

THE CHURCH IS FOR ALL

1 Corinthians 11:17 “I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse.”

The Corinthian church developed a practice known as the “agape meal.” Today, we would call this meal a “pot-luck” or “pass-the-dish” meal. An unfortunate issue arose regarding this meal. (Read 1 Corinthians 11:18-22 for Paul’s description of what was happened.) The bottom line was the behavior of the wealthier members led to a divided congregation. The richer members refused to share their food with the poorer members. They treated them as second-class citizens.

Note Paul’s question in verse 22, “. . .do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who do not have anything?” This question reminds me of a sermon preached many years ago by a young pastor to his congregation. During the sermon hymn the pastor “disappeared.” When the sermon hymn finished, there was a “commotion” in the back of the church. The noise caused the members to look to the back and they saw what appeared to be an older man in dirty bib overalls pushing a dirty lawn mower down the aisle. Needless to say, the people were aghast.

The people soon realized that the man in the dirty bib overalls was their pastor. They were even more shocked. What was their new, young, straight out of the seminary pastor doing? How dare him bring a dirty old lawn mower into their church! How dare him dress like that!

The pastor finally began to speak to the congregation. He based his message that day on 1 Corinthians 11:22 “do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who do not have anything?” His journey down the aisle of the church, dressed as he was and pushing a smelly, dirty lawn mower made its point. He applied the words here in 1 Corinthians 11 to that congregation and its ministry with the question to his members, “For whom does our congregation exist?”

A related question for you is for whom does Jesus exist? You are a child of God, not because of who you are, what you are or what you have done or not done. You are a child of God because Jesus died for all, rose for all and sits at the right hand of God and pleads for all people. In God’s sight, through Christ, there are no

rich, poor, educated, uneducated, better, worse, good, bad, deserving, undeserving. Jesus, God's Son, has redeemed you, purchased you and won for you a place in heaven "not with gold or silver but with His holy innocent, His bitter suffering and death. . . the shedding of His blood." By God's grace you are saved!

Prayer: O Lord, keep me humble and caring for all people everywhere recognizing that Jesus is Savior of us all, no matter who we are. In His name. Amen.

Thy works, not mine, O Christ, Speak gladness to this heart;
They tell me all is done, Thy bid my fear depart.

Refrain: To whom save Thee, Who canst alone For sin atone, Lord,
shall I flee?

Thy wounds, not mine, O Christ, Can heal my bruised soul;
Thy stripes, not mine, contain The balm that makes me whole. Refrain:

Thy cross, not mine, O Christ, Has borne the crushing load
Of sins that none could bear But the incarnate God. Refrain:

Thy death, not mine, O Christ, Has paid the ransom due;
Ten Thousand deaths like mine Would have been all too few. Refrain:

Thy righteousness, O Christ, Alone can cover me;
No righteousness avails Save that which is of Thee. Refrain:
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