

Traditions (TRUTH) delivered and kept, “Headship” presented, Creation’s gender roles restored and reinforced, contentiousness about these roles not tolerated, heresies exposed, sects denounced, selfishness rebuked. Then a profound lack of respect and self judgement regarding the Lord’s Supper is exposed and God’s intervention in judgement revealed. All these are found in chapter 11.

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered [them] to you.

16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

17 Now in this that I declare [unto you] I praise [you] not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

30 For this cause many [are] weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

Once the chain of command and created gender roles are reestablished Paul returns again to the divisive tendencies reported to be among them. We have seen earlier in the epistle, followings and leaders were developing among the saints at Corinth. While in verse 1 of 1Corinthians 11 Paul commends their adherence to the truth they had received from God through him, he then has to condemn the contentions, faction or schisms (not here “heresies” as the KJV mistakenly translates it.) developing among them. There were those who simply preferred certain leaders and speakers to others. Contentions developed among believers who differed about teachings or practices. For instance some were apparently disposed to be contentious about the gender roles and head coverings.(v 16) This tended to divide them from one another. As they drifted apart (**schisms, factions, schools of opinion within the local assembly**) they eventually would find themselves uniting together into various **sects (or heresies) completely apart from each other**, even though in the same locality. Remember “I of Paul,” “I of Apollos”? There was **one whole truth** given us, not many. Search it out and keep it. All of it! Don’t let personalities, gifted believers, prominent figures or popular movements divert us from it. For it points us to Christ and unites us in Him.

Personal self centeredness is a huge threat to unity. Paul has rebuked this in many forms already in this epistle, and now uncovers another instance. This involved their mixing of their ordinary meals with the Lord’s Supper. They showed a basic disregard and disrespect for the unique and holy occasion the Lord’s Supper was

meant to be. **“This do remember Me!”**

That was not all. The common meal they were having together when they gathered to remember the Lord was anything but common. Some had too much. Others had not enough. But those who had much didn’t share it **in common..** The Assembly (Church), at its founding on Pentecost, was characterized by believers having all things in common. This simple selflessness was the fruit of the Spirit newly uniting them into One body. This was manifested in their generous attitude even though the teaching of the One body or of the Assembly had not even been declared yet. But, years later, at Corinth the believers didn’t even share their food with one another at an assembly get together. They casually had a picnic combined with the Lord’s Supper and further dishonored Him by not even pooling their food. Hadn’t they heard of potluck? Here we see the beauty of taking turns serving our Lord’s Day evening suppers instead of everybody bringing their own meal each time.

Not only were they disrespectful to the Lord and disregarding one another, some were overindulging. Some were overeating while the hungry looked on. Some were actually drinking so much they were becoming drunken. What an insult to the Lord whom they were claiming to remember together. The Lord who died that they might be one. What an insult to the concept of Assembly. But they were simply numb to His interests. How easy it becomes to slip into such a state.

The remaining chapters of the epistle are largely devoted to teaching, instruction and exhortation to restore and embrace unity among the Corinthian saints (and us), particularly in the realm of the local Assembly. In fact the whole epistle is laced through with ministry toward unity. Paul faithfully exposes one by one, the forces and attitudes that were driving them apart. These schisms, these separations between them from one another was not God’s primary plan or intent when He created the Assembly of God on the earth. Although He established many local assemblies, each and all were intended, externally and internally, to be part of the whole testimony on earth to the uniting power of the shed blood of Christ.

John 17:11 That they may be one as We.

On the other hand, dividing us is precisely Satan’s goal. Let’s not make work easy for him.

By Ron Canner, July 30, 2003.