

Marinating in God's Word: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

You've got mail! A letter sent long ago to someone else, now by the power of the Spirit has been forwarded to you, so that you may grow in Jesus Christ.

For further reflection on your own or in a small group, consider these questions:

- Describe the first time you received the Lord's Supper. How old were you? What was the setting? Was it a formal (high liturgy and fancy tableware) celebration, or informal (no set liturgy or fancy tableware)? What did it mean to you?
- Vv. 17-22 are hard for us to imagine, unless we know that the Corinthians were celebrating the Lord's Supper in the midst of a meal in someone's house, and not a worship service. What errors did Paul identify? The errors rendered it less than the Lord's Supper (v. 20). How?
- In vv. 23-26 we find the "words of institution," that is the words that institute this meal as something more than a simple meal. If we are right that Paul wrote this letter before the gospels were written, then this was the earliest description. Compare the words here with those in the three gospels accounts (Mt. 26:26-29, Mk 14:22-25, Lk 22:14-20). What do you notice? How does this compare with what you usually hear in worship?
- It seems obvious to us that when we meet Jesus at this table, it is for the better. How so? Less obvious is that it can also be for the worse, as it had become for the Corinthians (vv. 27-32). What were they doing wrong? What impact did that have when they came to this table wrongly? Though it's hard to explain fully what Paul means here, what part do you understand of it being for the worse? What does that mean for how you come to the table?

Next week we will focus on 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, 14:34-36.