

Church Gone Wild: Week 11
Traditions & Communion

1 Corinthians 11
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Traditions

1 Corinthians 11:1

This statement is the conclusion of Paul's thought in Chapter 10. Our lives should be lived for the glory of God.

All Christians are walking examples of Jesus. We are the only Jesus some people will ever see.

1 Corinthians 11:2

We have traditions in church to serve people and honor God.

There was a problem in the church related to women wearing a head covering, a tradition in the church in Corinth.

1 Corinthians 11:3

The word "head" is used both figuratively and literally in this passage. Here the word is figurative meaning "source" or "source of life."

God is the source of life for Christ (the king). God himself worked through the Spirit in the conception, birth, life and resurrection of Jesus.

The problem between husbands and wives in Corinth was a relational problem (disrespect) and not an authority problem (disobedience). So Paul discusses headship here in terms of relationship rather than authority.

To be the head of his wife, a husband must be the source of her spiritual, emotional, physical, social and material life. Husbands exercise headship through supporting, listening, caring, protecting, loving and cherishing.

1 Corinthians 11:4-5

In order to show honor in Paul's day, men would not cover their heads in church and women would. *Should we follow the same traditions?*

Traditions are for showing honor and respect.

A woman is free to pray or speak to the congregation in church, as long as she does not dishonor, disrespect or distract anyone in the church (her husband included).

1 Corinthians 11:6

A woman praying with her head uncovered would be scandalous, so she might as well shave her head and come to church bald. He humorously exaggerates to make his point: *Traditions are for showing honor.*

1 Corinthians 11:7

The uncovered tradition for a man gives honor to God.
The covered tradition for a woman gives honor to her husband.

Paul's point is about the relationship between husband and wife. He is not implying that women are not created in God's image or that a woman doesn't give glory to God.

Husbands and wives have different roles and callings from God.

1 Corinthians 11:8-10

Wives are called to give a certain kind of respect to their husbands and to show that respect through appropriate traditions. The important issue is not the tradition, but what the tradition communicates.

1 Corinthians 11:11-12

While husbands and wives have different roles, they are equally valued in God's creation and they are equally important in creation.

1 Corinthians 11:13

Should we require women to wear head coverings in church? The Bible does not command it, but gives us the freedom to choose.

1 Corinthians 11:14-15

What does "nature" teach? What seems natural given cultural norms? Culture may teach that long hair of men is a disgrace, but the Bible does not teach that.

1 Corinthians 11:16

If anybody wants to fight over this practice (custom) of head coverings, then it would be better to get rid of the custom. It is not worth fighting for.

In the church, we will fight for sound doctrine (e.g. the Trinity, exclusivity of Jesus, the authority of Scripture).

We will fight for worship (e.g. worship without distractions, the sacredness of the sanctuary, the glory of God in all things).

We will not fight over traditions (e.g. song choices, church structure, clothing choices, the use of culture, personality differences).

Communion

1 Corinthians 11:17-19

Fights in the church are inevitable; that is why God gives the local church pastors and elders.

Fighting in the church is also enviable, because some in the church are not genuinely followers of Jesus. The fighting in Corinth included fighting over communion, the Lord's Supper.

1 Corinthians 11:20

Communion is when we worship together by eating and drinking to commemorate the death of Jesus. Communion is not *a* tradition, but *the* tradition practiced universally, but nearly all Christians at all times in Christian history.

The church in Corinth was not eating the Lord's Supper in worship; they were eating some other kind of supper.

1 Corinthians 11:21-22

The problem was that people were eating up the communion bread before it was time to serve it and others were getting drunk on communion wine. It was a church gone wild!

1 Corinthians 11:23-24

Jesus gave his very body over to torture and death as your substitute, taking upon himself the wrath of God for your sin.

"In remembrance of me" not as a dead hero, but as the Risen Lord

1 Corinthians 11:25

God made many covenants – binding agreements—with his people, but this is a new covenant, a free covenant, a covenant that is available for all.

It is not a covenant enacted by pen and paper, but a covenant ratified in blood, Jesus' blood.

1 Corinthians 11:26

Communion is not only worship, but it is preaching.

1 Corinthians 11:27

We are all unworthy of Jesus' sacrifice. No one had done enough good to deserve forgiveness; it's is God's gift. Nevertheless, we can eat or drink during communion in an unworthy manner.

1 Corinthians 11:28

The worthy way in which we receive communion is by examining our selves through prayer, confession and repentance.

1 Corinthians 11:29

"Discerning the body" is that worshipful act of remembrance.

1 Corinthians 11:30-34

Judge yourself, before God judges you!

Mystery & symbol

John Calvin wrote that we should guard ourselves against two faults—missing the *mystery* because of the symbol and missing the *symbol* because of the mystery.

The mystery: Christ's real presence

The symbols: Bread & juice



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