To eat it however in an **"unworthy manner"** is something else altogether because that speaks to the manner or how we eat the Supper. That was the issue at hand for the Corinthians.

You see Paul is addressing the whole notion of their self-serving cliques and private meals. He is arguing that their social distinctions militated against everything the atoning work of Christ had accomplished. You see what Paul has in mind here is what was happening in verses 20-22. That is, he has in mind the manner in which the Corinthians approached the Supper...the manner in which they viewed and gravitated toward social distinctions and class advantages. Paul believed that that sort of thinking militated against the message of the cross.¹⁰

Now I do think that Paul believed there was a vertical dimension to their guilt. I think you can see that in the phrase where Paul says such a person is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. That seems to imply that a person who holds to such class distinctions is guilty of the same kind of sin that led to his crucifixion. But guilt that seems to be stressed even more than that seems to be associated with failing to discern the Lord's body...not His body and blood but His body...and in that case it almost has to refer to the Corinthians mistreatment and abuse of the other, poorer saints at Corinth. That means that Paul wants the Corinthians to judge the body correctly...to think of other saints correctly and not to despise or mistreat them.

Now in my own personal ministry I have seen this particular idea turned on its head. I have seen some of the roughest and rudest treatment imaginable and often it was directly related to pacifying those who were wealthy at the expense of the poor. It is extraordinary to me that such a thing could ever happen in the church but it does more often than you can imagine. That is why one of my prayers for Grace Community is that we will always be on guard against that here. My prayer is that we will always have more of the attitude that Dr. Criswell once described in one of his sermon illustrations. This is what he said.

You could not describe out of a history book the worship, the hero worship, that England for the Duke of Wellington..the man who delivered the continent of Europe and England from the ire, from the scourge, of Napoleon. The Duke of Wellington, as you know, led the battle of Waterloo whereby Napoleon was exiled forever, and delivered England. He was the hero of the whole English-speaking world, and of the civilized world. Well, you know how they take communion in an Anglican church, in the state church of England; and he came down to the altar and knelt to take the bread and the wine. And there happened to be that day, as the Iron Duke, England's greatest hero, as he knelt at the altar to receive the bread and the wine from the officiating minister, why, there came a

poor, ragged man from the streets of London who knelt there by his side to receive the bread and the wine. And the officiating minister was greatly indignant, and stooped down to tell that ragged man to move away. **“Move away, don’t you realize that this is the great Duke of Wellington?”** And as the officiating minister sought to move away that ragged man the Iron Duke overheard and said to the priest, **“Sir, you leave him alone, leave him alone. We’re all the same here. The ground is level at the cross.”**¹¹

I just love that...it gets so close to the heart of the problem at Corinth. You see what Paul was saying is that because the Corinthians had misjudged, mishandled, mistreated the body of believers at Corinth...many of them had grown sick and died. Now I am not an advocate of trying to guess when someone’s sin has caught up with them and caused them to be sick or to suffering. I do not possess the mind of God or have insight from the Spirit of God that would ever give me the nerve to say, **“This occurred because of that”** but Paul could and did.

I like the way Calvin puts it.

Paul *does not* merely conjecture, that it is on that account that they are punished, but he affirms it as a thing that was perfectly well known by him. He says, then, that *many lay sick* — that many were kept long in a languishing condition, and that many had died, in consequence of that abuse of the Supper, because they had offended God.¹²

Paul says the reason that so many have died or are sick is because they had failed to discern the body rightly. That raises the question, **“How does one discern the body rightly?”** I love the way Walter Kaiser answers that question. So I want to read what he wrote. It’s fairly long so you will have to listen carefully but it’s really good. He writes this.

The issue for Paul is not the “worthiness” of individuals. If that were the case, none would ever be “worthy.” Rather, they were participating in the Lord’s Supper in an unworthy manner by demonstrating contempt for the community as a whole, by actions that were not controlled by love for the needy brothers and sisters. In this they are “guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Cor 11:27).

The phrase “guilty of sinning against” in the NIV translates the Greek word *enochos*. It is used mostly as a legal term, meaning “liable for,” “answerable for” or “guilty.” The thrust of Paul is then that those who eat and drink unworthily are guilty of Christ’s sacrificial death. They oppose and contradict in their loveless behavior the purpose of Christ’s death, namely, to create a new covenant community which will model, in the midst of a fragmented, broken world, a new way of servanthood which seeks the good of others.

It is within the context of these concerns of Paul and this understanding of the meaning of their love feasts that the admonition to “self-examination” and properly “recognizing the body of the Lord” must be heard. The Corinthians are to examine themselves with regard to the spirit in which they approach their participation: Is it other-directed or self-centered?

Not discerning the body or the body of the Lord is to fundamentally misunderstand the nature of Christian community and act in ways which undermine its vitality, its life and witness. It is that which stands under God’s judgment, for to do harm to Christ’s body is to oppose the purposes of God for which the Lord’s body was broken and his life’s blood was poured out.¹³

Brothers and sisters that is so good...you see we have to look at each other rightly. We have to perceive the beauty of what Christ has done in others and view others as part of the precious body of Christ in this place and if we don’t we have to evaluate ourselves rightly in order to avoid God’s discipline. That’s why Paul adds what he adds in verse 31.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11:31**...But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

Now what Paul wants the Corinthians to do is to examine themselves. Now he doesn't mean that he wants them to break into some sort of morbid introspection in which they attempt to remember every nuance of every sin of every moment of our lives. Of course, we are to repent constantly all of our lives. But what Paul has in mind here is a proper judgment regarding our need for God's mercy and our treatment and care of others in the church.

I like the way Luther put it in his Shorter Catechism.

"That person who is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: 'Given and shed for you for the remission of sins.'"¹⁴

And I like Calvin's reminder...

You must not, however, *think*, as *some* are accustomed to do, that there is here a kind of transaction between us and God, as if, by inflicting punishment upon ourselves of our own accord, *we satisfy his justice*, and *thereby*, redeem ourselves from his hand. *Here's why* —when *God*, chastises us, He has in view to *shaking* us out of our drowsiness, and arousing us to repentance. If we do this of our own accord, there is no longer any reason, why he should proceed to inflict his judgment upon us.¹⁵

And then Paul finally concludes his discussion in verse 33.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 11:33**...So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another-- ³⁴ if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home--so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

In this place, we have people from all kinds of different cultures and backgrounds. We have people from different economic levels, different races,

and different educational backgrounds. Yet, in Christ, we are united. In Christ, we cannot help but have genuine affection for other believers. That is why when a person says something like, **“I just can’t stand to be around the people at that church”** it just boggles my mind. How can we say those kinds of things? How can we think those kinds of things? When I think of the kind of affection that we really ought to have for each other, I cannot help but think of my grandfather and his best friend Bidy Nipp.

When I used to spend time at my grandfather’s house in the summer, my grandfather and my cousin Buddy and I would almost invariably wind up at Bidy’s place two or three times a week. My cousin and I used to dread going over to Bidy’s place. I hesitate to call it a house. Bidy’s house was made of Bois’Darc posts buried in the ground vertically. The posts were then wrapped with tar-paper. The roof was made of galvanized sheets. The floor was dirt. There was no electricity, no water, no plumbing. My grandfather didn’t have plumbing indoor plumbing either but he had electricity, water and floors. Inside Bidy’s house there lots of kids and lots of mattresses strewn about the floor.

When we would visit, we would go inside and my grandfather who was pretty feeble would plop right down on one of those mattresses, there were no chairs, like it was a fine leather sofa. My cousin and I would usually stand keeping a sharp lookout for bugs, ticks or other small critters. We had to...there were also several dogs in the Bidy’s house. We just could not wait to get out of there.

But my grandfather would act like it was home. We always dreaded him getting comfortable because if we lingered we knew that there was a chance it would happen and we dreaded the very thought of it. More than anything else in the

world we dreaded the prospect of being asked to eat with Bidy. There was no stove. Everything was cooked outside on an open grill and there was absolutely no telling from our point of view what actually might be on the plate we were offered.

One of the last times I visited Bidy's with my grandfather, it happened. They invited us to eat. My cousin and I made excuses but my grandfather just dug in like he was eating at the Waldorf. Finally, we left and when we were driving home my cousin and I ask my grandfather,

"Papa, how on earth could you eat with Bidy?"

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean how could you eat with him? Didn't you see how dirty that place was? I mean there could have been anything in the world in that stuff?"

My grandfather hesitated for a minute and then when a very soft voice and teared up eyes said something I have never forgotten. He turned and looked at us both and said,

"Boys, Bidy is my friend. He will always be my friend. I don't care what he puts on the plate, I would rather die than not eat it. Boys, this may be hard to understand but I would eat even if he spit in it."

Well, I can tell you it took me a long time to understand that kind of love and affection. But it is the same kind of love and affection we ought to feel for each

other. Not because any of us is so lovely but because each of us who name the name of Christ are important parts of that wonderful loaf of bread that was bought with the precious blood of Christ.

Let's pray.

¹ I make that point because there are a number of evangelical feminists who argue the opposite point...that is, that women are now equal in Christ were before they were subordinate because of the fall.

² Gordon D. Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians NICNT*, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing: Grand Rapids, 1987), 536.

³ C.K. Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968), 260-261.

⁴ Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), p. 376. He writes, "A triclinium (plural: *triclinia*) is a formal dining room in a Roman building. The word is adopted from the Greek τρικλίνιον, *triklinion*, from τρι-, *tri-* and κλίνη, *klinē*, a couch. It was characterized by three couches, the klinai, on three sides of a low square table, those surfaces sloped away from the table at about 10 degrees. Diners would recline on these surfaces in a semi-recumbent position. The fourth side of the table was left free, presumably to allow service to the table."

⁵ Charles Hodge, *Commentary on First Corinthians*, pg 238. Sage Digital Library Vol. 1-4.

⁶ Charles Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary of 1 & 2 Corinthians* (New York: Crossroads Publishers, 1987), pg. 74. Talbert writes: "First, Plutarch describes a banquet at which guests brought their individual meals and complains that this resulted in many banquets and the destruction of fellowship. He says, "Where each guest has his own private portion, fellowship perishes" (*Table Talk* 644C). 1 Cor 11:21 indicates that this was part of the problem in Corinth: "Each goes ahead with his own meal." Various members brought their own food and consumed it on their own schedule (cf. Jude 12).

Second, there was a Roman custom to serve different types of food to different categories of guests (Pliny the Younger *Letters* 2.6; Juvenal *Epigrams* 3.60; 4.85). Juvenal tells of a dinner with a patron that reflects this practice:

You're given a wine that even a poultice would not take., but your host drinks vintage wine, bottled when consuls wore long hair and beards.

You're served bread you can scarcely break, a hard lump of dough already spread with mold, impervious to teeth and sure to crack your jaws. But a loaf made out of fine flour, snow-white

and soft as gauze, is served your host.

Look at that mammoth lobster, with garnish of asparagus, being served your host.. . For you a shrimp is served in state—one shrimp afloat on one half of one egg on a tiny plate.

Look, that half-eaten hare he'll give us now, or from the haunch of boar some bits; we'll get what's left of the capon soon. So all of you sit in silence, ready, with bread held tight, untasted, and wait. (*The Satires of Juvenal*, trans. H. Creekmore [New York: Mentor Books, New American Library, 1963], 5)."

⁷ John Calvin, *Commentary on First Corinthians*, 11:21.

⁸ John Calvin, *Commentary on First Corinthians*, 11:21.

⁹ R. Alistair Campbell, "Does Paul Acquiesce in Divisions at the Lord's Table" in *Novum Testamentum XXXIII*, (1991), Pg. 69.

¹⁰ Jay Winik, *April 1865: The Month that Saved America* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 362-3. Winik write: "It was a warm Sunday at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and an older man, one of the church's many distinguished communicants, who had spent the last four years in war, was sitting in his customary pew. With his shoulders rounded, his middle thickened, his hair snow-white and beard gray, as usual, he attracted the attention of the rest of the church. But then so did another parishioner.

As the minister, Dr. Charles Minnergerode, was about to administer Holy Communion, a tall, well-dressed black man sitting at the western gallery (which was reserved for Negroes) unexpectedly advanced to the communion table—unexpectedly because this had never happened here before. Suddenly, the image of Richmond redux was conjured up—a flashback to prewar years. Usually whites received communion first, then blacks—a small but strictly adhered to ritual, repeated so often that to alter it was unthinkable, This one small act, then, was like a large frontier separating two worlds: the first being that of the antebellum South, the second being that of post Civil War America. The congregation froze; those who had been ready to go forward and kneel at the altar rail remained fixed in their pews. Momentarily stunned, Minnergerode himself was clearly embarrassed. The horror—and surprise—of the congregation were no doubt largely visceral, but Minnergerode's silent retreat was evident. It was one thing for the white South to endure defeat and poverty, or to accept the fact that slaves were now free; it was quite another for a black man to stride up to the front of the church as though an equal. And not just at any church, but here, at the sanctuary for Richmond's elite, the wealthy, the well-bred, the high-cultured.

The black man slowly lowered his body, kneeling, while the rest of the congregation tensed in their pews. For his part, the minister stood, clearly uncomfortable and still dumbfounded. After what seemed to be an interminable amount of time—although it was probably only seconds—the white man arose, his gait erect, head up and eyes proud, and walked quietly up the aisle to the chancel rail, His face was a portrait of exhaustion, and he looked far older than most people had remembered from when the war had Just begun. These days had been hard on him. Recently, in a rare, unguarded moment he had uncharacteristically blurted out, "I'm homeless—I have nothing

on earth?’

Yet these Richmonders, like all of the South, still looked to him for a sense of purpose and guidance. No less so now as, with quiet dignity and self-possession, he knelt down to partake of the communion, along the same rail with the black man.

Watching Robert E. Lee, the other communicants slowly followed in his path, going forward to the altar, and, with a mixture of reluctance and fear, hope and awkward expectation, into the future.”

¹¹ Dr. W. A. Criswell, “The Communion of Saved Men” a sermon on 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 16-17 delivered at the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas at 7:30 p.m. on January 8th, 1967.

¹² John Calvin, *Commentary on First Corinthians*, 11:30.

¹³ Walter C. Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 609.

¹⁴ Edward Englebrect, “Let a Man Examine Himself: Context and Communion Preparation” in *Concordia Journal*, April 1997, pg. 118.

¹⁵ John Calvin, *Commentary on First Corinthians*, 11:31.