

1 Corinthians 11 (Conrad Bowman) (7-8-07)

The Lord's Table. Verse 18, Ch. 11.

In the first place when you come together as a church, [an ekklisia, a called out body] I hear that divisions exist among you, and in part I believe it. [So he is convinced of it.] For there must also be factions among you in order that those who are approved may have become evident among you.

This describes a position that the Brethren authors, in general, took in order to resolve issues. If they had a difference of opinion regarding a passage, or a principle, or a doctrine, they used separation as a means of determining truth. If two guys could not agree on something, then they agreed among themselves that they would separate into two different operations, two separate classes, or sometimes two separate assemblies meeting in different locations, with the understanding that the Spirit of God would always make Himself evident within the body that holds the truth. So it would be obvious to all that He was absent from the body who was holding error. It was a kind of litmus test of how you could discover truth. Well, it didn't quite work out that way. The old sin nature is a powerful thing. And Satan himself is a master deceiver. His business is coming right up alongside of truth and getting as close to it as possible, even embracing 60% or 70% of it, and using that last little part to lead believers astray. So there was a flaw in their system. As a result, Ironside and others eventually concluded that the Brethren would never be a strong movement because they rightly divide the Word but wrongly divide themselves. And that statement probably marks their history more than anything. I'm telling you that because I use so many Brethren authors in my material to prepare these classes and you'll see their names and references come up time and again. So what Paul says here is that the position of deliberate separation –

there must also be divisions or factions among you in order that those who are approved – [and that's approved by God] – may have become evident among you. Therefore, when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

That has become their practice; they are coming together, and they are observing the Lord's Table, but Paul is saying that's really not the reason you got together.

For in you eating, each one takes his own supper first. One is hungry, and another is drunk.

Or approaching that. So, what is happening is the Lord's Table had become the occasion for feasting. On the surface, that doesn't seem like too bad an idea. We are going to practice the Lord's Table, we are going to observe that today; why, wouldn't it be nice for 'everybody to come an hour early and bring their covered dish, we will have a covered dish supper, and then we'll have the Lord's Table afterwards.' Well, some brought potato salad, roasted chicken, and all the rest. Others did not have anything so they are coming and sitting at the same table, and they don't have anything to eat at the meal. The equality that we talked about last week, gained by men praying in the meeting with their heads bare, and women praying with their heads covered, is completely destroyed by the practices of the meal preceding the Lord's Table; just completely wiped out. Because in the meal and in the provisions for you own, some were bringing lavish meals, and others have nothing to bring and that just drew a sharp distinction between the have's and have nots. So Paul says:

Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Do you despise the church of God, and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? And this I will not praise. For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you. That the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread, 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.

And that's the beginning of the Lord's Table. They are sitting at the table having a meal, and He starts the ceremonial part of that remembrance service right there. Paul says,

I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you. That the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks he broke it and said, this is My body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of Me. And then in the same manner He took 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.

So you have two things involved. First, the bread; it calls to mind the body of Christ, which was broken in sacrifice on the cross and given up for us. The life

that He lived qualified Him for the death that He died; willingly sacrificed on our behalf to pay for sins that He could not have committed. He was made to be *sin* in order that we might be made to be righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21). Again, I remind you, it was not just that He bore our sins and carried it as a load, He became our sin. Any questions on that? That's a big sweeping doctrine; because when Christ became sin, that act takes us back to the Old Testament Jewish practice of bringing a sin offering, and bringing it to God. The High Priest would commute all sin to the offering in the same sense and to the extent that the word for "sin" and the word for "sin offering" is exactly the same in the OT. [The reference for this is 2 Corinthians 5:21: "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made to be the righteousness of God."]

If you go back to Leviticus and you are looking at those Levitical offerings you will find the individual's sin commuted to the sacrifice. The sacrifice then became synonymous with sin, and was offered up, consumed in fire as a sweet savor to God, the Father. So this was a contract between the Son and the Father, and man is incidentally the beneficiary. Now think of all the songs you hear today, 'when He went to the cross, He went there for me.' 'He had me in mind when He went to the cross.' Today that is a popular thought, it's a loving thought. But dear ones, when He went to the cross, He had His Father in mind. Hebrews 5 tells us, 'though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered, and thereby became the author of our salvation, the finisher of our faith.' So the Son, regardless of whether any man had ever received salvation freely offered, the Son would have gone to the cross and there accomplished exactly what he did in order to please His Father. We then are incidentally the beneficiaries of this. That's tough to understand, isn't it.? It's tough because we like to put ourselves in the middle of the thing, and see everything being done for us. In fact, we like to popularize it and say everything was done for me. Well, that's not exactly right. Everything was done for the Father's sake to bring glory to Him, and we are the beneficiaries, however. Phil, you have a question? It says somewhere that it pleased the Father to bruise Him. Isaiah 53. [Isaiah 53:10: "Yet it was the Lord's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer, and though the Lord makes His life a guilt offering." NIV]

Charles Pirtle: What about Genesis? Genesis 3:15. "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel." NIV]

Conrad Bowman. This week I found a marvelous web site posted by Graham Brodie, from Australia, an engineer. Some years ago, Jehovah Witnesses kept

coming by his rented room, trying to talk to him. He started reading the Bible in order to be able to respond to them. Read NT the first week end and the OT over the next several months. In the process, he was absolutely convinced that it was totally true. God just opened his heart up and enlightened him. And, he said he soon found himself on his knees asking God to send the Son into his life and heart as Lord. From that moment on Jesus became the Lord of his life, to take his life and use it. He put his web site together in 1998. It lays out the major Bible doctrines and gives his testimony and biography. He has never been in a big church, but attends small gatherings. The beauty of that is that God does not need a marvelous organization in order to reach His people. His Spirit is out there doing His work in the community around us and He is doing that within our contacts, and within our associations around us. Our job is to be alert, spiritual attuned to the intelligence of the day, in terms of what God is doing, and to watch where the Spirit is working in people's lives, and just provide ready answers to their questions. That's our mission. The Spirit, the great Evangelist, is out there ahead of us, evangelizing – it's the Spirit who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, not us. We are privileged to be on site when that happens. But when that happens, it is our joy to join with them and to draw them into the body that He has brought them to. And that is what we are attempting to do here. We are attempting to provide a place that provides maximum light to believers that the Spirit has reached and turned their hearts on, and to provide them all that we know and all that God has given us of the spiritual truth that is contained in His Word. And that is what we are about.

Verse 26.

For as often as you do this [as you eat this bread and drink the cup], you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again.

So, this is the reason that this is an ordinance that we observe. Some assemblies take the Lord's Table every time they get together. Others do it once a week. Others do it once a month. It wouldn't hurt my feelings if we did it every time we gathered, because it is such a beautiful solemn occasion in which I can join with every one of you as equals under the hand of mercy of the Father, honoring the Son and what He did for us, the completeness of His work, and giving each person who participates with me the full right to use my testimony wherever you go, as I do with yours, because that is what you are doing when you take that bread and John's got it, and Jim's got it, and Paul's got it, and Phil's got it, and Ray's got it, and we take that bread together we are, we have reduced ourselves, beneath our rights, into a common body, calling attention to the

broken body of Christ. Now we take the cup, and the blood of Christ is spilled. Pause. We were talking about that broken body and that sacrifice. Because in becoming sin, Christ is putting the reality of the picture that has been in front of Israel since Numbers 20 and all through Leviticus through the whole of the Levitical law, that the priest of the tribe, the priest of the nation of Israel, would take that sacrifice and offer it on behalf of all the people. Christ is our great High Priest, and He has done and continues to do the exact same thing. His offer to the Father of His own body, is made on a aorist tense, "once and for all but ongoing in terms of its result" basis. Now, the reason that is important is because when we studied Romans 12.1,

Present your bodies a living sacrifice holy (or set apart), acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service of worship.

He asks exactly the same thing of us. Now, when He offered His body, it was perfect. We fall somewhat short of that. His perfect offering had a perfect result, and that perfect result ended up with itself being a perfect conclusion to the sin problem. He offered His body *once and for all*. There was and is nothing more that could be offered. When we offer our body to the Lord, according to Romans 12.1, we offer it on the ground of peace, for that is where we are as a result of redemption. As we are taught by Romans 8:1,

There is therefore no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus who are called according to His purpose.

So we are on the ground of peace, and we offer our body unto God to be used up in our life, and it is used on the basis of having been bought and fully paid for; so there is no condemnation attached to that body. It is now a worthy offering and sacrifice to God because of the work that Christ *has already done*. That is our judicial standing before God. We have been declared acquitted of all guilt and are now blameless. Now, when we take the cup and we take the bread and we eat that together, all of those thoughts are wrapped up in that service and what it means. You can't separate yourself from any of it. It is all there. And when we look at one another and we take this cup and this grape juice, or wine, or whatever we use, we take it together, and it is the "*togetherness*" that makes it work. It is not the physical element that is in there. it could be crackers, or a wafer; it can be grape juice, or it can be wine, or water, or whatever, in the cup; but it is the "*togetherness*" and the "*remembrance*" that sets that meal apart, because we have been set apart. Now,

As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim or announce the Lord's death until He comes again.

So that gives us a time frame for the continued observance of this remembrance service.

Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

What is an unworthy manner? An unworthy manner is to withhold sins from your confession to God. The work of Christ is complete. There is no sin not paid for. If you are harboring within your life things that you know to be sin that you have not yet committed to God and added to your list of things for which Christ died, then essentially you are withholding those sins and you are going to deal with them yourself. There is no provision in body life for that. You can't look through Scripture anywhere and find that there is a provision for that. We cannot say to God okay, I will apply the death of Christ to all these sins except one. Here are all except this one which I want to continue to work on. There is no provision for that. And the caution given here is, "let a man examine himself and let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup," because if he has sins that he is not willing to trust to the blood of Christ already spilled,

He who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly [And that is the body of Christ]. For this reason, many of you are weak and sick and a number of you are asleep or have died.

So there is a sin unto death, and the sin unto death is rejection of the work of the Holy Spirit on any given area of sin in your life that He is dealing with. If He has brought it to mind and you know it is sin, dealing with it is not optional. You have to deal with it. Otherwise, when the body gathers, and you come together to take this testimony, and you say to one another "Christ died for all sin," and you are holding back some things in your own life, you are not trusting Him for the solution to those things, then what you have done is rejected the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your own life, and continued rejection of the Holy Spirit in any given area results in the sin unto death. That is what that is. It is not an unforgivable sin. It is an unlivable sin.

Ray Johnson: What is meant by "dealing with?" There is only one way to deal with sin in your life. And that is at the cross. You have to take that sin to the cross. And there release that sin to the body of sin on the cross, which is Christ Himself. That sin that you are dealing with in your life is part of part of that Man hanging on the cross. You have to deal with it. You also have to consider it forgiven; otherwise you act like it is not.

Some, are not ready to give up this or that, because I enjoy it too much, or because this or that, etc. It has got you. It is holding you in an area of weakness. You do not want to turn it loose, because it is not going to turn you loose. Remember that Satan moves to and fro seeking those he can devour like a roaring lion grabs you and pulls you down. That is the picture of sin in Galatians; a man overtaken with sin. See the picture of a wild animal that overtakes its prey and pulls it down. That is what sin does. So, when that happens, the only solution to that is to reckon yourselves therefore to be dead to sin. You remember, in Romans 6, we were taken back by the Spirit and joined to Christ in His death to sin, He died to sin, we died to sin. That means also that we are dead to sin. That is the new creation here. So the flesh you occupy in the old body – it still subject to the same old lust, to the same old things that it loves. It likes power, it likes control, it likes fine things, it likes money, it likes ease, it likes etc., etc. Phil – it likes grumbling, it likes gossip that is what it really likes.

So the Spirit works in your life and enlightens you as to sin in your life. Dealing with it is not optional from that standpoint. Once you know it is there, you know what it is, you are obligated to take that to the Cross. Reckon yourself therefore to be dead to that sin that is pulling you down, besetting you. You died to it.

Discussion.

Charles Pirtle and Conrad Bowman – if you refuse to bring to the Lord a sin, then that can lead to physical death, not spiritual death. Verse 30, Ch. 11.

Ray Johnson: [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman: Correction. We do not count the sin to be dead, we count *ourselves* to be dead to the sin. This is a big difference; sin is never dead. This is the world in which sin reigns. We are dead to sin, to its power over us, because we died with Christ. When He died, we died with Him. So the New Creation "us" that came up out of the grave in resurrection life, and that lives today within you, is not touched by sin's power. It simply can't be because we are joined to

Christ. What can happen is that the flesh can take over, and the minute you don't reckon it to be true, you find that you are walking within the sphere of that sin. First John tells us that at that point, you lie and do not the truth. You are not doing the truth that shows who and what you are in Christ. You are not walking in the light as He is in the light. What you are doing is walking according to darkness as an unbeliever, while that sin has been paid for, and you died to it. So you are lying. You are lying to yourself, you are lying to the body, and you are lying to the whole world. And that's what – it's a call to holiness. It's a call to holiness in your mind and in your walk. Now, you do not want to take that call so far that it becomes false piety; you want to stay real with it, and that is what the body is about. It is also what the Lord's Table is about, what one of its functions is in the Christian's experience. It is because we give this testimony to one another that we are accountable to one another. You are accountable to the people with whom you share the Lord's Table, because those are the people to whom you gave your testimony regarding trusting Him with your sin. So, if you are harboring sin within your life and you take the elements of that Table and say you are not harboring sin, then the meaning is real simple. Liar is such an ugly word; but that is what happens. You begin to lie at that point. Now,

If we judged ourselves rightly – [verse 31] – we should not be judged. But when we are judged we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world.

What that says is God has corrective actions He takes. All the judgments you are ever going to have placed on you are going to happen today, in this life, in skin, bones, and flesh; because on the other side of physical death is eternity where you are transformed and will know as you are known. He will not judge you in eternity; He will judge you today as His own. That is the first principle in child rearing. Don't wait for the cop on the corner to correct your child. It's your responsibility to do it at home. So do it at home. Do it as close to the infraction of the rule as possible. Get real close to it.

So then my brethren when you come together to eat, wait for one another. You want to take it together. If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you may not come together for judgment, the remaining matters I will arrange when I come.

Now, Paul switches gears.

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I don't want you to stay unaware, you know that when you were pagans you were led astray to the dumb idols.

however you were led, (it didn't matter) that besetting sin that felt so good, it dragged you to the idol.

Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says: Jesus is accursed," or *anathema*, (the thing accursed). Jesus is the thing accursed. "And no one can say Jesus is Lord except by means of the Holy Spirit.

So here is the principle you are recognizing. We are looking at the word for the Spirit *pneuma*, and that is what has been true all the way through the middle portion of this first letter to the Corinthians.

Now there are a variety of gifts of the same Spirit. There are a variety of ministries in the same Lord, and there are varieties of effects by the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of revelation of the Spirit for the common good.

That is not *personal* good, but *common* good. Read this again, the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. It says the gifts of the Spirit are *never intended to be used for personal gain*. That's not the reason they were given. Not ever! They are not to be used to amass to yourself wealth, or power, or influence, or fame. That's not the reason spiritual gifts are given. That's an area that needs to be revisited, seriously revisited, in this day and age.

But to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit, and to another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another.

See, affecting of miracles is not production but rather calling them what they are and what they are displaying themselves to be.

Prophecy, to another distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

That is a list of gifts of the Spirit that are given to the church, all with the same goal in mind – the *common good* of people not the personal good of people or leaders.

Now, let's look at some of those. To one is given the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge. What is the *difference* in those two? Wisdom is the application of what you know to your experience. It is the practical application of the doctrine that you know to your experience; that's wisdom! The issue usually is how to apply the things that you hold true in your life. See, we can come into a class and there we can all get the same understanding of a particular doctrine, and that is what this class is all about. That is what we are attempting to do. We are attempting to bring us to common ground of understanding, because the basis and strength of that Table we share is that we hold a common understanding of who Christ is and what Christ did. Content is everything. It's not the act, but the content. You can go to another church and they can practice the same rites, the same ritual, the same Lord's Table, it looks the same, they buy the glasses from the same place, and the trays from the same place, and they drink the same grape juice, or whatever, and they pass the elements just like we do; but the content of what they believe about the work of Christ is entirely different from what we know the work of Christ to be. So, you are not sharing a common cup! The ritual means different things in different congregations because the content is in the details of what each element means, the typology of it all. Therefore, it is very, very important that we come to a *common* understanding about the work and practice and application of Christ's sacrifice for sin. Someone asked a question, namely, about going to another church (when visiting somewhere) and do we take the Lord's Table when there. Conrad says "he doesn't, but that is a personal thing with him because he doesn't know what he is testifying to, to them." When Paul says he becomes all things to all people, I think that is what he is talking about. See, not having an opportunity to say what that ceremony of remembrance means to us, it becomes an empty exercise. And, it can be misleading because it implies that you agree with them. So, I withhold.

You can see that this can be pretty serious. When you think about, say, a Catholic service where they accept the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, it was mentioned last week, that the cup and the bread actually become the body and blood of Christ, in fact! That is something we do not want to endorse, or imply, or even allow anybody to infer from our actions. So, I certainly withhold participation there. But there are lots of other places where I would also withhold

participation. I tend to be a little more rigid in that regard than some. It depends on what you determine your opportunity to testify to Christ's work really might be.

Phil Richman: Would you be in a sense alienating some people, let's say you are in a small group, as I was at one time in a Catholic group, and they, there was a priest there, this was after I was a believer, about 15 or 20 years ago, and I participated in that, and I felt good about it, I really did; in that particular case. I even shared some Scripture and really, as a result of that a fellow that, I was with was a Catholic and he came to the Lord, as a result of that. So I think you really have to think hard about whether you withdraw, and get your hackles up, or whatever, and look like you don't want to be friendly. I don't think it is going along to get along, as some might imply. It's just a thought. I understand what you are saying and I don't disagree and I do think it is personal. Communion is union, common union, and you can have that affinity.

Paul Nelson: There are some churches that will withhold communion from some that they don't recognize or know.

Charles Pirtle: Many Catholic churches expressly point out that unless you are a Catholic you are not invited to partake.

John Young: That happened to me a few months after I was saved – I was in Washington D.C. for my uncle's funeral and I didn't know, I was getting ready to participate in the communion service, and as an ex-Catholic I knew that they thought it was the actual body and blood of Christ, and I was thinking – I know better than that, but I will go ahead and participate on my basis, and the priest up there said anybody that's not a believer in Transubstantiation, and a practicing Catholic, should not participate, so I said, well, I've just been dis-invited. So, I didn't participate. [Laughter].

Charles Pirtle: Maybe the Protestants should be just as forthcoming. In other words, if you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, you are not invited to partake in this supper. After all, the communion service is for the congregants, it's a family thing and that has to be acknowledged.

Woody Laywell: Would not be out of place to ask them what their beliefs were.

Conrad Bowman: Actually, in our service, wouldn't it be more comfortable to explain what the meal means to us, and, set the bar for participation? You if are

going to leave it up to everybody to make their own choice, which I think is appropriate, then make sure that when you establish the rules of participation. This can be done very quickly. It doesn't take a lot of words to do that.

Phil Richman. I think you all appreciated the message, as I did, on communion, and I think we need that. It's been great. Thank you, Conrad.