

## *Betrayed*

1 Corinthians 11:23-34 (October 4, 2020)

### ***1 Corinthians 11:23-34***

23For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, 24and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 27Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. 28Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. 30For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. 32But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

33So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34If you are hungry, eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for your condemnation. About the other things I will give instructions when I come.

### ***Historical Context***

Greco-Roman culture was socially stratified. People in the Greco-Roman world always knew their status relative to others in the social pecking order. Locating themselves on the relative-status continuum was as natural as breathing. Virtually all social interaction was shaped by this hierarchy of status. Relative status in the Greco-Roman world showed itself in ways that might shock modern sensibilities. For instance, if a host had guests for dinner, it was common for guests of high status to be served more and better food and drink than others, and for guests of lower status to be served less food and drink of poorer quality.

Social stratification was so taken for granted that it shaped the practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper at Corinth. While this way of behaving might have been "normal" in the culture of Corinth, for Paul it is unacceptable. The Lord's Supper was intended to demonstrate the unity of the church in the mutual dependence on the grace of God shown in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

### ***Theme: Betrayed***

Paul notes that the context of the meal Jesus instituted occurred "on the night he was betrayed." This meal did not originate among human beings who were of one mind or heart regarding Jesus and his gospel. To the contrary, Jesus fed his disciples knowing that he was doing so in the company of a betrayer, one who would cause his death. This fact places a permanent stamp on all earthly celebrations of the Lord's meal: it comes as a gift from God to sinful human beings -- always.

The word "betrayed" rings poignantly and perpetually in every celebration of the meal; it is the verbal acknowledgment of the dark side of those who receive it. Paul's observation concerning the fact of the betrayal as a backdrop to the meal hints at the motives and intentions of any collection of human beings who gather for the Lord's Supper.