

The Blessed Mess: Paul's First Letter to the Church at Corinth

May 7th, 2023

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Deadly Division (1 Corinthians 11:17-34)

1. Why does God take division so seriously? (11:17-27, 30)

2. How can we take division more seriously? (11:27-33)

For Further Thought and Discussion:

Getting Started:

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?

Going Deeper

2. What "*divisions*" (v. 18) were surfacing in the Corinthian church? How were certain church members abusing the Lord's Supper (vv. 21-22)? Who was suffering as a result (v. 22)?

3. Paul says that the Corinthians' abuse of the Lord's Supper, (a) isn't a celebration of "*communion*" at all (v. 20), and (b) renders them "*guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord*" (v. 27). What does Paul mean by these statements? Why is the Corinthians' abuse of the Lord's Supper such a serious matter (see v. 30)? Why does Paul remind the Corinthians of the tradition they'd receive regarding the Lord's Supper (vv. 23-26)? How do Jesus' words serve as a corrective for the Corinthians' attitude and actions?
4. Paul warns against taking communion "*unworthily*" (v. 27), which he further defines as a failure to discern the body (v. 29). What kind of self-examination is Paul calling for (v. 28)? Which "*body*" are we supposed to consider as we take communion (compare 1 Corinthians 10:17 and vv. 33-34)?
5. In verses 31-32, Paul lists three levels of judgment. What are they? How does this passage serve as a warning to the Corinthians? How does God judge believers? How is God's judgment on believers different from punishment, or condemnation?

Application:

6. Ultimately, the church's unity is a picture of God, and what he has accomplished through sending Jesus (see John 17:20-26). How does this reshape our perspective on (a) guarding against division, and (b) pursuing unity?
7. Jeff provided a list of diagnostic questions for us to ask ourselves, to help us guard against division and seek unity. Which of these stood out to you? Why? Where do you need to seek repentance?
8. What's one thing you can do this week to apply this passage?