

Body and Blood

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 March 2018

Preacher: Shawn Woo

- [0 : 0 0] As you have figured out by now, we are not using microphones today. We did that so that we could relieve some of our hardworking volunteers on Good Friday.
- So if you can't hear me, please come a little closer. The passage for today is 1 Corinthians 11, 17-34. Chapter 11, verses 17-34 of the first letter to the Corinthians written by Apostle Paul.
- This comes after Romans, if you're looking in your Bibles, before 2 Corinthians. I'm going to read it out loud for us before we start.
- But in the following instructions, I do not commend you. Because when you come together, it is not for the better, but for the worse.
- For in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part. For there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.
- [1 : 1 4] When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk.
- What? Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you?
- Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not. For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night when 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. In the same way also he took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
- Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
- [2 : 1 9] Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.
- Let a person examine himself then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.
- That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged.
- But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.
- If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for judgment. About the other things, I will give directions when I come.
- [3 : 1 5] The word of the Lord. We've been going through a series through the book of 1 Corinthians, and so this is really the next passage in line, which happens to fit perfectly with Good Friday, really, and Monday, Thursday, and Good Friday.

And whether we like it or not, as we live, we face reminders of our socioeconomic class.

Wherever we go, we see this. I have a portable office, so that means oftentimes throughout the week I'm working at various cafes. And when I sit down to work at the Dunkin' Donuts on 3rd Street, I usually see townies.

People that have been living in East Cambridge for generations. People who have been around for a long time. I see blue-collar workers and pink-collar workers. Manual laborers and those in the service sector.

Many of them are older. Baby boomers. The Generation Xers. I almost always, whenever I'm there, see homeless people going in and out of the Dunkin' Donuts as well. Now, if I take a few minutes walk down Cambridge Street and then go to Curio Cafe, or to Loyal Nine, both on Cambridge Street, you see a whole different crowd.

[4 : 29] They tend to be younger, X-annials or millennials. And they're almost, all of them are almost invariably well-dressed. Better dressed than me, at least.

And they tend to be white-collar workers. They have their laptops up, a lot of them. They're having meetings. And they have drink and food in hand that costs almost twice as much as it costs in Dunkin' Donuts.

You never see homeless people at one of those cafes. Socioeconomic distinction is visible in many places we go and in many ways. And this has been true throughout human history.

Including in the Greco-Roman world where Paul and the Corinthians lived. One particular example of that that's relevant for this passage is a typical Greco-Roman dinner party.

Dinner parties were thrown by wealthy members of the society. So they would be these wealthy patrons. And they would invite everybody that's around them. But they would, the host, the wealthy host would seat the members of their own high class in this special room, the best room called a tree clinium.

[5 : 36] And then they would be in plain view of all the others who were made to sit in the crowded atrium. That's where we get the word atrium. And the guests in the tree clinium were treated to the gourmet foods and premium wines.

While the guests in the atrium were served inferior foods and wine. The church, however, was supposed to be different. Acts 2, 44 to 46 tell us that in the early church, all who believed were together and had all things in common.

And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts.

This is a quotation from Acts 2. The church was meant to be a people brought together by Christ, not by their social standing. Unfortunately, the practice of their pagan neighbors had seeped into the Corinthian church.

So Paul roundly rebukes them in this passage. And this passage serves as a helpful corrective to us as well, to all of our tendencies to form cliques and factions that we prefer.

[6 : 49] So first, Paul addresses the divisions in the church in verses 17 to 22. And then he speaks of the death of the Lord in verses 23 to 26. And then finally, he talks about the discernment of the body in verses 27 to 34.

That will be my outline as I go. The divisions in the church, death of the Lord, discernment of the body. And his main point is that instead of perverting the Lord's Supper by assimilating the Greco-Roman practice, Christians ought to partake worthily of the supper by discerning the body of the Lord.

I know that seems a little abstract, but it will become clear what I mean by that as we go through this passage. Paul begins by stating the problem, the divisions in the church in verses 17 to 18.

And at the beginning, if you might recall from the beginning of chapter 11, verse 2, Paul said that now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I deliver them to you.

So Paul was there recognizing, acknowledging that in some of the matters pertaining to the public worship of the church, they were preserving the traditions that Paul passed down to them. So he says, I commend you.

[7 : 53] But here in verse 17, regarding the matter of the Lord's Supper, Paul says explicitly that he's not commending them. There's nothing to commend about what they're doing in the Lord's Supper. So he says, in the following instructions, I do not commend you because when you come together, it is not for the better but for the worse.

The word come together occurs five times in just this passage, and it's the semi-technical way of referring to the church's public worship. So like when we're gathered here on Friday or when we're gathered on Sunday, when we come together, that's what Paul is talking about.

When the church gathers together for worship, there should be mutual exhortation and edification, building one another up. It should be for the better. But instead, when the Corinthians gathered, it was for the worse.

And the reason for this is given in verse 18. Four, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. If you've been with us through the series, you recognize that the Corinthians are quite the divisive bunch.

Paul had to rebuke them earlier in chapter one because they were dividing into factions based on the different leaders that they follow. Some people said, I follow Paul. Some people said, I follow Apollos. Some people said, I follow Cephas.

[9 : 07] But Paul told them there should be no divisions among them. And Paul appears to have heard a similar report of their abuse of the Lord's Supper. And so he says, also, I hear that there are divisions among you.

And how Paul responds to this report, this bad report that he hears about the Corinthian church is really helpful for us. Because sometimes when we hear a bad report about someone, it's tempting to jump to conclusions and to form judgments in our minds and to start to critique them.

But Paul shows us a better way. He says at the end of verse 18, And I believe it in part. By saying that he believes the report in part, Paul's acknowledging that his informants are not disinterested observers.

He believes them in part because he has deemed that they are credible, but nevertheless he recognizes the need to hear the Corinthians' perspective. So he bridges that gap by saying, I believe it in part.

One of the wisest principles in the American criminal justice system is that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty. Whenever you hear a bad report about another believer, or in a church or a ministry, presuming guilt is an unhelpful practice in the legal courts as well as in our own hearts.

[10 : 21] As Proverbs 18, 17 says, The one who states his case first seems right until the other comes and examines him. So when after then a serious consideration, you conclude that the issue is weighty enough to be addressed, don't turn then immediately to others to tell them about it, but instead turn first to the person that is directly involved.

Confront them. Address them. That's exactly what Paul does here. I hear that there are divisions among you, and I believe it in part. Then Paul addresses the issue directly with them.

And Paul believes this not only because he has heard it from a credible source, but because also there's a theological reason for divisions and factions within the church. So look at verse 19.

For there must be factions among you, in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. Isn't that an interesting thing to say? In Matthew 10, 34 to 37, as well as 24, 9, 13, Jesus taught that his life, his person, and his work, his message, will be polarizing.

They would divide the world into two camps. Those who follow him, believe him, and confess him, and those who reject him and refuse him. And similarly, in the parable of the weeds that he told in Matthew 13, he taught that in the church, there will be both wheat, which are the people of God that are planted, sown with the seeds of the gospel, as well as weeds, those who don't belong to God.

[11 : 51] So in every local church, in the whole universal church, there are both true believers and non-believers. There's both wheat and weeds. And because of this, even when there are divisions in the church, Paul notes that even through that, God is working out his sovereign purposes.

Because the divisions of the church, when people choose to divide and form factions, or leave the church as some do, it reveals those who are genuinely God's, those who are committed to God and committed to his church.

And so that's why the word genuine means approved by testing. Even these divisions are means that God uses in the people of God to prove them as genuine.

So then having explained how he came to understanding, to learn of these divisions, and why he feels the need to address them about it, Paul then hits the problem head on in verses 20 to 21.

Follow with me, verses 20 to 21. When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk.

[12 : 59] Paul draws a deliberate contrast between the Lord's Supper, on the one hand, in verse 20, and his own meal, right, in verse 21. So the Lord's Supper is called the Lord's Supper because it is the supper that belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ presides over the table. He is the host of this dinner, of this supper. And it is commonly to be shared with all believers, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, freedmen and slaves, rich and poor, black and white.

But instead of having this common supper of the Lord, the wealthier factions of the Corinthian church were going ahead with their own meals. They were not having the Lord's Supper.

They were having their own meals. This is, some of the context of the original setting helps to understand what's going on because in the early church, unlike us, people partook in communion in the context of a full meal.

So they would have, of course, the bread and wine, but it would be in the context of a full meal with all the other things that go with it. So they would usually gather in the home of one of the wealthier members of the church, mainly because their house was bigger and could accommodate more people.

[14 : 15] And believers brought foods, they brought funds, they brought prayers to all share commonly with those who are at the Lord's Supper. But in this situation of the Corinthians, instead of sharing their sumptuous fare with the rest of the church, the wealthier members were going ahead with their own meals.

The food that they brought, which were presumably better in both quantity and quality, they were having it, keeping it for themselves and going ahead and eating it before anyone else can get to it.

This abuse was so bad that the result was one goes hungry, another gets drunk. Paul's not necessarily concerned about people getting drunk per se, although that's also a problem.

He's trying to contrast the two images. On the one hand, people are going hungry because there's nothing to eat. On the other hand, they have had so much to eat and drink that they're drunk at the Lord's Supper.

That's the contrast that Paul is drawing. And you can hear Paul's indignation, the horror with which he rebukes them in verse 22. What?

[15 : 20] Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you?

Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not. If you're going to eat your fill of gourmet foods and fine wine, do it in your own house, is what Paul's saying.

This is not your own private meal. This is the Lord's Supper. So why must you profane the Lord's Supper by humiliating those who have nothing?

Generally speaking, everywhere in the world, the poor among us face discrimination. Money takes you places. It gives you leverage and connections.

But the poor are daily reminded of their lower socioeconomic status. And they must bear the haughty condescension of the social elite. They're cut off from the best education, best services, best products, best opportunities, and best foods that our society has to offer.

[16 : 28] But not so in the church. Sunday morning, as well as all the other times when the church is gathered together, should be the least segregated hour of this country.

Because when Christ died for us on the cross, He leveled the ground because all must come to Him as sinners to be saved. That's why Galatians 3.28 says, There is neither Jew nor Greek.

There is neither slave nor free. There is no male or female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. So when we partake in the Lord's Supper, every believer that comes to the table as a sinner in need of a Savior should have their full fill.

Because God's grace doesn't run out. Because God's grace is sufficient. You don't need to be wealthy to come to Christ. You don't need to be intelligent to come to Christ. You don't need to look good to come to Christ.

You don't need to be successful to come to Christ. This is the scandalous message of the cross of Jesus Christ. That there is none who does good in this world, not even one, as Psalm 14.3 says.

[17 : 47] And all, therefore, without distinction, must humble themselves before Christ and believe in Him for salvation. That's what Good Friday is all about. The Corinthian believers had lost sight of this, so Paul reminds them about the death of the Lord.

That's my second point. In verses 23 to 26. It's a passage that we recite every Sunday when we celebrate the Lord's Supper. For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when 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. In the same way, also He took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Wonderful passage. Paul uses the language of delivering and receiving, receiving and delivering again later in 1 Corinthians 15. And that's the technical way He refers to the faithful transmission of the teaching of Christ.

He's saying that what He received from the Lord Jesus Himself about this Lord's Supper, He passed on, transmitted faithfully to the Corinthian church. And when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, it was during His last supper with His disciples.

[19 : 15] That fell on the Thursday of the week of Jesus' death, so that would have been yesterday. That's what some people call Maundy Thursday. This last supper is recounted in Matthew 26, all the Gospels really, and it was a traditional Jewish Passover meal.

When the Old Testament people of God, Israel, was enslaved in Egypt, God delivered them with mighty signs. And the greatest among those signs was the sign of the Passover, which is recorded in Exodus 12.

At that time, because Egypt was oppressing the nation of Israel, and the nation of Israel, God called them His firstborn son in Exodus 4.22. And because they were oppressing the firstborn son of God, the nation of Israel, God struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and animals.

But God spared the Israelites, who, following His instructions, slaughtered a lamb without blemish. So that's a way of redeeming the firstborn son that they sacrificed.

They sacrificed instead a lamb without blemish. They ate it, and then smeared its blood on the doorposts and the lintels of the houses. When the Lord God came in judgment over Egypt, He saw the blood daubed on the doorposts and lintels, and He passed over His people.

[20 : 30] Now, the unblemished Passover lamb, which ransomed God's people on that day, is what points to the blameless lamb of God, the Passover lamb, Jesus Christ.

That's why John 1.29 describes Jesus as the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. That's why Paul said earlier in chapter 5, verse 7, that Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed because Christ, the Son of God, shed His blood for our sake.

We are forgiven of our sins and adopted as the sons of God. Because Christ, the Passover lamb, died as the ransom price for us. We all, sons and daughters, have been freed from our slavery to sin.

That's why, if you actually studied the accounts of the Last Supper in Scripture, this is really fascinating. There is no mention whatsoever of the Passover lamb, which is strange, because the centerpiece of the Passover meal is the Passover lamb.

Yet when you study the accounts of the Last Supper, which was the Passover meal, there's no mention of the Passover lamb. Why is this? Because Jesus is the ultimate Passover lamb.

[21 : 42] And the focus should not be on that lamb of the Old Testament, but the new lamb of the new age. The Passover lamb of the Exodus cannot in reality atone for the sins of God's people.

It merely pointed to the ultimate reality of Jesus Christ, who would die as the atoning sacrifice for our sins on the cross. And because of this also, that Jesus chose the bread rather than the lamb as a sign that would facilitate people's remembrance of him in the ages to come.

That's why he says here, the Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, he 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. Jesus is using metaphorical language, of course, in this.

Scripture nowhere says that the consecrated bread becomes or gets transformed into the actual physical body and blood of Christ. He nowhere says that.

The bread which can be easily broken is a fitting representation of the body of Christ which was broken for us. And because Christ chose the bread which was a part of the regular diet of the people in this day and age instead of the lamb which was part of a special annual meal of the Passover, the church took that to mean that they should celebrate this whenever they gathered together and broke bread together.

[23 : 01] And because of that communion became, the Lord's Supper became a regular practice as we see in Acts 2 and as we see even here in this passage because he says, as often as you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

As often as, that suggests frequency. This is why we celebrate the Lord's Supper whenever we gather together on Sundays. But in addition to the bread, Jesus also chooses the wine to represent his body, the fruit of the vine.

Verse 25 says, In the same way also he took the cup after supper saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. Our covenant is just the, it's kind of a, you can think of it as a cross between a contract and a relationship.

It has a legal binding force like a contract but it's relationally based. It's based on love like a relationship. That's the kind of relationship that God established with his people.

It's called a covenant. And God established the covenant with Old Testament, in the Old Testament with his people Israel but that covenant was broken by his people.

[24 : 11] And in Jeremiah 31 31 to 33 God promises to bring about a new covenant that can never be broken. And in Exodus 24, 8 when that old covenant was forged and when it was made Moses, the mediator between God and men at that point he took a sacrifice oxen's blood and he sprinkled it on God's people to ratify that covenant.

But in the new covenant Jesus stands on a mountain of Calvary just as Moses was standing at the mountain. He's the mediator between God and men and he, instead of sprinkling them with the blood of animals, he sprinkles his people figuratively with his own blood for cleansing.

He pays for our iniquities, our sins with his own life. That's what Hebrews 10, 1922 says. He says, By the blood of Jesus our hearts are sprinkled clean from an evil conscience.

Why? Because it's impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Only the blood of the Son of God can take away sins. So, all in all the Lord's Supper like Good Friday is about the death of the Lord.

That's why twice in verses 24 to 25 Jesus says, Do this in remembrance of me. And Paul summarizes the significance of the Lord's Supper in 26 by saying it is the proclamation of the Lord's death until he comes.

[25 : 33] So, until the second coming of Christ, until he returns to redeem all creation and consummate our salvation until that day when Christ returns. Every time we gather to worship together and every time we break bread together in the Lord's Supper, we are proclaiming the Lord's death.

But the Corinthians, the rich Corinthians, by humiliating the poor Christians at the Lord's Supper, they were negating the very unity of the people of God that Christ brought about by his blood.

And so, because of that, they were profaning the Lord's Supper. For this reason, in verses 27 to 34, Paul calls the Corinthian church to discern the body.

That brings me to my final point, the discernment of the body. Paul says in verse 27, Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.

Whoever partakes in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner and the Corinthians selfish behavior certainly falls under that category. Whoever does that will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.

[26 : 42] This verse proves in my mind that the Lord's Supper is not a hollow ritual, that it's not an empty reenactment. That's why Paul wrote that this is a participation in the blood of Christ earlier in chapter 10.

When we eat the bread and drink the wine or grape juice in our case of the Lord's Supper, there's a whole other reason why we're using grape juice.

I can explain that to you later if you have questions about it. But when we eat the bread and drink the wine, we're really spiritually participating in the body and blood of Christ. That's why we also refer to the Lord's Supper as communion.

It's an old word, communion, but it means to have fellowship with, to commune with, to participate in. That's what we do when we partake in the Lord's Supper.

It's certainly symbolic, but it's not merely symbolic. There is spiritual substance in the Lord's Supper. Christ is really present at the Lord's Supper through His Spirit and we really participate in Him as we partake in that sacrament.

[27 : 49] And that's why Christian theologians of the past have historically described the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as both a sign and a seal. I don't know if you guys know what I mean by that, but a sign signifies something.

It represents Christ's sacrifice on our behalf. But a seal, it secures and it assures, it marks, so that's, because it serves as a seal, when we partake in it, it marks us as God's own people.

It assures us, it increases our faith and gives us assurance of the fact that we are in fact participating in Christ. You could kind of compare it to what happens at a wedding, and most of you have probably been to a wedding.

When you go to a wedding, a man vows to love and cherish the woman until death do them a part. And then, he places the ring on her finger as the sign and seal of the vows that he just made.

The ring attests to the husband's love and commitment and assures her of it. It represents and ratifies their union. So, similarly, in the worship service and our corporate context when we gather together, if the sermon, what I'm doing now, the preaching of the word, is like the wedding vow where the gospel of Christ's love is proclaimed to us, the supper is the sign and seal of that proclamation.

[29 : 16] The sermon is the preached word, the supper is the pictured word. In the sermon, we hear the gospel. In the supper, we see and smell and touch and taste the gospel.

In this way, the Lord's Supper is a means of grace to God's people to strengthen them in their faith and help them to experience greater communion with Christ.

For that reason, when we partake in the Lord's Supper unworthily, flippantly, pridefully, selfishly, we sin against Christ himself who is spiritually present in the Lord's Supper.

And that's why Paul says in verse 28, let a person examine himself then and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. Paul uses the same word examine which also means to test in 2 Corinthians 13:5.

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. When we partake in the Lord's Supper, we should examine ourselves. Do I really know that this is participation in the Lord's body and blood?

[30 : 28] Have I truly renounced my sin and myself? And have I truly submitted my life to Christ and to live in full submission and obedience to Him? Now, when we do Lord's Supper, I don't want that to dissuade all of you from coming up.

this does not mean that you have to have had a sinless week in order to come up and partake in the Lord's Supper. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

He said in Luke 5:31-32, those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Christ invites sinners to His table. grace is dispensed to us freely so we can come without pay, we can come without price and eat at His table.

But we must come acknowledging our sins as sinners, humbling ourselves before God and clinging to Christ. That's the only condition upon which we can come approach that table as sinners.

[31 : 39] And there are dire consequences for those who partake in the Lord's Supper without examining themselves. It says in verses 29 to 30, For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

That is why many of you are weak and ill and some have died. Verse 29 parallels verse 27. So to eat and drink without discerning the body is to eat and drink in an unworthy manner.

When we partake in the Lord's Supper, we need to know what we're eating and drinking, that it represents Christ's body and blood sacrificed for us. That's what it means to discern the body. If we eat and drink without discerning the body, we dishonor the Lord and incur his discipline.

Apparently, some of the Corinthian believers had become weak and ill and some had even died. And Paul teaches and he understands this prophetically that that was due to their abuse of the Lord's Supper.

Of course, that doesn't mean that anytime you're sick, it's because you're abused of the Lord's Supper. He's just saying in that specific case of the Corinthians, their abuse led to actual illnesses and even death. Paul continues in verses 31 to 32, but if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged.

[32 : 54] But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. There's a series of word plays throughout this passage that all relate to the Greek word for judgment.

The word judgment occurs twice in English in verses 29 and 34. The word judge is repeated three times in verses 31 to 32, as well as the word discerning in verse 29 and the word condemned in verse 32.

They're all variations of the same Greek word, the same root word in the Greek. That means judge. And so Paul's, through these word plays, Paul's drawing kind of three tiers of judgments for us to understand.

And the first type of judgment is our judgment of ourselves. If we judge ourselves truly, we will not be judged. That means we need to discern the body, examine ourselves, and judge ourselves when we partake in the Lord's Supper.

But if we neglect to do so, God will judge us. That's the second tier of judgment. This is the second meaning of the word judge, and it refers to God's discipline. It says in verse 32, but when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

[34 : 04] God's discipline is an expression of His grace because by judging us in this way, God corrects us and sanctifies us so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

That condemnation is the third type of judgment. It refers to God's final judgment. So what Paul's teaching us here is that God's present judgment of us mercifully corrects us so that we do not stray further and are condemned by God's final judgment.

God's present judgment spares us from His eternal judgment. But we can be spared of both by judging ourselves, by discerning the body, by partaking of the Lord's Supper after examining ourselves.

But I don't think we have yet exhausted the meaning of the phrase discerning the body. The Lord's Supper has two directions. First is a vertical direction because we commune through the Lord's Supper with Christ and through Christ with the triune God.

That's the vertical orientation. Secondly, the Lord's Supper has a horizontal orientation. That's why we relate to one another. We commune with one another in the members of the church.

[35 : 12] And that's why it was such a blatant abuse of the Lord's Supper that the Corinthians were humiliating other members of the church at the very table. So likewise then, the idea of discern the body applies in two directions.

Discerning the body means discerning the body of Christ. The body and blood of Christ represents Him and His sacrifice. And then secondly, it means to recognize the body of Christ, namely the church, the people of God.

And there are several clues in the text that indicate that Paul intends this second meaning for this word as well. Because in chapter 10 verse 17, he already made the connection, chapter 10 verse 17, he already made the connection between the bread that we eat at the Lord's Supper and the body of Christ, the church.

He said, because there is one bread, we who are many are one body. For we all partake of the one bread. The church constitutes the one bread, one body of Christ because we partake in the one bread of the body of Christ.

In addition, immediately after this passage, as we will see in the coming weeks, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12 that just as a body has many members but is one, all members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ.

[36 : 26] For in one spirit, we were all baptized into one body. Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and all were made to drink of the one spirit. So the church, the people of God, us that are here, we are Christ's body.

And that's why even though four times throughout verses 26 to 28, Paul mentions both the bread and the cup to refer to the body of Christ, in verse 29, he deviates from this pattern to simply say the body.

Because I think he wants us to understand the dual meaning, not just the body of Christ, the Lord, but the church as well, Christ and the church. And it is to this latter aspect of discerning the body of Christ, the church, that Paul returns in verses 33 to 34.

Follow with me, verses 33 to 34. So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If anyone is hungry, let them eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for judgment about the other things I will give directions when I come.

The Greek word that is translated here as wait has a broad range of meaning, and it means to await eagerly. It means to receive favorably.

[37 : 40] It means to welcome. So Paul is basically telling the wealthier Corinthian members of the church to extend hospitality to the poorer members of the church.

To include them, share with them, welcome them. And as he admonishes them, he reminds them that they are all brothers and sisters.

In the Greek, like in Spanish, when you want to say brothers and sisters, you use the plural form of the masculine noun. So brothers includes brothers and sisters. So the sisters are implied in the noun brothers, and it's significant that Paul addresses them in this way as brothers and sisters.

Because the Jewish Passover meal, which is in the background of the Lord's Supper, was traditionally a family affair. The head of the household presided over the table, and they broke bread together.

But Jesus violated this paradigm when at the Last Supper, he called his disciples out of their respective families and presided over the table himself as the head of the new family that he was forming, the family of God.

[38 : 56] And that's why he says in Matthew 12, 50, whoever does the will of my father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother. So then the Lord's Supper is a family meal, with Christ as the head of the household presiding over it.

It is the meal of the body of Christ, which is the family of God. And just as brothers and sisters don't choose each other, but are related to one another by virtue of their common parents, we have been brought together into God's family, not by shared interest or race or ethnic background or political persuasion, gender, age, or socioeconomic class, but by virtue of having the same God as Father, by virtue of having the same Lord Jesus, by virtue of having the same Spirit indwelling us.

That's what unites us and brings us into the family of God. So let me ask you, brothers and sisters in Christ, are you welcoming and receiving one another?

Do you wait eagerly for one another? Undoubtedly, you will have natural affinities with some members and not others, but we cannot, for that reason, exclude one another and form cliques and factions, divisions in the church.

Such divisions have no place in the family of God, especially in our corporate worship context, but also more generally in our relationships with one another. Think about this.

[40 : 31] We have to be, take care to be sensitive toward one another's needs, the different family situations, the different financial situations, the different personalities and temperaments, and we must seek to accommodate one another.

A few practical examples on Resurrection Sunday, when we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, if you have a family to share the day with, a biological family to share the day with, and to eat sumptuous meals with, but you know of singles in the church who don't have family, biological family to go to, to eat with, invite them into your family.

Invite the family of God into your biological family to share the meal. When you're going out to eat with the group from the church, if the group from the church after the worship service, if there's a student or a poor postdoc whom you know can't afford it and therefore is not going, offer to buy the meal for them.

Accommodate them. When you're planning on an outing that would exclude families with kids, think about how you can accommodate them in the future, or even offer to babysit for them in the future so that they can go on such an hour.

Welcome one another. Receive one another. Accommodate one another. And by this all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

[42 : 14] If you are not yet a follower of Jesus Christ, that Good Friday and the Lord's Supper, which we just learned about, confronts you with two realities that you must face. On the one hand, you have to recognize that you're a sinner.

We all are. We were created to live for God, yet in our unbelief we live for ourselves without any reference to God. The true God. We are so sinful, in fact, that Jesus had to die for us as the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

To pay the penalty of our sins. Our sins were so grave, and the penalty so severe, the eternal Son of God had to die for us. We're sinful. We're sinners. On the other hand, we are reminded that God so loves us, that Christ willingly, gladly, gladly, joyfully died for us.

And to be a Christian is to know and feel simultaneously our deep unworthiness and the deeper worth that God has nevertheless imputed to us.

It means to know simultaneously that we are sinful, but that God is gracious and merciful. Jesus said, this is my body, which is for you.

[43 : 41] The phrase for you captures the idea of substitution. He died in our place. He died on our behalf. That man nailed to the cross 2,000 years ago on Good Friday with blood pouring down all over his body.

That man with the crown of thorns on his head. That man who is parched, who is suffocating on that cross. That man who is alone, condemned, and rejected by all.

That man bearing the full weight of sin on his shoulders. That man should have been you. That man should have been me. But Christ took our place.

He was condemned so that we could be justified. He was rejected so that we could be accepted by God. He died so that we might live and have eternal life.

All the righteousness, the joy, and heaven, and abundant life, and salvation that Christ has won for you can be yours tonight when you believe in Jesus.

[44 : 59] But how can you take hold of it? In John 6, 54, Jesus tells us that whoever feeds on the flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

You need the Lord's Supper. But partaking in the Lord's Supper apart from faith in Jesus Christ will do you zero good. Because in that same passage in John 6, 40, Jesus explains that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

Notice the close parallel between those two verses. The end result is the same. Eternal life and resurrection at the last day. But the way you get there is different in those two verses. On the one hand, verse 54, it says you get there by feeding on Jesus flesh and drinking his blood.

But then in verse 40, it says you get there by looking on the Son and believing in him. Those are conceptual parallels. Feeding on Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood are metaphors for looking on the Son and believing in him.

That's why Augustine, a 4th century Christian theologian, wrote, believe and you have eaten. We eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood by looking on him and believing in him.

[46 : 24] And if we eat and drink the elements of the Lord's Supper without faith, it would be ineffectual. So, we will partake in the Lord's Supper after this.

As we do it, partake it with faith. That we partake in the spiritual reality of our union with Christ and his death and resurrection. So will you believe in Christ today?

Will you believe that his sacrifice is totally sufficient for your salvation today? Will you believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and will you give your life to him today?

I pray that all of you will. Let's pray together. Amen. There is no greater love than this that a friend lays down his life for a friend.

No gods of any of the world's religions have ever taken flesh, become a human being to live among us, to take on our sin, and then to die for us, to save us.

[47 : 55] You are the good friend who laid down your life for us. You are our savior. And God, I pray that you would grant every single person sitting in this auditorium right at this moment, grant them the gift of faith so that they might believe and have eternal life.

God, we desire them more than anything else. That they might share with us in this life we have, the joy we have, the salvation we have. Please, Lord.

And Lord, won't you please shape us, your people, the church, so that we exemplify to the watching world that radical unity and sacrificial love that you have taught us, that you have commanded us.

Strengthen us by your spirit so that we might live that way. In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen. Amen.