

# ***THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST***

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## **1 CORINTHIANS LESSON 5 (Chapter 11)**

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

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

### **Ben Bailey:**

"Imitate me as I also imitate Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). I'm Ben Bailey.

### **Timothy Sparks:**

And I'm Timothy Sparks. Welcome to our continuing study of 1 Corinthians. This broadcast is brought to you by individual members and congregations of the churches of Christ. We hope you will visit the churches of Christ in your area. We also hope you will visit us on our website at [www.thegospelofchrist.com](http://www.thegospelofchrist.com). We have streaming audio and video lessons on our website. You may download these and use them to assist you in your study of God's Word. And, as always, we will be happy to send you a free copy of any of our lessons on DVD or CDs. All you need to do is let us know which ones you want. Visit us on our website at [www.thegospelofchrist.com](http://www.thegospelofchrist.com), fill out the request form to let us know which lessons you want, and we will be more than happy to send those to you. We also would be glad to send you a Bible correspondence course. This is a course that you can take in your spare time. You receive it by mail, and when you complete one lesson, you can return it to us for grading. We then will send you that lesson (graded), along with the next lesson, and so on. We believe this could prove very beneficial to you in your study of God's Word.

As we come to 1 Corinthians 11, we see that Paul discusses a number of relationships that God has established, and the importance of each in His divine plan. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, Paul says, "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." The arrangement that God has set up is as follows: God, Christ, man, and woman. This, of course, is not to say that Christ is superior to God, because Jesus Himself said, "I and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:30). Nor is it to suggest that man is superior to woman, because when the two are married, they come together as one flesh. God has set things up where they have different roles. As this chapter begins, Paul states that we are to imitate him, even as he imitates Christ. That, then, leads Paul into a discussion in which he points out the proper roles for men and women. He addresses the fact that women are to be in submission, and that hair is given to the woman for her glory. He also says that men are not to have long hair, "for does not even nature itself teach you that it is a shame for a man to have long hair?" Paul is really dealing with the role of submissiveness. Christ was submissive to God. And here Paul is dealing with man and woman being submissive to God by abiding in the responsibilities and roles they have been assigned. Ben, tell us more about chapter 11.

### **Ben Bailey:**

In chapter 11, we're also going to notice that Paul talks about the Lord's Supper. He takes us back to Matthew 26 where the Lord instituted the Supper and said, "Take, eat, this is my body" (speaking of the unleavened bread). And He passed around the fruit of the vine and said, "Drink you all of it, for this is My blood." Paul reminds Christians of the awesome responsibility they have in regard to the Lord's Supper. Paul is going to give us some very clear teachings here, but before we notice what Paul teaches about that, we also should understand some general teachings about the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper, as we know, was instituted by Jesus Christ on the night before His trial and crucifixion. Jesus instituted the Supper as a replacement for the Passover, and to serve as a memorial for Christians of His death. This is why Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of Me." It is a reminder of what Jesus did. Many people take the Lord's Supper only once or twice a year (e.g., on Christmas, or at Easter). But how often does the Bible indicate that we should take the Lord's Supper? A clear example is offered in the passage found in Acts 20:7, where we learn from the context that on the first day of the week the Lord's disciples came together to break bread after the Lord's Supper had been instituted. According to Acts 20:7, when Christians came together on the first day of the week, they came together for the **purpose** of taking the Lord's Supper. Ask yourself: "How many weeks have a 'first day'?" Each of us recognizes that **every** week has a first day. There is not specific week in mind within the context of Acts 20:7, and so from this we can safely conclude that on **every** first day of the week, Christians came together to break bread. A clear example might be the language that God used in the Book of Exodus where God said simply: "Remember the Sabbath." God never said, "Remember **every** Sabbath." There was no specific Sabbath in mind, and so the Jews knew to interpret the command as **every** Sabbath. **Every** Saturday that came around, they were to remember that. While it never was stated specifically, "every Sabbath" was implied in the language of God's instructions. Now, compare that language with the language of Acts 20:7, where we are instructed to remember the Lord, by partaking of the Lord's Supper, on the first day of the week. So, there is teaching that we should remember the Lord in this manner every time the first day of the week comes around. In the churches of Christ, our sole guide is the Bible. We strive to do Bible things in Bible ways, in order to follow God's Word on this matter.

### **Timothy Sparks:**

Paul makes it clear that when we partake of the Lord's Supper, we are to do so in a very reverent way. Apparently, as we look at the context of the chapter, some of the Corinthians were coming together on the first day of the week, but not for the Lord's Supper. Rather, it was a common, ordinary meal they were using to fill their bellies. Paul asked them, "Do you not have houses in which to eat?" The purpose of the Lord's Supper is not to fill **our** bellies, but rather to remember the sacrifice of Christ—**His** body and **His** blood, which were shed for our sins. Paul therefore says that whosoever eats or drinks of the body or blood of the Lord in an unworthy way, eats and drinks damnation unto himself. Whenever we eat of the bread (which represents the body of Christ), or drink of the fruit of the vine (which represents the blood of Christ), if we do so in an irreverent or flippant manner, then we are heaping condemnation upon ourselves. This memorial is so important that it occurs on the first day of every week, in memory of what Jesus has done for us. It is by the blood of Christ that we are saved. And to come in contact with that blood, we have to be baptized into Christ. This memorial Supper reminds us of what Jesus did for us at His crucifixion on the cross—for your sins, and for mine. And so, whoever partakes of the Lord's Supper in a profane way, God will hold accountable. Remember Nadab and Abihu from Leviticus 10? This is an example of two priests who were doing something

that God had not authorized. As a result, they were worshipping in a profane way. When we worship in a profane way, or in an unauthorized way, God will hold us accountable as well. Our souls are at stake here. This should be a very precious memorial in which we esteem Jesus, and remember what He has done for us. There is nothing wrong with us having our emotions tied into this act, and having a tear come to our eyes. But it would be wrong for us to allow our emotions to run roughshod over clear-cut scriptural teaching so that we do whatever we want. We must come to the Supper with our minds engaged. It is not a common meal where we joke about things of the day. This is a time, according to Scripture, that is set aside to remember Jesus Christ, our Savior, Who secured salvation for all those who keep His commandments.

**Ben Bailey:**

Another teaching we notice in 1 Corinthians 11:27-28 really gets to the heart of the matter. When we come to partake of the Lord's Supper, we need to examine ourselves. In fact, this was Paul's admonition, that a man should examine himself, and **then** take the Lord's Supper. When I take the Lord's Supper, I need to first and foremost look at my own life. Paul says that he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner is guilty of the blood of Jesus Christ. It's a very important thing for me to make sure that my life is right. This teaches us that if we are living a life of sin, every time we eat the Lord's Supper, we are condemning ourselves because we are viewing the blood of Christ as a flippant thing. So examine yourself, examine your relationship with others, and examine your relationship with God Himself. When we are partaking of the Lord's Supper, our minds must be engaged in what's going on. It's a memorial. Jesus says, "Do this in memory of Me." That teaches us that our minds need to be focused on Jesus Christ and His sacrifice. When I eat that bread, which represents His body, I need to think about what the body of Christ endured—how that He was beaten, how He was spat upon, how they took a crown of thorns and pressed it into His head, how they hit Him on the head with a rod, how the stripes were laid on His precious back, how the nails were driven into His hands and feet, how the upright of the cross was dropped into the hole in the ground, and **all** the physical suffering that Jesus endured. When I drink the fruit of the vine, I need to remember that precious blood that was spilled—how it began to spill with the first stripe, and how Jesus agonized on the cross, and spilled His blood for me so that I could be clean. Friend, there is no place for "playing" when it comes to the Lord's Supper. Young people especially need to realize that the Lord's Supper is sacred. It's not a time to be passing notes. It's not a time to be talking. It's not a time to be laughing or joking. We need to be reverent during the Lord's Supper. And we need to realize what a very, very important event this is. Otherwise, we condemn ourselves by our irreverent acts and by our irreverent lifestyles. So, Paul here reminds us to examine ourselves, and to remember what Christ did for us. In fact, this is so severe that, if we find something wrong in our lives, we need to go and make it right before we partake of the Lord's Supper. We can see very clearly that the Lord's Supper is special.

**Timothy Sparks:**

As I observe the religious world around us, and a lot of the religious teaching, I notice that much of the teaching does not incorporate taking the Lord's Supper on a regular, weekly basis. Some people are content to take the Lord's Supper every quarter, or just on special holidays, and so on. What is the logical implication of that in regard to how we interpret and put into action the Scriptures?

**Ben Bailey:**

If I understand your question correctly, in essence you're asking, "What's the implication for my soul if I fail to partake of the Lord's Supper every week?" It's very severe. In 1 Corinthians 4:6, we're instructed not to go beyond what is written. In Revelation 22:18-19, we are told not to add to or take away from God's Word. Here's the "divine woe" that is going to fall upon us. If we do not take the Lord's Supper every first day of the week, how serious is that? It's so serious that we are guilty of taking away from the Word of God, and we are not doing what the Bible says. The example found in Leviticus 10:1-2 teaches us that when we do don't do **exactly** what God says, God isn't at all pleased with us. Isn't that how you would read the New Testament as well?

**Timothy Sparks:**

Absolutely. God is very, very concerned about us doing everything according to His will. Some would suggest that if we try to keep **every** command of God, then we are pharisaical. But if you examine Matthew 23:23, you will see that Jesus taught that when someone is actually guilty of becoming pharisaical, it is because they did **not** keep all the commands of God. Jesus said to the Pharisees of His day, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and yet have neglected the weightier matters of the law—justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone." So, what God criticizes is when people don't do **all** He has commanded. When we do keep all the commandments that God has given us, we still don't have "bragging rights," as Luke 17:10 teaches—"So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'" Paul is stressing the same thing that the apostle John was when he wrote, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1 Jn. 5:3). As we look at the context into which the Lord's Supper is placed, proper observation of that Supper is essential to worship that is "in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). We must partake of the Lord's Supper on the first day of **every** week (Sunday). Wherever you are around the world, when Sunday arrives, that is when you are to partake of the Lord's Supper, in remembrance of Jesus' death on the cross for our sins. We in the churches of Christ plead with people to "go forward by going back"—back to the Bible. It doesn't matter what various religions or groups teach. What matters is what God says in the Bible. There's an adage, "God said it; I believe it; that settles it." But really, the adage should read, "God said it; that settles it"—whether people believe it or not! You are not going to be judged by what **I** say. But all of us **will** be judged by the Word of God (Jn. 12:48). So here in 1 Corinthians 11, we find some critically important teachings.

**Ben Bailey:**

That's exactly right. Friend, where you attend church, do they take the Lord's Supper on the first day of **every** week? If not, ask yourself, "Why not?" And if you take of the Lord's Supper on, say, Christmas or Easter, ask yourself, "Where is the authority in the Bible that permits me to take the Lord's Supper on those days?" And why on those days, but not other days? Where is the authority for such? It is not found in such passages as Acts 20:7 or 1 Corinthians 11. The text of 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 indicates that the Christians of the first century came together **every** first day of the week. This is an important point, because, as we've already studied, their purpose for coming together was to partake of the Lord's Supper. How often did they come together as a general assembly? The answer is, of course: **every** first day of the week. The implication of that is this: If we come together to partake of the Lord's Supper, and if we come together every first day of the week, then I must take the Lord's Supper every first day of the week.

But let me offer you some practical suggestions that I think might help all of us to keep our minds focused on Christ during the Lord's Supper. Man's mind, so it seems, is prone to wandering. It has been suggested that the average attention span is somewhere between four and seven minutes. If I'm taking the Lord's Supper, and my mind begins to wander, I've found that one of the best ways to go back to the cross is to open my Bible and begin to read about that event. We're told to think about the body and the blood of Jesus. Why not take your Bible and read Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, or Matthew 26 and 27? As we are reading these passages, our mind will naturally be concentrating on them, and it will make it more difficult for our minds to wander. Or, why not concentrate on the words of a hymn that depict Jesus' suffering? There are a number of Gospel hymns that have been written on this subject. It would be wonderful to think on their words, and to allow those words to take you back to the cross and all that occurred there. So, if you have trouble with your mind wandering, then read your Bible or concentrate on a song. Paul teaches us that the Lord's Supper is critically important. Ask yourself, "How important is the Lord's supper to **me**?" Is it **so** important that you are to examine your life, and you are to make sure you're present to take it **every** first day of the week to remember Jesus? Why would you **not** want to remember Jesus every first day of the week? Remembering the suffering He endured should compel us—every first day of the week—to live faithfully before Him. Timothy, isn't that one of the main ideas behind the Lord's Supper—that it should cause us to **want** to live the Christian life?

### **Timothy Sparks:**

The Lord's Supper certainly should cause us to reflect upon the life of Jesus. But at the heart and core of this message is the death of Jesus. All of history focuses on the life of Jesus. But without His death, His life would have been meaningless. Yet there is something else here as well. Paul said, "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Cor. 11:26). That, then, implies the resurrection of Christ because He will come again. For our part, we are to partake of the Lord's Supper, then, until that happens—until the end of time. When Christ returns, He will destroy the Earth (2 Pet. 3), and He will take the righteous back to forever remain with Him in Heaven (2 Thess. 4). The Lord's Supper is not a meal to fill our bellies, but, rather, is a memorial, a remembrance, to help us focus on Jesus, Who died for us. A good friend of mine once asked me, "You're a member of the church of Christ. Is the reason you partake of the Lord's Supper because by the time the next Sunday has rolled around, you have just forgotten about the death of Christ?" No, that's not it at all. The Bible stresses that God wants us to **remember** the death of His Son. Peter writes, he says, to remind us, to put us in remembrance, or to stir up our minds. Throughout the Old Testament, we find phrase after phrase repeated about keeping the commands of God, to love the Lord our God, and to be obedient in all things. Every Sunday when we partake of the Lord's Supper, we are provided with a reminder of all of these things. There appears to be a parallel in the Old Testament in regard to the Sabbath, which was to be observed every Saturday. Why did the Jews celebrate the Sabbath every Saturday? It was commemorative to them—of God's creative works, and how He ceased His creative activity on day seven. Sunday, of course, is not the Sabbath, since the Old Law has been abolished—nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). But Sunday is the commemorative day when God's people collectively remember the death of Christ. There are so many important things that are stressed within the Lord's Supper. Why, then, do so many religious people want to "bypass" partaking of that Supper, and thereby fail to observe what God has commanded them to observe?

### **Ben Bailey:**

This Lord's Supper is a divine communion. As we examine 1 Corinthians 11, we see that it is a divine fellowship between God and us, and between one another. The idea of a "communion" has to do with "association with, having a relationship with." We commune with God during the Lord's Supper in the means **He** has prescribed. Who would want to purposely overlook an opportunity to commune with God or with other Christians? So, yes, the Lord's Supper is **very** important. According to 1 Corinthians 1:10, we are not to have divisions; we are not to be divided. Yet one of the reasons people in religion **are** divided has to do with such matters as we're discussing here regarding the observation of the Lord's Supper. Some people in religion want to observe the Supper only on special days, while others want to do it quarterly, and so on. But the Bible sets forth that it is to be observed on the first day of **every** week. Ask yourself, "If I'm not doing it this way, why not? What would be wrong with following the same pattern as the first-century church followed?"

If you're not a Christian, you can become one. Perhaps there are other things in your life that you're not doing correctly. If you have never obeyed the Gospel in the manner prescribed in the Bible, you can do that today. If you are willing to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He should be Lord of your life, then you've taken the first step. In Acts 8, the Ethiopian nobleman said, "Here is water; what hinders me from being baptized?" Philip responded, "If you **believe** with all your heart, you may." If you believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Son of God, then you're ready to take that next step: **repentance**. Repentance means to make a change of will that leads to a change of life. In other words, I change the way I think, and then I follow up on that by living a good life. In Luke 3, certain prominent Jews came to John the Baptist to be baptized, but John refused to baptize them, saying, "Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance." A penitent life shows that changes have occurred in that life. After a person believes, and after he repents, then he must **confess** Jesus as Lord. Paul stated in Romans 10:10 that "with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." We must confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and let that confession be an outward sign of our inner belief. Then, we must **be baptized** for the remission of our sins. Baptism is essential to one's salvation. The apostle Peter made this very clear when he said that "baptism does also now save us" (1 Pet. 3:21). There could not be a clearer passage teaching the essentiality of baptism. Jesus Himself said in Mark 16:16, "He who believes and is immersed will be saved." Baptism is carried out for the remission of sins, according to Acts 22:16. If today you are not a child of God, if you have not obeyed the Gospel, why not do that? Why not do what the Bible says? Once again, we want to thank you for joining us in our broadcast. We hope you will continue to study with us as we endeavor to discover more of "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

### **Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

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## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR 1 CORINTHIANS LESSON 5 (CHAPTER 11)

1. In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul discussed how God had specified the “order” of certain relationships (God/Christ/man/woman). Is such an order actually important? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. There appears to be a direct parallel in the frequency of observing the Sabbath (in the Old Testament) and observing the Lord’s Supper (in the New Testament). What is that parallel?
3. Throughout the Book of 1 Corinthians, Paul had to address various problems facing the church. One of those had to do with how Christians were observing the Lord’s Supper. What was the issue, and how did Paul deal with it?
4. The Lord’s Supper is a memorial. Name several things it is intended to commemorate.
5. In Leviticus 10, there is an account of two Old Testament priests, Nadab and Abihu, who were killed by God as punishment for unauthorized acts on their part. What did they do? And why was it serious enough to deserve a punishment from Heaven?
6. According to Paul’s discussion of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:27-28, those who partake are to “examine themselves.” Why? And what is involved in this process?
7. Some teach that observing the Lord’s Supper **every** week is legalistic and “pharisaical.” According to Christ, what, exactly, made something pharisaical? Would partaking of the Lord’s Supper fall into that category? Incorporate Acts 20:7 into your answer.
8. When Christians worship on Sunday, that very fact alone celebrates Christ’s resurrection on the first day of the week. But are there any elements of the Lord’s Supper that could cause a Christian to reflect on the resurrection as well? If so, what are they?
9. Why did the Jews celebrate the Sabbath? And why do Christians celebrate the Lord’s Supper?
10. The Lord’s Supper is a “communion.” What is the idea behind communion? How is the Lord’s Supper properly viewed as communion?
11. If a certain church decided to observe the Lord’s Supper quarterly, semi-annually, or just on special holidays, would that be acceptable? If not, why not?
12. As a Christian partakes of the Lord’s Supper, what should be at the forefront of his or her mind?
13. Explain the importance of these two passages in regard to partaking of the Lord’s Supper. (1) Luke 17:10—“So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’” (2) 1 John 5:3—“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”