

1 Corinthians Class 14 Transcript

Welcome back to class 14 in our series in FI Online on the book of 1 Corinthians.

In class number 13 we had **one question**, so let's cover that as we begin.

I understand that the traditional teaching and the one you also gave us about the head coverings of **1 Corinthians 11** refers to hats for the men and hair length for the women, but it does seem to me as if Paul would then be comparing apples to oranges or mixing his metaphors. However, I do see that in **chapter 11 verse 14** Paul does talk hair length for men and women without mentioning of hats, so I find it a bit confusing, as do some other sects who say Paul is talking about hats for the men and the women. Please help.

Well, first of all, I'm sorry that I introduced that confusion in the first place. The subject of appropriate head covering is clearly about hair and the appropriate length. I inserted some comments in the last class about men wearing hats indoors and the custom of etiquette of removing a hat when prayer is being offered, and frankly, I probably introduced a lot of confusion in the process.

Paul is clearly talking about hair length as a matter of covering the head. He's not talking about hats. He's not talking about veils. He's not talking about some other thing to cover the head. Now, it is true that there are groups who have tried to apply **1 Corinthians 11** to hats or scarves as far as this entire passage is concerned, and they conclude that women should always have some kind of a head covering—a veil or a hat—when they go into a church.

If you were to tour with us, for example, when we go to Israel, the ladies are often required to put on, if nothing else, put a handkerchief on their head before they walk into some of the Roman Catholic churches, but that is not the teaching of the Bible. That's not what Paul's talking about, and any church that tries to read hats or veils into this is not really reading what it said.

So, I apologize for introducing confusion by talking about hats. That just came at the top of my head, and I realize that probably made it confusing. I can understand why. What Paul is talking about in **1 Corinthians 11** is about hair and the appropriate length of the hair.

So, thank you for your question.

Now, before we begin the next session, class 14, we as always want to ask God's blessing.

So, if you would please bow your heads and join me.

[Prayer]

[3:47]

In our last class, class 13, we'd just started into **1 Corinthians chapter 11**, and it seems like a sudden change in subject. We've been talking about food offered to idols. We've been talking about making decisions that are legal, but based more on the impact and how it might build people up or not, and the basis for making those decisions. And now we've moved to a subject about hair length. And what we'll see as we go a little further in this chapter is that this apparently was an issue that was causing some problems in the Corinthian Church, and therefore it was important for Paul to address these things which can divide and yet should never be a cause of division.

In fact, what we'll see as we look through this section is that in fact Paul is stressing that though there are differences—and there should be differences—these differences shouldn't be separating us. So, we'll see that, and then we're going to move into what I think is the most important part of **1 Corinthians 11**, which deals with the Passover. So, let's proceed.

Last time, we finished through **verse 5 of 1 Corinthians 11**, so we want to continue on.

Now, as we were talking about the relationship that Paul describes in the family that God

had established from the beginning, we emphasize that everyone in the family has a responsibility to be submissive to the one in authority over them—all the way up to the fact that Jesus Christ is submissive to his Father. That every man is to be submissive to Jesus Christ, and every woman is to be submissive to her husband. That this is a system which God has established that brings stability and peace in the family relationship and in the church relationship as well.

We did emphasize, however, that simply because man has headship doesn't place him in a position of commanding his wife to do something that is wrong. And we quoted back from **Acts chapter 5 in verse 29**, where *Peter and the other apostles answered* (the religious leaders who wanted them to be silenced) *and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men."*—that that principle is true for all of us that we all have a responsibility ultimately to be yielded to God.

[6:16]

But now, as we went through this passage, let's just go and pick it up in [**1 Corinthians 11**] **verse 5**, where Paul wrote:

But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved.

We begin to look at various hair lengths that are involved here and some of the lessons that we are to learn. I don't think we're supposed to be so totally focused on trying to

figure out exactly each hair length, although we'll see in general terms what the Scripture says, but there are principles involved here that are very important for us to grasp.

Now again, as we explained last time, some of the commentators make this whole section be talking about public worship and women praying or prophesying in the public church service. But later on in this very section of **1 Corinthians**, Paul is going to make it very clear that it's not the women's role to be standing in front of the congregation and leading in those ways.

So, we're not talking here about what takes place in the church service. We're talking about the way we conduct ourselves outside of that and in our daily lives and our family relationship and our relationship with others.

[7:29]

So, he says, again, that if she prays or prophesies—she does these things with her head uncovered—then she's dishonoring her head, which Paul has just said is her husband. She's bringing dishonor to him. It's all the same as if her head were shaved. And again, as we read last time, the shaving of the head was something that was done for an adulteress; it was done in mourning; it was done as a sign of an individual going through a very difficult time, not something that was just the normal way of life.

But, he goes on to say in **verse 6**:

[For] if a woman is not covered, let her [also] be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.

Okay, what are we talking about?

We find here that Paul has listed four different hair lengths. First of all is *shaved*. That's pretty obvious. We pretty well understand what that is. That's all the hair shaved off, just skin on top. That's not—that's, again, something that some people may wear their hair that way, but that's not appropriate for a lady to do.

The second length he mentions is *shorn*. Now, again, for the most part we don't stop and think about that because we're not around sheep being shorn, but if you've ever seen sheep after the shearing has taken place, it's not much longer than being shaved. It's a very, very short hair. We might consider it, as we might call it today, a crew cut or a buzz cut, some sort like that.

The third length that's simply mentioned is *not covered*. And then finally the fourth is *covered*. How do we define those? Well, to be honest there is no way for us to set a specific length that's involved. We simply have said, in principle, that a woman's head should be covered. That doesn't have anything to do with the style of hair she wears. It has only to do with the length of the hair. If she wishes to wear her hair up, there's

nothing unbiblical about that whatsoever, but that her hair should be a little bit longer.

What it tells us as we look through this is that the first three—shaved, shorn, not covered—are acceptable for men. Any man who wants to wear his hair that way, that's perfectly all right. Obviously, it goes from the very shortest, *shaved*, to whatever is *not covered*. Again, if you look at the pictures or the statues of people who existed back in the time when Paul wrote this, men's hair was basically fairly short—not a lot different than men like myself wear hair short today. Would it have been maybe a little bit more full at some points? I suppose there may be some who did. But when you study the actual artwork and history from that period of time, you find that the long hair on a man was a sign of one of the pagan deities. And when humans wanted to appear like they had these divine attributes and characteristics, they're sometimes portrayed in that way. But the average person, the average Roman, the average Greek—no, that was not the way their hair was worn. It was worn relatively short.

[10:43]

A woman's hair should be longer than that. What's the difference between them? Sometimes we've tried to define it and basically said, well, we feel that it would be a good standard if the back of a woman's neck is covered by her hair. Okay, that seems like a reasonable standard, again, not saying that she has to wear it up—has to wear it down in that way, that's up to her. That's a style issue, not a length issue.

Now, we're going to see a little bit more here though, and again, I don't want to get bogged down with all of this. As we said, the first three of those are acceptable for men, but not for women. The last one, as we'll see, is acceptable for women, but not for men.

Rather than try to get down to a specific length—how many inches, how many centimeters or whatever—is going to be appropriate, I'd prefer to use another principle. I would simply say this: if there is a question about whether a man's hair is too long or a woman's hair is too short, then probably it is. You should go ahead and not, as a man, not try to get your hair as long as it can be and still be legal, nor a woman get her hair as short as it can be and still be legal. That's really kind of avoiding the point that Paul is making. What's legal is not necessarily what's best. Stay away from the edges. Stay away from the borderline. If a man has hair, it ought to be short enough that there's no question it's short. A woman's hair should be long enough [that] there's no question about it. That's, I think, a principle.

There's another aspect of this though that I thought was interesting. As I was researching this, I looked at the New International translation, which shows us that some of the translation through here can be challenging to try to understand exactly what's meant, but I thought it was an interesting alternative translation in **verses five and six** together. It says this:

1 Corinthians 11:5-6, NIV margin [*Life Application* version]: *And every woman who prays or prophesies with no covering of hair [on her head] dishonors her head—she is*

just like one of the “shorn women.” If a woman has no covering, let her be for now with short hair; but since it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair shorn or shaved, she should grow it again.

Now, that may be an interesting translation, an interesting perspective on this.

[13:04]

He goes on to tell us in **verse 7** [NKJ]:

For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.

Now, Paul is not describing her, the woman's, relationship to God. He's describing her relationship to her husband. The man kind, man and woman together, was the crowning achievement of God's physical creation and was created with the full intention that mankind would bring glory to God. That was true of both men and women. But within the mankind, the woman was created for a different role than the man. And in bringing honor to her husband, she brings honor to God as well.

He goes on to say, **verse 8**:

For man is not from woman, but woman from man.

And he's going to see as we go a little further—let's just go on to the next verse.

Verse 9 *Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.*

He's making the point that none of us are independent. After the creation of Eve, there is no man that there—excuse me, that there is no man who can come on the scene and say that he didn't need a woman to get here. Adam was created uniquely, but every other man has arrived through a woman who was his mother. Likewise, no woman ever produced a child without the husband. Both are essential, and that's the way God set it up.

We point to—or what God points to here is a difference in function. We refer to this as complementary roles. Now, it's illustrated—if some of you are kind of mathematically inclined, as I tend to be—by what we call complementary angles. In this case, angle *alpha* and angle *beta* are complementary. When you put them together, they create a perfect 90° angle, but separately, neither one can do that. So, what it shows us is that it takes both to create this right angle that we're trying to create. And likewise, where humans are concerned, God's established man and woman with complementary roles.

Now, if you look at that diagram, which of the two angles is most important? Well, that doesn't make any sense because both are necessary. You can't say one is more important than the other; they're simply different. And they carry out a slightly different

function in order to produce the right angle we're looking at. So likewise, where humans are concerned, God did not create man or woman greater than the other. We are in complementary roles.

One of the main lessons for us is that we don't have the option of choosing a different kind of relationship between husband and wife. To do so is to rebel against God's intention, which He clearly revealed through the creation.

[16:08]

Now, he goes on to say:

Verse 10 *For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.*

Now again, this is something that we try to understand, but we don't fully have a grasp of it. We have a basic idea. No one knows exactly what Paul meant by that statement. It is generally believed—and I think appropriately from what Scripture tells us—that God has sent the angels to be ministering spirits for those who are called today. In fact, he tells us that in **Hebrews 1**, in **verse 14**. Therefore, those angels are going to be present at all times, not just at times of worship, but all the time.

Now, this comment from *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, I think, expresses this reasonably well:

Perhaps angels are mentioned in this discussion about the place of women in the church to remind Christians that angels are present and that they are interested in the salvation of God's people, and they are sensitive to the conduct of Christians. So the angels would recognize the breach of decorum were Christian women not to have proper head coverings (Now again, we understand that to refer to hair, which we'll see a little further down.) and the long hair distinguishing them as women, the sign of authority on her head, which symbolized her husband's authority over her.

So, it's telling us here that the angels themselves look upon us, and the outward appearance is something that illustrates what is supposed to be a part of the heart—that we strive to do what God tells us to do in this way.

Now again, in **verse 11**, he says:

Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.

Again, the phrase here *independent of* means kind of “apart from.” No man nor any woman can claim superiority because both of us are totally dependent upon one another to even exist. So, God created man and woman as spiritual equals, but He

deliberately designed them in such a way that neither one of them is even capable of existence without the other. It's strange that in our world today, it seems like some of those movements out there, especially the LGBTQ movement seeks to show that women don't need men and men don't need women; we can get by putting men with men and women with women. That denies what God created. Men are not complementary to men. Women are not complementary to women. We don't complete each other, but the way God designed it, we do.

[18:51]

Again, it says *in the Lord*, or within the sphere of God's working within us. Now that's not true simply physically. I've heard sometimes—it's been a long time, but I've heard men who might say something like: well, you know, women just don't understand things, spiritual things, in the way that men do. Well, in one sense you're right; they may understand them better. Not always. I'm not making that point. But I'm saying that if you think that somehow men are inherently more spiritual or more capable of understanding spiritual things, you're really missing out on some wonderful help that your wife may be able to give you. Women certainly understand many spiritual things very well. It's by being together and sharing those understandings that all of us are strengthened and built up.

Remember what we said? What is it that builds up? Does a man have the ability to function on his own and separate, other than through reproduction? Yes, you can live your life that way, and you can be a reasonably successful person. There are people who do. But, we also should understand that God created us to strengthen and build up each other, and in the family, that's in a unique way. But we also note that in the family, we don't all bring the same strengths and weaknesses to that relationship. Each one is completely different and yet together make a very, very strong unit, as God designed it.

So, within God's design, the man and the woman together strengthen and build up one another. What society thinks about that at times is, in fact, completely irrelevant. This is what God intends. And, that is the eternal standard that we as Christians want to live by. We not only can learn from each other, we really **must** learn from each other if we want to have a balanced understanding.

He goes on to say, **verse 12**:

For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.

It's certainly true that the woman was created as a help for the man. From the time of that creation, no man can claim he came into existence without the woman who carried him and brought him into this world as his mother. Man cannot exist without woman, nor can woman exist without man. To look down on one another is really utterly foolish and very shortsighted. God designed it to be this way, so that men and women would have the proper respect and appreciation for each other. It is a unity within the family.

Now again, remember, here's our subject in **1 Corinthians**—we have a problem with the Church where people are not unified as they should be, where they're allowing things to separate them that should never separate them. Now we're looking at one of the most fundamental relationships in life, man and woman. And quite honestly, marriage in that age wasn't what God intended it to be. But God is calling Christians to come to a higher standard, to recognize that what God has offered is something much greater, much more fulfilling, and, you can accomplish much, much more with each other and with that respect toward one another.

[22:24]

He says, **verse 13**:

Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

You know, without that recognition of her relationship with her husband in this way. The question here, remember, is not about what's legal, but about what's appropriate. Now we can apply that same principle to a lot of different situations. We can apply it to dress, conversation, any number of different things. It builds upon what we've been seeing in **chapters 8 through 10**. It may be legal to eat meat offered to idols, but is it appropriate? Okay, judge for yourselves. It may be legal for the woman to do this, but is it really what's appropriate? Is it the kind of thing that accomplishes what God wants accomplished?

God does not require us, for example, to pray on our knees. Why do we do it? Well, for those of us who can, there may certainly be individuals who can't get on your knees, but for those of us who can, what does it do for us? Why do you have to get on your knees to pray to God in your own private place of prayer? Well, that physical activity of kneeling reminds us who's in charge. It reminds us where we are. We've come to the throne room of God, and we humble ourselves through that physical act of kneeling. Likewise, what God tells us here is a matter of humbling ourselves to meet the standard that God sets for us. The covering of the head in an appropriate way for men or women, as we see described here, has an impact as well.

He goes on to say, **verse 14**:

Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?

Now, I think sometimes we misunderstood this—I certainly have—and tried to look at nature to see the—what's being said here, that does nature show us this? Well, I think many people rightly have brought out: well, if you look at a lion, it's the lion that has the male that has the long hair, and the female doesn't. So, what does nature tell us? That's really not the point, and that's not really the word that's used here.

Basically, what Paul is saying is: we don't have a specific law that says this, but do we really need a "thus saith the Lord" to be able to figure out that God intended men and women to appear differently? And that's kind of the sense of it. Do you need a law? Doesn't even life, nature itself—not in the sense of looking at nature—but don't you just naturally look at men and women and realize they're supposed to look different? God designed us to be different.

[25:12]

He goes on to say:

Verse 15 *But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering.*

Now, there are those who have often read through this section and said: well, a woman must wear a veil, or she must have a hat on her head when she is in services, and so on. No, that's not what this is saying. It very clearly says that the covering God is talking about is the hair that God gave her, that she should have her hair long enough that she is covered by that standard that he talked about earlier—that this is a glory. It brings glory to her because it shows an attitude of yieldedness in submission to God. It brings glory to her husband because it shows her honoring of her husband, and, ultimately brings glory to God because it recognizes that God is the one who established this system. And by her outward appearance, she shows that she is eagerly, willingly submissive to that system that God has established. So, there are physical things that show in that way.

I wondered about this in the sense of, sometimes when I see pictures, let's say for example, from areas in Africa where many of the women wear their hair extremely short. So I asked some of our pastors over there about this, and one of them even sent me a picture of several of the ladies in the congregation, and all of them had their hair appropriately long. They realize this is what God says is the right standard, and they eagerly go along with that standard, regardless of what society around them has. They set a very wonderful example there and show that what God says is important.

So, he goes on to say—and again, I don't really want to make a Bible study about hair length. I don't really think that's the main thing that Paul has in mind here. He's talking about being artificially divided by something that shouldn't divide us.

So, he says this in the next verse, **verse 16**:

But if anyone seems to be contentious (They want to argue this point.), we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

Paul is saying this is not a cultural thing. This is not something that has to do with what the hairstyle is in Corinth 2000 years ago, as opposed to hairstyles today. No, that's not

his point. This is the standard for the Churches of God. It is timeless. It is a standard that we believe is what God intends it to be, and Paul has wisely written it here and preserved it for us. So, that's the standard that we choose to use.

Now, again, are we going to come up to someone and meet them at the door with the deacon who measures whether your hair is long enough? No, that's ridiculous. But, this is a standard that you and I should use. As a man, I need to make sure that my hair doesn't get so long that there's any question about whether my head is covered in an inappropriate way. If I'm a lady, I need to make sure that mine is long enough to be properly covered.

[28:17]

Now, I know some of you ladies encounter the same thing my wife does. Sometimes you tell the hairdresser what you have in mind, and that isn't exactly what you get. So that's certainly understandable. That doesn't show rebellion to God's system. That's just simply a matter of, sometimes we have to make certain adjustments.

We had a lady here in the local Dallas congregation a few years ago in an extremely serious neck injury and ended up having to have most of her hair completely cut off, and that was the only appropriate way for it to be because, otherwise, even trying to care for it, she could've harmed herself very seriously. Now, that lady today has long hair again; it's grown out. But there are those situations, and we certainly understand that. So that's not what we're talking about here. Let's not be divided over something that, really, God intends there to be a difference between us. We are different, but we're unified even in our difference.

Now, we're going to move on here, and this part, I think, gets very, very important. There's one more thing I want to cover here, and I'm going to read a little bit of a section here from *Expositor's Bible Commentary*. But I think the *Expositor's* actually makes some very, very good points in summarizing this passage. It says:

His teaching in **1 Corinthians 11:2-16** goes far beyond the cultural conditions affecting the Corinthian church. Indeed, it was applicable also to other first century churches and to God's people at any time. The principles Paul presents here are to govern the church and individual Christians in their life and conduct, and they are as follows (and he gives five different ones):

Number 1. Christians should live as individuals and in corporate worship in the light of the perfect unity and interrelatedness of the persons of the Godhead. The Father and the Son are perfectly united, and yet there is a difference administratively—God is the Head of Christ. So, Christians are one, but they too have an administratively subordinate function to one another.

Number 2. Christians are to remember that God first created man, then woman, and placed the man as administrative head over the woman and the woman as

his helper/companion. So, in the Christian community the man is to conduct himself as a man and as the head of the woman, while the woman is to conduct herself as woman with dignity, without doing anything that would bring dishonor to her.

Number 3. Since Christians live in the Christian community of the home and that of the church, they're to remember that God has established the man and the woman as equal human beings. As woman came from man, so also man is born of woman, **verse 12**. So in the Christian community, believers should treat one another with mutual respect and admiration as they realize each other's God-given special functions and positions.

Number 4. Christian men and women should remember that, though God has made them equal human beings, yet He has made them distinct sexes. That distinction is not to be blurred in their realization that they are mutually dependent, the man on the woman and the woman on the man. It is also to be observed in their physical appearance so that the woman can be recognized as woman and the man as man.

Number 5. God is a ruler of order. This means order in worship and peaceful decorum in the church and in the family. Therefore, Christian men and women should conduct themselves in a respectful, orderly way, not only in worship, but also in daily life.

[32:10]

Okay, let's move on. The rest of this chapter leads us into a very, very important section as we consider the Passover.

Paul says:

Verse 17 *Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.*

Now, we could read that and say, well, is he talking about the instructions he just gave or what's coming? I think the context points forward. It indicates that, alright, I'm going to give some instructions here, but I can't begin by praising them. Sometimes Paul praises. He wants to praise. But he says, "I can't *praise you* in this because when *you come together* (This gives us the context.), you're not coming together *for the better but for the worse.*"

Now, the commentators very often, as they look at this, talk about what they call an "agape feast" or a "love feast." And, quite honestly, they say, "Well, this was something that was traditionally a part of the first-century church." Well, I would challenge you to find someplace in Scripture where you find that. Now, are there historians who come along and say this took place? Yes, there may be some slight reference to something of

them getting together in this way in **Jude verse 12**, but, we really currently couldn't prove that, and for them to say that this is the subject here is grossly missing the point that's being made.

Paul is referring here in the verses that follow to a meal which was held prior to the observance of the Passover, the New Testament symbols of the Passover that Jesus Christ instituted. Now, why would people do that? Well, if you read the customs of Judaism and you read what the Scripture says, it began with a meal. Jesus Christ, as He gathered His disciples together for the Passover, as He clearly says, they were coming for the Passover; they had a meal. So, it's certainly understandable that people in the first century would've looked at that example and said, "Well, we need to have a meal because, after all, it was after the meal that Jesus instituted the New Testament symbols of the broken bread and the wine, so they probably were coming together to have a meal."

Now, Paul is not telling us that the meal itself caused division, but he's going to very quickly show us that there were things going on that were terribly dividing the Church and were deeply disrespectful to God and to one another.

[34:40]

We move on to **verse 18**. He says:

For first of all, when you come together as a church, —

This is not just people getting together in one another's homes and enjoying fellowship or getting together after services. No, this is, you come together as a Church.

—I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

Oh, so people are coming together, and as we'll see in a moment, certainly a meal is involved, and yet in that, there are divisions. There are some people who are divided from others right there in the Church.

Now again, remember, it is *among you*. It is not divisions where people are no longer there. It is people are coming together, but they're not treating each other with the same respect that should be shown. They're getting together with their friends or those people they are comfortable with, and they're not really associating with everyone. Some don't feel comfortable with that.

Now, probably what we see here— keep this in mind: the Church of the first century especially was a unique environment. In society, a master would never sit down and have a meal with a slave. Men would never share a meal with women; that was a separate thing. That may explain a part of why he covers the section about men and women appearing different, being different and yet all together when the Passover is observed because all are spiritually the children of God, the sons and daughters of God.

So, in that first-century world, the various classes completely separated themselves from one another.

Now we come to the Church, and God is calling people from all those classes, and He brings them together in a common celebration. And as we're going to see as we go further in this chapter, the commonness of that celebration is extremely important. It's something that must be shared in that way. So this was an unusual environment. Now, there are some people who—they were perhaps the richer, the more well-to-do. There are others who are in the Church who were slaves. They wouldn't normally associate with each other. So, coming into the Church, it doesn't just magically make all of those barriers disappear. Instead, they probably still continue to do things in that way.

He goes on to say, **verse 19**. He said:

For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.

That doesn't mean that God demands it, that He insists that there be factions. He's just simply saying: okay, God acknowledges that this is going to happen. Human beings, leaving God out of the picture, are going to separate themselves, and that's not the way God intends it to be.

[37:37]

The term here for *faction* is a term that primarily seems to have to do with choosing. I want to choose who I'm going to associate with. I want to take sides. I want to be with this person, but I'm really not comfortable with that other one.

Now, probably in the midst of this, I think all of us can imagine there's probably a group of people who were saying, I don't want to be divided. I don't want to choose this group or that group; I just want us to be together. And yet, they themselves probably find themselves in a very awkward spot. What do you do in a spot like that? Well, Paul's going to go ahead and address these issues.

He says:

Verse 20 *Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.*

Now, if I could ask one thing of you, please try to put out of your mind the traditional idea of what the phrase *Lord's Supper* means. I think that hampers us from being able to understand what's being said here. Many of us come from a Protestant background where we were told: oh, we'll get together on Sunday morning, and we pass the bread and the wine, and we're taking the *Lord's Supper*; we call it that. That's not what's being said here.

So, let's understand a couple of things, and I will give you a couple of possible ways of looking at this. First of all—and this is something I didn't realize for many years—the words that are used for this phrase, *Lord's Supper*. He says, again, you are not coming together *to eat the Lord's Supper*. The phrase *Lord's Supper* in Greek is *kuriakon deipnon*. What does that mean? Well, basically, it means “a lordly meal,” the kind of an elaborate feast a ruler might have.

Now, in your mind, would it be possible for people in the first century who are coming together to observe the Passover, who are looking at the example of Jesus getting together with his disciples for a meal before those New Testament symbols, would you come to the conclusion that it could be a pretty nice meal? And in fact, if you came from a nice background, an upper-class background, perhaps you would want to have a very nice meal. If you were setting up a meal for the Church prior to the Passover service, wouldn't you want it to be a nice meal? You wouldn't serve something that was poor. But, is that really what God intends?

We'll see as we go further, but, I think it's legitimate to translate this phrase: *when you come together in one place, it is not to eat a lordly meal*. It is not for the purpose—you're not coming together in order to have a wonderful meal. That's not the point. That's not what you should be focused upon.

[40:33]

Now there is another aspect of this that we might see as well. It could be translated as if we take *Lord*—in this case *kuriakon*—if we take that as a reference to Jesus Christ, then Paul could also have been saying: when you come together into one place, it is not for the purpose of eating the meal Jesus ate. It's not that that you're doing. That again is a perfectly legitimate way.

However you want to take the phrase *Lord's Supper*, we also should note what it clearly says: you are **not** there *to eat the Lord's Supper*. So, when people in their good evangelical fervor say: “Oh, well, we get together Sunday morning, and we have the Lord's Supper”—no, you don't; you can't. That's not something that's possible. And once more, Paul says: *when you come together you are not there to take the Lord's Supper*. So, again, it's very clear that's not what's supposed to be taking place.

But let's understand what is taking place. He's going to show us that as we go further.

Verse 21 *For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk.*

Now, wait a minute. Does that fit a description of anything you have ever seen if you come from that evangelical background of people having bread and wine, or even as it used to be when my family was attending one of those churches, little cubes of white bread with grape juice? Have you ever seen anybody who was a glutton on the bread and a drunkard on the wine? No, it makes no sense. We cannot be talking about some

little ceremony with bread and wine in it. No, there's much more to it. What takes place?

Well, why don't we just read it for what Paul says: *one takes his own **supper** ahead of others*. Okay, so here's an individual who's come together, and they're having supper; they're having a meal. But, instead of waiting for anybody else, they're getting theirs while it's good.

Now, think about the society of that first-century world. There were many people who were slaveowners, who were wealthy, who had much freedom in their time. They can come together at whatever time they want and probably if—just imagine that it's like, let's say, like a church potluck, where people are bringing different things. They can come in—even if it's a catered meal, whatever you want to have—but the people who are there who have the freedom of time, who are wealthier, probably have the nicer food. And the slaves, who probably are just hoping they can get there in time, don't have the freedom to come in that way.

So, the wealthier ones, the ones well-off, the ones who are free in their time, show up, and well, all the food is here, and it's hot, and it's pleasant, and they go ahead and eat, and they eat to the full. After all, it's a supper. And when the slaves finally arrive, leftovers are all that's there, and there may not even be enough to fill them, so they're hungry. They've come to this Passover service, and instead of being able to rejoice with their brethren—and all of them being equal brethren—instead, they're hungry.

[43:58]

Here's somebody else in the end of this who was drunk, who's had so much wine to drink that by the end of the meal, they're a little tipsy. What's that like going into the Passover service so stuffed you can barely stay awake and a little bit drunk, and here are other people coming in who don't even have enough to eat or drink? What a selfish thing! And that is apparently what was going on in the Corinthian Church, instead of considering one another, which this whole section has been about. Oh, was it legal to go ahead and eat the meal? Yes, it was. But the way they were doing it wasn't building up; it was tearing down. So Paul said: that's not the right way.

He says in **verse 22**:

What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those (disgrace those, embarrass those) who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you. (I can't praise you.)

Now Paul will praise later. But in this case, no—it's terrible.

So, what does he do? He goes on to tell us, **verse 23**:

For I received from the Lord—

Now remember, Paul tells us that he was instructed by Jesus Christ personally. So, he says: “What I gave you is what Jesus Christ told me.”

—that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

Now, all of us have read this section, but we want to go through it a little bit more detailed here. The terms *received* and *delivered* are technical terms that referred to receiving and passing along traditions. So, Paul says: “I received this. I gave it to you faithfully, so you knew what it was. **While** He was being betrayed” is the sense of the word there. In this process, He does all of this.

He says, **verse 24**:

and when He had given thanks, He broke it and (He) said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

Now again, I'm always amazed and somewhat struck each year at the Passover service when we read through this passage, and we know—because it tells us clearly in the book of John—that Jesus fully knew who He was. He knew where He was going, and He knew what He was going to be facing in the next few hours. He knew that that broken bread was symbolic of what He was going to go through. And He didn't just kind of try to get through it. He blessed it. He asked God to bless it as a symbol of what He was going to endure for you and me. He says, *this is My body*.

[46:57]

Now, Roman Catholics try to say that they draw from this ceremony what they call “transubstantiation” —that the bread literally becomes the flesh of Jesus Christ. That makes no sense. It's contrary to what Scripture says. But think back, when Jesus said to the disciples, “Take this bread. It is My body.” —His body was right there. He obviously meant the bread to be symbolic. He wasn't saying: “Take a chaw out of My body.” He was saying: “The bread represents My body,” but His body was right there, and He says, *do this in remembrance of Me*. Now, I'm going to come back to that phrase because we'll see it in the next verse as well, and it's very important, I think, for us to understand. It's a very graphic, a very powerful phrase.

He says, **verse 25**:

In the same manner He also took the cup after supper (This is not part of the supper; this is afterwards.), saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

Okay. If this New Covenant required the blood of Jesus Christ, it tells us it has to be a very important covenant. No other covenant ever required a guarantee that important. This one did. When it says, *do this as often as you drink it*, again, some use that as a justification to say: “Oh, well, we do this every Sunday,” or “We do it every quarter,” and so on. That's not the point. The meaning of that phrase is that it's whenever you do it—

okay, whenever you do it. When are we going to do it? We're going to do it when Jesus Christ did. When did He do it? One time at the Passover. So, we're going to do it when He did it—at the Passover. So, whatever Passover it is—your first, your third, your 53rd—every time you do it, this is what you're supposed to keep in mind.

He says, *do this in remembrance*. Now, I find this to be a really fascinating thing. The word that's translated with *remembrance* is *anamnesin*. Now, that probably doesn't sound very familiar to you, but it will before we're done. The root word means "to cause to remember, to think about something, to remind someone." One of the roots that we will see there in this word is in the word that we use today in English occasionally, mnemonic. Now, the M is not pronounced, but in English we say "mnemonic." We talk about a "mnemonic device." It is a pattern of letters, ideas, associations that helps you remember something. The word HOMES is sometimes used by students in this country to remember the names of the Great Lakes—H for Huron, O for Ontario, M for Michigan, E for Erie, S for Superior. So, if you can remember the name—the word HOMES, then you can put that with it.

So, when we look at that word *anamnesin*, this mnemonic aspect is there, the aspect of remembering. So, what do we derive from this? Well, there are two explanations because we have, as you see here, *ana* + *mnesin*. *Mnesin* has to do with memory. *Ana* can be taken as one word which means "up." So, it means to bring up to your mind, to your remembrance. Jesus Christ is saying, when you do this, this is to bring this clearly to your mind. You're not just going through the motions. It's not just a ceremony. This is important.

[50:57]

But, there's another way of seeing this as well, and I have it divided there in the second part of the slide, *an+a+mnesin*. In Greek, when you have a word like *mnesin*—or *mnesia*, as it sometimes is—when you put an "a" in front of it, it makes it negative. So *mnesin* has to do with remembering; *amnesin* has to do with not remembering. When you add—when you have a Greek word that begins with a vowel, instead of putting it with—instead of putting an "a" there for you to have two "a"s in a row, put an "an." So it becomes *anamnesin*, a double negative, which strengthens it. It makes it very strong, so that, in essence, it says, "do this so that you will not, not forget." You will not fail to remember what this means, "to not, not remember." It means it's something that's so strong in your mind that you will never forget.

So, when Jesus Christ uses this phrase, *do this in remembrance of Me*, He's saying, "I want you to do this so that you will never ever forget how important this is." Now, I put down at the bottom of the screen an English word, *amnesia*, or as we would pronounce it, "amnesia," the inability to remember. We put a negative in front of that, and it basically means an inability to forget. I think that's a sense of what's there. Jesus Christ is saying, "I want you to do this so that you will never ever be able to forget what took place."

He goes on to say, again:

Verse 26 *For as often as you eat this bread* (“Now again, this is the same phrase, “whenever you do it.”) *and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.*

The phrase there that is used, to *proclaim*, is a very strong statement. It means you make a solemn proclamation. But I’d like you think about something. When you observe the Passover, your presence—the fact that you take the bread and you take the wine—is intended to be a solemn proclamation to whom? You’re making a solid, a strong proclamation to the other people who are there, who are the members of the Church. They’re not other people out in the world. You’re not making a proclamation to the world. You’re making a proclamation in the midst of your brethren. Now, what is that proclamation? “I desperately need the body and blood of Jesus Christ in my life. Doesn’t matter how wealthy I am, how powerful, how important, how intelligent, what position I have.” Every person there, the ministers who are in front of you during the Passover service as well as anybody who’s in that service, we are all proclaiming to each other equally, “I am here because I need the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.”

It’s kind of hard to be proud when that’s the proclamation you’re making. When you’re standing in front of your brethren, in the midst of them, and by your participation you’re saying, “I desperately need this because I sin, and I come so terribly short.” That’s awfully hard to be proud and separate yourself from one another.

The proclamation that we make is personal, not corporate. Not a proclamation we make as a Church. It’s not a service that’s kept in the public eye. It’s a proclamation we make to one another: “I need this.” We’re not simply announcing that Jesus died. We’re, through our annual participation, we’re solemnly affirming that “His death is important to me.”

[54:46]

When the Passover was instituted in **Exodus chapter 12**, Moses said to the people:

Verse 25 *It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. 26 And it shall be, when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ 27 that you shall say, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.’ ” So the people bowed their heads and worshiped.*

It’s been the Church’s policy for many years that if you have an older teen or someone like that who wishes to come to the Passover service to observe, and that they can appreciate the meanings of the Passover service, then that’s permissible for them to do. They don’t participate in anything. They don’t participate in the foot washing. They don’t take the symbols, but they can watch, and they can see the seriousness with which we take it. Now I realize, in many cases some of our older teens are serving by babysitting or things like that. But, if there is one who truly wants to come, talk to your local pastor.

You should be able to work that out.

Let me go on because I'd like to finish. I'm going to go just a couple minutes overtime here because I think it's very important to finish the subject.

He goes on to say, **verse 27**:

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

In an unworthy manner means “pertaining to being proper” or “not corresponding to what should happen.” Participating *in an unworthy manner* entails coming to the table in an irreverent and sinful way.

I think it's important to understand that because sometimes people look at this and say: “Oh, well, I'm not worthy.” Of course, you're not worthy. No one's worthy, not of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but that's not what it's saying. It's not saying you must somehow make yourself worthy of Christ's sacrifice. It's saying you don't dare come to this carelessly, without some very deep personal thought and self-examination. So he tells us that's what we must do. Participating in an unworthy manner is coming to the table in an irreverent way.

He goes on to say, how do you avoid that?

But let a man (verse 28) examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

It doesn't say examine yourself to see if you're worthy. It says examine yourself, see what's there, stack yourself up to the right standards, and see where you are, and then take part in it. Doesn't say decide if you'll take part in it. You're going to take part in it. The only option we have is whether we will do it carelessly or with the proper thought and appropriate understanding for what we're doing.

[57:44]

He goes on to say:

Verse 29 *For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.* (Not judging correctly)

I like this quote from *Barclay*, and I think it says it very well:

This phrase (about discerning the Lord's body) can equally mean two things; and each is so real and so important that it's quite likely that both are intended. First of all, it may mean that the man who eats and drinks unworthily does not realize what the sacred symbols mean. It may mean that he eats and drinks with no reverence and no sense of the love that these symbols stand for or the obligation

that is laid upon him. Second, it may mean this also. The phrase “the body of Christ” again and again stands for the Church; it does so, as we shall see, in **1 Corinthians 12**. Paul has just been rebuking those who with their divisions and their class distinctions divide the church; so this may mean that he who eats and drinks unworthily, who has never realized that the whole church is the body of Christ (and instead) is at variance with his brother. Every man in whose heart there is hatred, bitterness, contempt against his brother man, as he comes to the table of our Lord, eats and drinks unworthily. So then to eat and drink unworthily is to do so with no sense of the greatness of the thing we do, and to do so while we are at variance with the brother for whom also Christ died.

That’s a very powerful statement there.

Now, let’s notice the next one, **verse 30**:

For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

Now, we could take this in a very physical way. But imagine what a condemnation that would put upon a person. If a person were sick and they’ve been praying and asking God’s guidance and intervention in healing—and we all know people in the situation where their sickness continues, and they struggle along year after year—if you take this entirely physically, then wouldn’t you feel awfully condemned? “Is God not healing me because I’m taking the Passover improperly,” when you’ve tried the very best to do it in that way? Or what about the person who dies? We all know people die in the course of the year. Do they die because they failed to take the Passover properly? I think there has to be a spiritual sense that we consider this as well. People are spiritually weak. People are spiritually diseased because they fail to take the Passover with a sense that they should have, with a reverence. They fail at that self-examination. They fail to deal with it in the proper way, and some may be even spiritually dead.

[1:00:39]

So, Paul says: **verse 31** *For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.*

We wouldn’t have to fear judgment if we took the proper time to judge ourselves.

But he says: **verse 32** *But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.*

Yes, God may chasten us in the process, but He does so because He doesn’t want us to be condemned.

So he tells us: **verse 33** *Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.*

Don’t do this separately. This is something we all need to do together.

And he says: **verse 34** *But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.*

So, Paul says: “Look. Do away with the meal. If you want to eat a meal at home, eat at home; that’s fine.” But when we come together, we use the symbols that Jesus Christ put into effect after the meal: the unleavened bread, broken, the wine, the cup that we share, that all of us need to be participants in.

So we do not hold a Passover meal prior to that service, and I think that’s what we find here. Paul is saying, that’s not what’s going to produce the right result. And then he says, *the rest I will set in order when I come*. That tells me that, “Okay, there are other issues that need to be addressed, but we can put those aside until I arrive; this one needs to be addressed now” —which would indicate to me the Passover is very close, but it hasn’t come yet. It wouldn’t make much sense to address it a week after Passover. It has to be as we’re approaching.

All right, well, we’ve gone a few minutes over time. My apologies for keeping you over, but we hope that you’ve enjoyed the class, and we will look forward to being together with you again for class 15 next week.

[1:02:27]