**Selections in 1 Corinthians**

**Providence Church, Gary T. Meadors, Th.D.**

**Session Five: The Structure and Meaning of 1 Corinthians 11**

1 Cor 11 provides the first two components in a series of questions/issues about **“community in worship”** (11:2-14:40). These four chapters cover:

“Coverings” and gender distinctions (11:2-16)

The Lord’s Supper: Discerning the body (11:17-34)

Religious/spiritual manifestations in worship (12:1-14:40)

Varieties of gifts but the same Spirit (12:1-31a)

The preeminence of love (12:31b-13:13

Regulating “spiritual gifts/manifestations” in worship (14:1-40)

1 Cor 11 has two major sections: 11:2-16 addresses the right of a women to participate in public worship and 11:17-34 addresses protocols for the Lord’s Supper.

**Paragraph analysis:**

**ASV(1901) ESV NIV(2011) CONTENT (just describe what it says)**

11:2-16 11:2-16 **WOMEN** AND MEN **IN PUBLIC WORSHIP** (11:2-16)

Praise for decorum in public worship with reiteration (**See chart below**)

11:17-34 **ABUSE/PROTOCOLS FOR THE LORDS SUPPER** (11:17-34)

11:17-22 11:17-22 Paul’s critique of Corinth’s behavior

11:23-26 11:23-26 Paul’s statement of the history of the Lord’s Supper

11:27-32 11:27-32 The consequences of abuse of the Lord’s Supper

11:33-34 11:33-34a Concluding statement

11:34c Upcoming visit by Paul

**Selective observations:**

**WOMEN** AND MEN **IN PUBLIC WORSHIP** (11:2-16) ... the basic layout may be **chiastic** (Garland, 511):

A Commendation for maintaining the traditions handed on by Paul and the assertion of the basic principle that everyone has a head (11:2-3)

B Shame about coverings for men and women (11:4-5)

C **Social** impropriety for a woman to be uncovered; **theological**  impropriety for a man to be covered (11:6-7)

D Theological explanation from the creation account (11:8-9)

**E Central assertion: for this reason a woman ought to have authority over her head (11:10)**

D’ Theological caveat from procreation (11:11-12)

C’ Social impropriety for a woman to be uncovered (11:13)

B’ Shame (and glory): lessons from nature about coverings for men and women (11:14-15)

A’ Admonition to conform to Paul’s customs and those of the churches of God (11:16)

Chiastic literary structures are quite common in the Bible. For example, the entire Flood Narrative in Genesis is a chiasm (see previous class on Hermeneutics). Such literary items illustrate that the Bible is a composition for an audience and not some mystically transmitted document (like the Book of Mormon).

**Several issues may help us to navigate the original context:** Changing mores in Roman society between status of men and women (Ciampa and Rosner, 501ff.) and Syncretism with Roman Religion customs are only a few of the background issues in Paul’s correspondence with the Corinthians.

* As one author reconstructs the setting: **“**Paul, we want you to know that we have faithfully kept the traditions you passed on to us, but some of us are wondering whether those traditions have been faithfully implemented even in the way we have worshipped since you founded this church. For instance, as things are now, our men come to worship with their heads uncovered, but women have been covering their heads. Some of us wonder why we continue to distinguish between men and women in this way since among the traditions you passed on to us is the fact that we are all parts of God’s new creation and that in this new creation there is no longer Jew nor Greek, slaver or free, or even ‘male and female.’ More and more women are out in public these days with their heads uncovered, just like men. Some find this very offensive, but others feel that the offended are merely old-fashioned and that the gospel would have us celebrate our sameness in Christ.**”**
* Winter’s research into the Roman world of 1 Corinthians notes: Significant research “...supports the interpretation that the **wives praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered in the Christian gathering were replicating the attitude and actions of ‘new’ wives [in the Roman world**]. As Christians, they defied a traditional imperial and Corinthian norm for wives engaging in what their compatriots would have judged to be a religious activity.” (Winter, *Roman Wives...*, 77ff.) Winter notes that there was an “officer” who was in charge of “policing women’s dress codes” in relation to their “status.” It was a job not sought!!
* “By deliberately removing her veil while playing a significant role of praying and prophesying in the activities of Christian worship, the Christian wife was knowingly flouting the Roman legal convention that epitomized marriage. ...she was being contentious—.... If, according to Roman law, ‘she was what she wore’ or in this case what she removed from her head, then this gesture made a statement in support of the mores of some of her secular sisters, the new wives, who sought to ridicule the much prized virtue of modesty which epitomized the married woman.” (Winter, *Roman Wives...*, 96)
* Why should a man not cover (same term) his head? The Jewish high priest was required to cover before Yahweh and modern Jewish men wear a Yakama. The issue is similar to the women...too much identification with the culture. “men were no less culpable than wives for they were drawing attention to the secular status by their action [Toga drawn over head and hanging down], copying a Roman convention of the emperor and the elite in a religious setting,...” (Winter, 95-96).
* QUESTION: Since the cover or non-cover is so tied to Roman Corinth conventions, **is this text descriptive or prescriptive?**

Debate over the meaning of terms (my old class notes are 26 pages here!) ...

* “head” ... source or authority
* “cover/veil” κατακαλύpτεται = “coming down the head” (3 common terms for a veil not used)
* “authority over her head” 11:10 (Fitzmyer, 417)
  + # 1 “Sign / symbol of [her] authority (NRSV, NAB, JB, ESV, NEB, REB....)
  + #2 “Symbol / sign of subjection (**but odd use**, “29 times in the NT, and in all the other instances it has an active meaning, authority over: “have the right to control something or do something” ... hence predominance of Eng translations).
  + Way majority opinion is #1, **the “cover” gives the woman the right to participate in public worship. When she conforms to the public worship protocols, she is empowered to participate.** God uses a cultural norm to regulate their relationship in public worship...what does this imply about our reading of Scripture? “The head covering is a sign of the power received from the Lord (v. 11) and of the dignity she has to worship and praise God in the presence of the angels, as the Greek prep[ositional] phrase that follows in this verse suggests.” (Fitzmyer, 417) The “cover” makes her *bona fide*.
* No “such” or “other” “custom”
  + Is this a descriptive or prescriptive passage? Or both with the need to delineate each.
  + What is the point of the translation of 11:16? [“such” or “other”]

Is Paul’s “switching” to mutuality an indication of differences in equality? Both sexes are dependent on the other. Yet text mentions woman 15 times indicating a focus in the whole context. Is Paul saying that if the women want more freedom/status/power they need only to look at creation!! Mutuality reigns.

**English Translations Compared, 11:10 (SEE chart sheets)**

**English Translations Compared, 11:16**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Greek | KJV | ESV | NIV84 | NIV2011 | NLT |
| 16 Εἰ δέ τις δοκεῖ φιλόνεικος εἶναι, ἡμεῖς **τοιαύτην συνήθειαν οὐκ ἔχομεν** οὐδὲ αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ θεοῦ. | 16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have **no such custom**, neither the churches of God. | 16 *p*If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have **no such practice**, nor do *q*the churches of God. | 16 If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have **no other practice** — nor do the churches of God. | 16 If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have **no other practice**—nor do the churches of God.a | 16 But if anyone wants to argue about this, I simply say that we have **no other custom** than this, and neither do God’s other churches. |
| 1/ linguistics = “such” BUT context indicates “other.” Key is to nail the antecedent of “such” to those who were contentious and setting aside protocols. Then “other” is actually an interpretive translation. | | | | | |

**ABUSE/PROTOCOLS FOR THE LORDS SUPPER** (11:17-34)

* In a patron’s home/courtyard
* Issue of “status” is obvious ... an ongoing problem in Roman Corinth

Appears they are practicing a meal with the bread and cup (like Upper Room). No mention of foot

**Paul's Response to the questions of Public Worship (11:2-34)**

1. Male and Female in Worship before God (11:2-16)

**2. The community of believers in Worship before God (11:17-34)**

1a. The problem of the Lord's Supper in the Corinthian assembly (11:17-22)

2a. The proper tradition concerning the Lord's Supper (11:23-34)

1b. The historical institution of the Lord's Supper (11:23-26)

The terms translated “received” and “delivered” in 11:23 are technical terms for the authoritative transmission of tradition, especially the term “delivered.”

Define “ordinance”:

2b. The proper practice of the Lord's Supper in the assembly (11:27-34)

1c. Framing the Lord’s Supper within the Jewish Passover history:

**Exodus 12-13**: Observance in family context (12:1-6)  
 Pre-selected lamb slaughtered at twilight on eve of Passover (12:1-6)

Lamb’s blood ritually applied on door frame (12:7)

A meal with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (12:8-11)

Head of family rehearses religious tradition during the meal (13:25-27)

Package in the seven day Festival of Unleavened Bread that required a pilgrimage to a holy site on the seventh day (13:6)

**Deut 16:1-8** (cf. 2 Chron 30; 35:1-19) reflects a move of Passover celebration from the family unit to a national context. This brings about some changes.

From the home to a national pilgrimage festival (national needs)

Animal may be either sheep or cattle (Deut 16:2; cf. Exod 12:3)

Time of sacrifice changed (Deut 16:6; cf. Exod 12:6), probably for the convenience of the pilgrims! From roasting to boiling (Deut 16:7; cf. Exod 12:9)

**Jubilees 49** (150 BCE)

***Mishnah Pesahim*** (about 200 CE)

2c. Matthew 26:17-46 (cf. Mark 14:1-52; Luke 22:1-53; John 13:1-38) provides a base to understand the historical setting and sequence in which the “Lord’s Supper” was instituted.

The variations between the Synoptic and Johannine traditions are probably due to (1) the use of various calendars between religious groups, or (2) to the writers’ thematic interest, or (3) to Jesus rescheduling the event for framing purposes. We will assume that Jesus did indeed eat the Passover meal with his disciples the night before he was crucified.

**The Preparation (26:17-19)**

The **occasion** (17): Feast of Unleavened Bread/Passover (cf. Exod 12)

The **instructions** (18-19): “My time is at hand”

Reveals that Christ came to fulfill God’s will.

Christ’s omniscience (Mk 14:13)

Messianic self-consciousness (cf. Jn 7:6,8)

**The Purging (26:20-25; 31-35)**

The **disclosure** of the betrayer (20-25; cf. 26:14-16)

All twelve were present (21)

Jesus informs them that he will be betrayed (22)

Note: Disciples are not defensive…sign of maturing.

Jesus’ focus on Judas (23-25)

Incident at Bethany (26:1-16; cf. Jn 12:4-6)

Upper Room confrontation

Washes Judas’ feet (Jn 13:1-20)

Gives Judas the place of honor (Jn 13:26)

Judas’ departure (26:26 with Jn 13:30)

The **predictions** (31-35)

Their scattering (31; cf. Zech 13:7)

His resurrection (32)

Peter’s denial (33-35; 26:69-75)

**The Partaking (26:26-30)**

The institution of the “supper” (26-29)

Symbolism

Prophetic promise

The farewell message in the upper room (Jn 14)

The hymn and departure (30)

The Hallel Psalms were sung during Passover (Pss 113-118)

Read Ps 118 in light of the Lord’s Supper

Departure to Gethsemane (Jn 15-17 delivered just before walking

out or on the way)

**The Prayer (26:36-46)**

The “cup” and the disciples

Good Friday Sermon Gary T. Meadors, Th.D.

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Muskegon group of churches

**INTRODUCTION**

Today is **“Good Friday.”** When we understand what this last 24 hours in the earthly life of Jesus contained, it seems like calling it “Good Friday” is an oxymoron. What is “good” about it? Anger, jealousy, hatred and cowardice seem to triumph over reason and justice. What is “good” about such things? What is “good” about the physical torture and death of an innocent man? Whatever one’s opinion about how Mel Gibson’s “The Passion of the Christ” images this day, this was, in the annals of history, a very ugly day.

Yet, in the plan of God, it was a “good” day. The last song sung at the last supper late the night before was probably the last in a series of Hallel Psalms used at the Passover celebration. Psalm 118 would still be ringing in Jesus’ ear those last few hours. Perhaps the words of this Psalm were part of his struggle in prayer in Gethsemane. Listen to **some** of the words of Psalm 118.

1 Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is **good**;

because his mercy endureth forever. (KJV)

5 In my anguish I cried to the LORD,

and he answered by setting me free.

6 The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid.

What can man do to me?

7 The LORD is with me; he is my helper.

I will look in triumph on my enemies. (NIV)

8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD

than to trust in man. (middle verse of the whole bible in Eng!)

22 The stone which the builders refused

has become the head of the corner.

23 This is the LORD’S doing;

It is marvelous in our eyes.

24 This is the day which the LORD has made;

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

29 Oh, give thanks unto the LORD, for he is **good**;

for his mercy endureth forever.

In spite of the horrific circumstances and evil deeds of all present on that day of suffering and crucifixion, **it was a “good day.”**

For Jesus, as unique Son of Man and Servant of the Lord, it was a day of exaltation and humiliation. For we human observers, we might want to emphasize the humiliation aspect and leave the exaltation to resurrection Sunday. But that would not be God’s view of these events. The death of Jesus was a victory in the plan of God.

For our reflections this “Good Friday,” please turn to Isaiah 52:13-53:11, and **stand** for the reading of God’s Word. While I appreciate and use many different Bible versions, I am choosing to read from the King James today because of a certain dignity in its speech, although I may help it a bit!

**READ the text…. EXPLAIN the text….**

**I. THE SETTING OF THIS SERVANT “SONG”**

The Book of Isaiah is built around three Messianic Portraits:

The King (1-37)

The Servant (38-55)

The Anointed Conqueror (56-66)

Isaiah 52-53 is the fourth and last in a series of Servant Songs in Isaiah (cf. Motyer, in.loc. for this entire analysis).

* It delineates the completion of the work of the Servant;
* This work is imaged as the “wounding and bruising of one who bore the sins of others”;
* It is followed by viewing the results of this sin-bearing, substitutionary service as

something to “sing” (54:1, first word!) about;

achieving “peace” with God (54:10; cf. Rom 5:1); establishing the people in righteousness (53:11; 54:17);

calling a sinful world to repentance (55:6-7);

and a pilgrimage with God (55:12).

It is a **“good day”** afterall !

**II. THE STRUCTURE, AND THEREFORE MESSAGE, OF THE SERVANT “SONG”**

The Bible, as well as being God’s Word, is a highly crafted piece of literature. How could anything less really honor the great God of all creation? This Servant Song in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 reflects thoughtful organization for the greatest impact on the hearer (still dependent on Motyer). The text is laid out in a literary form known as “chiasm”:

A1 **The ENIGMA**: exaltation and humiliation (52:13-15)

B **A REVELATION** about the Servant’s suffering and death

(53:1-9)

A2 **The SOLUTION OF THE ENIGMA**: exaltation through the humiliation of sin-bearing suffering (53:10-12)

Let us think through this text and its three movements:

**A. THE ENIGMA OF THE SERVANT (52:13-15)**

1. The exaltation of the Servant (13)

2. The humiliation of the exalted BUT suffering Servant (14)

3. The subjugation of the world to this enigma (15; cf. 1 Cor 2:6-16)

**B. THE REVELATION ABOUT THE SERVANT (53:1-9)**

1. Revelation, not human wisdom, brings the suffering Servant into focus (53:1-3; cf. 1 Cor 1-2 again).

2. Revelation explains the Servant’s suffering as vicarious…he

suffered alone and suffered for others not himself (53:4-6).

3. Revelation declares that the suffering Servant must DIE in order achieve his work on behalf of others (53:7-9).

**C. THE SOLUTION TO THE ENIGMA IS THAT DEATH ACHIEVES EXALTATION (53:10-12).**

1. The Servant’s death is OUR sin-offering (10)

2. God the Father affirms the Servant’s offering as the basis to justify the “others” for whom the Servant has died (11-12)

So, we have the message of the Suffering Servant wonderfully contained in the structure of Isaiah 52:13-53:12. But now lets hear the …

**III. THE “REST OF THE STORY!”**

As you listen to this story of the Suffering Servant who died for our sins, you might wonder why an Old Testament text doesn’t convince Jewish persons that Jesus is indeed THE Messiah. The answer in one sense, is simple. They view the Suffering Servant as the nation of Israel, not as an individual who bore the sin of the world. Indeed, history has provided much suffering to God’s ethnic people, the Jews.

A rather out spoken first century Jew, however, did get the point of Isaiah. Peter, in his first epistle, chapter 2, verses 21-25 (1 Peter 2:21-25), contains the most extensive reflection (in citation and allusions) of Isaiah 53 in the New Testament. Listen to these words:

**READ 1 Peter 2:21-25**

**CONCLUSIONS**

As we bring out reflections to a close, I just want to read an old hymn for you…yes, a hymn, now you really know I’m just an antique (that’s sarcasm if you didn’t get it!).

What Will You Do With Jesus? Neutral You Cannot Be.

Because some day you will be asking, What will He do with me?