

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 230 – August 18th – 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Works frequently referenced in these notes on 1 Corinthians

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|----------------------|---|
| John Drane | <i>Paul</i> , Lion Publishing, Berkhamstead, 1976 |
| Leon Morris | <i>The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians</i> , Tyndale New Testament Commentary, 2 nd Ed., IVP, Leicester, 1985 |
| Anthony C Thistleton | <i>The First Epistle to the Corinthians</i> , The New International Greek Testament Commentary, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2000 |

Verse 17

Τοῦτο δὲ παραγγέλλων οὐκ ἐπαινῶ ὅτι οὐκ εἰς τὸ κρεῖσσον ἀλλὰ εἰς τὸ ἥσσον συνέρχεσθε.

παραγγέλλω command, instruct
ἐπαινεῶ commend, praise

A deliberate contrast with 11:2.

κρεῖττον and κρεῖσσον adv. better
ἥσσων, ον gen ονος less; εἰς το ἦ. for the worse

συνερχομαι come together, meet

Implies meeting *as a church*.

"Instead of the Communion being supremely an act of edification, it was having a disruptive effect." Morris.

Such meetings 'do more harm than good.'

Verse 18

πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀκούω σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν, καὶ μέρος τι πιστεύω.

ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church
σχίσματα Noun, nom & acc pl σχισμα, τος n division, opposing group

"There is a fundamental difference between 1:10-12 and the point here... In 1:10-12 the 'splits' seem to reflect tensions between *different ethos of different house groups*. The splits are 'external' to given groups, although internal to the whole church at Corinth. Here, however, *the very house meeting itself reflects 'splits' between the socially advantaged and the socially disadvantaged*. They are 'internal' even within a single gathered meeting."

Thistleton

ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἶμι)
μερος, ους n part, piece, in part, partly
πιστεύω believe

"He did not accept every tale he heard. On this occasion he recognised that there was some exaggeration in the account that had reached him, but he recognised also an unpleasant amount of truth" Morris

Paul's phrase also reflects pastoral sensitivity. This malpractice may not have affected *all* home meetings, or not all to the same extent.

Verse 19

δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι, ἵνα καὶ οἱ δοκιμοὶ φανεροὶ γένωνται ἐν ὑμῖν.

δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary, must
αἰρέσις, εως f religious party, faction, false teaching

δοκιμος, ον approved, genuine, valued
φανερως, α, ον evident, plain, visible
γένωνται Verb, aor pass dep subj, 3 pl
γίνομαι

Horsley suggests this verse represents Pauline irony, he is saying "For of course there must be 'discrimination' among you so that it will become clear who among you are 'the distinguished ones.'"

Verse 20

συνερχομένων οὖν ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ οὐκ ἔστιν κυριακὸν δεῖπνον φαγεῖν,

κυριακος, η, ον belonging to the Lord
δειπνον, ου n supper, main meal

Whose meal is it? There is a contrast between what they pretended to be celebrating 'the *Lord's* supper' and the actuality described in the following verse τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον. Who is the host? On whom is the focus? To whom does the occasion bring glory?

φαγεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐσθίω eat

Verse 21

ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον προλαμβάνει ἐν τῷ φαγεῖν, καὶ ὃς μὲν πεινᾷ, ὃς δὲ μεθύει.

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every
ἴδιος, α, ον one's own
προλαμβάνω do (something) ahead of time

Hayes says that the temporal sense is possible but not demanded. Horsley favours understanding the προ- prefix as intensive e.g. 'devours.' Thistleton suggests 'each consumes his own supper at the time of eating.'

πειναω be hungry

μεθω be drunk, drink freely

The divisions Paul speaks of were evidently divisions between rich and poor which, far from being overcome when they met together were exacerbated.

There are several suggestions as to what precisely was going on. Some suggest that each brought his own provisions for a common meal but that each ate what he had brought rather than sharing. In consequence, the rich had plenty but the poor went hungry. The poor, who may well have been slaves, would not be free to come before they had completed their day's work, by which time the rich had already feasted.

An alternative suggested by Theissen supposes that the owner of a house would invite all Christians of whatever social class to share in a simple supper of bread and wine. The problem arose because, in addition, the host invited his own social equals to a better meal which took place before the poorer people came along at the end of their day's work.

Archaeological evidence suggests that fine houses had an ornate dining room or triclinium, in which a dozen people could recline on couches to eat a banquet. A scarcely furnished atrium, or sheltered courtyard, would serve as an overflow and could perhaps accommodate thirty or forty at a squeeze.

"The quality of food, drink, service and comfort would be of a higher order in the triclinium, especially if some in the atrium could arrive only after the best of the meal was over." Thistleton.

Whatever the circumstances, a meal designed to express unity was being so abused as to highlight the disunity of this fellowship.

Verse 22

μη γαρ οικιας ουκ εχετε εις το εσθιειν και πινειν; η της εκκλησιας του θεου καταφρονειτε, και καταισχυνετε τους μη εχοντας; τι ειπω υμιν; επαινεσω υμας; εν τούτω ουκ επαινω.

οικια, ας f house, home

η or

καταφρονεω despise, treat with contempt

They despise the gathering of the people of God by making it an extension of and reflection of their own social life. Paul seeks to reorder "social relations in the church by restricting the intrusion of household-based power." Barton

καταισχυνω put to shame, humiliate

ειπω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s λεγω

επαινεσω aor act subj, 1 s επαινεω v.17

Verse 23

Εγω γαρ παρελαβον απο του κυριου, ο και παρεδωκα υμιν, οτι ο κυριος Ιησους εν τη νυκτι η παρεδιδετο ελαβεν αρτον

παρελαβον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl

παραλαμβανω take, receive, accept

παραδιδωμι hand or give over, deliver up

"The verbs *received* and *delivered* (*παραλαμβανω* and *παραδιδωμι*) are almost technical terms for receiving and passing on the Christian tradition (cf. Verse 2)." Morris. On this ground (and, having noted that several phrases appear evidently pre-Pauline), most commentators argue that Paul is referring here to a tradition passed on to him within the Christian community but owing its origin to the Lord. Morris disagrees and believes that Paul is speaking here of a direct revelation. Cullmann argues that it is not the events of the Last Supper themselves which constitute Paul's revelation from the Lord but the connection between these and the celebratory meal which Christians were in the habit of taking together.

νυξ, νυκτος f night

Thistleton, citing Eriksson, says, "Here what dominates 11:17-34 is concern for the weak, the other, the despised, as precisely what sharing in Christ's death as the 'handing over' of the self to be used for God's loving work of reconciliation and redemption *includes*... Eriksson's careful argument is too detailed to reproduce here. However, it coheres precisely with these points. He writes: 'What is the behaviour prescribed in the words of institution? The answer ... lies in Paul's use of the tradition in 11:26... Their behaviour at the Lord's Supper celebrations is, or at least should be, a proclaiming of the Lord's death. For Paul this is a logical consequence of the tradition.' This explains precisely why underlying 11:17-34 is a factor which (again) 'the majority of interpreters have tended to overlook,' namely 'the Corinthians' claim that they deserved praise' (i.e., for *observing* the tradition). 'The tradition itself lifts the whole argumentation ... to a higher plane' which concerns what it is to share in the life and death of 'the Lord of the church Himself.'"

ἔλαβεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s λαμβανω
 ἄρτος, ου m bread, a loaf

Verse 24

καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν· Τοῦτό
 μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν· τοῦτο
 ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.

εὐχαριστεω thank, give thanks
 κλαω break (only of bread)

"*Breaking bread* has the communal sense of sharing in solidarity of objective fellowship (κοινωνία, that in which the participants or shareholders share, not primarily the subjective feeling associated with this), and this aspect finds expression in 1 Cor 10:16 (τον ἄρτον ὃν κλωμεν; ...) and probably in Acts 2:42, 46, (although the precise meaning of *breaking bread* in Acts 2 should not be presumed without careful inquiry)." Thistleton

After εἶπεν the TR, following most minuscules, adds (from Mt 26:26) λαβετε φαγετε

σωμα, τος n body

"Following the benediction, the *karpas* (or hord d'oeuvre characteristic of the Passover) is dipped in salt water or in vinegar and distributed, associated with the hyssop dipped in the blood of the first Passover sacrifice, with the words of a further benediction, 'Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the produce of the earth.' The Haggadah then begins: 'This is the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt.'... The 'surprise' (to use Leenhardt's imaginative phrase) is that 'my body' *now replaces the events or objects of redemption from Egypt made participatory and contemporary*. It is the event of Calvary, of the atoning death of Jesus as an event within the public domain, that is now appropriated in 'This is my body for you.'" Thistleton

After ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν a number of MSS add κλωμενον while a number of versions add δεδομενον (cf. Lk 22:19). Metzger comments, "The concise expression τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν is characteristic of Paul's style. Attempts to explicate the meaning of the words resulted in the addition of various participles."

ἔμος, η, ου 1st pers possessive adj my, mine
 ἀναμνησις, εως f reminder, remembrance

"The Passover festival as a reminder of the Exodus from Egypt may be cited as an analogy." Hering

"'Remembrance' of Christ and of Christ's death (i) retains the biblical aspect of a *self-involving remembering in gratitude, worship, trust, acknowledgment, and obedience* ... (ii) it also carries with it the experience of being *'there' in identification with the crucified Christ who is also 'here' in his raised presence*. However, still further, it embraces (iii) a *self-transforming retrieval of the founding event of the personal identity of the believer (as a believer) and the corporate identity of the church (as the Christian church of God)* as well as (iv) a *looking forward to the new 'possibility' for transformed identity opened up by the eschatological consummation* (v.25). All of this is gathered together in Paul's point that such 'remembrance' constitutes a *self-involving proclamation of Christ's death* through a life and a lifestyle which derives from understanding our identity as Christians in terms of sharing the identity of Christ who is 'for' the 'other.'... "As CFD Moule observes in his illuminating but often neglected essay 'The Judgment Theme in the Sacraments,' 'In 1 Cor 11:28-32 δοκιμαζειν, κριμα, διακρινειν, κρινειν and κατακρινειν are used in quick succession in a very striking way.' 'Remembering' the Lord's death means 'participation in the Lord's Supper [in which] we ought voluntarily to anticipate the Lord's judgment... If we fail to do so, he will himself judge us, but judge in order to save.' 'Remembering' is appropriating 'this sacramental verdict' in which, through involvement with the atoning death of Christ, believers say 'guilty,' only to share with Christ God's verdict of 'put right!'" Thistleton

Verse 25

ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπῆσαι,
 λέγων· Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη
 ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, ὡσάκις
 ἐὰν πίνητε, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.

ὡσαυτως adv in the same way, likewise
 ποτηριον, ου n cup

Maybe 'in the same way with reference to the cup', cf. 10:16.

δειπῆσαι Verb, aor act infin δειπνεω eat, dine

καινος, η, ου new

διαθηκη, ης covenant, will, testament

Recalls Ex 24:8, the blood of the Covenant. This new and indissoluble covenant is sealed with the blood of Christ. "Jesus is saying ... that the shedding of his blood is the means of establishing a new covenant. It provides forgiveness of sins and opens the way for the activity of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer. The whole Jewish system is replaced by the Christian, and everything centres on the death of the Lord, which establishes the New Covenant." Morris

Thistleton makes the interesting point that "'Covenant' also reflects precisely the major theme which persists from 8:1 to 14:40, namely, that of *constraint*, or the *free choice to forego one's rights*. For God himself limits his own range of actions by free sovereign choice when he determines to act only in accordance with declared promises of grace. On such a basis Christian believers may be confident that they are redeemed and accepted. Hence the unwillingness of many of the 'strong' at Corinth to permit constraints on their own 'rights' for the sake of the weak (cf. 8:7-13; 9:1-12) contradicts not only identification with the Christ who shed his 'blood' for others, but also the very principle of divine 'covenant' in which the faithful God pledges his faithfulness and thereby also constrains his own 'rights' by a voluntary decision of sheer grace."

αἷμα, ατος f blood

ὅσας adv. as often as, whenever

ἐάν here equivalent to ἄν particle indicating contingency and introducing subjunctive

πινω drink

Verse 26

ὅσας γὰρ ἐάν ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον πίνετε, τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε, ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ.

ἐσθιω eat

θανατος, ου m death

καταγγελλω proclaim, make known, preach

"It is no accident that καταγγελλετε means 'you are proclaiming' or *you are preaching*. By 'eating this bread' and 'drinking this cup' the whole assembled congregation stands in a witness box and pulpit to proclaim their 'part' (cf. κοινωνία in 10:16, objective sharing with a stake; and μετεχειν in 10:17, being an involved participant; see on communal participation under 10:16 and 17...)." Thistleton

ἄχρι (and ἄχρις) prep with gen until, as far as; ἄχρι οὗ until the point when

"The eschatological tone should not surprise us when in addition to playing a role in the common tradition, eschatology in this epistle serves to remind complacent groups within the congregation at Corinth of their fallibility, vulnerability and status as pilgrims or travellers still *en route* to their final goal (1 Cor 1:7b-9, 18; 3:13-15, 17, 18; 4:5, 8-13; 6:9-14; 8:1-2, 7-13; 9:24-27; 10:1-5, 12; 11:26; 13:8-13)..."

"All the same, Paul means more than this. Just as the full sun outshines any source of illumination otherwise provided in everyday life, so when 'he' (*the Lord*) 'comes,' this reality will eclipse and outshine the pledges and promises that have hitherto pointed to it. In this sense the fellowship gathered around 'the table of the Lord' (10:21) provisionally and in partial measure constitutes the pledge and first preliminary foretaste of the 'Supper of the Lamb' of the final consummation to which the Lord's Supper points in promise... The founding event of the cross is constitutive for Christian corporate and individual identity. Self-involvement in the story of the cross shapes the story of the self and the Christian church. However, this is not yet the whole story. The story does not reach its culmination 'until he comes,' and only then will the full meaning of all present moments be disclosed, beyond the need for partial significations." Thistleton

Verse 27

Ὡστε ὅς ἂν ἐσθίῃ τὸν ἄρτον ἢ πίνῃ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ κυρίου ἀναξίως, ἔνοχος ἔσται τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ κυρίου.

ὥστε so that, with the result that

ἂν particle indicating contingency ὅς ἂν = whoever

ἀναξίως adv. in an improper manner

ἀξιος may mean 'fit' as in Luke 12:48, 'I am no longer fit to be called your son.' The adjective ἀξιος denotes 'fitting correspondence' BAGD. "Paul's primary point is that attitude and conduct should *fit* the message and solemnity of what is proclaimed. At Corinth these were too often 'not fitting,' or, in Meyer's accurate words, 'in a way morally out of keeping with the nature (10:16) and design of the ordinance (11:24-25)'. Thistleton

ἐνοχος, ον liable, answerable, guilty

αἷμα, ατος see v.25

"The syntax ... implies *not a sacrilege against the elements of the Lord's Supper* but answerability or being 'held accountable' for the sin against Christ of *claiming identification with him* while using the celebration of the meal *as an occasion of social enjoyment and status enhancement without regard to what sharing in what the Lord's Supper proclaims.*"
Thistleton
"That 'body' is not to be interpreted here as equivalent to *church* is shown by the addition of 'blood.'" Barrett

Verse 28

δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτόν, καὶ οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου πινέτω·

δοκιμαζω test, examine

I.e. examine their motives and understanding and then come to eat and drink in a fitting manner because they are conscious of what they are doing.

ἑαυτός reflexive pronoun, himself ...
ἐσθιέτω Verb, pres act imperat, 3 pl ἐσθω

Verse 29

ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων κρίμα ἑαυτοῦ ἐσθιει καὶ πίνει μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα.

This shorter reading is preserved in the oldest and best MSS but supplemented in most. Metzger writes, "The meaning of the shorter text, which is preserved in the best witnesses, was clarified by adding ἀναξίως (from v.27) after πίνων and του κυριου after σωμα. In each instance there appears to be no good reason to account for the omission if the words had been present originally."

κρίμα, τος n judgement, condemnation

"The cross stands as an anticipation of God's final, definitive judgment which takes the form of a double verdict 'guilty' and 'justified' (1 Cor 1:30-31)." Thistleton. Hence, to participate in these pointers to the cross without discernment of all that such participation implies is to bring oneself into the context of judgment without that identification with the Christ who alone can save.

διακρινω judge, evaluate, discern

The phrase 'not discerning the body' is difficult and the subject of many interpretations. In light of the abuses at Corinth, it is perhaps best to understand the reference to be to discerning the body of Christ, namely the church. (Certainly not to discerning the sacramental presence of the body and the blood of Christ in the elements!). So Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, says, "Although this has been generally interpreted as a reference to Christ's crucified body, the community itself is almost certainly in view as well, if not exclusively. By means of it [this phrase], the need for the members of the community to recognise their unity by 'receiving' one another (this is preferable to the RSV's 'waiting' for one another) is stressed (v.33). The fact that there are many members of the community should not lead to the assertion of individualistic attitudes, nor to the formation of cliques within it, but instead to a continuing affirmation of its solidarity."

Thistleton follows Barrett, Marshall, Wolff and Schrage in suggesting "the issue is understanding the entailments of 'sharing as participants in the death of Jesus "for you"' (Wolff)... I.e., be mindful of the uniqueness of Christ, who is *separated* from others in the sense of giving himself for others in sheer grace. The Lord's Supper, by underlining participation in, and identification with, the cruciform Christ, thereby generates the social transformation, which is Paul's *second concern*."

The Lord's Supper was intended to express unity not only with Christ but also one with another (see 10:17). Yet they had made it an expression of their divisions (see vv 18-21). Hence, in this meal where the body of the Lord is commemorated in the bread they failed to discern the living reality of the body of Christ of which they were severally a part (see v.33).

Verse 30

διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοὶ καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί.

πολυσ, πολλη, πολυ much, many
ἀσθενεῖς Adjective, m nom pl ἀσθενης, ες
sick, weak

ἄρρωστος, ον sick, ill
κοιμαομαι sleep, fall asleep, die
ἱκανος, η, ον sufficient, large, much

What should have been for their blessing and strengthening had become a confirmation of judgment (cf. v.29).

Verse 31

εἰ δὲ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν, οὐκ ἂν ἐκρινόμεθα·
διακρινῶ v.29

"We should make a practice (such is the force of the imperfect tense) of 'distinguishing ourselves' ... i.e. distinguishing between what we are and what we ought to be." Morris Thistleton says, "What is required is 'recognising' *our portion in the cruciform Christ for us*, 'i.e., 'recognising' our status and obligations as 'Christian believers,' or, to replicate v.29, 'recognising what characterises us as Christian believers.' This is to *discern our distinctiveness*, not as individuals, but as *the having-died-and-being-raised-one-body-of-Christ*." And quoting Moule he continues, "Rightly appropriated divine grace, expressed through 'the sacramental verdict,' invites and promotes 'entry beyond judgment into the life of the age to come.'"

ἂν particle indicating contingency

Thistleton says, "Fee's view that the issue turns on 'self-examination' (vv. 28,31) not only deprives δοκιμαζῶ and διακρινῶ of their proper force as embracing specific effects as well as processes but also substitutes a psychologism for a more robust theological conception of a genuine appropriation of grace anchored in identification with the crucified Christ. Paul's concern anticipates Bonhoeffer's declarations about 'cheap grace.' Cheap grace is 'the preaching of forgiveness without repentance... Communion without confession, grace without discipleship... Christianity without Christ.' By contrast, a costly but authentic appropriation of grace entails 'taking up the cross ... sharing Christ's crucifixion ... the cup of suffering.' This is why identification with Christ and the cross in the Lord's Supper is at the same time a dialectical passing through judgment as 'guilty' and 'accepted' or 'rightwised,' as 1:18-25, 30-31 paves the way for the Corinthians to perceive."

And, quoting Pannenberg, he continues, "If 'to belong to Jesus Christ means to participate in his giving of himself to God and his kingdom ... in fellowship with all who are related in this way to the same Lord,' then 'in right receiving' (11:27) .. 'we judge ourselves *aright*' (my italics) '[and] will not be judged (at the last judgment, v.31).' For we 'pass on ourselves God's verdict.'"

Verse 32

κρινόμενοι δὲ ὑπὸ κυρίου παιδεύομεθα, ἵνα μὴ
σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν.

παιδεύω train, teach, discipline

These troubles are tokens of God's Fatherly love for them.

κατακριθῶμεν Verb, aor pass subj, 1 pl
κατακρινῶ condemn

Verse 33

Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί μου, συνερχόμενοι εἰς τὸ
φαγεῖν ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
συνερχομαι v.17
ἀλλήλων, οἱς, οὗς reciprocal pronoun one
another
ἐκδεχομαι wait for

Cf. Rom 15:7.

Verse 34

εἰ τις πεινᾷ, ἐν οἴκῳ ἐσθιέτω, ἵνα μὴ εἰς κρίμα
συνέρχησθε. Τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ὡς ἂν ἔλθω
διατάξομαι.

πεινῶ be hungry

ἐσθιέτω Verb, pres act imperat, 3 pl ἐσθίω

"If the well-to-do take their more elaborate meals in their own private houses (ἐν οἴκῳ, at home, as NJB, NRSV), the poor and disadvantaged will not be shamed as they are in the case of current practices." Thistleton

κρίμα, τοῦς v.29

λοιπός, ἡ, ον rest, remaining, other

ὡς ἂν when, whenever

An indefinite form which implies that Paul did not know when he would be able to visit them.

ἔλθω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ἐρχομαι

διατάξομαι Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1 s

διατάσσω command, instruct