

Dr. Gary Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 27, Response to Worship Question, 1 Cor. 11:17-34 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 27, Response to Worship Question, 1 Cor. 11:17-34, [Biblicalelearning.org](https://www.biblicalelearning.org)

Dr. Gary Meadors' lecture on 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 addresses Paul's sharp **criticism of the Corinthian church's improper observance of the Lord's Supper**. Meadors highlights how their gatherings were marked by **social divisions and disregard for the poor**, turning a communal meal into a display of status. The lecture then shifts to the **foundational tradition of the Lord's Supper**, examining Paul's account in light of the Gospel narratives and emphasizing the significance of Jesus' institution. Finally, Meadors explores the **consequences of partaking in an unworthy manner** and stresses the need for self-examination, concluding with a discussion linking the Lord's Supper to the Jewish Passover and the suffering servant motif in Isaiah, illustrated with a Good Friday sermon example.

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 27 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the [Biblicalelearning.org](https://www.biblicalelearning.org) [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → 1 Corinthians).



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3. Briefing Document: Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 27, Response to Worship Question, 1 Cor. 11:17-34

Briefing Document: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 - Abuse of the Lord's Supper

Overview: This briefing document summarizes Dr. Gary Meadors' lecture on 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, focusing on Paul's sharp rebuke of the Corinthian church's improper practices surrounding their communal meals and the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Meadors highlights Paul's concern over social divisions and the desecration of this sacred meal, emphasizing the proper understanding and observance of the Lord's Supper rooted in its institution by Jesus.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. Paul's Blatant Censure of Corinthian Practices (11:17-22):

- Paul expresses strong disapproval of the Corinthians' gatherings, stating, **"In the following directive, I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good."** (Meadors quoting 1 Corinthians 11:17).
- He identifies the primary issue as **divisions** within the church during their communal meals, mirroring problems addressed earlier in the epistle. **"In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions."** (Meadors quoting 1 Corinthians 11:18).
- These divisions manifested in the wealthy and socially elite members prioritizing their own needs and disregarding the poorer members, turning the communal meal into something resembling status-driven Roman banquets. **"So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, but when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry, and another gets drunk."** (Meadors quoting 1 Corinthians 11:20-21).
- Meadors quotes Garland who states the wealthy "turn the Lord's Supper into a festival meal, in the course of which socially deprived or economically dependent latecomers are treated as hangers-on...thereby undermining the four others of the cross itself, which the Lord's Supper proclaims."
- He also references Winter's observation that some Corinthians followed "the socially accepted convention of private dinners in secular Corinth," which explains their behavior but does not excuse it in the context of the church.

- Paul directly refutes their claim that these gatherings constitute the Lord's Supper: **"So then when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat."** (Meadors quoting 1 Corinthians 11:20).
- The Corinthians' behavior demonstrated a **despising of the Church of God** and a **humiliation of those who have nothing**. **"Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the Church of God by humiliating those who have nothing?"** (Meadors quoting 1 Corinthians 11:22).
- Meadors emphasizes the clear connection between their social status practices and their abuse of this religious event.

2. The Proper Tradition Concerning the Lord's Supper (11:23-26):

- Paul then rehearses the **Dominical tradition** of the Lord's Supper, emphasizing the authoritative transmission of this practice. **"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on or delivered to you—the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread..."** (Meadors quoting 1 Corinthians 11:23).
- Meadors highlights the technical terms "received" (paralambano) and "delivered" (paradidomi/paredoka) as indicators of this authoritative tradition.
- He briefly discusses the concept of an "ordinance," suggesting it involves practices instituted by Jesus, commanded to be perpetuated, and actually perpetuated by the apostles.
- Meadors presents a chart comparing the accounts of the Lord's Supper in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and 1 Corinthians, highlighting their close alignment regarding the bread and the cup.
- He discusses Bruce Winter's observation that Paul intentionally changed the word order in his recounting of Jesus' words, specifically moving the possessive pronoun "my" (mou) forward. **"In Matthew, Mark, and Luke... the body of me is my body. However, in 1 Corinthians 11:24, Paul says touto mou estin to soma."** (Meadors explaining the Greek).
- Winter suggests this deliberate deviation served to emphasize Jesus' self-giving act as a servant for the sake of others, thus condemning the Corinthians' self-centered behavior. **"It becomes clear that Paul's purpose in quoting the Eucharistic words was not simply to repeat a tradition that he had already delivered to them, but to explain why that tradition did not endorse their conduct, but condemned it..."** (Meadors quoting Winter).

- This tradition imposed an obligation on believers to **imitate Christ** in their relationships, which the Corinthians were failing to do.

3. Judgment for Abusing the Lord's Supper and the Call for Self-Examination (11:27-34):

- Paul warns of the consequences of partaking in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner: **"So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord."** (Meadors quoting 1 Corinthians 11:27).
- Meadors clarifies that "unworthy manner" refers to the **way the Supper is celebrated** (the context of division and status abuse) rather than the individual's personal worthiness. He encourages confession and seeking forgiveness for personal sin.
- He emphasizes the importance of **self-examination** before partaking: **"Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup."** (Meadors quoting 1 Corinthians 11:28).
- Failure to discern the **seriousness of the body of Christ** (referring to both the physical body of Jesus and the corporate body of believers) can lead to judgment: **"For those who eat and drink without discerning the seriousness of the body of Christ, ... eat and drink judgments on themselves."** (Meadors quoting and explaining 1 Corinthians 11:29).
- Paul attributes the **weakness, sickness, and even death** of some in the Corinthian community to their flippant and abusive participation in the Lord's Supper. **"That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep."** (Meadors quoting 1 Corinthians 11:30).
- He notes that discerning themselves would have prevented such judgment and that these judgments serve as **discipline** to avoid final condemnation with the world.
- Paul provides an immediate resolution: **"So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together. Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home..."** (Meadors quoting 1 Corinthians 11:33-34). This emphasizes the communal nature of the meal and discourages the perpetuation of social divisions during church gatherings.

- He concludes with a promise of further directions upon his arrival, softening his strong rebuke with a familial address ("brothers and sisters").

4. The Lord's Supper in the Context of the Passover:

- Meadors stresses the importance of understanding the Lord's Supper within its **Jewish Passover history** as part of our Judeo-Christian heritage.
- He outlines key elements of the Passover observance in Exodus 12 and 13 (slaughter of the lamb, blood on the doorframe, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, family meal).
- He notes the development of Passover celebration from the family unit to a national pilgrimage festival in Deuteronomy 16.
- He briefly mentions the development of Passover traditions in Second Temple Judaism (Jubilees, Mishnah).
- Meadors examines the New Testament accounts of the Last Supper (Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, John 13), highlighting the preparation, the purging of Judas, the partaking, and the prayer.
- He points out the significance of Judas departing before the institution of the bread and the cup.
- He discusses the Hallel Psalms (113-118) sung during the Passover meal, particularly highlighting the messianic significance of Psalm 118 in relation to Jesus' death and resurrection. **"This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it."** (Meadors quoting Psalm 118:24 and explaining its true context).

5. Meadors' Example of a Good Friday Sermon:

- Meadors provides an outline and excerpts from a Good Friday sermon to illustrate how to connect the Lord's Supper with the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion.
- He plays on the word "good" in "Good Friday," highlighting the seeming contradiction given the suffering involved, but ultimately emphasizing the goodness of God's plan.
- He connects Psalm 118 to Jesus' experience and the significance of his death.
- He emphasizes the importance of reading and explaining Isaiah 52:13-53:11 (the Suffering Servant passage) in public services.

- He notes the Jewish interpretation of the Suffering Servant as the nation of Israel, contrasting it with the Christian understanding of it as referring to Jesus.
- He highlights Peter's reflection on Isaiah 53 in 1 Peter 2:21-25.
- He concludes by referencing the hymn "What Will You Do With Jesus?" emphasizing the centrality of Christ's death on the cross.

Conclusion:

Dr. Meadors' lecture provides a comprehensive overview of Paul's forceful response to the Corinthians' misuse of their communal meals and the Lord's Supper. He underscores the severity of their social divisions and their failure to recognize the profound significance of this sacred practice rooted in the self-sacrificial love of Christ. By grounding the Lord's Supper in its historical context of the Passover and examining the relevant biblical texts, Meadors emphasizes the need for reverence, self-examination, and unity within the believing community when participating in this ordinance. His example sermon further illustrates how these themes can be effectively communicated in a contemporary setting.

4. Study Guide: Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 27, Response to Worship Question, 1 Cor. 11:17-34

Study Guide: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 and the Lord's Supper

Key Themes

- **Abuse of the Lord's Supper:** Paul strongly condemns the Corinthians' practices surrounding the communal meal and its connection to the Lord's Supper due to social divisions and selfish behavior.
- **Social Status in Worship:** The lecture highlights how pre-existing social hierarchies and Roman banquet customs were negatively impacting the Corinthian church's observance of the Lord's Supper, leading to the humiliation of the less privileged.
- **The Dominical Tradition:** Paul emphasizes the authoritative tradition he received directly from the Lord regarding the institution of the Lord's Supper as a corrective to the Corinthians' distorted practices.
- **Significance of the Lord's Supper:** The lecture explores the meaning and proper observance of the Lord's Supper, connecting it to Jesus' self-sacrifice and the need for unity and self-examination among believers.
- **Judgment and Discipline:** Paul warns of the consequences of partaking in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, leading to weakness, sickness, and even death within the community, while also emphasizing God's disciplinary love.
- **Historical Context of the Passover:** The lecture provides a brief overview of the Jewish Passover tradition and its connection to the institution of the Lord's Supper by Jesus, highlighting the fulfillment of Old Testament themes.
- **The Suffering Servant in Isaiah:** The Good Friday sermon excerpt connects the Lord's Supper to the theme of the suffering servant in Isaiah, emphasizing Jesus' sacrificial death as a "good" day in God's plan.

Quiz

1. Why does Paul have "no praise" for the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 11:17?
2. Describe how social status and Roman meal customs were negatively influencing the Corinthian church's celebration of the Lord's Supper.

3. What does Paul mean when he says, "it is not the Lord's Supper you eat" (1 Corinthians 11:20)?
4. What are the two technical terms Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 11:23 regarding the tradition of the Lord's Supper, and what do they signify?
5. According to the lecture, what are the three key aspects of an "ordinance" instituted by Jesus?
6. How does Bruce Winter interpret Paul's alteration of the word order in his recounting of the institution narrative compared to the Synoptic Gospels?
7. According to the lecture, is Paul primarily concerned with the individual worthiness of the participants or the manner in which the Lord's Supper is being celebrated in 1 Corinthians 11:27-29? Explain your answer.
8. What are some of the consequences Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 11:30 for those who partake in the Lord's Supper without discerning the body of Christ?
9. What immediate resolution does Paul offer to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 11:33-34 regarding their gatherings for communal meals?
10. How does the Good Friday sermon excerpt connect the celebration of the Lord's Supper to the Old Testament Passover and the suffering servant in Isaiah?

Answer Key

1. Paul has "no praise" for the Corinthians because their meetings for what they considered the Lord's Supper were doing more harm than good due to the divisions and mistreatment of the poor that were occurring during these gatherings. Their practices were undermining the unity and significance of the meal.
2. The wealthy Corinthians were treating the communal meal attached to the Lord's Supper like typical Roman banquets, where social status dictated the quality and location of food. This resulted in the poorer members arriving late and being left hungry or treated as inferior, directly contradicting the egalitarian nature of the Christian community.
3. When Paul says, "it is not the Lord's Supper you eat," he means that their current practice, characterized by division, selfishness, and the humiliation of the poor, has so distorted the meal that it no longer reflects the true meaning and intent of the Lord's Supper as instituted by Jesus.

4. The two technical terms are "received" (παρέλαβον - *paralabon*) and "passed on/delivered" (παρέδωκα - *paredōka*). These terms signify the authoritative transmission of tradition, indicating that Paul received this understanding of the Lord's Supper directly from the Lord and faithfully conveyed it to the Corinthians.
5. According to the lecture, the three key aspects of an ordinance instituted by Jesus are: it is a practice instituted by Jesus himself, it is a practice commanded by Jesus to be perpetuated by his followers, and it is a practice that was actually perpetuated by the apostles in the early church.
6. Bruce Winter proposes that Paul deliberately rearranged the word order, specifically moving the possessive pronoun "my" ("μου" - *mou*) earlier in the sentence, to emphasize Jesus' self-giving nature on their behalf. Winter believes this highlights the contrast with the Corinthians' selfish behavior during their communal meals.
7. Paul is primarily concerned with the manner in which the Lord's Supper is being celebrated, rather than the individual's subjective feeling of worthiness. He condemns the divisive and abusive practices occurring within their communal meals, which desecrate the meaning of the Lord's Supper.
8. Paul states that those who eat and drink without discerning the seriousness of the body of Christ "eat and drink judgments on themselves." This has resulted in many among them being weak and sick, and a number even having "fallen asleep," a euphemism for death, indicating severe consequences for their irreverent participation.
9. Paul's immediate resolution is for the Corinthians to eat together as a unified Christian community when they gather. He advises those who are hungry to eat at home beforehand so that their communal gatherings do not result in judgment due to their selfish and divisive behavior.
10. The Good Friday sermon excerpt connects the Lord's Supper to the Passover as its historical and symbolic foundation, highlighting Jesus as the fulfillment of the Passover lamb. It also links the event to the suffering servant in Isaiah, portraying Jesus' death on the cross as a "good" day that brings salvation, a theme echoed in the meaning of the bread and the cup.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the social dynamics within the Corinthian church as revealed in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 and discuss how these dynamics were impacting their observance of the Lord's Supper.
2. Compare and contrast Paul's instructions on the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 with his critique of the Corinthians' practices in verses 17-22. What are the key elements of the proper tradition that Paul emphasizes?
3. Discuss the significance of Paul's warning about partaking in the Lord's Supper in an "unworthy manner" (1 Corinthians 11:27-32). What does the lecture suggest this "unworthy manner" entails, and what are the potential consequences?
4. Explore the connection between the Jewish Passover tradition and the Christian celebration of the Lord's Supper, drawing on the lecture's overview of Exodus and the Synoptic Gospels. How does understanding the Passover enhance our understanding of the Lord's Supper?
5. Analyze the rhetorical strategies employed by Dr. Meadors in presenting the material on 1 Corinthians 11 and the Lord's Supper, including his use of background information, textual analysis, and the inclusion of the Good Friday sermon excerpt.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Dominical Tradition:** The teachings and practices directly instituted or authorized by Jesus Christ, particularly in reference to the Lord's Supper as described in the Gospels.
- **Peri-de:** A Greek phrase meaning "now concerning," often used by Paul as a structural indicator to introduce new topics in his letters, its absence in 1 Corinthians 11:17 suggests a shift in focus not prompted by a direct question.
- **Censure:** Strong disapproval or criticism, as seen in Paul's blunt rebuke of the Corinthians' practices.
- **Euphemism:** A mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered too harsh or blunt, such as "fallen asleep" used for death.
- **Paradicist (παράδοσις - paradosis):** The Greek word for tradition, referring to the body of teachings and practices passed down, especially in the early church.

- **Paredwka (παρέδωκα):** The aorist active indicative form of the Greek verb *paradidomi*, meaning "I delivered" or "I passed on," used by Paul to emphasize the authoritative transmission of the Lord's Supper tradition.
- **Ordinance:** A religious rite or practice instituted by Christ and observed by the church, often understood as having symbolic significance (e.g., Lord's Supper, baptism).
- **Sacrament:** Similar to ordinance, a religious ceremony or act of the Christian church that is regarded as an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual divine grace.
- **Synoptic Gospels:** The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which share a similar perspective and contain many of the same stories and sayings of Jesus.
- **Eucharistic Words:** The specific words spoken by Jesus during the Last Supper when instituting the practice of the bread and the cup, as recorded in the Gospels and 1 Corinthians.
- **Unworthy Manner:** In the context of the Lord's Supper, refers not primarily to the individual's personal sinfulness but to the irreverent, divisive, and socially unjust way in which the meal was being observed by the Corinthians.
- **Discerning the Body (of Christ):** Understanding and recognizing the profound spiritual significance of the Lord's Supper, including its connection to Christ's physical body broken for humanity and the unity of the body of believers, the church.
- **Hallel Psalms:** Psalms 113-118, traditionally sung during the Jewish Passover meal as psalms of praise.
- **Chiasm:** A literary structure in which parallel phrases or clauses are arranged in an inverted order (e.g., ABBA), often used for emphasis and artistic effect in biblical texts.
- **Suffering Servant:** A figure described in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, traditionally interpreted by Christians as a prophecy of Jesus Christ and his atoning suffering and death.
- **Economic Trinity:** A theological term referring to the outward actions and roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in creation, redemption, and the ongoing governance of the world, as distinct from their eternal and inherent being (the immanent Trinity).

5. FAQs on Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 27, Response to Worship Question, 1 Cor. 11:17-34, BiblicaleLearning.org

Frequently Asked Questions on 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 and the Lord's Supper

1. Why does Paul so strongly criticize the Corinthian church's practice of their community meals, particularly in relation to the Lord's Supper?

Paul issues a harsh rebuke because the Corinthians were turning their communal meals, which were associated with the Lord's Supper, into displays of social stratification. The wealthy were eating and drinking to excess in separate groups, while the poor and latecomers were left hungry and humiliated. This behavior directly contradicted the unifying purpose of the Lord's Supper, which is meant to proclaim the equality found in the cross of Christ and foster community among believers, regardless of their social standing. Their practices mirrored the divisive social customs of Roman banquets, thus undermining the core message of the Christian faith.

2. According to Paul, what was the proper understanding and practice of the Lord's Supper based on the tradition he received?

Paul emphasizes that the Lord's Supper is a tradition he received directly "from the Lord," highlighting its authoritative nature. He recounts the Last Supper, where Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." Similarly, after the supper, Jesus took the cup, gave thanks, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." The purpose of this practice is to remember Jesus' sacrificial death and to proclaim it until he comes again. It is an ordinance instituted and commanded by Jesus, and perpetuated by the apostles in the early church.

3. How does Paul's account of the institution of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 differ from the Gospel accounts, and why might this difference be significant?

While Paul's account aligns with the core elements of the Gospel narratives (taking bread and wine, giving thanks, the symbolic meaning of the body and blood, and the command to remember), Bruce Winter notes a subtle but potentially significant difference in the word order of Jesus' words regarding the bread. In the Gospels, it is typically phrased as "This is my body," whereas Paul writes, "This is my body which is for you." Winter suggests that Paul's alteration, by placing the possessive pronoun "my" earlier, emphasizes Jesus' self-giving action as a servant on their behalf, thus directly condemning the Corinthians' self-centered behavior at their communal meals.

4. What does it mean to partake of the Lord's Supper in an "unworthy manner" according to Paul? Is this related to the personal worthiness of the individual?

To partake in an "unworthy manner," as Paul describes it, refers not to the individual believer's personal sinfulness or feelings of inadequacy, but to the way in which the communal celebration of the Lord's Supper was being conducted in Corinth. Their divisive behavior, social elitism, and disregard for the poor were profaning the sacred meal. It was the context and manner of the eating and drinking that were unworthy, not necessarily the individual's subjective feelings of worthiness. Believers are encouraged to confess their sins and seek forgiveness, but the primary issue Paul addresses is the abuse of the communal aspect and the meaning of the Lord's Supper.

5. What are the potential consequences of partaking in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, as outlined by Paul?

Paul warns that those who eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner are "guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord." Furthermore, he states that those who eat and drink without discerning the true significance of the body of Christ (referring to both the physical body of Jesus and the corporate body of believers) "eat and drink judgment on themselves." This lack of proper discernment and disrespectful participation had led to weakness, sickness, and even death among some in the Corinthian community, indicating the seriousness of their offense in God's eyes.

6. What does Paul mean by the need for self-examination before partaking in the Lord's Supper?

The call for self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28) encourages believers to reflect on their own attitudes and behaviors, particularly in relation to their fellow members of the body of Christ. It is a time for introspection, confession of sin, and ensuring that one's heart aligns with the spirit of unity and love that the Lord's Supper signifies. This examination should lead to a recognition of the seriousness of the occasion and a commitment to honoring Christ's sacrifice and the community of faith.

7. How does the historical context of the Jewish Passover relate to the understanding of the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus during the Passover meal, connecting it deeply to the Jewish tradition of remembering God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt. Key elements of the Passover, such as the lamb, unleavened bread, and the rehearsal of the religious tradition, provide a rich background for understanding the symbolism of the Lord's Supper. Jesus himself is seen as the Passover Lamb, whose blood brings about a new deliverance. Understanding the Passover helps believers appreciate the depth of their Judeo-Christian heritage and the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan in Christ.

8. What practical advice does Paul give to the Corinthians to correct their misuse of the communal meals associated with the Lord's Supper?

Paul instructs the Corinthians that when they gather to eat, they should do so together as a unified community, not as separate social groups. He advises that anyone who is hungry should eat at home before coming to the gathering, so that their meetings do not result in judgment due to their divisive and excessive behavior. He emphasizes that these gatherings should reflect their identity as brothers and sisters in Christ, rather than reinforcing social hierarchies. Paul indicates that he will provide further directions upon his arrival to ensure the proper practice of their communal worship.