

# *THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## **1 CORINTHIANS LESSON 6 (Chapters 11-12)**

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.* Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

“But now indeed there are many members, yet one body” (1 Cor. 12:20). Welcome to our study of the Book of 1 Corinthians. Beginning in chapter 11, and going all the way through chapter 14, Paul deals with the abuses, and proper uses, of things in the worship assembly. In his discussion he deals with the Lord’s Supper and with miracles. He begins in chapter 11 by saying that he wants Christians to imitate him as he, in turn, imitates Christ. Paul sets forth these principles, based not on his own authority, but as he imitates the teaching of Jesus. One of the problems with which Paul deals in 1 Corinthians 11 is the proper relationship of men and women to Christ in the assembly. In 1 Corinthians 11:3 Paul shows us the hierarchy that God has set up. “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” Imagine in your mind the divine hierarchy which represents the way that God wants things to be. First there is God as the Head. Second, Christ is under Him. Third, man is under Christ. And fourth, woman is under the man. That is the system that God has established in the church regarding authority. God is in complete control as the Creator of mankind (Gen. 1:1). But God has put His Son in a place of authority over the church (Mt. 28:28) and over all humans (Eph. 1:21-23). Christ has established that man should have authority in the home and in the church. We know from Ephesians 5:21-31 that man is the head of the home. That does not mean that he is to be a dictator. Just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, so a man must love his wife, children, and home, and do what is best for them. Under man, then, we have woman. It is noteworthy, especially from the context of Corinthians 11, that Christ has all authority regarding matters of doctrine. Man is under Christ, and must follow His teaching. Woman is under man when it comes to authority. This is seen in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 where Paul said, “Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.” Paul repeated that sentiment in 1 Corinthians 14:33 when he said that women are not allowed to speak in the church’s assembly, but must remain silent. God has set men in places of authority, while women have not been given that position. This is the way God set things up. To understand worship, we must understand the authority that God has set in place. We must worship God in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:24). And we must learn to honor what God has established when it comes to matters of authority.

One of the things with which Paul deals in 1 Corinthians 11 is the fact that women must not have authority over men. He deals with this through a discussion of head coverings in order to show that women must occupy a place of submission. Women today do things such as that by not standing up to speak, and instead occupying a submissive role. Men are the leaders, which is Paul’s point in stating that there is a correct hierarchy.

In verses 20 and following, Paul deals with the Lord’s Supper and how it relates to worship. Notice 1 Corinthians 11:20, where Paul wrote, “Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper.” Paul was discussing an abuse of the Lord’s Sup-

per. God has decreed that when we partake of the Lord's Supper we all come together in one place to partake of it. There must not be any division, or a separate assembly. We are all to be together. This is the way that Jesus set it up in Matthew 26. Christ and all of the apostles were gathered together and partook of the Lord's Supper at its institution. This is very important because the Corinthian Christians were abusing the Lord's Supper. We learn from the context that one person was eating ahead of another, one had already partaken, but another had not yet done so. There was great confusion and discord concerning the Lord's Supper. Paul told them that when they came together, it was not to be that way. From this we learn that we must all come together in one place in order to partake of the Lord's Supper.

There are some important teachings to be learned here. We must not divide the assembly. Some people today think that it is acceptable to take children out of the worship assembly, and that is acceptable to God. But Paul said, "...when you come together in one place..." He said that again in chapters 13 and 14. When we worship, God does not intend for us to divide the assembly. There is no authority for doing that. It is against the clear principles of 1 Corinthians 11:20. You do not find any authority in the Scriptures for such things as "children's church" or "children's Bible hour." Nor do such things meet the burden that Paul places on the church in 1 Corinthians 11:20.

As Paul deals with the Lord's Supper, he reminds the Corinthians of some very important things. For example, he reminds them that the Lord's Supper is a very reverent act. In 1 Corinthians 11:20-22 Paul said,

"Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you."

These people were treating the Lord's Supper in an irreverent fashion. One was drunk. Another was already full. People were not waiting on one another. Paul said, "If you want to eat a common meal, you have houses for that purpose. The Lord's Supper is not a common meal, and you should not make it into that. Instead, come together in one place." That is the context here. The very purpose of the Lord's Supper is reverent. It was an essential part of the church's coming together. It is important that we remain reverent during our worship so that we can honor God for Who He is, and that we worship Him in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24), and that we come together to pay honor to Him for what Jesus has done for us. Imagine the chaos that must have been present in the church at Corinth with people coming at different times. The Lord's Supper is intended to be a very reverent act.

Here are some practical lessons that relate to that. When it comes to worship and the Lord's Supper, we need to be sure that we respect this as an important action that helps us remember Jesus' death. This means that we should not be making light of it by talking, laughing, writing notes, playing, or daydreaming. Those things would be just as much condemned as making chaos out of the Lord's Supper by not waiting on one another. The Lord's Supper is an act in which we must engage with the utmost respect for God.

Notice, too, that in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 Paul sets for the requirements of the Lord's Supper.

"I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me. In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup

is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."

Here, Paul sets forth some principles about which we need to be reminded. We are, in principle, to do things the way God has set them up. We are commanded in 1 Corinthians 4:6 not to "go beyond what is written." We must not add to or take away from the Word of God, lest He rebuke us and we are found to be liars (Prov. 30:6). There has always been a strong command and warning found in Scripture, as well as examples of those who perished because they did not do things exactly as God commanded. Consider Nadab and Abihu, who were two young priests who used strange or unauthorized fire to offer a sacrifice to God "which the Lord had not commanded." Fire came down from Heaven and destroyed them. Someone might say, "What a small thing. Why should it matter how the fire was lit? They still worshiped God." The fact is that they did not do it the way that God said that they should. We must remember to always do things as God has established.

We also must use the elements that Jesus used when He instituted the Lord's Supper. The bread represents the body of Christ, which was broken for us. The fruit of the vine represents the blood of Christ. In Matthew 26:28 Jesus said, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." When we meet together, we must realize that there is a certain way in which we must correctly partake of the Lord's Supper. We must remember the death of Jesus. Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of Me." We must stop and consider all that Jesus did—what He suffered, how He was beaten, how He was laughed at and mocked, and how people treated Him in an ungodly way. He endured all that so that we could have the hope of one day going to Heaven.

Paul also touches on the regularity of the Lord's Supper. In 1 Corinthians 11:26 Paul said, "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." From this passage we learn two things about the timing or regularity of the Lord's Supper. First, it is going to last until the Second Coming of the Lord. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ, and was intended to last until He comes again "in the clouds" (1 Thess. 4:13ff.). Second, there is a certain frequency associated with the Lord's Supper. Paul said, "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." So many people today are confused regarding when Christians are to partake of the Lord's Supper. In the popular religious world today, many people say that the Lord's Supper should be eaten on Christmas or Easter. Others say that it is acceptable to partake of the Lord's Supper once a month. Has the Bible told us when we are to partake of the Lord's Supper? It certainly has. In Acts 20:7 we are told that Christians came together "on the first day of the week to break bread." How many weeks have a first day? **Every** week has a first day. This language is almost identical to the command that is found in Exodus 20:8 where God told the people of Israel to remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. How many weeks had a Sabbath? **Every** week had a Sabbath. Did God say, "Every week I want you to do this"? No, not in that immediate context. But later in Exodus 23 He did. The Jews, however, correctly interpreted God's command to mean that every Sabbath that comes around is to be remembered. God has taught us as well that we are to partake of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. How do we know that we are to do that every first day of the week? In the original Greek in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, the wording is "**every** first day of the week." How many places do you know that do not take up a collection on the first day of **every** week? Everyone does that. The same language that is used in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 also is used in Acts 20:7. In the first century, Christians did these things every first day of the week. And Acts 2:42 tells us that they came together "to break bread." We should do that today as well—"until the Lord comes"—if we want to please God.

What else does Paul teach us about the Lord's Supper? He teaches us that we are to do it "in remembrance of Jesus," and that we must reflect on how we do that in order to ensure that we are doing it in a proper way. In 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 Paul said,

"Whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

In the context, the "unworthy manner" in verse 20 referred to the fact that Christians were not waiting on one another. They were not meeting the standard that the Lord had established. Today when we partake of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy by not using the proper elements or by not doing it on the proper day, or when we do not do it in the right way, or when our hearts are not where they ought to be, then we are no different that the Corinthian Christians. We must reflect on the manner in which we partake so that we can be sure that we are doing things the way God commanded that they be done. We also need to reflect upon ourselves so that we can be sure that we are remembering in a proper manner the Lord's death. We must reflect on the Savior's broken body and all that He did for us on the cross of Calvary.

So, 1 Corinthians 11 contains a great deal of teaching on the Lord's Supper. But Paul also discusses (in relation to the assembly) the miraculous. In 1 Corinthians 12-14 Paul has much to say about miraculous gifts. In chapter 12 he notes that such gifts were given "for the profit of all" (vs. 7) in order to encourage, edify, and uplift the body. Just because one person has a certain gift, and another person has another gift, does not mean that one is better than the other. Each member, Paul says, is important to the body. In chapter 13 Paul then goes on to show that there is something greater than miraculous gifts (like speaking in tongues or prophesying). The greatest is love. In that same chapter, Paul shows that miracles were never intended to last forever. In 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, Paul said that miraculous knowledge, prophesying, and tongue speaking were things that would last only until that which was "perfect" (complete) had come. We know that Jesus has already come, and His Second Coming is not under discussion here. So what is the perfect or complete that was going to come, at which time the miraculous would end? From James 1:22-25 we learn that it is the Bible—God's complete and perfect will—which is the "perfect law of liberty." Miracles were intended to last until God had completed the New Testament so that we would have everything we needed to understand God's will. Someone might say, "That doesn't seem right. Miracles are for human gratification, aren't they?" No, miracles never were intended to be used in such a way. What was the purpose of biblical miracles? Mark 16:20 and Hebrews 2:3-4 teach us that miracles were to confirm God's Word. Suppose you had two people in the first century stand up and say, "I am a spokesman of God." The people back then did not have a Bible to use to check what these two people were saying. They both claimed to be from God. So how could you know which one was right? If one man could raise the dead and heal the lame, and the other man couldn't, then the one who could perform miracles had God's sign of approval. The miracles served to prove that that man's words had come from God.

Today we can test the spirits by getting out our Bibles because we have God's Word. Chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians shows us that in the first century these people possessed different miraculous gifts. Some were able to speak in tongues, some were able to heal, and some had the gift of prophecy. But these gifts did not send people into a frenzy so that they were unable to control themselves. Rather, 1 Corinthians 14:32 teaches us that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophet." If someone received a prophecy, he could control that gift. A miraculous gift did not overtake a person and force him to do something (like we so often see today on television).

What, then, do we learn about miracles from chapter 12? First, we learn that God does not want us to be ignorant on this subject. Notice 1 Corinthians 12:1 where Paul teaches Christians, “Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant.” This implies that there was ignorance of the subject in the first century. And there is mass ignorance and confusion on the subject of miracles today, too. Today we have people who are claiming that they can do what Jesus and the apostles did in the first century. But there is a serious problem with such a claim. The laying on the apostles’ hands, which imparted to others in the first century the ability to perform miracles (Acts 8:20-24) is no longer available. What happened when the last apostle died? If miraculous gifts were passed on by the laying on of the apostles’ hands, then when the last apostle died, the gifts ended. There is so much confusion today on this subject, but that is not God’s fault. He is not the Author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). Rather, He wants us to do things in an orderly, structured manner. That is why we have the Bible. Ephesians 5:17 tells us, “Do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” John 8:32 teaches us that we can know the truth, and that the truth will set us free.

What, then, are some of the teachings regarding miracles that Paul wanted the Christians in Corinth, and us, to know? He wanted us to know that no one can have the Spirit of God if he does not claim Jesus as Lord (1 Cor. 12:2-3). If someone said, “Jesus is not Lord,” then you could know that they were not “of God” and that they could not perform miracles. That same principle is true today regarding teachings. If someone does not claim Jesus as Lord, we can know that such a person is not from God because the Bible says that Jesus is Lord. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 we learn that there were many gifts—the gift of prophecy, the gift of teaching, the gift of being an apostle, the gift of healing, and so on. There were various gifts, but only one Spirit—the Spirit of God—gave those gifts to people. In verse 7 Paul says, “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.” Today when you see people who claim to be able to do miracles, the only ones who profit from such is the person doing the miracle and the person for whom the miracle was performed. But that was not the case in the first century. Whenever miracles were performed (such as tongues or prophecy), everyone was edified. Thus, this built up the whole body.

In dealing with this subject, Paul realized that there were certain gifts that people appeared to esteem higher than others. However, just because one person had that gift, but another person did not, that did not mean that the person who did not possess the gift was any less important to God. In 1 Corinthians 12:14ff. Paul deals with the fact that there are many members, and that each member does not have the same gift, yet all members are important to God. In this section we learn some very important truths about the church. The church is one body, but it has many members. What is the church? When someone says, “We are going to church,” is that correct? If someone says, “I go to church at \_\_\_\_\_,” is that correct? What is the church? Is the church the building? Is the church located on a map somewhere? No. Look at 1 Corinthians 12:12 where Paul says, “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.” What is the church or the body? It is the members. The church is not a building. It is not stained-glass windows or ornate designs such as were prevalent during medieval times. The church is the members. Christians compose the body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12:27 Paul said, “You are the body of Christ, and members individually.”

How does a person get into the body? If the body is the members and not the building, how does a person get into the body of Christ—the saved or “called out” group? In verse 13 Paul presents a very important truth about baptism. “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” It is by the teaching of the Holy Spirit given to those men who wrote

down those teachings in the Bible that we learn that we are all baptized into the one body. Why is it important to be “in the body”? In 1 Corinthians 15:24-26 we learn that Jesus is one day going to come back for those who are in the body (that is, those who in the church or the kingdom—Mt. 16:18-19). If Jesus is coming back for the church, if we want to be received into Heaven with Him, and if the only way to do that is to be a part of the church, then how does a person get into the church? A person is “baptized into the body.” Galatians 3:27 teaches us that we are baptized “into Christ” (into Christ’s body, the church). It is not just passages like Acts 2:38 or Mark 16:16 that teach us the essentiality of baptism. Here, too, we are taught that baptism is essential if a person wants to get into the group of the saved known as the body of Christ. How could anyone say that baptism is merely “an outward sign of an inward grace” when a person cannot get into the Lord’s body without first being baptized. That is very important.

Paul deals with the fact that every member is useful, and that we must not look down upon what we might think of as “lesser gifts” among members. He talks about how the body is many members, but in verse 20 he offers another truth about the Lord’s church when he says, “But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.” How many bodies are there? If the body is the church, as Ephesians 1:22-23 says it is, then how many bodies are there? Paul said, “There are many members, yet one body.” Jesus built only one church. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, “...I will build My church.” He built one church, and it belongs to Him. It is the church He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28). If we are going to honor God, we must be a part of the one body.

Here is what that means. Jesus did not die for religious groups started by men. Jesus built His church. It is His, and it needs to follow His authority. It needs to allow Him to be its Head (Mt. 28:18; Eph. 1:21ff.). And it needs to bear His name. If something belongs to you, then it is yours. The church is Christ’s. It is “the church of Christ” because Jesus paid the ultimate price for the one body. In verse 25 we learn another important truth about the church. God wants His church to be united. Paul’s desire was “that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.” How we today need unity in God’s one church. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Ps. 133:1). There is strength, power, and sustenance to be gained in unity. If we are the church (as verse 27 says), then we need to be united in God’s cause.

I hope that this lesson will help you understand some very important teachings about worship, about the Lord’s Supper, and about the use of miracles in the first century. Next week we are going to discuss chapters 13 and 14, and how miracles have come to an end. We also will notice that modern-day miracle workers are in sharp contrast to, and in violation of, what we find in 1 Corinthians 14. Remember that the greatest gift of all, as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13, is love. John 3:16 teaches us that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Have you obeyed the Gospel? Have you become a Christian? Do you love God enough to submit your will to the will of the Father? You can do that today by believing that Jesus is God’s Son, being willing to repent of those things in your life that are not right, being willing to confess Christ’s name before men, and being willing to be baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). If you have not done that today, I want to encourage you to obey the Gospel of Christ before it is eternally too late.

**Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

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## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR 1 CORINTHIANS LESSON 6 (CHAPTERS 11-12)

1. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, what does Paul urge Christians to do?
2. According to Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 11:3, what hierarchy has God Himself established for use in the church?
3. What did Paul say in 1 Timothy 2:11-12?
4. According to John 4:24, how are we to worship God?
5. What important piece of information is contained in 1 Corinthians 11:20 regarding the Lord's Supper?
6. What does Matthew 26:26-28 show Jesus doing before His death on the cross?
7. Where in the Scriptures do we find authority for such things as "children's church" or "children's Bible hour" that remove children from the worship assembly?
8. In 1 Corinthians 11:22 Paul said that he "did not praise" the Christians in Corinth. According to 1 Corinthians 11:20-22, what were those Christians doing that caused Paul to make such a statement?
9. What does Proverbs 30:6 say about adding to or taking away from God's Word?
10. According to the last few words found in 1 Corinthians 11:25, what is one purpose of the Lord's Supper?
11. Does the Lord's Supper help Christians remember Christ's death or His resurrection from the dead?
12. From teachings found in passages such as Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, how often are Christians to partake of the Lord's Supper?
13. According to 1 Corinthians 11:27, what does a person do if he or she partakes of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner?
15. What is the "perfect law of liberty" that James mentioned in James 1:25?
16. According to 1 Corinthians 12:2-3, what was one way in the first century to tell whether or not a person was "of God"?
17. According to Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:18, what is "the body"?
18. According to Ephesians 4:4, how many bodies are there?
19. According to 1 Corinthians 12:14, what composes the one body?
20. According to Jesus' statements in Matthew 16:18, who owns the body?