

Chris Jones

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[0 : 00] 1 Corinthians 11, quick walk, two big sections. First section, verses 1 to 16. Second section, verses 17 to 34.

And I wasn't even going to bother with the first section until we had our community group the other night. Thank you. That's my sign of authority. I forgot to have it on when I started this message. I want you to know that it's okay for me to be out the front. I'm operating under Steve's authority and the Archbishop's licence or something like that. We read the passage in our community group the other night.

We had a great discussion and towards the end, somebody tentatively but also boldly said, when you hear this read, it's really hard for the hairs on the back of your neck not to stand on their end. And they were reflecting, I think some of the words used were that when we come to a passage like this, it sounds old-fashioned, it sounds fuddy-duddy, it sounds out of touch.

[1 : 05] And in some ways, and even in worse ways, for women, sounds like a considerable put-down. And we could go off and have a... You could talk heaps about all that without even looking at the passage.

We've already found our positions, we know where we stand, and we're ready to interact with one another in our groups, aren't we? And we haven't even read the Bible any further. But what if he's dealing...

I think he's dealing with problems in both places, but what we see in the first half, he says, verse 2, I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings just as I pass them on to you.

He's been involved in tradition, the transmission of something which wasn't his, it was given to him, and he's tried to faithfully pass it on to them. And however they've handled it, he's saying, I really want to praise you for this.

So the first half of chapter 11 is reasonably positive, and the second part is incredibly negative. Verse 17, in the following directives, I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good.

[2 : 12] So if we look at the first half, we're seeing they're praiseful, and we move into the second half, which we'll do in a minute, I have no praise for you. He's hot with anger for the way that the Christians in Corinth are behaving with regard to particular issues.

So come back to women. We're not going to cover everything. We got a reaction in our community group the other night that sort of said, this just seems so out of touch. And yet what if, what if we looked around our group and we said, all of us have daughters.

What would it take for our daughter to present shamefully out there in the community? If we were at a community gathering the football down in Westfield, if they took their tops off and walked around, would that be perceived as a shameful thing?

And most of us would say, yeah, the whole of society would see that as shameful. And we added to it and said, yeah, well, even if they dressed really skimpily. And then we started to talk about, well, what about out the front of church?

And we've got a woman speaking to us and her skirt's up, you know, halfway up her thighs and her cleavage is well down the middle and the guys are paying a tremendous amount of attention to everything that she's saying.

[3 : 27] There's something culturally inappropriate that gets in the way of the message. And I think there are some dynamics at play here that bear on that.

And I'm saying it now because this is going to feed perhaps into some of the things that Sam might want to talk about tomorrow afternoon. What I want you to see in terms of the text, verse 4, every

man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonours his head.

So there's a presumption there that a man amongst in the church of God may be praying and prophesying, which is the forth telling of the word of God, bringing the word of God to bear. And he will present in a particular way and possibly reflects the Old Testament glory where Moses didn't have his head covered in the presence of God. But it may be wider than that in terms of Corinthian culture.

And then verse 5, look really carefully. Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head.

[4 : 42] Now what have they both got in common? In both contexts, a man or a woman is praying or is prophesying in public.

They're doing the same thing but they're presenting differently in the cultural context. And what if, and I think I've read this but I won't go to the cross on it because I might get contradicted, but what if in Corinth to be a woman out the front of the congregation with your head shaven said something about your social standing, maybe even your connection with prostitution or it said something about you as a woman in that setting, might that not get in the way of the prayer being prayed or the word of God being brought to bear in terms of prophecy?

Now I don't think I want to go a lot further than that. There's obviously bucket loads that could be said and here's your opportunity to write your own questions down right now on your sheet and they can be brought back to panel tomorrow afternoon.

That's the way we can deal with some of this stuff in this context. It's fantastic. But coming to the second half, verse 17, in the following directives I have no praise for you.

Your meetings do more harm than good. So there's a big point that he's working from round about verse 17 to verse 22.

[6 : 20] He said, you come together in verse 20, when you come together it's not the Lord's supper you eat. For as you eat each of you goes ahead without waiting for anyone else.

Would you mind paying attention to me? Like I can see everybody's eyes gone over there but I'd really like your eyes back here, okay? And in verse 21 he literally says, you're not eating the Lord's supper, you're eating to self.

You're doing your own stuff. And we know from what Steve's spoken about in the last talk that he's been talking to us about being a body and so when we talk about body in Christian life we're talking about the corporate life of the people of God.

We are a body. We're a body gathered today and boy it's an exciting body to see gathered today and to be gathered in this way and that people have given time this morning to worship in this way. Just awesome. But he's saying to the Corinthians there's something about this gathering that's going on with you which is just out of what are you guys doing?

[7 : 33] We're just having lunch. We're having lunch. I did say bring lunch and I said there's some really nice wine on the table there's some fantastic chocolates and there's more stuff coming.

Well it's going to be great to be able to share that in a minute and This is ours. This is ours. Ours. Well I don't care about the leaf and the carrot you can have that. It's no ordinary salad. It's no ordinary salad. So what else is in the box?

The very best chicken. Okay. It's distracting isn't it?

What was the word? He says verse 22 or verse 21 for as as you eat each of you goes ahead without waiting for anyone else and one remains hungry and another gets drunk Don't you have homes to eat and drink in or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing and what shall I say to you?

[9 : 35] Certainly I shall not shall I praise you for this? Certainly not. And then he goes into those words that we know really well from the communion service he goes to a different body he moves from the body of Christ in terms of his people to the body of Christ himself and he says for I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread Passover meal remembrance to the time in Egypt the deliverance from the great salvation event of the Old Testament and 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 and in the same way after supper he took the cup saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me for whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes so he's directing the attention of the body of Christ to the body of Christ and he's doing what has happened right throughout our message series in Corinthians he is taking us

back to the way of the cross and he is reminding the people of God that we are who we are through the sacrificial self-serving act of our saviour

God the Lord Jesus Christ who has made us one with him so this is not about which tradition do we go with and have all the church arguments of history that we could conduct or the method or whether we got an individual cup or a wafer or a piece of bread that's a load of nonsense it's a sideshow but what is the centre of this show is that there's a body of believers in Corinth who are humiliating one another by the way that they interact with each other they're calling it the Lord's supper and they have gone so far away from the truth that it is an offensive thing that they do in the light of what God has done for them and so you come into the last part of the passage where there's a warning there it says whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in unworthy manner we're not talking about little cups of grape juice and wafers we're talking about the behaviour of the body of Christ so whoever behaves as we gather in this corporate meal so whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord and a man ought to examine himself he ought to examine himself so should the woman before he eats of the bread and chokes on the cup or drinks from the cup because anybody who eats and drinks without recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself and that is why many among you are weak and sick and a number of you fallen asleep but there's been a breakdown in corporate body life amongst these people and it's expressed very practically in the way they're conducting themselves when they come together in this meal which they call worship and God's judgment has been upon them but he's encouraging them to come under God's discipline rather than on his judgment and so respond to his words so respond now as sons and daughters of God and repent go back to your seats anyway you did a great job can we give them a hand so is this for our community group now or love doesn't work does it but then so it's very practical in the end verse 33 my brothers when you come together to eat wait for each other it's almost a courtesy isn't it it's as simple as a courtesy and it's the other person centered love

I'm not just going to fill my guts while you all stay hungry and there's probably something even bigger going on which is it's almost a display of wealth I've got my sandwich for today but these guys have got luxury and so I display my wealth and as I display my wealth and who I am in terms of the people of God as we meet in this place I exalt myself and by implication I humiliate other people around me and God calls us to a different standard of behaviour in the light of the cross and the way of the cross and what the Lord Jesus has done for us so if you're really hungry when you're coming for lunch well he's telling you to go and have a bit of Maccas before you turn up so you don't have to pig out and take yourself ahead of everyone else he doesn't say if you're hungry if anyone's hungry you've got to give him more it says if you're coming to this meal gathered as the people of God satisfy your hunger out there and then come and eat in moderation with everybody else be sensitive to the brothers and sisters that you have in Christ so that it will not result in judgement and when

I come I'll give further direction so complete sense of 1 Corinthians 11 absolutely not but there's a few things going on there which are good for us to heed what is what is coming soon to