1 Corinthians

Chapter 11

We Forgot The Most Important Thing…

**Lesson Objectives**

* Understand the tremendous blessing and responsibility God has given us in the Lord’s Supper
* Examine how love and truth impacts our work as a congregation

**Worship** (CW:310:1)

A: I come, O Savior, to your table,

**B: For weak and weary is my soul;**

A: O Jesus, you alone are able

**B: To satisfy and make me whole**

A: Lord, may you body and your blood

**B: Be for my soul the highest good!**

**Before We Begin**

Think about the kind of work an ad agency or a PR firm representing a celebrity does. Then answer the questions below:

* How is our work as a church different from their work?  
  They change their message to fit with the times  
  They do their best to spin the story in order to make their client look great  
  We are called to preach and teach God’s Word without addition or subtraction

**MIT #1**

**It is God’s Word, not ours**

* What might be appealing about making our church ministry similar to that work?  
  It is simply easier to find out what people want to hear and tell them that  
  Being faithful to God’s Word is a difficult task
* What things would we lose as a result?  
  We would lose the certainty of Scripture; we would cast doubt over all of God’s Word; we would fail to be the ambassadors God has chosen us to be

**1 Corinthians 11:2-16**

**MIT #2**

**What does God’s Word say?**

1. What kind of false assumptions might people have about the roles of men and women. Use the passages below to explain why the items on the list are incorrect.
   1. Galatians 3:28 - There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.  
      Is the man as head more important than his wife, on the top position on the totem pole of important people in the family? No. A Christlike head knows that in importance before God, there is no difference between male and female since both are equally redeemed and valued in the blood of Christ (Galatians 3:26-29).  
        
      Our heavenly Father is not setting up a system by which he “plays favorites” in his family. Rather, in his grand design of interdependence among his creatures, he gives us direction for living out that interdependence for the blessing of everyone in any particular relationship (home,

church, work, etc.).

* 1. Ephesians 5:25 - Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.  
     Is the man as head able to make sure that what happens around the house is what he wants to happen, regardless of the wishes of his wife? Is he the "king of his castle?" No. A Christlike head knows that he is not called to lord it over or dominate his wife, but he is called to love and serve her as Christ loved the church—making her needs and concerns his first priority, just as Christ did for us (Mark 10:42-45; Ephesians 5:25-28).
  2. 1 Corinthians 11:3 - …and the head of Christ is God.  
     Jesus is the “body” who is guided and directed by the Father as his “head” in carrying out his earthly mission of redeeming mankind.

Thus Jesus total and willing subjection to the guiding and directing of his “head” serves as an example both to man in his relationship to his “head”, Christ, and to woman in her relationship to her “head”, man.

Headship in Scripture is, at its heart, humble leadership that has as its prime concern the spiritual and physical welfare of all others whom God has placed in that head's care. Headship is not perk and privilege; it is an awesome responsibility to be God's representative in caring for others. Yes, there is a bit of Christ's authority whenever God gives someone such a position of responsibility, yet that authority is not to be used as a club or a threat. That authority is a solemn trust from God to be used for the benefit of those in our care. It is a trust that needs to be exercised wisely as those who will give an account to God for the trust he placed in us as his representatives.

Kephalee denotes a close relationship in which the one who is the “head” has a deep

interest what happens to the “body” (a person or persons) connected to him

* 1. 1 Corinthians 11:11 - In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.

A key aspect of that order of creation is God’s design of the crown jewel of his

creation. God created male and female in his image as unique but interdependent

creatures to work and interact with one another as they care for his world and so bring honor to his name. Our creation as male and female is not some afterthought or needless duplication in his created order. God designed both male and female to contribute what is unique to our callings. In that way we carry to completion the task he has given us to reflect the glorious image of a gracious God to a now fallen world. We ignore our unique place in the order of creation to the harm of our own and others’ physical, emotional, and spiritual welfare.  
  
We can easily fall to the temptation to distort order of creation as if it were a convenient phrase to hurl at others to keep them “in their place.”

The relationship God gave man as head ought not lead man to disrespect woman

* 1. Psalm 33:20 - We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield.

**MIT #3**

**We exercise our roles in Christian love**

For clarity, it is also important to note that the term “helper” in and of itself does not imply a unique or subordinate role. In fact, “helper” is a term most often used in Scripture to describe God himself as he supplies what is lacking for us and on whom we depend (for example, Psalm 33:20).

* 1. Romans 3:23-24 all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.  
     Where we fail in that, we run to Christ's forgiveness. There at his cross, we find the strength of his grace to live out this awesome responsibility of being representatives of his selfless love in our homes.  
       
     Why don’t women wear hats?   
     Paul was applying a principle to the worship life of the Corinthians. The principle is always valid. The application may not be.

**The Lord’s Supper (11:17-34)**

**MIT #4**

**Our worship must include love for each other.**

1. The Corinthians were gathering together as a church family. Yet Paul says in verse 17 that their meetings were doing “more harm than good.” What was causing Paul to describe their work in such a scathing way?

Agape meal = The people ate a common meal, prayer was offered, and the Scriptures were read. After the meal a collection was taken for the widows and orphans., and communication from other congregations were read and answered.  
  
The food was no longer being shared generously among all people; social groups seem to share their food only with each other; plus the wealthy were getting drunk  
  
From what Paul says in this section, it is clear that some members were showing disdain toward the poor in their congregations. This was causing them to misuse the Lord’s Supper, the common meal in which all members of the church remembered Christ’s suffering and death and partook of his body and blood.   
Verse 17 *“More harm than good”—*This scathing remark is one of the strongest Paul ever leveled against a congregation. This section includes much on the Lord’s Supper, but it is really not about the Lord’s Supper itself. Rather, it is about the favoritism and unloving attitudes in the Corinthian congregation. To correct the problem, Paul places the Lord’s Supper into the center of the discussion, with the prayer

that the Corinthians will shape their attitudes around the Supper they *all* participate in, rather than in their different incomes.

1. Someone says to you, “I believe that the Lord’s Supper is a great thing. It’s a nice picture of what Jesus did for us. I can’t believe that you think that’s actually Jesus’ body and blood, though. That’s too weird.” Write down three things from this section or other parts of Scripture to help you respond:
   1. Jesus’ words of institution; this is my body, this is my blood  
      The Lord’s Supper places us into the very heart of our blood-bought redemption won for us by Christ’s death on the cross

**MIT #5**

**The Bible says Jesus’ body and blood is present in the Lord’s Supper.**

* 1. Paul warns that we can sin by eating and drinking in the sacrament. This can bring judgment on us. Is he trying to frighten us away from the sacrament, so that we are afraid to receive it? Certainly not.  
       
     Luther: “How can you sin in eating the body of the Lord, if he is not present in the eating of the bread? Whoever eats unworthily is guilty in regard to what he eats and sin is committed in the eating and drinking.”
  2. *“It is not the Lord’s Supper you eat.”* Paul was not saying that the body and blood of Christ were not present among the Corinthians because of their abuses. Quite the opposite (verse 29). Rather, he was impressing on the Corinthians that their lack of love was turning the meal into something the Lord Jesus would never condone.  
       
     This self-examination does not concern itself with my personal worthiness. I am not looking at myself to determine whether I am “good enough” to eat and drink. If worthy eating and drinking depended on personal worthiness none of us could ever accept the Lord’s invitation.

I examine myself by asking certain questions. I begin by asking: Do I recognize that I am a sinner, that because of my sin I am a lost and condemned creature? But then I continue: Do I believe that Jesus’ body and blood were given and shed for the forgiveness of all my sins? Do I also recognize the body and blood of Jesus in the sacrament, do I believe that they are truly present as Jesus said? Do I purpose with the Lord’s help to fight the battle against sin in my life?

1. You bring a friend to church and they ask, “Why doesn’t your church say everyone can come up to communion?” How might you use this section to help you answer that question? How will you emphasize that close communion is intended to be a practice of Christian love?

Close(d) Communion has the purpose of channeling blessings to the communicants, rather

than affording needless opportunities for people to receive the sacrament to their spiritual harm.  
  
We not only participate in the body and blood of Christ, but this also brings us into fellowship with all those who eat and drink with us in this sacrament. Thus, receiving the Lord’s Supper at the same table, eating of the same loaf, is an act of fellowship in the faith. It is a recognition or expression of unity, of being one body through faith in the same Jesus. Only among those who have confessional unity can their unity be acknowledged in this way.

Hence we find that Jesus nowhere commands the church to invite everyone to this Supper. The gospel, the good news, we are to preach in all the world. And regarding baptism Jesus says, “Baptize all nations.” Never, however, does he say: “Give my body and blood to everyone.” It was instituted in the close fellowship of the twelve. It is not for everyone. The Lord has to tell us under what circumstances or to whom this sacrament is a blessing.  
  
Our topic, however, leads us to give special consideration to the biblical principles of fellowship as they apply to participation at the Lord’s Supper. Since we noted that joint reception of the Lord’s Supper is always an act of Christian fellowship, we need to make this application.

We will receive at the Lord’s table those whom we can recognize as one in faith with us. And how will we recognize them? In stating the biblical principles of fellowship we said: “We can recognize those who are one in faith with us on the basis of the confession of their lips and actions.” In this connection it is important to remember that membership in a particular congregation and church body is a confessional matter. By joining a particular congregation I am saying: “I am in agreement with your doctrine and practice.” So the primary confession we look at is church membership.  
  
Since joining in Holy Communion is always an act of fellowship, we cannot knowingly give the body and blood of our Lord to those whose confession does not agree with ours, whose confession we are convinced is flawed by persistent error.

To practice “open communion” by which we would receive such at the Lord’s table is irresponsible use of this precious sacrament. Some of our Lutheran forefathers came to American to escape the demand of their government in Germany to celebrate Holy Communion jointly with the Reformed or Evangelicals as they were called. They rejected such joint communion in “union churches” as sinful unionism.  
  
A few quotations from Werner Elert’s book, Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries (Concordia, 1954), describe the practice that the early church learned from the apostles. He writes: “The early church was never in doubt that unity in doctrine is a prerequisite of altar fellowship. No one who taught false doctrine might receive Holy Communion in an orthodox congregation”

1. How can remembering the purpose of the Lord’s Supper help shape our attitude as a congregation?

We are forgiven

We belong to God

We are united in confession and in Jesus Christ  
Koinonia

**Review:**

Thankfulness:

Sin:

Reminder:

New: