

Bible Study # 9

11 10 15

1st Corinthians

11-15

Summary of the Kerygma

- The promises of God made in the Old Testament have now been fulfilled with the coming of Jesus, the Messiah
- Jesus was anointed by God at his baptism as Messiah
- Jesus began his ministry in Galilee after his baptism
- He conducted a beneficent ministry, doing good and performing mighty works by the power of God
- The Messiah was crucified according to the purpose of God
- He was **raised from the dead and appeared to his disciples**
- Jesus was exalted by God and given the name “Lord”
- He gave the Holy Spirit to form the new community of God
- **He will come again for judgment** and the restoration of all things
- **All who hear the message should repent and be baptized**



Review of last week

- In *1st Corinthians 7* Paul began by addressing non-sacramental marriages and divorce
 - Only if the non Christian interferes with the Christian's right to worship could they divorce
 - Children of mixed marriage are blessed because one of the spouses is a Christian
- Next, he discussed the unmarried and widowed suggesting that, due to the impending distress, they should refrain from marriage if possible
- This was followed by reinforcing his desire to remain celibate as had the prophet Jeremiah

Review of last week

- In *1st Corinthians 8* he discussed why the “knowledgeable” Christians should avoid eating meat offered to idols for the sake of the newly baptized and weaker pagan converts who might slip back into paganism watching others eat meat offered to idols
- Then in *1st Corinthians 9* he discusses his right as an Apostle to take a wife and to receive support from the congregation
 - But he refused both in order not to appear to be selling the gospel
- He called all who preach the gospel to live the gospel (obviously aimed at the false prophets)

Review of last week

- In *1st Corinthians 10* Paul brings in the scriptures (our Old Testament) focusing on Moses and the Exodus from the “Glory Cloud” to the Exodus
 - He reminds them that they have been Baptism into Jesus by water and the Holy Spirit
 - He tell how the Hebrews ate the manna and drank water from the rock which Paul says was the Christ
 - He points out the **danger of the sin of presumption** and how the ancient Hebrews fell back into **idol worship** several times (including the golden calf incident) finally resulting in the death of 23,000 (24,000 in Numbers) in Moab

Review of last week

- He calls the *Corinthians* to **shun the worship of idols**
- He explained how the Exodus story of bread from heaven, water from the rock, and flesh of quail were “types” or “Typology” pointing to the *Eucharist* found in the Church in *Corinth* and the rest of the Christian churches

Review of last week

- Paul reminds the *Corinthians* that they have received sufficient grace to withstand their temptations of falling back into polytheism
- He reminds them that the Greek temples to the gods of Zeus and others are **filled with demonic personalities**
- He asks how could they drink from the “**cup of the Lord**” and the cup of demons?

Review of last week

- He ends with another discussion of eating meat from the market place
 - First, he says its ok if **no one** tells you that it had been offered to a god
 - Second, he tells them that they can eat at the home of a neighbor (pagan) and eat whatever is presented **unless** it is announced that **it was part of a sacrificial offering**
 - Then, out of deference to that person's conscience you should not eat it

1ST Corinthians 11

1ST Corinthians 11

- In the next six chapters we will see **three issues** from Paul regarding the churches' liturgical assembly:
 - The proper attire for women at the Mass
 - Behavior at the Lord's Supper (the Mass)
 - The proper use of spiritual gifts or charisms
- Most of the information for this section is taken from the *Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scriptures: First Corinthians* by George T. Montague, SM

1ST Corinthians 11

- **1st Cor 11:1-16** *“I commend you because you remember me in everythingIf anyone is disposed to be contentious, we recognize no other practice, nor do the churches of God.”*
 - Paul begins by calling the *Corinthians* to imitate him as he imitates Christ (should be seen as the end of 1st Cor 10)
 - Then he calls them because **they are holding fast to the traditions** (the teachings Paul had passed on to them earlier) and because not everything in the community needed correction
 - This next section responds to the questions concerning the proper attire for men and women at worship

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- Perhaps some of the women had taken their new liberty in Christ as authorization to break with the social customs of their day which expected women in public to wear veils over their heads
 - The “veil” symbolized that a married woman belonged to her husband, and an unmarried woman to her father
 - Paul begins by explaining what is meant by the “head” as he tells them:
 - Christ is the head of every man
 - Husbands are the head of their wives
 - God is the head of Christ
 - In the Greco-Roman culture of that day for a woman to appear in public unveiled was to manifest the same availability as a prostitute

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- Paul also relates this to the custom of women being veiled in the other churches in Judea
- Here, he is **appealing to their sense of solidarity** with other members of the Christian community as this was one of the ways the Christian church distinguished itself from those who attended the synagogue
- The Christian community gave women the right to pray and prophesy in public discourse in the worship service which was strictly forbidden in the synagogue

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- Obviously, cultural norms have changed over the centuries, and no one today would think that a woman in church without a veil means sexual availability or prostitution
- This raises the important distinction between **doctrine** and **discipline**
 - Dogmatic and moral teachings of the Church (**doctrines**) do not change
 - **Disciplines** within the Church have changed with different times and social circumstances

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- **1st Cor 11:17-22** *“But in the following instructions I do not commend you,...Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.”*
 - Here, we discover some areas of **conduct that called for censure** since the *Corinthians* seem to have no concept of the real **nature of the Last Supper**
 - Early Christians met in private homes and it is evident that a part of the celebration was a meal held before, during or after the Eucharist known as: the Pascal meal, agape meal or love feast
 - This was a kind of “pot-luck supper to symbolize the effect of a solidarity within the community as they joined in a common table

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- Unfortunately, the opposite was taking place
- The **congregation was breaking down into a series of “picnicking circles”** or individual **“dinner groups”**
- This practice (picnicking circles) was well-known in the Greek world but it is exactly what Paul finds unconscionable in the Eucharistic assembly
- Paul calls them to eat their own supper privately to avoid breaking up the assembly of the Church at the Eucharist

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- **1st Cor 11:23-26** *“For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you,...For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”*
 - These disorders are considered grave to Paul because the Eucharist is something that the Lord himself instituted
 - Here we see **Paul’s version of the consecration** *
 - Although it is very similar to that found in the gospels yet:
 - It contains the words “which is for you” which is not found in Matthew or Mark
 - And less than found in Luke which says it is “given for you”

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- The separate consecration of the bread and of the wine signifies the **separation of the blood from the body of Christ** (yet the whole of Christ is present under both species)
- Paul, like the synoptic writers, treats **the death of Christ as a sacrifice**
- Paul identifies the body of Christ with the body emulated on the cross (John does the same thing (**Jn 6:51**))
- Paul is insisting to the *Corinthians* that the continuation of Jesus' sacrificial meal is intended by the Lord just as the Passover of the Jews was celebrated regularly to recall the great saving events of the Exodus (**Ex 12-13:9**)

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- He seems to have written this letter around the time of the Jewish Passover (in the Spring of 57)
- The Prophet Jeremiah, who preaches the “New Covenant,” **does not say how the “new covenant” will be ratified**
- But Jesus says that, like the old covenant, the new covenant will be sealed with His blood
 - It will not be sprinkled on the people (as in the first covenant) but given to them to drink! (**Ex 24:6**)
 - His body will also be given to them to eat as a part of a sacrificial meal which is to be consumed by the people

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- The Greek word of covenant is ***diatheke*** which has the added meaning of “**testament**”
- In this sense the “new covenant” has, on the death of the Testator (Jesus), taken on an unbreakable character
- Hence, it is impossible to change the nature of the Lord’s Supper or caricature it as the *Corinthians* are doing
- Paul certainly hopes that his recalling of the institution of the Eucharist will awaken in the community a sense of solidarity with others, especially the poor to which the sacrificial meal calls them

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- For Paul the Eucharist is not merely the presence of the body and blood of the Lord; it is also the solemn representation of his death
- The Eucharist is also the solemn representation of his death
- Elsewhere in the New Testament, the verb **proclaim** means to make a solemn and public proclamation of some new order of thing now in effect
- It is by both word and action that the Eucharist proclaims the **death of the Lord until he comes**

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- In this short phrase, sung or recited in the Mass immediately after the consecration, Paul sums up the **three great mysteries**:
 - The death of Christ which is **passed**
 - The presence of the risen Christ in the **present**
 - The **future** coming of Christ *

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- **Mystery of Faith** (*formerly called the Memorial Acclamation*):
- *Priest*: The mystery of faith:
- **People**: A - We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.
or B - When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your death, O Lord, until you come again.
or C - Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.
- **Anamnesis** ("*remembering*"):

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- The early Jewish Christians, carrying over a Jewish belief and hope that the Messiah would come at Passover
- And they continued to celebrate the feast with the hope that Jesus the Messiah would return as they celebrated it
- The meaning of this is profound: the **Eucharist is the best thing the Church can do until Jesus returns**

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- While waiting to see him face to face the Church celebrates his real but hidden presence in this sacrament
- Thus, the consequences of abuses of the Eucharistic meal are dire:
 - “Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord.”

1ST Corinthians 11 (Cont)

- **1st Cor 11:27-34** *“Whoever, therefore, eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord... About the other things I will give directions when I come.”*
 - Paul is reminding the *Corinthians* that **any abuse of the Eucharistic meal is very serious**
 - Earlier Paul had reminded his followers of the death of the Israelite idolaters who ate the manna in the desert and thus he has no difficulty in attributing illness and death within the community to an unworthy reception of the Eucharist