

1Spending Time with Jesus in I Corinthians Chapter 11

Invite Jesus to speak to you as you read this week.

1st: read I or II Corinthians (read the one you didn't read last week) all the way through, the whole book, imagining you are Paul saying this to the church in Corinth. To help you remember and ENJOY what you are reading, read out loud for at least 15 minutes each time (longer would be even better.)

2nd: read chapter 11 by itself to remember what it is about.

3rd: read chapter 11 again and write down what stands out to you.

What do you notice?

1)

2)

3)

Third read through, answer questions as you go:

I Corinthians 11:1-16

If we are following Paul's example and Christ's example, what should we be seeking? (10:33)

not our _____ but the _____ of _____ so that they may be _____

This CHANGES EVERYTHING!

What does Paul praise them for in verse 2?

So they are keeping the traditions he passed on to them (meeting together to worship and to share the Lord's Supper.) Who do you think passed these traditions on to Paul? If you want to check your answer, look up Galatians 1:13-19.

But the Corinthians have added their own "spin" to these traditions, and Paul has to correct them as a good father would.

If you have questions about verses 3-16, you aren't alone. The one thing that all my sources agree on is that they don't know the answers to a lot of those questions. Remember, we are reading one side of a two-way conversation.

So here is what we DO know:

- 1) In Rome and Corinth, what you wore (including your hair style) told everyone who you were. Honorable women had long hair and wore head coverings when they were in public. Prostitutes, though, didn't wear head coverings in public. If a woman was caught in adultery, the punishment was having her head shaved. It was a way to publicly shame her (and her husband because her reputation was tied to him.) In their culture where your honor was EVERYTHING, this was a much bigger deal than it would be for us today.
- 2) Women were praying and prophesying in the Corinthian church, and Paul doesn't tell them to stop. He simply tells them to dress like honorable women when they did.
- 3) Paul points out that **in the Lord** men and women are not independent of each other. **In the Lord** they are enabled to experience living as God intended on that 6th and 7th day of creation: as equals who work side by side, defending and serving each other, submitting to and worshiping God. But this is only possible **in the Lord**. So the important point Paul is making is: believers live radically different from the world because we are ___ the ____.

Here are questions we wish we could ask Paul to clarify in this first half of chapter 11:

What exactly do you mean by "head" in each verse? For instance, "head" could mean:

- A literal head (a part of the body)
- The source of something, like "headwaters" of a river
- Authority (but this wasn't the most common meaning of "head" in Paul's day)

What do you mean by "authority over her own head" and "because of the angels"?

"Glory" can mean "what evokes a good opinion." Is that what you meant in verse 7, Paul?... that God created man to be that which causes others to have a good opinion of God – so much so that they will make Him their own God and follow Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, because they are convinced that God is THAT worthy. Then a wife, by being the "glory of her husband," would cause others to think well of her husband. If not, Paul, what do you mean?

I Corinthians 11:17-34

What do you think Paul is most upset about in verses 17-22?

N.T. Wright, a highly respected Biblical scholar, thinks that Paul might be being sarcastic in v. 19. Do you think Paul is being sincere or sarcastic in this verse?

When Jesus ate the Last Supper with his disciples, what special meal were they eating together?

Have you ever wondered why the way we celebrate the Lord's Supper now looks so different from that big, festive meal? Do you think this passage might have had something to do with it? How?

According to verse 26, how do we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes? Whenever ____ (plural) eat this _____ and drink this _____.

"Whenever" – every time this action is performed, it carries the same weight and intent as the first. It proclaims to all of heaven and earth that we are already experiencing the beginnings of new creation as we participate together as the body of Christ in this grace we call "Communion".

Who is the "you" in verse 26? Look ahead to I Corinthians 12:13: We were all baptized by _____ so as to form _____ - whether _____ or _____, _____ or _____.

So if the whole body of Christ comes together and eats the Lord's Supper as Jesus intended (surrendered to God, united, and loving one another like God intended when He created us), how would that event be a proclamation that Jesus' death has caused new creation to begin?

Who is witnessing this proclamation? Circle all that apply: everyone in the church
people who are visiting the church other people angels other: _____

Did you know that vv. 23-26 is the oldest written record of Jesus' Last Supper? Paul wrote this letter before Matthew, Mark, Luke or John were written. In this passage we get to hear not only what happened during the Jesus' Last Supper, but we get to hear Paul explain why it is so important.

When you hear these verses read as you prepare to take communion, what part amazes you most?

In vv. 27-32, Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Lord's Supper isn't something they can "use" for themselves. This supper belongs to Jesus.

Define "discern" (v. 29):

In Greek, discern is "to make a distinction, a decisive separation that leads to clear judgment."

What "body of Christ" is Paul saying we should discern? A) Jesus' body as in I Cor. 11:24?
B) The church as the body of Christ in I Cor. 12:27? C) Both?

What do you think Paul meant by "discerning the body of Christ"?

Why do you think God would judge His church when the rich in it were humiliating the poor?

Does it surprise you that Paul would say the Corinthian church was being judged by God? If so, why?

Is it better to be disciplined by the Lord in this life or to be condemned along with the world?

Imagine that you got to hear Paul reading 11:33 out loud in English. What word do you think Paul would emphasize? (By "when you gather to eat", he means when the church gathers to eat the Lord's Supper.)