

What is the focus of the Lord's Supper? 2

Factual matters:

- The natural reading of 1 Cor 11:17-34 is not about the centrality of a communal meal; indeed the abuses of it are highlighted and the attention placed upon the two elements of the Supper and obedience.
- The general emphasis is upon the cross in v23-27. Paul categorically tells us that the Supper is a memorial of the cross. Verse 26 could not be clearer, 'For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.' The Supper is a proclamation of Christ's death. There is no pointer to the wedding banquet as a focus of the Supper here.
- In the Gospels the Supper is a celebration of the New Covenant which was sealed by Christ's blood (Matt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20). As the Passover looked back to Israel's deliverance from Egypt, so the Supper centres attention on the deliverance of the cross.

To take the most important ritual given to the church to celebrate every week, and turn the direction away from the cross and towards something else is a great sin. I repeat, it is a sin to do this since it is absolutely opposed to God's plan and Christ's honour. Anything that takes attention from Christ, especially in his death, and turns it to man is wrong. And this is what happens in groups that trivialise the elements of the Supper and give no time to worship, prayer, Bible reading and silence in remembering Christ's death. To also incorporate children playing, women knitting and people chatting idly in this time is little short of shocking.

There is a serious matter raised in Hebrews 10:29

Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

Whilst we can argue about whom this verse refers to, nonetheless the essential point is simple. Supposed Christians cannot treat the blood of the covenant lightly. We cannot treat the blood of the covenant superficially or trivially. This must also mean that we cannot treat the symbolic representation of that trivially, i.e. the cup of wine in the Supper. The people being condemned here clearly were doing something practical and it may well have included insulting the Spirit by wrongly partaking of the Supper, not just failing to meet together (v 25) or wilfully sinning (v 26). Note also Paul's warning in 1 Cor 11:27-29.

There are other holes we can pick in the apologetic of the position under criticism, such as their wrong interpretation of Greek words, poor exegesis and faulty historical references, but the point has been sufficiently made for our purposes here.

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