



To Eat the Body and to Drink the Cup of the Lord in an Unworthy Manner  
An Investigation of the Term ἀναξίως in 1 Corinthians 11:27 within the Context of  
1 Corinthians 11:17–34,  
with Special Regard to its Interpretation in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of  
Tanzania-Ulangu Kilombero Diocese

Faith Habiba Fussi

VID Specialized University

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study is about giving a proper interpretation the word ἀναξίως as found in 1 Corinthians 11:27 aimed at enabling a proper theological evaluation of the practices surrounding the celebration of the Eucharist in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania –Ulanga Kilombero Diocese (ELCT-UKD). Since theological interpretations determine the different understandings and practices around this sacrament, a proper interpretation of the text, to which 1 Corinthians 11:27 belongs, namely, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 can lead people into a correct understanding on celebrating Eucharist worthily. The thesis tries to find a proper understanding of the Eucharistic practices in 1 Corinthian 11: 17-34 with the emphasis on the meaning of the term ἀναξίως in verse 27, with the intention of influencing and re-correcting the meaning and practice of Eucharist that affects the Lutheran Church of Tanzania today.

The thesis discusses the possibility of a unified Church in partaking of the sacrament of the Eucharist together as members of a Christian community. As a theological biblical work, this is written as a first step to help the church to unite the Christians around the body of Christ, to restore the church to its original form and purpose around the Eucharist. The thesis also urges the church, generally and particularly in the ELCT-UKD, to assess itself and restructure its perspective on both the theological and contextual issues that are related to the partaking in the Eucharist in order to encounter the dynamics of a changing world so that it can be effective in living in accordance to the essence of its being, especially on the issue of the use and application of the means of grace through the sacraments.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

BDAG: A Greek-Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Literature

EDNT: Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament

ELCT: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

LXX: Septuagint

NIV: New International Version

NKJV: New King James Version

NRSV: New Revised Standard Version

UKD: Ulanga Kilombero Diocese

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# **1 CHAPTER ONE: Introduction**

## **1.1 Theme and goal of the study**

The thesis topic is about “To eat the body and to drink the cup of the Lord in unworthy manner: An investigation of the Greek term ἀναξίως in 1 Corinthian 11:27 within the context of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 with special regard to its interpretation in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania-Ulangu Kilombero Diocese.” The theme and the goal of this thesis is to take part in the discussion of the text (1 Corinthians 11:17-34) in order to obtain the understanding of the term ἀναξίως (unworthy) as it has been used by Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:27. This is based on the criticism to the practice of the Eucharist which mentions about eating the bread and drinking the cup of the Lord unworthy.

The understandings of the sharing of the Eucharist worthy or unworthy among Christians in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania have brought improper practice and understanding of the nature concerning Eucharist and its theology to the life of the Church. However, an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:27 which can lead people into proper understanding on celebrating Eucharist unworthily or worthily is still lacking. This thesis discusses the possibility of a unified Church in partaking of the sacrament of the Eucharist together as members of the Christian community.

As a theological Biblical work, this is not written in contrary to the church discipline or to be in favour of those who are under penance or church discipline, but as a first step to reunite the body of Christ, to restore the church to its original form and purpose. Therefore, proper understanding of the Eucharist practices in 1 Corinthian 11: 17-34 with the emphasis on the meaning of the term ἀναξίως in verse 27, will influence and re-correct the meaning and practice of Eucharist that affects the Lutheran Church in Tanzania today. This specifically resolves on the lack of a common understanding on eating the bread and drinking the cup in an unworthy way.

1 Corinthians 11:20-22, 33-34a and Galatians 2:11-14 are among the most important texts in the New Testament which specifically describe what the early Christian meals are. Having a meal was a common thing that happened in the life of the Church. And in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Paul gives instructions on how the Corinthian Christians should conduct the meal as he mentioned the Lord’s Supper. But how this practice developed has been explained in various ways, ranging from some



form of Jewish meal to a specific type of Greco-Roman meal.<sup>1</sup> It is important to point out that the church community in Corinth was mostly of gentile origin in which they were accustomed to the lifestyle and practices of their time, including the Greco Roman dinner parties.<sup>2</sup>

Denis Smith, in his book titled *From Symposium to Eucharist*, explains that there is also a great possibility that the most influential elements pertaining to the church's communal meal in Corinth comes from various surroundings such as the banquet practices of the Hellenistic world. From Smith's suggestion, it seems that there is a great influence of Greco-Roman banquet form and ideology that affected the practice of Eucharist in the Pauline community in Corinth. However, in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Paul's first critic was that the meal was being practiced within the church community and then further explains how it should be properly eaten. He does not indicate any problems of eating the Eucharist as a meal, but, rather he is merely correcting the practices of how one should consume the meal.

Paul does not give a direct answer on how Christians should practice the Lord's Supper, but moderately takes to correct certain abuses into the celebration of the communal meal. However, it seems that the concern of Paul in discussing the Lord's Supper was not to provide a theological exposition of the meal; instead he uses it to challenge the Corinthian Christians' behaviour. He did not give a direct answer on how Christians should practice the Lord's Supper. But in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, he was just responding to the church of Corinth with extensive expositions on the nature of the Eucharist and as a ritual practice which reflected the character of the Eucharist.<sup>3</sup>

## **1.2 Motivation of the study**

Through the pastoral experience as a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, I have met with several questions about the practice of the Eucharist. But one of the hardest questions faced was: "What does it mean to share the Eucharist unworthy or worthy?" This question has continued to exist among Christians, sometimes without being provided with

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 173-174.

<sup>2</sup>Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 241.

<sup>3</sup>Ådna Jostein, "The Eucharist in Paul and in Hebrew" 94.

appropriate answers; and this lack of understanding of the Lord's Supper to some extent has caused some problems to the church. From my Pastoral experience, eating the bread and drinking the cup is understood by the church as needing sanctification and holiness before partaking in the sharing the Lord's Supper. Sanctification and holiness before partaking of the Lord's Supper is also mentioned by Richard B. Hays who says that, eating the bread and drinking the cup in an unworthy manner has often been misunderstood to mean that only the perfectly righteous can partake of the Lord's Supper.<sup>4</sup>

I have been motivated by own observation during my eight years of pastoral activities in my home church in Kilombero, Tanzania. One day, I was confronted by one pastor who had invited people to celebrate the Holy Communion and before they came to receive the Lord's Supper, I saw that the majority of Christian service participants went outside the Church until the Eucharist liturgical service was finished. After the celebration of the Lord's Supper, they came back to the Church and continued worshipping. Then I asked the pastor of that Congregation why the Christians went out when He announced the liturgical service of the Eucharist. The pastor replied that they were not allowed to partake of the Holy Communion because they were unworthy. This aspect has brought an impact to the Church to the extent that, most of the Christians do not see the theological significance to partake the Lord's Supper in their Church life. However, there is still a question in the mind of the people which is also debatable among the theologians on if these interpretations of 1 Corinthians 11:27, and whether allowing or not allowing people to partake in the Eucharist, are the true gospel and/ or whether it is unworthy to allow all Christians to partake of the Lord's Supper.

Such an event and the situations experienced motivated me to find a proper interpretation of the Greek term ἀναξίωτος to gain insight on the doctrine of Eucharist and how we can interpret it in our contemporary churches together with its impact on the Christians' social and spiritual life.

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<sup>4</sup>Hays, First Corinthian, 200.

### **1.3 Question of research and delimitation of the Study**

#### ***1.3.1 Research Questions***

From what is said above, it should not be a surprise that the main research question is: *What it means to celebrate the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner?* The study will focus on investigating what Paul meant in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 particularly in verse 27 with the direct emphasis of the meaning of the Greek term ἀναξίως. The main aim is to be achieved by focusing on the following objectives:

1. Analysis of the concept of Eucharist in 1 Corinthian 11:27
2. To explore the major theological theme from the analysis of Paul's account of Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthian 11:17-34- for further understanding among Christian.
3. To underscore the relevance of the interpretation of Paul's account of the Eucharist in 1 Corinthian 11:27-34 for the practice of Eucharist among Christians in Ulanga Kilombero Diocese of the ELCT.

#### ***1.3.2 Delimitation of the Study***

This study is conducted from a Biblical perspective (New Testament) which focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the term ἀναξίως as presented by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:27 within the context of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 with the emphasis of getting a proper understanding of the term ἀναξίως as it has been applied and interpreted in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania-Ulanga Kilombero Diocese.

### **1.4 Method and Source**

The thesis data will be collected from exegetical sources because this is an exegetical New Testament study and because it is done from Biblical perspective. The exegetical method is of great importance since it is the only method which can be used to interpret and explain the details of the Biblical text used in the study. The reasons behinds for the choice of Biblical exegetical

method are, it helps to discover the meaning of the text and to give the results as related to the verifiable phenomena.<sup>5</sup>

Exegesis involves the careful and thorough interpretation of a literary work with the avoidance of presuppositions that might be involved in every aspect of exegesis with the influence of one's own attitudes and personality. Therefore, in this thesis, the researcher will manage to avoid reaching to dogmatic conclusions before the text is carefully and honestly examined. Due to that, consistent exegesis will be done clearly to allow the text to modify and to mold attitudes and beliefs rather than by reading into it one's own ideas. Often the true meaning of a passage can be displaced either by failing to examine it thoroughly enough, thereby neglecting relevant information, or by being extremely complicated thereby losing sight of how it relates to the overall context of Scripture. The first thing that the exegete needs to do is to step back from the text to see the entire picture since both the audience and situation are influencing the formation of the message. The issue of genre is another important consideration, but 1 Corinthians 11:27 as attributed to Paul as a letter which was written in response to specific situations and to address problems of the study. Furthermore, the historical-criticism and literary critical method of exegesis will be used as well as the Biblical text to be exegeted which is 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

I will use the historical critical method because it narrates a study, which asserts to convey historical information to determine what happened and what is described in the passage. The historical study will be used to shed the light of the text to determine the nature of the text as to why it was written. Whereby, the aim of the historical method is to discover the meaning of the passage as the original author would have intended and what the original hearers would have understood.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Egger, *How to Read the New Testament*, 7.

<sup>6</sup>Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 63-64.

## **2 CHAPTER TWO: EARLY CHRISTIAN MEALS**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims at presenting on the background and understanding of the early Christian meals that ranging from the Jewish tradition to Greco-Roman background. This section will give us a clear picture about the practice of the Christian meal and its course in the thought and life of Christians.<sup>7</sup>

### **2.2 Meals in the Jewish tradition influencing the early Christians**

The practice of Christian meals has an inseparable history that has been translated from Judaism to Christianity. The Lord's Supper, as one of the most important Christian meal, has also a background from the Jewish Passover meal. The Passover was the major festival meal held to commemorate Israel's deliverance from Egypt.<sup>8</sup> The Passover appears originally to have two separate spring festivals. One rite involved use of unleavened bread and the other a sacrificial lamb. In the Old Testament, Exodus 34:18, 25 distinguishes the festivals by using the terms Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover Feast.<sup>9</sup> All future generations of Israelites were to celebrate Passover as a lasting ordinance. Slaves and resident aliens were permitted to join the meal only if they had been circumcised.<sup>10</sup> The Passover was to be an opportunity for the father to teach his children. He was obliged to explain the meaning of the ceremony to them.<sup>11</sup>

In the New Testament, the gospel of Matthew 26:17, Mark 14:1 and Luke 22:1 treats the Passover as part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread which lasted within a week and interprets Jesus as a paschal lamb.<sup>12</sup> The Passover meal included the meat of the sacrificed lamb, unleavened

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<sup>7</sup>Smith, From Symposium to Eucharist, 173-174.

<sup>8</sup> Wilson, "Passover." 675.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 676.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 676.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 676.

<sup>12</sup> Bokser, "Unleavened Bread and Passover, 765.

bread, bitter herbs and wine.<sup>13</sup>This meal should be eaten in the evening. It was held at home or in a room within the city reserved for the occasion (Matthew 26:17-19). The annual pilgrimage festival ceased when the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. Following this time, many Jews found themselves scattered in communities among the nations of the world. Passover ceased being a pilgrimage festival at a central sanctuary and, from that time on, people ate the Passover meal in their own homes.<sup>14</sup>

For the understanding of the Jewish Passover meal and the influence on the practice of Eucharist in the early Church, we need to certainly look at not only the context of the Last Supper, but also on the religious context within which the Last Supper was celebrated. This is an important hermeneutical key for understanding this event.

The Last Supper happened before the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus; but the framework of all this is the preparation for the Passover, the biggest festival of Jewish people. Through it we read also the event of Eucharist in the early Church. Exodus 12:14 asserts that this feast was to be celebrated by each generation from there onwards. The fundamental term which indicates the way and the attitude with which to celebrate this religious event, is the word memorial (*Zikkaron*). Its correct understanding is fundamental for seeing the Passover as Jewish people live it and it is also of particular importance for the understanding of the Eucharist. The Hebrew word *Zakar*, to remember, which is used in Exodus 12:14,13:9 referred not just to remember something, but to put in mind something and to re-live it; to enter not only in the thought of the past but also into the actuality of what happened.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, Bokser insists that, as portrayed in the gospels, the meal is not structured to celebrate the Exodus event; but it rather reinterpreted in a way that relates to the future of the Jesus movement, that is Christianity. The bread becomes the salvational body of Christ and the wine, his blood, is the sign of future redemption. Bokser observes that, these two symbolizations were used by the early Church in the worship after Jesus death and could be understood in the light of

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 677.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 677.

<sup>15</sup> Reste, "Memory and Tradition in Israel." 241.

sacrifices in general. The body of a sacrifice served to ensure the sense of relationship with the divinity, and while its blood brought the power of atonement.<sup>16</sup>

The first Christians incorporated Jewish elements in the Eucharist in particular, on the idea of the Passover lamb. The word lamb, as used in the Bible, has both a literal and a symbolic sense. It is often used to qualify a lamb who offered in the Jewish worship as the burnt offering. The main purpose of these burnt offerings and sacrifices was to make atonement for and cleanse either an individual or the people. The lamb was often seen by Israelites as a symbol of innocence and gentleness. The idea of a being without blemish and the gentleness of the lamb is derived from the sacrificial system predicted in Isaiah 53:1-7, and specifically in verse 7, that speaks about the patience of the suffering Servant of the Lord who is compared to a lamb which is led to slaughter.<sup>17</sup> In the New Testament, the word lamb has been used in four places with the reference to Jesus: John 1:29, 36, Acts 8:32, 1Peter 1:19 and Revelation 13:11. The Greek word used for a lamb is *Amnos* which often referring to the lamb which was sacrificed daily to make atonement (Leviticus 1:4). Also, the word *Amnos* is used to refer to the Passover offering which identifies the Christ sacrifice with the Passover in John 19:33, 36 and at the Last Supper. It was at the Passover when Jesus was put to death. From this, Paul identifies Jesus with the Passover offering in 1 Corinthians 5:7.<sup>18</sup>

And from the New Testament record, it seems clear that Jesus instituted the Lord' Supper by associating it with the cup which came after the Passover meal that was eaten (1 Corinthians 11:25). He associates the cup of redemption with his atoning death by saying, "The cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:18-20); and Jesus commanded them to always do that in his remembrance.<sup>19</sup> The disciples knew all this vocabulary, and its meaning. The word is an anamnesis, which refers not just as a call to put in mind a past event, but a live call to put in mind namely by having it is a re-actualization of the event through its memorial effect and the re-living of it.

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<sup>16</sup> Bokser, "Unleavened Bread and Passover, 755-765.

<sup>17</sup> Woodbridge, "Lamb," 621

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 621.

<sup>19</sup> Wilson, Passover, 678.

### **2.3 The meals practice of Jesus influencing the early Christians**

The New Testament record shows apparent meals practiced by Jesus during his ministry. There are a variety of meal practices including his table fellowship with a tax collector and sinners. Jesus had a habit of sharing meals with marginalized people such as tax collectors and sinners had led him to be accused as a glutton and a drunkard.<sup>20</sup> As widely known, tax collectors were suspected of skimming off some of the revenues for themselves and of collaborating with the Roman occupiers<sup>21</sup>. According to the Jewish leaders of Jesus time, sinners could be those who engaged in occupations that prohibited them from observing all the precepts of the law. These were not the kind of persons with whom a seemingly pious Jewish religious teacher like Jesus was expected to associate at meals and elsewhere.

According to La Verdier, the great feast at the home of Levi, the tax collector, presents the church as a people called to repentance and the Eucharist as a sacrament of evangelization. He continues to say that the Eucharist is meant to be a gospel event issuing Jesus' call to conversion and welcoming all who respond to his call as in Luke 5:32; that Jesus has not come for the righteous to repent, but for the sinners.<sup>22</sup>

However, there is a one of the striking and controversial features of Jesus' public ministry which was caused by his custom of sharing meals with tax collectors and sinners. Pharisees were the ones who reacted negatively to Jesus' socializing with tax collectors and sinners due to the concept of meals that was they were bound by a theology of holiness or purity which set the Jewish people apart from dining with others.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, being impure, as argued by Adna, does not mean you are a sinner; but sin comes when such one does not keep away from that which is sacred. The Pharisees believed that

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<sup>20</sup> Marguerat, *Meal and Community Ethos in the Acts of Apostle*, 521.

<sup>21</sup> Adna, "Jesus' Meals," 334-336.

<sup>22</sup> La Verdier, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church*, 86.

<sup>23</sup> Adna, "Jesus' Meals," 346.



if someone in a state of ritual impurity goes into the temple, he causes defilement.<sup>24</sup> Jesus radically challenges the notion that separation at meals is required to maintain purity which called a contagious holiness. The issue of arguing why Jesus accepted the wicked at table companions without any hint of repentance has been discussed by E.P. Sander in the article written by Adna, *Jesus Meal and Table fellowship* as a precondition. However, God receives sinners, but God does not allow those whom he receives to remain sinners.<sup>25</sup>

The practice of Jesus Christ sharing meals with sinners is accepted even by the most liberal of scholars as being historically reliable information depicting the actions of Christ. This theme of Jesus gathering with outcasts around a meal table is often lost in the current Eucharist thought and debate. The Eucharist then should be seen as a call to grace, a remembrance that God still invites those who have been called in their society unworthy to sup at his table.<sup>26</sup>

Matthew 22:1-14 and Luke 14:15-24 tell us about the parable of the great banquet. Jesus compares the Kingdom of heaven to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son and who had to extend the invitation to quests he normally would not invite. Although Matthew and Luke differ in their presentation of the parable, they agree in the extended invitation to good and bad or poor because the invitees were not worthy of the invitation. In Mark 2:18-22, Jesus uses a language which describes his Kingdom. His meal with his disciples was an arena to demonstrate his message of the Kingdom.<sup>27</sup>

Jesus portrayed the kingdom of God as a great banquet where all those who answer to the invitation will sit down with one another and God to feast in abundance, with the trust that those who were regarded as outsiders would be invited while those expecting to have a place at the table

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 336.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 338-339.

<sup>26</sup> Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 554.

<sup>27</sup> Adna, "Jesus' Meals," 332

would be cast aside (Matthew 8:11-12 and Luke 13:29). So those who ate with him could be assured that they would also feast with him in the age to come.<sup>28</sup>

## **2.4 The influence of Jesus last supper on the Eucharist in the early church**

The Synoptic Gospels indicate that Jesus last meal with his disciples before his crucifixion was a Passover meal. Therefore, the traditions of the Passover shaped the worship of the early church around the celebration of the Lord's Supper.<sup>29</sup> The Lord's Supper is one of the most important sacraments instituted by Jesus when he was approaching the climax of his ministry on earth.<sup>30</sup> This tradition is about Jesus having his last supper with his disciples, interpreting the elements of the bread and wine as his body and blood and commissioning the disciples to regularly repeat the meal in his remembrance. How did the narrative about the Last Supper originate? We have two independent version of this story. The earliest account of Jesus' Last Supper is found in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians 11:23-25 which tells about the very beginning of the Eucharist and the Gospels.<sup>31</sup>

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, and Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25 and Luke 22:15-20 tell us about the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. The phrase words of institution refer to the concept that Jesus instituted the ceremony of the Lord's Supper when he spoke the words over the bread and wine at the last supper.<sup>32</sup>

### ***2.4.1 Paul's Account of the Lord's Supper***

According to Paul's tradition, Jesus included an institution command; Do this in remembrance of me. This memorial of the Last Supper became a central ritual for Christians in the early Church. The Eucharist was celebrated along with a shared meal in the homes of local Christians. In his first

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 333.

<sup>29</sup> Neyrey, *Meals in the New Testament*, 4.

<sup>30</sup> Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, 1.

<sup>31</sup> La Verdere, *The Eucharist in the New Testament*, 21.

<sup>32</sup> Smith, "The last Supper as a Historical event" 582.

letter to the Corinthians, Paul describes a Eucharist celebrated in connection with a common supper shared in the homes of the early Christians. This supper included the blessing of the bread and wine, the breaking of the bread, and communion.<sup>33</sup>

Concerning the Passover meal, Paul identifies it as the last meal of Jesus with the words on the night in which he was handed over. Jeremias discussed most of the other issues relating to the historical origin and significance of the last supper and his book has become a standard reference for the notion the Jesus' last supper was a Passover meal. Joachim Jeremias places the Last Supper clearly in the light of a Passover meal. According to Jeremias, Jesus uses the sacrificial language which shows his body and blood is the sacrifice event. He acknowledges that these translations have brought a broad understanding from those who ate the supper at that time because even Jesus thought of himself as the eschatological paschal lamb.<sup>34</sup> His body which was given to us, and his blood which is poured, was thus expected to initiate the time of salvation.<sup>35</sup>

Jeremias is criticized by Theissen and Merz to bring notion that the last supper was not a Passover meal. For Theissen and Merz, their understanding of Jesus sacrificial event was to signify a temporary replacement of the Jewish temple and its cult. For them, the last supper is a symbolic action in the context of Jesus' conflict in the temple during the last week in Jerusalem and therefore has nothing to do with the Passover meal.<sup>36</sup> In his argument, Jeremias insists that the last supper contained features common to Passover meals that was followed by Greco-Roman culture including: the Jerusalem location, its occurrence at night, the posture of reclining, the drinking of wine and the interpretation of the elements of the meal.<sup>37</sup>

In conclusion, Jeremias shows that the meal signified Jesus' death as a final replacement of the Jewish sacrificial system; while for scholars like Theissen and Merz, it was the replacement

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<sup>33</sup> La Verdier, *The Eucharist in the New Testament*, 21.

<sup>34</sup> Byrskog, "The Meal and the Temple" 423.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 426.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 426.

<sup>37</sup> Smith, "The Last Supper as a Historical event" 583.

of the temple cult until the kingdom of God and the new temple to come. The idea of Passover meal is well mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke.

#### **2.4.2 *Mark's Account of the Lord's Supper***

Mark's account of the Lord's Supper is believed to be the first written account of the Eucharist given in a gospel setting including the greater story of the life and works of Jesus. The Lord's Supper is discussed in the look of Jesus' passion story which begins with the plan of his betrayal and the preparation of the Passover meal. This has been well explained in Mark 14:12-16. In these verses, we see Mark giving a complex involvement of the last supper which also includes the preparation of the Passover meal in verse 22. Jesus sent two of his disciples to prepare for the Passover meal along with the instructions as to where it should be prepared (14:13-15); and the preparation of the Passover meal itself in verse 16. It is evident that, for Mark, the meal that followed is the Passover meal due to verses 12, 14, and 16. The Greek word *kai* is typical of the Mark narrative style and the *genetivus absolutus* in verse 14:22a gives a clear meaning of the Eucharistic words that, while they were eating, Jesus celebrated this meal with his disciples.<sup>38</sup>

Many, who maintain that the Last Supper was not part of a Passovers meal, point out that there is no necessary connection in Mark between the account of the last supper in 14:22-25 and the preparations for the Passover meal in 14:12-16. However, even though the elements of the Passover meal are not mentioned in 14:22-25, the Last Supper is intimately associated with a meal in 14:22 that is festive in nature.<sup>39</sup>

#### **2.4.3 *Luke's Account of the Lord's Supper***

In the Gospel of Luke 22:16-24, Jesus sends his disciples to prepare to celebrate the festival meal of the Passover. That meal was also known as the Last Supper and it forms the basis of the Lord's Supper. The background of the meal is likely a Passover meal though others have put doubt on

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<sup>38</sup> Sandnes, "Jesus' Last Meal," 457.

<sup>39</sup> Stein, *Mark*, 649.

it.<sup>40</sup> Luke 22 speaks about the fulfillment of the present meal in verse 29-30; but Jeremias takes verse 15 as an unfulfilled wish whereby in verse 16 explains that Jesus abstains from the meal. In its implication, Luke makes the Eucharist not intended for Jesus but only for his followers. Karl Sandnes argued that this strengthens the Luke understanding of the Eucharist and will give little attention to the participation of the disciples in the Gospel of Mark because even the preposition *gar* does not favor the reading; but rather it makes it more intense to the Jesus desire to eat with his disciples<sup>41</sup>

#### ***2.4.4 Matthew's Account of the Lord's Supper***

Matthew wrote his gospel account of the life and works of Jesus Christ around the year 85 A.D. The language Matthew uses and his description of the different events within the gospel show that he was writing for those with a Jewish heritage. For Matthew, the significance of the Eucharist must be understood by considering Jesus death and resurrection. Like Mark, Matthew also has the preparation for the meal as being of the Passover lamb. This preparation is motivated by a statement *o Kairos mou eggus estiv* whereby Jesus says; “My time is near; at your house I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciple” (Matthew 26:17). The Greek phrase *Kairos mou eggus estiv* clearly indicate Christ's consciousness of the fact that he was accomplishing the work which the Father had given him to do. The time to which Jesus refers here in Matthew 26:18 must not be limited to the hours of the Passover but should be interpreted in a somewhat broader sense; “the time appointed to me to bring to its conclusion the task of redemption assigned to me by the Father<sup>42</sup>

In concluding the above explanation, the last meal that Jesus shared with his disciples was a Passover meal. However, John claims that Jesus died during the Passover Eve, he never testifies indirectly in John 6 to the Passover character of Jesus body given for the world. But he has a strong statement that is found in John 6:4; “Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews was near.” This

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<sup>40</sup> Bock, Luke, 550.

<sup>41</sup> Sandnes, “Jesus' Last Meal According to Mark and Matthew, Comparison and Interpretation,” 456-457.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 466.

sheds light to this chapter including verse 51-56 in which the Eucharist traditions are mirrored and whereby the death of Jesus is clearly implied in that passage. Moreover, Paul situates the Eucharistic word into the Passion narrative in 1 Corinthians 11:23b (in the night he was betrayed) and uses the Passover theology to explain Jesus death in 1 Corinthians 5:7

Therefore, Mark and Matthew as well as Luke give an eschatological prospect to this meal. The meal is the last meal that Jesus celebrates with his disciples; and Paul in 1 Corinthians, witnesses to the fact that even in the 50s, the Eucharistic words were handed down as part of what happened “in the night he was betrayed.”<sup>43</sup> Whether the last supper was a Passover meal or not, it is clear that the Eucharist was instituted at Passover time and Christian writers from Paul 1 Corinthians 5:7 onwards have stressed that the death of Christ was the fulfillment of the sacrifice foreshadowed by the Passover.

## **2.5 Meals between the Resurrected Christ and the Disciples influencing the early Christians.**

### ***2.5.1 Meals practiced by Jesus in the Gospel of Luke 24***

The Eucharist is commonly known as and referred to as the Lord’s Supper because it was Christ himself who instituted the practice of the Eucharist. LaVerdiere writes that the practice of Eucharist did not end up with the distinction between the Last Supper and Lord’s Supper and the way it is united in the Passover event.<sup>44</sup> Luke is known as both a theologian and historian. The way in which he wrote his gospel is both an account of the life and works of Jesus as well as a way to introduce theology into the community. The gospel of Luke was written around the year 85 A.D. Luke wrote his gospel directed toward the Christians of Gentile origin.<sup>45</sup> Luke drew upon the account of the Lord’s Supper found in Mark, as well as the Eucharist tradition described by Paul in his letter to the Church of Corinth.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 473.

<sup>44</sup> La Verdiere, *The Eucharist in the New Testament*, 92.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 79.

According to the Gospel of Luke, there are two meals that Jesus had after his resurrection: the one with the disciples of Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), and the one with the assembly community in Jerusalem (24:36-53).<sup>46</sup> The story of Emmaus shows where the communities were to seek the living one that is among the living. Through their conversation they invited Jesus to their place as their hospitality. Jesus reclines at the table with them. While He was sharing the meal, he takes the bread, gives thanks and breaks it and gives it to them. The meals he shared with them, gave them a picture like the one they had with him with in his Last Supper.<sup>47</sup> The Gospel of Luke 24 does not end up with the story of the Emmaus, rather it is also telling us about an event that happened in Jerusalem. The disciples after they returned to Jerusalem joined the assembly community. Jesus again appeared to them and they gave him a piece of broiled fish and he took it and he ate it in their presence.<sup>48</sup>

### ***2.5.2 Meals Practiced by Jesus in the Acts of Apostle 1***

Luke wrote his gospel in a two-volume work. The first one is the gospel and the second one is the Acts. He wrote the Acts of the Apostle as the continuation of his Gospel. In the Gospel, Luke did not treat the development of the Church after Jesus resurrection and ascension. He took it up in the Acts, relating the Eucharist to various phases of the Church's growth and showing how the Eucharist contributed to its understanding of the Jesus movement and the understanding of the Eucharist by the church. In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke showed how the Eucharist has firm foundations in the Jesus meals with the apostolic community. Jesus' eating with disciples brings out the strong relationship between the development of the Eucharist in the apostolic church and its origins in the life and mission of Jesus.<sup>49</sup>

In the Gospel, Luke describes the Lord's Supper. Although he does not describe the Last Supper in the book of Acts, he does not miss to refer to the practice of the Eucharist. Luke describes

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>47</sup> Bock, *Luke*, 614.

<sup>48</sup> La Verdere, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church*, 92.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 96.

this practice as the breaking of the bread in Acts 2:42, 46, and 20:7, 11. Luke's mentioning of the Eucharist in Acts 2:42 suggests that he understood the meal to be a fellowship meal, a meal that has a horizon and dimension binding the disciples to one another and so should be partaken of with great regularity to reinforce that bond. The meal was eaten in the home (Acts 2:46) giving it a more personal touch than in worship that took place in the temple. It is also following the example of Jesus and the original Lord's Supper.<sup>50</sup>

### ***2.5.3 Meal Practiced by Jesus according to the Gospel of John 21***

In the Gospel of John, meals practiced by Jesus began with the story of the incarnated Jesus who dwells among us. In his gospel, he tells us that the word that was made flesh was the living bread that came down from heaven to give his life flesh for the life of the world (6:51). John describes the bread which came down from heaven to be the bread of life which is also unique in its reflection on the Eucharist. John describes the Eucharist in relation to Jesus' incarnation inviting his disciples and all who do believe. John contains three passages which refer to the Eucharist tradition; but it is in John 21: 15-23 that Jesus had meal with his disciples after his resurrection. The event took place by the sea of Tiberius, that is in Galilee, where Jesus had told his disciples to meet after his resurrection (Mark 14:27, 16:7 Matthew 28:7, 10, 28:16). For John, the bread and fish meal with Jesus shows how the Eucharist is a real sharing in Christ living giving flesh and blood.

### **2.6 The Meal and conflict in the church of Antioch according to Galatians 2:11–14**

Since Paul presents tradition, as one that was passed on to him, he seems to assume its practice for all churches with which he is familiar. And the meal at Corinth in which this tradition is found, is clearly a full banquet, sharing features much like the community meals being practiced in Jerusalem, Antioch and Galatia. Consequently, the terminology of the Lord's Supper and the invoking of the words of Jesus at the table were surely known also at Galatia probably at Antioch and perhaps at Jerusalem. This shows how the meal text was rooted in banquet ideology. This can be proved both in 1 Cor 11:17-34 and Gal 2:11-14.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 102.



At Antioch, the problem of table fellowship involved controversies about the Jewish attitude towards eating meals with Gentiles. This attitude carries implications for broader issues such as theological tensions within the early church and the nature of the relationship between the Jewish and Gentile Christianity.<sup>51</sup> The problem of table fellowship was raised by Peter. Paul, Cephas, Barnabas and some Christians from Jerusalem were at a community meal in Antioch. Ordinarily, the Christians who were of Jewish background ate with those of Gentile background. But when some came from Jerusalem, Cephas and others who were of Jewish background, including even Barnabas, withdrew from the others, intending to take their meal apart.<sup>52</sup>

The incident that happened in Antioch has similar case with that in Corinth because both letters are traces meal which brings separation rather than togetherness (1 Cor 11:33).<sup>53</sup> One of the main functions of the banquet was to define societal boundaries. The idea of social boundaries and social bonding features prominently in the works of Paul. An interesting text speaking to this issue is found in Galatians 2:11-14:

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

Both the church in Antioch and Corinth derive from the nature of the meal that creates social boundaries. The circumstances differ: in Galatia, the segregation was on ethno-religious biasness. In Corinth, it was one of economic status. Paul reflects on the theology implied by the withdrawal of Peter, Barnabas, and the rest of the Jews from the table fellowship with Gentile

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<sup>51</sup> Douglas, *Galatians*, 142.

<sup>52</sup> Verdier, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church*, 26.

<sup>53</sup> Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 175.

Christians in Antioch (2:11–14). For Paul, this contradicts the truth of the gospel (Gal 2:14) because it implies a separation within the community of faith.<sup>54</sup>

However, the results of table inequality at Corinth and Antioch were the same as the truth of the gospel was not being practiced. Paul addresses this truth as the unity of the church. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all on in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28-29).<sup>55</sup> This is the sentiment that should be proclaimed from the Christian meal table. However, in Corinth and in Antioch, the meal table was being divided. According to Smith, the meal controversies at both Antioch and Corinth (and Rome as well) derived from the nature of the meal to create social boundaries.<sup>56</sup> Any refusal to have equal meal participation with someone indicated exclusivism. This led to the practice of individualized meals (τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον) when there should have been communal meals, referred to by Paul as the Lord's Supper (κυριακὸν δεῖπνον), they should be shared by the entire church body (1 Corinthians 11:33).<sup>57</sup>

## 2.7 The Greco Roman Banquet Tradition

The term Greco-Roman is being used to refer to the combined culture of the Mediterranean world of circa 300 B.C.E (Alexander the Great) to circa 300 C.E (Constantine). The major cultural influence of this time and place were those of the Greeks and then later the Romans, whose culture was largely adapted from that of the Greek.<sup>58</sup> Dinner, δεῖπνον to the Greeks and *Cena* to the Romans, was the most important meal of the day in the Greco-Roman world (1 Corinthians 11:25). The meal was eaten when the sun had gone down. More than the partaking of a meal, dinner was used as an occasion to socialize and develop friendships bonds.<sup>59</sup> Banquet was a special communal

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 175.

<sup>57</sup>cf. 1 Cor 11:20, 21, 33.

<sup>58</sup> Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 19.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 20-21.

meal with two main courses; which is δεῖπνον followed by a symposium party.<sup>60</sup> Formal banquets comprising a supper and a symposium were the most common means of giving expression to one's sense of belonging to a group.

The Greco-Roman banquet is characterized most specifically by the practice of reclining. The reclining for a meal was fundamentally always a mark of status.<sup>61</sup> In the Greco-Roman world, regular banquets took place in social occasions like wedding, birthday, funeral or any others in private homes or in the pagan temples.<sup>62</sup> Invitation for this purpose could be made verbally or through a letter one or more days before, and the number of participants varied between three to eleven people.<sup>63</sup>

The Hellenistic meal table functioned on many different social levels. First, the banquet demarcated social boundaries. The meal table, then, serves a very basic sociological function. Smith writes that “whom one dines with defines one's placement in a larger set of social networks.” Much is communicated simply by sharing a meal with some and not with others. The banquet, then, by default was a symbol of exclusivity building upon the concept of the banquet establishing social boundaries that created a social bond.<sup>64</sup> Generally according to Smith, such banquets excluded wives and children. But if they were present, they had to sit down. But mostly the prostitutes, female companions that included flute girls and even male slaves were objects of sexual intercourse.<sup>65</sup>

Smith writes that this was a kind of social and luxury banquet which the guests would be invited.<sup>66</sup> As a guest arrived, a servant would wash his feet and take him to his place on the couch

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<sup>60</sup> Smith and Taussig, *Meals in the Early Christian World*, 24.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 39

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>66</sup> Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 22.

and since each position at the table had an imputed ranking attached to it the host was responsible for creating the guest list and assigning them their rank around the table<sup>67</sup>.

After the dinner (μετὰ τὸ δεῖπνῆσαι), the evening progressed into this social gathering, various activities commonly took place at symposia, such as party games, dramatic entertainment, dancing and philosophical conversation<sup>68</sup>. The symposia became infamous for their wickedness, often being described as occasions of sexual celebrations and drunkenness. Dennis Smith argues that this was not a common practice, but an idealized artistic presentation of the dinners<sup>69</sup>. Through the passage of the time, the *deipnon* began to be observed in the evening and not as a midday meal. Dennis Smith writes that this change of hour led to the meal taking on more leisurely characteristics and in turn becoming the social highlight of the day as well.<sup>70</sup>

In the ancient world, this symbolism was carried by various elements of the banquet, such as the sharing of common food or sharing from a common table or dish that related to the idea of social boundaries and bonding.<sup>71</sup> Smith writes, “To dine together formed the dining group into a community whose identity was defined internally by means of social bonding and externally by means of social boundaries.” For example, the Essenes of Qumran defined strict requirement for suitability to participate in their pure meal<sup>72</sup>. Even Paul urged his Christian community to maintain strict banquet boundaries: “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demon. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons” (1 Corinthians 10:20)<sup>73</sup>

The very act of “reclining” was a social marker, since only free persons could sit in such positions during meals. This posture indicated superiority, requiring the guest to be served. But

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>71</sup> Smith and Taussig, *Meals in the Early Christian World*, 28.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 28.

the stratification does not stop there. Those who reclined were further ranked by the places assigned to them at the table. This dining practice is indicative of the wider Hellenistic culture, which placed great value on the separation of slave and free, male and female, wealthy and poor.<sup>74</sup>

The Christian Eucharist was first celebrated in a Hellenistic culture context, leading some to believe that the early church's celebrations of the Lord's Supper were no different than any other social group meal around the Mediterranean. Given the mentality and culture dominant in the areas being influenced by Christianity, it is most likely that early Christian meals engaged in practices and elements common to civil gatherings and other religious banquets. Thus, the manner in which the Eucharist was celebrated was modeled by common Greco-Roman banquet traditions rather than the celebration of the Lord's Supper, although the celebration of the Eucharist has incorporated elements based on Jewish tradition, namely bread and wine, in the Jewish festival of Passover. Although the birth of the Eucharist is linked with a Jewish feast, it does not replace it nor does it equate it in the Corinthian Church. It is their behavior that had been influenced by their Greco-Roman culture that led to the replication of the hierarchy of social status at the celebration of the Lord's Supper.<sup>75</sup> The following chapter will take us into the closer look on the Exegesis on the 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>75</sup> Desilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 566.

### **3 CHAPTER THREE: AN EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-34**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, exegesis is needed to be an examination and analytical study of the historical context of the text in order to understand how the original readers would have understood the teachings of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. In order to uncover the historical context of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 there are two tasks to be accomplished. Firstly, to conduct a historical analysis of the text there is a need for an exploration of the religious, cultural and sociological, and literary context of the origin of the text. Then the grammatical and thematical study of the Greek Text will be done to uncover the original meaning of the various words, phrases, tenses, part of speeches will be thoroughly observed and investigated. Secondly, there is in need for an exploration of the purpose of Paul for the writing of the text.

#### **3.2 Historical Situation of Corinth**

It has been easy to reconstruct the situation of Corinthians because we can get information from Paul's own statements. Even the letter also shows clearly on how the situation was. But coming to the question of the situation of Paul, it is not easy because we do not have such direct evidence but the Acts of Apostles may shed some further light on this matter.

##### ***3.2.1 Authorship and Date***

Traditionally it is believed that, the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians was written by Paul himself as the servant who has been called and sent by God to preach the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles. About the year A.D 50 towards the end of his second missionary journey, Paul founded the church in Corinth before moving on to Ephesus. Paul returned to Ephesus on his third missionary journey and spent approximately three years there (Acts 19: 8, 19: 10, 20:21). Antony C. Thiselton suggests that it is possible that 1 Corinthians was written during Paul's first stay in Ephesus. Supporting himself with his trade as a tentmaker worker, he lived with Aquila and

Priscilla who had recently moved to Corinth from Rome (Acts 18:1-3)).<sup>76</sup> However, it is more likely that it was written during his extended stay in Ephesus while he refers to sending Timothy to them (Acts 19:22, 1 Corinthians 4:17). The first letter of Paul to Corinth was proposed that probably the letter was written early in 53 or 54 A.D.<sup>77</sup> However, this letter was not the first letter Paul wrote to the Corinth after his departure from the city (1 Corinthians 5:9). To begin with first Corinthians is not really the first letter Paul wrote to Corinth. First Corinthians 5:9 alludes to a previous letter which the Corinthians had misunderstood. We know nothing of its contents except that Paul told the church not to associate with immoral people.<sup>78</sup>

### **3.2.2 Audience**

The letter is addressed to God's church at Corinth (1.2). This epistle is addressed not only to Corinth, but to all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place (1 Corinthians 1:2-4).<sup>79</sup> However, when Paul's opening statement is examined more closely, it is evident that every Christian is not said to be the addressee of the letter. It is specifically addressed to those in Corinth, whose sanctification is with all other disciples. There is no doubt that the principles taught in 1 Corinthians apply to all believers in every place (cf. 7.17; 14.33-34). But this letter is an occasional document, initially responding to issues and problems in the lives of those living in a specific location, at a certain time, and under particular historical and cultural circumstances.

### **3.2.3 The Historical Situation of Corinth**

Then, in our first letter to Corinthians which was a letter brought to Paul by three representatives of the church (1 Cor 16:17). This letter tells us about what was going on in the Church of Corinth

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<sup>76</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 29.

<sup>77</sup> Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 71.

<sup>78</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 7.

<sup>79</sup> Nigel, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 2.

after Paul's departure in Corinth. There is difficulty in determining the nature of the situation but Paul addresses it through a letter he received from his coworkers. These people brought a letter telling Paul about the difficulties in the communities that he had evangelized (3:10-15, 9:2, 15:1-2).<sup>80</sup>

The letter was about the rise of factions. One was grouping themselves around the names of Paul, Apollos, Cephas and Christ (1Corinthians 11:10-12). At that time, the church of Corinth was experiencing internal strife, but argues convincingly that the greater problems was brought by the division between Paul as a founder of the church and some influential teachers (Apollo and Cephas) who were leading the Corinthians in an anti-Pauline direction.<sup>81</sup> The Corinthians were in fact taking their cues from what they knew of the educational process as modeled by the rector's teaching in their city and taking part in debates, quarrels, boasting and arrogance.<sup>82</sup>

But we also have to know that the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians was written in response not only to the issue of divisions but also to certain practical issues raised in the letter he had received from them. The major issues which were to be settled were issues of immorality in the Church (5:1-8; 6:12-20), legal disputes (6:1-11), abuses of the Lord's Supper (11:17-34) and controversies about the resurrection of the dead. So, the Corinthians themselves wrote the letter to Paul asking for his advice.<sup>83</sup>

Concerning the issue of Lord's Supper, Paul heard a report that when the Corinthian came together as a congregation, there were divisions among them. It was no longer the Lord's Supper that he had taught them when he was in Corinth. From the report that he received, there was disunity in the communal gatherings.<sup>84</sup> In that time, the Corinthian had completely lost sight of what it means that their gatherings are for the purpose of receiving the Lord's Super. The way they

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<sup>80</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 6.

<sup>81</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 8-9.

<sup>82</sup> Withering, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 74.

<sup>83</sup> Bays, *First Corinthians*, 5.

<sup>84</sup> Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 543.



were gathering it was not at all in keeping with the Supper as the Lord's sacred meal. The Corinthians destroyed the holy character of the Supper by individualism. It was no longer the Lord's Supper (11:20) but it was one's own supper.

Discussion of the social level of Paul's Corinthian converts usually begins with Corinth as a city because it is important in this work. Its economy, location and social status of its population and religious life needs to be better known since all elements have to do with the members of the Christians believers in Corinth. If we do not have a good picture of this city, we cannot understand the behavior of the people and what was happening in the congregation.

### ***3.2.4 The City of Corinth***

The city of Corinth was located on the Isthmus which formed the gateway to the developments peninsula. Corinth was destroyed in 146 BC by the Roman Lucius Mummius. It was for more than a century before being reconstructed by Julius Caesar in 44 BC. At the time of Paul, it had already regained its importance and became the largest city in Roman Greece.<sup>85</sup>

The prosperity of the city of Corinth at time of Paul was partly due to the ports which facilitated commercial transaction between East and West and also between the peninsula and the mainland of Greece. The Isthmian games attracted people and probably Paul used the opportunity to make tents for visitors. When Paul arrived at Corinth he found a rebuilt city with a mixed population composed of Greeks, Jews, Syrians, Egyptians, Slaves and others. Corinth, as a Roman colony, at the time of Paul had a mix of populations composed of Gentiles and a number of Jews. Many people in Corinth (Acts 18:10) seem to have been mainly former pagans and even when Paul addresses the problem of sexual immorality, it was typical of Gentile paganism. The city was not only occupied by Gentiles; also, there were, in particular, God fearers, who attended worship

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<sup>85</sup> Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 2.

and attached themselves to the synagogues because of their respect for Jewish monotheism and its high moral standards.<sup>86</sup>

#### **3.2.4.1 Social-Economical Background**

Turning to the social economic circumstances of the Corinthian Christians the best starting point is Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 1:26 where he says that not many of those to whom he is writing are wise, powerful or noble by birth. Paul's statement shows that, there were few Corinthian Christians who are in the high-status level and those were the ones who hosted the meal in their private houses (Romans 16:5, 1 Corinthians 16:19).<sup>87</sup> According to Paul, Gaius household could host the whole assembly of believers suggesting that his house was large and perhaps had a large courtyard to welcome an entire assembly.<sup>88</sup> Not all Corinthian Christians were rich people, but significant there were number of poor people among the converts (1 Corinthians 1:28, 11:22).<sup>89</sup>

Recently, scholars like Gerd Theissen have investigated the social level of the congregation of Corinth. He come out with the view that some members of this church were from high social positions and that the conflict which broke out in this congregation involved people from different strata in the church of Corinth and even Paul himself confirms that in 1 Corinthians 1:26.<sup>90</sup>

### **3.3 The Literary Context of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34**

Most scholars have rightly situated the problem addressed by Paul within the immediate context of Paul's discussion of idol food in chapter 8-10, and particularly 10:14-22, seeing its close connection to the latter. However, to fully understand the underlying problem that warrants Paul's discussion and rebuke in 1 Cor. 11:17-34, one must situate it in the broader context of the letter a

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>89</sup> Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 22.

<sup>90</sup> Theissen Gerd, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 125.

context that is complicatedly connected to its occasion. In this regard, and particularly relevant to the discussion here is the problem of individualism that manifests itself in different ways in the letter. Without doubt, it is a thread that runs throughout the book.<sup>91</sup> This letter under review was written to the church of Corinth by the Apostle Paul (1:1-2). His attention appears to be that of correcting the church's religious behaviors (1:11) concerning certain disputes that had arisen. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 is the second of the three sections dealing with the matter of public worship in Corinth (11:2-16 and 11:17-34). It often proves helpful to outline an entire document to see how the distinct parts fit together. The epistle of 1 Corinthians may be concisely be outlined as follows:

- I. Introduction (1.1-9).
- II. Response to Reports (1.10 - 6.20).
- III. Response to the Corinthian Letter (7.1 – 15:58).
  - A. Abuse of the Lord's Supper (11.17-34).
- IV. Final instructions and Conclusion (16:1-24).

The thought that precedes the 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 discussion has to do with Paul's exhortation on the Corinthians communal meal, the Lord's Supper (κυριακὸν δεῖπνον). He then proceeds to commend them for keeping the traditions he had taught them before (11:2), but then quickly shifts to address the problem of women's worship in the Corinthian church, the issue of head coverings and male leadership (11:3-16)

1 Corinthians 11:17-34 is a part of the third major section of 1 Corinthians which may be entitled as The Probatio section. The Probatio is the heart of a rhetoric speech or letter and includes the principle arguments used to persuade the audience.<sup>92</sup> Paul's concern in this letter is with the unity of the Christians community and with the factors working against that unity. Therefore, and as witnessed throughout the letter, he seeks to argue against factors that compromise on their unity while providing positive arguments in favor of that which builds up to the body of Christ.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>Adewuya, "Revisiting 1 Corinthians 11.27-34" 96.

<sup>92</sup> Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 76.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 76.

This chapter 11:17-34 precedes Paul's section on the spiritual gifts starting in chapter 12. But Chapter 11 is also in the middle of Paul's response to the Corinthians letter. It is most likely then that all of Paul's comments teaching and application are a mode in response to the Corinthians' question regarding the Lord's Supper.

### ***3.3.1 Immediate Context***

Concerning the immediate context of this text, it is evident that 1 Corinthians 11:27 stands under the thematic heading of 1 Corinthians 11:17-26. Here, we find the major turning point in the focus of the letter where Paul condemns the Corinthians for the kind of meetings that they had had become for worse instead for the betterment of the church. Paul's primary complains in this section and the situation made him even not to believe if such kind of thing could happen in the Christian Church of Corinth that had proved that they can bring divisiveness. In verse 18-19 Paul explains why their meetings were unbeneficial based on the report that he had heard that the Church's attitude in partaking of the Lord's Supper was divisive or schismatic instead of bringing unity.<sup>94</sup>

In verse 20-22, Paul does not provide much information about the situation, but he does offer a few clues. For example, he makes the claim that when the time comes to eat, each needed to go ahead with his/her own meal (τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον). The second clue that the Apostle provides appears to be related to the earliest ones; one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. Hence, we see Paul asking the member of community if they do not have homes in which they can eat and drink.<sup>95</sup> In 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Paul draws out the implications for the Corinthians out of his appeal to tradition. In response to the problems that happened during the Lord's Supper, Paul presents the community with a tradition recounting Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper.<sup>96</sup> In verse 27, Paul condemns them on the issue of partaking of the Lord's Supper unworthily. The text

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<sup>94</sup> Duff, "Celebrating the Lord's Supper in Corinth" (1Cor 11:17-34), 556.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 556.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 556-557.

proceeds to the issue of a solemn warning of the consequences of unworthy eating of the Lord's Supper. Therefore 1 Corinthians 11:27 lies between 33-34 where Paul giving them specific direction that when they come together to eat, they should wait one another.

### **3.3.2 Structure of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34**

The text can be divided into three main sections whereby the first section concentrates on the problem at the meal (verses 17-22) as described by Paul. In the second section which starts from verse 23-25, Paul presents the paradosis to the community, a paradosis that as the apostle indicates in 11:23. And in the final section which starts from verse 27-34, Paul warns the community of the consequences of participating in the Lord's Supper unworthily (ἀναξίως).

## **3.4 An Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34**

### **3.4.1 Textual Problem of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34**

When reading 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 from the Greek New Testament and considering all the critical signs in the critical apparatus, we find that there are several replacements, insertions and omissions in the text. But all these problems have little effect because they do not change the meaning of the verses and the message of the text at large.

In verse 19 the Nestle-Aland 28<sup>th</sup> edition, the text reads; δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι ἵνα καὶ οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται ἐν ὑμῖν. The phrase ἐν ὑμῖν (in you) is omitted by Codex D\* F G; Cyprianus and Ambrosiaster. Also, the conjunction καὶ has also omitted by Codex **Ν** A C D<sup>1</sup> F G K L P Y 81. The text itself followed by superior manuscript papyrus (P<sup>46</sup>) Codex Vaticanus (B) and Codex Ephraim (D) . Therefore, the text remains as it is for exegetical work.<sup>97</sup>

In verse 27, ἢ πίνῃ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ κυρίου ἀναξίως, (Therefore whoever eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy). This phrase has been inserted in the manuscript and supported

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<sup>97</sup> Nestle- Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*. 28<sup>th</sup> Revised Edition, 539.

by  $\varphi^{46}$  **N** A B C D F G Y 33 which is strong evidence hence, no comment on that the text has to remain as it is for exegetical work.

In verse 29, the Nestle Aland 28<sup>th</sup> edition read the text  $\acute{\omicron}$   $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$   $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\theta\acute{\iota}\omega\nu$   $\kappa\alpha\iota$   $\pi\acute{\iota}\nu\omega\nu$  translated as (for he who eats and drinks). After this phrase, there is an insertion of the word  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\zeta\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma$  (Translated as unworthy. This phrase is following by **N**<sup>2</sup> C<sup>2</sup> D F G K L P Y 81. According to the exegetical rule the shorter text which is preserved in the best witness was clarified by adding the word  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\zeta\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma$  (from verse 27) after  $\pi\acute{\iota}\nu\omega\nu$  and  $\tau\omicron\upsilon$   $\kappa\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon$  after  $\sigma\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha$  . In each instance there appears to be no good reason to account for the omission if the word(s) has been present original. However, the text itself is followed by the superior manuscript  $\varphi^{46}$  **N** \* and Codex A B C \*D F G K P Y 81.

In other words, Metzger wanted to say that, the Greek adverb "in an unworthy manner" ( $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\zeta\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma$ ) and the Greek adjectival clause "of the Lord" ( $\tau\omicron\upsilon$   $\kappa\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon$ ) never appeared in verse 29 of the best witnesses (Greek papyri, manuscripts, and minuscules). The inclusions of the words "in an unworthy manner and of the Lord" were later corrections within some of the same witnesses and other sources. The copyists made these helpful edits. That is, the copyists saw that Paul mentioned "in an unworthy manner" ( $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\zeta\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma$ ) and "of the Lord" ( $\tau\omicron\upsilon$   $\kappa\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon$ ) in verse 27, and therefore they added the same words to clarify verse 29 so as to be parallel to verse 27.

Therefore, after having studied the textual problems with all various suggestions we get from the critical apparatus, we are well convinced that there is no reason to deviate from the text as presented by Nestle Aland 28<sup>th</sup> edition. This is to say the text as presented in Nestle Aland 28<sup>th</sup> edition is valid and we cannot change its verdict.

### 3.4.2 Translation

#### 3.4.2.1 The Greek Text: 1 Cor 11:17-34

1 Cor 11:17-34 is presented here in the way it appears in the Nestle-Aland 28 edition.

- 17 τοῦτο δὲ παραγγέλλων οὐκ ἐπαινῶ ὅτι οὐκ εἰς τὸ κρεῖσσον ἀλλὰ εἰς τὸ ἥσσον συνέρχεσθε.  
18 πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀκούω σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν  
καὶ μέρος τι πιστεύω.  
19 δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι ἵνα καὶ οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται ἐν ὑμῖν.  
20 συνερχομένων οὖν ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ οὐκ ἔστιν κυριακὸν δεῖπνον φαγεῖν.  
21 ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον προλαμβάνει ἐν τῷ φαγεῖν καὶ ὃς μὲν πεινᾷ ὃς δὲ Μεθύει.  
22 μὴ γὰρ οἰκίας οὐκ ἔχετε εἰς τὸ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν ἢ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ θεοῦ καταφρονεῖτε  
καὶ καταισχύνετε τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας τί ὑμῖν εἶπω ἐπαινέσω ὑμᾶς ἐν τούτῳ οὐκ ἐπαινῶ.  
23 ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣ  
παρεδίδοτο ἔλαβεν ἄρτον.  
24 καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς  
τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.  
25 ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δεῖπνῆσαι λέγων τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἢ καινὴ διαθήκη  
ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι τοῦτο ποιεῖτε ὡσάκις ἐὰν πίνητε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.  
26 ὡσάκις γὰρ ἐὰν ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον πίνητε τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου  
καταγγέλλετε ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ  
27 ὥστε ὃς ἂν ἐσθίῃ τὸν ἄρτον ἢ πίνη τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ κυρίου ἀναξίως ἔνοχος ἔσται τοῦ  
σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ κυρίου  
28 δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν καὶ οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου  
πινέτω  
29 ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα  
30 διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοὶ καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί  
31-32 εἰ δὲ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν οὐκ ἂν ἐκρινόμεθα κρινόμενοι δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου παιδευόμεθα  
ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν

33-34 ὥστε ἀδελφοί μου συνεργόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε εἴ τις πεινᾷ ἐν οἴκῳ ἐσθιέτω ἵνα μὴ εἰς κρίμα συνέρχησθε τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ὡς ἂν ἔλθω διατάξομαι.

#### **3.4.2.2 English Translation of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34**

17 Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse.

18 For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe.

19 Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine.

20 When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's Supper.

21 For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own food; and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk.

22 What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you! Do you not have house to eat and drink?

23 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread,

24 And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

25 In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord.

28 Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

29 For all who eat and drink without discerning the body eat and drink judgment against themselves.



- 30 For this reason many of you are weak and ill and some have died.  
31 But if we judged ourselves we would not be judged.  
32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.  
33 So when, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.  
34 If you are hungry, eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for your condemnation. About the other things I will give instructions when I come.

### **3.4.3 An Exegetical Analysis of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34**

#### **3.4.3.1 Problem at the meal (11:17-22).**

17. τοῦτο δὲ παραγγέλλων οὐκ ἐπαινῶ ὅτι οὐκ εἰς τὸ κρεῖσσον ἀλλὰ εἰς τὸ ἥσσον συνέρχεσθε. Paul begins with the nominative absolute τοῦτο δὲ παραγγέλλων.<sup>98</sup> The τοῦτο could refer to the preceding instructions given in 11:3-16.<sup>99</sup> It could also be a phrase that could be referring both to the previous directives and the following commands. However, its relationship to the rest of the sentence, with δέ serving as negation, shows the close tie of this phrase to the instructions that follow in 11:17-34.<sup>100</sup> Also, Paul's use of οὐκ ἐπαινῶ in this verse signals a deliberate and conscious retraction of his phrase ἐπαινῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς in 11:2.<sup>101</sup> Paul once again uses the phrase οὐκ ἐπαινῶ in verses 22, thereby creating a verbal to a criticism concerning the abuse of the Corinthian meal practices.

In this verse 17, one would expect Paul to follow up this statement (τοῦτο δὲ παραγγέλλων) with the content of instruction.<sup>102</sup> What one finds, however, is Paul's explanation for why the Corinthian communal meal is not worthy of his praise (οὐκ ἐπαινῶ). Paul's criticism is aimed at

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<sup>98</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 536.

<sup>99</sup> Barret, *The First letter to the Corinthians*, 260.

<sup>100</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 594.

<sup>101</sup> Thiselton, *The First letter to the Corinthians*, 856.

<sup>102</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 594

what occurs when the Corinthians “come together” (συνέρχεσθε). This verb is used by Paul five times from verse 17-22 to verse 33- 34. It is one of the key words that holds the argument together and probably had become a semi-technical word for the ‘gathering together’ of the people of God for worship.<sup>103</sup>

Paul writes *συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*, using the adverbial participle of *συνερχομαι*, creating a parallel with *ἐκκλησίᾳ*. This gives some light to what is meant by “gathering together” in verse 17-18. The repetition of *συνερχομαι* in this specific Eucharistic context denotes not simply assembling together, but about the meeting they hold as a church. This becomes very clear in verse 18.<sup>104</sup> The phrase *ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ* does not mean when they assemble in the church as if it was a church as a building; since *ἐκκλησίᾳ* does not mean the place of meeting in the New Testament. Paul refers to them gathering as a church that is in assembly.<sup>105</sup>

It is at this practice, in which the Corinthian Christians come together to celebrate their status as the people of God, that Paul writes a very sharp critique. Paul utilizes the use of a strong language, stating that in reality the assembling of the church does more harm than good. Most translations condense the phrase *οὐκ εἰς τὸ κρεῖσσον ἀλλὰ εἰς τὸ ἥσσον* in 11:17 with the English phrase “not for the better, but for the worse.”<sup>106</sup> The phrase is introduced by *ὅτι*, which here carries a causal sense, showing the reason for Paul’s lack of praise concerning the gathering of the church. The Corinthians’ failure was not one in which they neglected the assembling of themselves together but their failure was truly to be God’s new people when they gathered; here there was to be neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 594.

<sup>104</sup> Thiselton, *The First letter to the Corinthians*, 856.

<sup>105</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 536.

<sup>106</sup> NRSV, 1989, 133.

<sup>107</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 594.

18. πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀκούω σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν καὶ μέρος τι πιστεύω

Paul now explores into the reasons why the church meetings at Corinth were more harmful than beneficial. He begins by writing πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ, meaning, first of all.<sup>108</sup> The phrase is emphatic, since there is no “second that follows.”<sup>109</sup> The content of Paul’s argument is based upon news he has heard about the gatherings of the Corinthian church. Paul writes συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀκούω σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν. The verb ἀκούω could be a continuous present, giving the idea of “I am constantly hearing” or it may simply carry the idea “I hear,” as most translations shorten it. When the Corinthians come together in ἐκκλησίᾳ (as a church, in assembly), word has reached Paul’s ears that there are schisms. Thiselton says that it is better to translate σχίσματα as splits to preserve both the metaphor of the Greek and to avoid the mistaken notion that the divisions were of a doctrinal nature.<sup>110</sup> Paul used σχίσματα earlier in the letter, writing: “I appeal to you brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no divisions (σχίσματα) among you” (1:10). There is a difference between the σχίσματα spoken of in 1:10-12 and the ones mentioned here. Thiselton writes:

In 1:10-12 the splits seem to reflect tensions between different ethos of different house groups. The splits are external to given groups, although internal to the whole church of Corinth. Here, however, the very house meeting itself reflects splits between the socially advantaged and the socially disadvantaged.<sup>111</sup>

Thiselton continues to write that Paul’s critique of divisions in 1:10 was directed at factions caused by rivalry among religious leaders within the church while here the *schismata* are apparently between the more and the less well-off in the church. Garland repeats this thought that the divisions that he is concerned about are not theological schisms (cf. 1:10). They are rooted in the socio-economic gulf between the haves and the ‘have-nots.’<sup>112</sup> In short, Theissen says that the

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<sup>108</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 536.

<sup>109</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 421.

<sup>110</sup> Thiselton, *The First letter to the Corinthians*, 857.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 857

<sup>112</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 537.

*schismata* arose during the communal meal because the wealthy host treated the other wealthy Corinthians better than the poorer member of the community.<sup>113</sup> Ciampa and Rosner argues that if we discuss that division in the world wisdom, would have to say that the church of Corinth distinguished some of the members as socially superior member of the church who were considered worthy and this was insulting before God.<sup>114</sup> For Garland, it is in Paul's view that these schisms nullify the very purpose for gathering together for worship in the name of Christ. It contradicts what the Lord's Supper proclaims as the foundation of the church: Christ's sacrificial giving of his life for others.<sup>115</sup>

In his response to the new he had heard concerning the divisions in the Corinthian church, Paul says καὶ μέρος τι πιστεύω, translated by the NKJV as "and in part I believe it." This may reflect Paul's caution in believing these stories.<sup>116</sup> Perhaps he does not want to believe such rumors.<sup>117</sup> Ciampa and Rosner say that Paul's statement seems to be strange since the evidence from the rest of this passage clearly indicates that he thought it clear that the Corinthian church was a divided church.<sup>118</sup> Fee writes that this is Paul's way of crediting of his informants.<sup>119</sup> Hays views it as an emphatic "I can't believe it."<sup>120</sup> Garland, however, argues that μέρος carries a wide range of meaning in the New Testament and in literary and non-literary sources here, it should not be translated adverbial (partly) but rather as matter ( 2 Corinthians 9:3); or report giving the idea of "I believe a certain report which include stories of their disintegration during the Lord's Supper."<sup>121</sup> The best view, given the tone of sharp critique that runs through this passage, seems to

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<sup>113</sup> Duff, "Celebrating the Lord's Supper in Corinth" (1Cor 11:17-34), 558.

<sup>114</sup> Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 544.

<sup>115</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 537.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 537.

<sup>117</sup> Robertson and Plummer, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 239.

<sup>118</sup> Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 544

<sup>119</sup> Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 596.

<sup>120</sup> Hays, *First Corinthians*, 195.

<sup>121</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 538.

be that of Witherington who sees this as a rhetorical device expressing a kind of mock disbelief. It does not mean that he does not believe it, but Paul knew that for Christians this is a violation against Christian unity. However, it was common for such behavior to be seen in pagan contexts.<sup>122</sup>

19. δεῖ γὰρ καὶ αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι ἵνα καὶ οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται ἐν ὑμῖν

The use of γὰρ shows that this verse is meant to further explain Paul's upset at the Corinthians' abuse of the assembly which is then described further in verse 20-21.<sup>123</sup> The use of γὰρ καὶ is rare in the works of Paul (cf. 2 Cor 2:9; Rom 13:6.). Some translations render the phrase emphatically as no doubt (NIV). Fee, however, argues that the word combination is intended to signal an additional reason to the one stated in what has already been said.<sup>124</sup> He gives the translation: "There is also this further reason for believing what I heard."<sup>125</sup> Paul's use of αἰρέσεις, which should be seen as parallel to σχίσματα, thereby gives the idea of divisions in the light of an eschatological judgment. In keeping with the teachings of Jesus, Fee says that Paul expected divisions to accompany them at the End, divisions that would separate true believers from those who were false.<sup>126</sup>

What Paul says next is somewhat of a puzzle to contemporary interpreters. He uses the impersonal verb δεῖ, which carries the idea of "it must be" or "it is necessary" in reference to these factions. The NKJV reduces this, along with the prepositional phrase ἐν ὑμῖν, as: "for there must be factions among you." This seems like a complete reversal from Paul's condemnations of the Corinthian factions in 1:10-17. The NKJV renders the ἵνα clause that follows as showing purpose, giving the idea of "in order that." Or ἵνα can be translated as "so that," hence displaying the idea of result. The grammar allows for either reading or re-reading, but there does seem to be a theological distinction between the two.

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<sup>122</sup> Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 247.

<sup>123</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to Corinthians*, 858, Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 596.

<sup>124</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 596.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 596.

<sup>126</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 858, Fee, *The First Epistle Corinthians*, 597.

The rest of the phrase reads οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γέγονται ἐν ὑμῖν. Garland extracts it: “in order that the elite might be evident among you”.<sup>127</sup> Barrett translates it as, in order that the genuine among you may stand out.<sup>128</sup> Barclay writes that the divisions are necessary so that it may become clear which of you are of tried and true quality.<sup>129</sup> What is Paul saying here? Perhaps Paul is writing about eschatological judgment. In verse 30 Paul asserts that some present illness and deaths among them are already expressions of divine judgment on their divisions.<sup>130</sup> This view holds that there appears to be some divine purpose hence reading the ἵνα clause as “in order that” in the divisions thereby demanding and reflecting that these factions occur in order to separate true and false believers in his judgment (27-32).<sup>131</sup> In this view, οἱ δόκιμοι are seen as the elect approved by God.<sup>132</sup>

An alternate view is that factions (αἰρέσεις) are permissible and even necessary, while divisions (σχίσματα) are to be avoided.<sup>133</sup> Orr and Walther write saying that with apparent resignation he accepts the inevitability of factions as a means of testing.<sup>134</sup> The purpose of this inevitable period of testing, as Hodge puts it, is to show the ones who have stood the test and are worthy of approval.

Thiselton composes a rather creative argument that it is not Paul who is saying that the divisions are unavoidable but his readers.<sup>135</sup> He says how can Paul appear to allow splits which he condemns? For Hays, this is a necessity for fulfilling the divine plan<sup>136</sup> Fee, however calls this one

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<sup>127</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 535.

<sup>128</sup> Barret, *1 Corinthians*, 259

<sup>129</sup> Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, 100.

<sup>130</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 597.

<sup>131</sup> Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 195.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

<sup>133</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 597.

<sup>134</sup> Orr and Walther, *1 Corinthians*, 269.

<sup>135</sup> Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 858-59.

<sup>136</sup> Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 195.

of the true mysteries in the letter.<sup>137</sup> This view has some appeal to it, but Thiselton perhaps stretches the language too much in an attempt to read into Paul's words. Perhaps the best way to view this statement by Paul is through the lens of irony.<sup>138</sup> Garland writes saying that it is far more likely that he expresses bitter irony about these factions rather than affirming their eschatological necessity.<sup>139</sup> If this is the case, then the word δόκιμοι is not used in a favorable sense, by defining "approved Christians." Rather, it carries the idea of dignitaries.

Fee argues that, this sentence is something of an aside it also places their divisions more than in a sociological way. If argued in a theological way, the rich people seems to be acting merely as rich who would always act with poorer guests in their homes; but being at the Lord's Table will have another meaning because such an activity has the impact to their life. This is because proof does not lie only in having a correct belief system, but in having a behavior that reflects the gospel.<sup>140</sup>

20. συνερχομένων οὖν ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ οὐκ ἔστιν κυριακὸν δεῖπνον φαγεῖν

Paul now returns to the concern of verse 18. He has now set the stage to properly critique the Corinthian assembly. He begins with "therefore" (οὖν),<sup>141</sup> which directs his previous rebukes of divisions at a singular practice which is in the Lord's Supper. The repetition of "gather together" (συνερχομένων) once again signifies a church assembly, and this genitive absolute is modified by the phrase ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ therefore giving the idea of meeting together in the same place.<sup>142</sup> What is the purpose of this gathering? It is implied by the negative οὐκ ἔστιν κυριακὸν δεῖπνον φαγεῖν. The οὐκ ἔστιν, when used with the aorist infinitive φαγεῖν, could denote a logical impossibility hence giving the idea of 'it is not possible for you to eat the Lord's Supper'.<sup>143</sup> κυριακὸν is in a

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<sup>137</sup> Fee, *First Epistle*, 538.

<sup>138</sup> Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 159.

<sup>139</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 539.

<sup>140</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 597.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 597

<sup>142</sup> Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 856

<sup>143</sup> Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Corinthians*, 335.

possessive adjective hence giving the idea that the meals are belonging to the Lord; thereby giving the idea of the Lord's own Supper. Then the church should have been gathering to partake of the Lord's Supper; a communal meal and Eucharistic rite.<sup>144</sup> So the δεῖπνον, the meal, that was supposed to belong to Jesus, and to give glorify to Him, was not being celebrated when the Corinthians gathered for church.<sup>145</sup>

21. ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον προλαμβάνει ἐν τῷ φαγεῖν καὶ ὃς μὲν πεινᾷ ὃς δὲ Μεθύει.

With an explanation for γὰρ (for), Paul ties together the preceding to come together in verse 18 and 20 by spelling out both the nature of the divisions and why their meal was not to be the Lord's Supper. The division was manifested among the Corinthians when they gathered for worship. When they came together as a church community, it was not a communal meal that they were celebrating. Their meal gatherings were characterized as consisting of each taking a private supper (ἴδιον δεῖπνον 11:21) as opposed to the Lord's Supper (κυριακὸν δεῖπνον 11:20). The result was that, one went home hungry while another became drunk (11:21).

In contrast to what the church should have been doing, celebrating the κυριακὸν δεῖπνον, Paul writes that they instead were practicing ἴδιον δεῖπνον. Garland translates the phrase as "his own meal" meaning that instead of everyone partaking of a common table, individual meals were being observed at church gatherings.<sup>146</sup> In order to better ascertain what is grammatically being communicated here, a look must be taken into how the Corinthian meal was probably structured. Hans Lietzmann describes the practice:

"Each brings provisions and wine with him according to his means and thus contributes his share to the common supply. When all are present the meal begins, and proceeds with seemly sociability. This is the rule. If, on the other hand, anyone keeps his own food for himself, does not wait for late-comers or even allows them to go hungry while he himself drinks too much, he is sharply reprimanded."<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Theissen, "The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity" 148.

<sup>145</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 598.

<sup>146</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 541.

<sup>147</sup> Lietzmann, "Mass" 185.



This meal was referred to in the ancient world as an *eranos*; a type of potluck in which each brought according to his means in order to share with all. According to their tradition, the churches of Paul mainly met in houses.<sup>148</sup> It was the responsibility of the host to perform the culturally expected deeds of hospitality, including presenting the guests with a meal.<sup>149</sup> It seems safe to assume that much of church practices took place around the meal table. Therefore, it should have been seen as an extreme violation of church unity to exclude fellow Christians from the fellowship table.<sup>150</sup>

There is some confusion in the wording of this verse as to which word is carrying the most emphasis. Some scholars point to προλαμβάνει being the practice that Paul is here criticizing. The word carries temporal idea, giving the meaning of “to take beforehand.”<sup>151</sup> NIV translates it that, each one goes ahead without waiting for anyone else. Different scholars hold this reading as follows: the wealthy members arrive while the working class and the slaves are held up with obligations and by the time the church is completely assembled, there was little food and wine left for the late comers while some members had already overindulged.

Some scholars place the emphasis on ἕκαστος, which highlights the problem as being one of individualism.<sup>152</sup> Coupled with τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον, Thiessen views this as implying private dinners.<sup>153</sup> The picture being painted is that the wealthy members of the church were consuming meals that were superior in quality and quantity as compared to the food given to the poorer members of the church.<sup>154</sup>

The wealthier Corinthians were merely getting a head start on the working class members and were partaking of food and wine of higher quality and in far greater portions in front of the

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<sup>148</sup> Thiessen, *Social Setting*, 85-91.

<sup>149</sup> Lampe, *The Corinthians Eucharist Dinner Party*,

<sup>150</sup> Thiessen, *Social Setting*, 83-89.

<sup>151</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 599.

<sup>152</sup> Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 194.

<sup>153</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle Corinthians*, 147-150.

<sup>154</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 600

poor ones. They did not wait for the poor when they ate the meal and this behavior was so strange to be seen in the Christian church. Witherington says that such behavior was caused by the Gentiles who continued to follow their social conventions of their pagan culture.<sup>155</sup> This was clear because many of Paul's converts were Gentiles. Thus, this is why he even warned them in 1 Corinthians 10 against participating in the feasts in pagan temples because such behavior would not have gone down well with a Jewish audience.<sup>156</sup> And this was confirmed by Paul himself in 1 Corinthians 10:20 where it seems that they were partaking in both the Lord's Supper and the meals from the pagan god temple which was contrary to Paul's understanding of Eucharist.<sup>157</sup>

This was not only the case to the Corinthian Christians. But in discussing this in a larger context, there were also a number of Jews and synagogue attending Gentiles who had converted Christianity in Corinth (Acts 18:8). So, arguing this on the basis of social factors, there is a stress that those who were called weak or poor might have started to eat food sacrificed to idols as a means of keeping contact with their fellows from the pagan environment. However, Theissen argues that food was a matter of social communication in the Greco-Roman world and that socio-economic factors were the root of conflict that Paul tries to solve here. According to 1 Corinthians 10:23-26 the high class people could eat well and have plenty in their own homes since they could buy food from the marketplace while the low class people could not. The great mass of people from Greece and Roman soldiers ate meat in special circumstances. In fact, eating meat became a central problem in a way that Paul was directing some to meat market since their socio-economic status had influenced their behavior to do so. And on the side of the weak and poor, because they were not able to buy food, so for they went to the pagan temples where food was daily available.<sup>158</sup>

Social order seems to have been kept as high-class Christians used banquets to distance themselves from others. The reasons why Paul encourages believers to eat together was to reflect that they were one body in Christ (1 Corinthians 11:33). In fact, he encourages unity of race by

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<sup>155</sup> Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 248.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>157</sup> Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 199.

<sup>158</sup> Theissen, "The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity" 122-126.

saying that there is neither Jew nor Greek (Galatian 3:28). Paul sought to utilize the celebration of meals as a way of social bonding; a way to bring about harmony and unity among believers as Dennis Smith comments:

(Paul) will respond to issue of social stratification at the table but will especially develop, the theme of social equality. In his discussion of early Christians worship he will utilize many features from the rules of banquet entertainment suggesting that the worship took place at the community table.<sup>159</sup>

Smith remarks that regarding the centrality of the meal table in Christian gatherings seems to agree with the parallelism between when you come together as a church and when you come to eat (1 Corinthians 11:17-18, 20-21, 33). Paul refers to the celebration of the Eucharist as κυριακὸν δεῖπνον which is the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthian 11:20). This is formed from the combination of two words δεῖπνον meaning banquet and κυριακὸν meaning the Lord's. Although κυριακὸν appears as an adjective, it carries the possessive force of a genitive indicating that this δεῖπνον belongs to the Lord as picturing the Lord as the host of the banquets. Hence, Paul's rebuke to the church in Corinth lies in the fact that they had forgotten that Christ was the host, the meal president and the venerated deity in every occasion that the church would gather to partake of any common meal (1 Corinthian 11:17-34).

However, there is no clear evidence of the verb being used here and in this way applies in the context of eating. In the present case, the lack of further description by Paul makes a clear-cut decision a bit difficult to come by. The Greek word προλαμβάνει (take) can have a temporal meaning and could be translated as mean to consume or devour.<sup>160</sup> This word gives the passage a stronger sense. The Corinthian Christians, as the church of God, were expected to share their meal with their fellow members in the Church. In fact, the rich were bringing it; but were eating and drinking the food themselves without thinking about the poor people.<sup>161</sup> This translation is supported by the two phrases ἐν τῷ φαγεῖν in that by utilizing the aorist infinitive, it indicates what is taking place in conjunction with the meal and in the presence of all. Secondly, the use of ἕκαστος

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>160</sup> Hays, 1 Corinthians, 197.

<sup>161</sup> Barret, First Epistle to the Corinthians, 262.

implies that all are present, both the drunk and the hungry.<sup>162</sup> If this reading is correct, then the rich were consuming the portion of the meal that should have been shared with the poor. In satisfying their own desires in greed and gluttony, the Corinthians could not have communal fellowship with each other and with Christ around the Lord's Table. There was no κυριακὸν δεῖπνον in such meals but only a self-serving individual dinner.

The verse ends with the phrase καὶ ὃς μὲν πεινᾷ ὃς δὲ μεθύει which means for each one's takes his own supper; and one is hungry and another is drunken or is drunk. Fee's view is that Paul takes words from both parts of a meal, eating and drinking, and expresses them in their extremes.<sup>163</sup> There is not a literal drunkenness being spoken against here, but overindulgence; and not real hunger, but a meal of less quality and quantity. Morris, however, sees Paul as using these words literally to express the sharp contrast between the hungry poor who are lacking even necessary food, and as compared to the drunken rich. Whether the words are merely for argument or are truly indicative of the practice, Paul makes it clear that it is not the Lord's Supper being celebrated. Garland writes that the Corinthian meal hardly proclaims the meaning of the Lord's death for all. According to him, call it what you will, but do not call it the Lord's Supper.<sup>164</sup>

22. μὴ γὰρ οἰκίας οὐκ ἔχετε εἰς τὸ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν ἢ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ θεοῦ καταφρονεῖτε καὶ καταισχύνετε τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας τί ὑμῖν εἶπω ἐπαινέσω ὑμᾶς ἐν τούτῳ οὐκ ἐπαινῶ.

Paul here continues in his trademark style of asking rhetorical questions.<sup>165</sup> Paul is obviously addressing the wealthy church members. The questions asked by Paul present his argument in two points. The first is that the Corinthian Christians are failing to see the sacredness of the communal table of the Lord and are treating it like any ordinary meal. The first has a question (μὴ γὰρ οἰκίας οὐκ ἔχετε εἰς τὸ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν). This phrase contains a similar shameful statement to the rich members over what they did to those who are poor.

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<sup>162</sup> Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 541, Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 541.

<sup>163</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to Corinthians*, 601.

<sup>164</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 542.

<sup>165</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 601.

Fee tries to retain the word μὴ/οὐκ usage with the translation, for surely it cannot be, “can it?”<sup>166</sup> The question is meant to show worship as a sacred time and the meal table as a sacred place. Fee says that if the Corinthians Christians wanted to eat their meals, then they could remain to their houses; but because they wanted to eat the meals as the Assembly of God’s people, then those meals was not belonging to them but belonged to the Lord (the Lord’s Table).<sup>167</sup> More to the point is that the poor probably did not possess the means and space to cook food in their own houses, which may have been a luxury only enjoyed by the privileged.<sup>168</sup> Osiek comments saying, “For the poor, a formal meal was had only for special occasions...thus the regular Christian community meal would have had far greater significance than a meal would among the wealthy.”<sup>169</sup>

The point of the meal was not to satisfy one’s hunger, but to come together as the people of God and thereby displaying the Gospel in the unity of fellowship and remembering the work of Christ that made such a unity possible.<sup>170</sup> The second question drives to the heart of the matter. Paul sincerely asks the wealthy Corinthians, “Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? Καταφρονεῖτε carries the idea of “to show contempt for.”<sup>171</sup> The phrase τῆς ἐκκλησίας is not just a reference to the poor in the church, but to the entire community of believers. τοῦ θεοῦ is a genitive of possession, showing the community to belong to God. Leon Morris writes that to behave like the Corinthians is to despise the church which is no less than the church of God. It is to despise the poor (notice the connection between the poor and the church). Barrett argues that, it is by failure here that the Corinthians profane the sacramental aspect of the Supper and not by liturgical error or by under valuing it, but by prefixing it to an un-brotherly

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 601.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 602.

<sup>168</sup> Garland *1 Corinthians*, 543.

<sup>169</sup> Osiek, *The Family in Early Christianity*,

<sup>170</sup> Hodge, *1 Corinthian*, 199.

<sup>171</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthian*, 542.

act.<sup>172</sup> The ones that are humiliated are the τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντάς, which Winter translates as the “have-nots.”<sup>173</sup>

Most commentators see this as a general reference to the poor, but Barrett makes the connection with οἰκίας and gives the possible translation, “those who do not have houses.”<sup>174</sup> Paul ends this section as he began it. As in verse 17, Paul writes οὐκ ἐπαινῶ, meaning, “I do not praise you.” By using this phrase, Paul is bracketing his condemnation of the Corinthian fellowship by showing its total lack of praise-worthiness.

By way of summary, Paul’s argument from 11:17-22 was that the Corinthian observance of the Eucharist was spoiled by their disunity. This was exhibited around the meal table in the mistreatment of the poorer members of the church by their richer members. Paul writes that these church meetings were “not for the better, but for the worse” (11:17). The rich devoured their portions and those that were meant to be shared with the poor, overindulging on food and drink while some in their midst went without. This behavior was divisive, creating a distinct visual barrier between the haves and the have-nots. There was nothing in the actions of the Corinthians that matched the self-giving picture of Jesus as reflected in the Eucharist. And so, it is on this dull that Paul turns from confrontation to instruction.

### 3.4.3.2 *The Words of Institution/Paradosis (11:23-26)*

23. ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣ παρεδίδοτο ἔλαβεν ἄρτον

Now that he has molded his argument as to why the Corinthian meal practice was not worthy of his praise, Paul wants to explain the reasons to that effect. It had to do with their own self-understanding as expressed earlier in verse 2; that they had been keeping the traditions that had

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<sup>172</sup> Barret, *First Epistle to Corinthians*, 264.

<sup>173</sup> Barret, *1 Corinthian*, 263.

<sup>174</sup> Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 157.

been handed down to them.<sup>175</sup> Paul turns his attention to describing the κυριακὸν δεῖπνον as it should be practiced; both παρέλαβον (“received”) and παρέδωκα (“handed on”) signify the transmission of the liturgy and practice. This language signifies the passing on of traditions between the worlds of Judaism and Hellenism.<sup>176</sup> Paul uses the language of transmission tradition to refer to these words of institution. Paul does not suggest that these words came to him by revelation. Moreover, the Last Supper material is not the kind of thing that belongs to revelation.<sup>177</sup> Blomberg says about it in the same way and this shows that it should not be interpreted as a direct revelation that Christ granted Paul, but rather as the transmission of the words of Christ by the disciples throughout the growing Christian community.<sup>178</sup>

Although direct revelation is not in view here, Paul views Jesus as being the originator of the meal and the ultimate source of the tradition.<sup>179</sup> The tradition that Paul received and has already passed on to the Corinthians describes what happened from the phrase ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣ παρεδίδετο, which translates as, on the night (that) he was handed over.<sup>180</sup> παρεδίδετο could be taken in a number of ways: it could refer to the arrest of Jesus as a result of Judas’ betrayal; it could carry the passive idea of being handed over by God to die a sacrificial death; or it could have a middle function, meaning that he handed himself over”<sup>181</sup> Whatever sense the verb communicates, the emphasis is on why the dinner observed on that night was something special.

Garland writes saying, “This ‘handing over’ and Jesus’ interpretation of what that meant in the words spoken over the bread and the cup mark this meal off from all others as something very unique.”<sup>182</sup> By setting up the account of the Last Supper in this manner, referring to the night of Jesus’ betrayal and the arrest in which he knowingly gave himself up to be crucified, Paul now

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<sup>175</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 606.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 607.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 607.

<sup>178</sup> Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 229.

<sup>179</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 607.

<sup>180</sup> Fitzmeyer, *1 Corinthians*, 436.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 436.

<sup>182</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 546.

begins to describe the meal of Jesus in contrast to the selfish way in which the Corinthians were observing the Eucharist.<sup>183</sup> Paul then launches into what has liturgically been labeled as the words of institution.<sup>184</sup> Before taking a look at the words themselves, the question to ask is; how does this material function as a response to the Corinthian abuse? This passage is unique in the letters of Paul, for it is the only instance where he cites at some length from the Jesus traditions that would eventually appear in our Gospels.

Andrew McGowan has surveyed early liturgical institution narratives and offers some insights into this passage. McGowan writes, “There is no doubt that the institution narrative is here presented as of some liturgical significance, broadly speaking, but it is also clear that the problem at Corinth was one of ethics as much as or more than of ritual.” This gives some life and flexibility to the Eucharist. In McGowan’s view, Paul is not shackling the church’s observance of the meal to a recitation of words and repetition of ritual. McGowan writes saying that, the narrative and the call to “do this in memory of me” would seem to lead to “thanksgiving” more easily than the mere recitation of the words ‘this is my body that is for you.’<sup>185</sup> Howard Marshall agrees with McGowan’s assessment, arguing that this text is a description of what Jesus did at a meal” and not a binding command of what the church ought to do.<sup>186</sup>

Another interpretive element that needs to be dealt with before going forward with the exegesis is the bread-supper-cup sequence that Paul describes. Peter Lampe writes that the Eucharist, as communicated to the Corinthians, followed these three steps. First, the Eucharistic bread is blessed and broken. Then, a nourishing dinner takes place. Finally, the dinner ends with the blessing of the cup and the drinking from it.<sup>187</sup> The Lord’s Supper *paradosis* handed on by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23b-25 presupposes, as the words μετὰ τὸ δεῖπνῆσαι clearly attest, a meal between the bread ceremony and the cup ceremony. Paul is then framing the communal meal

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<sup>183</sup> Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 229.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>185</sup> McGowan, “Is There a Liturgical Text in This Gospel? 73-87.

<sup>186</sup> Marshall, *Last Supper*, 111.

<sup>187</sup> Lampe, “The Eucharist” 37.



between the bread (word) and cup (word).<sup>188</sup> Although placing a meal in the middle of a church service may seem strange to contemporary church goers, Das writes that a worship service without a community meal would have equally been as strange to the Corinthians at that time.<sup>189</sup>

Much work has been done in analyzing the sequence in which the elements are blessed. One of the most prominent voices of the last century was Hans Lietzmann who placed Paul's sequence of blessing next to the Synoptics in order to discern elements of liturgy.<sup>190</sup> Since analyzing the other accounts of the Last Supper will be to no avail in the current study, it is now time to return to the exegetical study of Corinthians.

Paul writes that Jesus' first action was ἔλαβεν ἄρτον. This is the same formulaic phrase used in Matthew 26:26, Mark 14:22, and Luke 22:19. The phrase "he took bread" should be seen in its original Passover context. Paul uses this word in the first letter to the Corinthians prior to this passage (5:8, 10:16-17). Although this will not be further discussed in this thesis, but it is showing the connection that Paul is drawing between the bread and the body. For now, the words ἔλαβεν ἄρτον show how Jesus is using the Passover context to reinterpret the meaning of the bread, as he was distributing it, in terms of his own death.<sup>191</sup>

24. καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν

After Jesus takes the bread, he "gives thanks" for it. Paul, along with Luke, employs the word εὐχαριστήσας, which is a participle that gives rise to the common name of the rite: the Eucharist. Matthew and Mark use the word εὐλογήσας, which means, having blessed.<sup>192</sup> Some have viewed εὐχαριστήσας as arising from Hellenistic Christian communities while εὐλογήσας was a more

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<sup>188</sup>Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 546.

<sup>189</sup> Das, *1 Corinthians*, 188

<sup>190</sup> Lietzmann, "Mass" 166.

<sup>191</sup> Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 606.

<sup>192</sup> Firtzmeyer, *First Corinthians*, 437.

Jewish word. But Fitzmeyer sees them both as being of Palestinian background.<sup>193</sup> Jeremias views this simply as a saying of grace over the meal, which seems likely.<sup>194</sup>

Having taken and blessed the bread, Jesus proceeds to break it. ἔκλασεν is a verb that is only used in the New Testament to express the breaking of bread at a meal.<sup>195</sup> The action itself does not require a metaphorical interpretation that is clearly referring to the death of Christ, but it is a phrase only used to denote a fellowship meal.<sup>196</sup> Jesus now speaks words over the bread, reinterpreting the Passover tradition and drawing the themes of deliverance around himself. He says τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν. A literal reading is, “this of mine is the body which is for you.”<sup>197</sup> Fee says the Lord’s Supper that the Christians celebrate is in fact a continuation of the Last Supper that refer to the actions of Christ in distributing the bread to his disciples and probably a Passover meal at which it interprets the bread and wine in terms of his body and blood that was given through his death on the cross.<sup>198</sup>

Thiselton writes that the phrase σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν characterizes both early the Pauline and Lukan tradition that are reflective of Isaiah 53: 12 which is the work of the Suffering Servant; which both identify and substitute as does the σῶμα of Christ.<sup>199</sup> Fee goes on saying, “By offering them to share in ‘his body’ in this way, he invited his disciples to participate in the meaning of the benefits of that death.”<sup>200</sup> Another element unique to the Luke/Paul is the phrase τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.<sup>201</sup> Blomberg gives the translation as: “do this as my memorial.”<sup>202</sup> Garland draws further meaning from the Passover context, writing that this phrase: “...commands ritual

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 437.

<sup>194</sup> Jeremias, “Eucharist Words” 104, 111.

<sup>195</sup> Fitzmeyer, *First Corinthians*, 437 cf. Luke 24:20, Acts 2:46, 27:35, Mark 8:6. 19, 14:22, Matthew 14:19

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 437.

<sup>197</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 546.

<sup>198</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 608.

<sup>199</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 877.

<sup>200</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 551.

<sup>201</sup> Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 551, Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 877.

<sup>202</sup> Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 230.

remembrance of this foundational saving event... It is related to Jewish liturgical remembrance that praises and proclaims the mighty acts of God. What is to be remembered, as far as Paul is concerned, is that the crucified one gave his body and sacrificed his blood in an expiatory death that brings the offer of salvation to all persons... They are to imitate Christ's example of self-giving. Everything they do in their meal should accord with his self-sacrifice for others."<sup>203</sup>

Like the Passover, the Eucharist was meant to become a memorial meal. However, there has been some scholarly debate as to what exactly is being remembered. Jeremias argues that the subject of ἀναμνησιν is God, meaning that the meal is not to remind man of Christ's Sacrifice, but rather to remind God of the kingdom promises he made in the Eucharist.

25. ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι λέγων τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἢ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι τοῦτο ποιεῖτε ὡσάκις ἐὰν πίνητε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν

The introductory phrase ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον literally translates, "and likewise, the cup." Many translations take the verb ἔλαβεν, "he took," from verse 23.<sup>204</sup> The NRSV, KJV gives a more literal translation, "with the cup after supper." μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι, which is "after supper," indicates that the wine blessing was said at the conclusion of the fellowship meal.<sup>205</sup> Thiselton writes that μετὰ, with the aorist active articular infinitive, τὸ δειπνῆσαι, means 'after taking the main meal.'<sup>206</sup> This language also seems to show two courses to the communal meal: a dinner followed by a religious rite; with the blessing over the wine marking the transition between the two.<sup>207</sup> This is one of the strongest arguments for seeing the Eucharist in terms of the Greco-Roman banquet. Many scholars argue in favor of seeing the cup as the 'Cup of Blessing' which is the third cup of the Passover feast.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 548.

<sup>204</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 613.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 613.

<sup>206</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 882.

<sup>207</sup> Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 188.

<sup>208</sup> Marshall, "Last Supper" 119.

The Cup of Blessing points forward in time to the coming of the Messiah. As Jesus takes this cup, which is already weighted with eschatological significance, he says τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι. Barrett gives the translation ‘this cup is the new covenant in my blood.’<sup>209</sup> These words also draw attention to Jesus’ passion, more so since covenants are typically established through the shedding of blood. Paul uses the modifier καινὴ to describe the covenant. Paul writes: τοῦτο ποιεῖτε ὡς ἅκις ἐὰν πίνετε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. Fee sees this as a repetition of the previous command “do this in remembrance” precisely because this is where his concern lay, not in repetition of the words per se, but that the eating of the Lord’s Supper should truly be done in Christ’s honor.<sup>210</sup>

The Corinthians had lost sight of what both Jesus’ words and actions signified. By breaking the bread and passing the cup, Jesus was symbolically giving himself to his disciples. Paul emphasizes observing the meal with a sense of memorial, in which the church emulates Jesus’ self-giving. In this way, the church is to picture in its Eucharistic observance the truth of the gospel. Fitzmeyer writes that the directive of repeating what Christ had done preserves the meaning of the death of Jesus and brings the sense of proclaiming its redemptive significance.<sup>211</sup>

26. ὡς ἅκις γὰρ ἐὰν ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον πίνετε τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ

Paul now gives the reason why he has recited the Last Supper tradition: “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, the Lord’s death you proclaim until he comes.”<sup>212</sup> The word γὰρ grammatically links this verse with what has preceded it.<sup>213</sup> ὡς ἅκις, when used with the indefinite ἐὰν, gives the idea of “as many times as.”<sup>214</sup> Whenever the κυριακὸν δεῖπνον is properly observed, the death of Christ is proclaimed (καταγγέλλετε is indicative, not imperative). What does it mean

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<sup>209</sup> Barret, *1 Corinthians*, 268.

<sup>210</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 614.

<sup>211</sup> Fitzmeyer, *1 Corinthians*, 444.

<sup>212</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 548.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 548

<sup>214</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 886.

to proclaim the Lord's death? Some assert that the Lord's death is proclaimed by the action of the rite. Others believe that there was a verbal component, in which a proclamation was made in a homiletic structure. This type of liturgical presentation of the death of Christ resembles the Passover tradition of retelling the Exodus story. Garland, however, sees the emphasis of this proclamation as arising from the actions of both the eating and drinking.<sup>215</sup>

Paul's purpose of repeating the Last Supper tradition was a corrective, not of the Corinthians abuse of the liturgy of the meal, but of the ethos that it should represent. Garland writes that if they are proclaiming the Lord's death in what they do at and during the Lord's Supper, they will not overindulge themselves, despise others, shame them, or allow them to go hungry.<sup>216</sup> Peter Lampe agrees saying that in the Eucharist, Christ's death is also proclaimed and made present by means of our giving ourselves up to others.<sup>217</sup> Dennis Smith writes on the same note saying that the purpose of the death of Christ was to create a saved community. Paul finds that the most profound meaning of the meal as Lord's Supper lies in its ability to bring together a disparate people into one community.<sup>218</sup> Therefore, it is the table unity of the church, which should overflow with love for another and bring a mutual meeting of needs that proclaims the community making power of Christ's death to the world.

Paul ends the verse by looking to the future consummation of the kingdom. Jeremias sees ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ not temporally, but as a prospective subjunctive, which would signify purpose, giving the meaning of 'until the goal is reached that he comes.'<sup>219</sup> He argues that the Eucharist proclaims the beginning of the time of salvation and prays for the 'breaking in of its complete fulfillment.'<sup>220</sup> Fee sees this as Paul reminding the Corinthians of their essentially eschatological existence. They

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<sup>215</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 548.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 549.

<sup>217</sup> Lampe, "The Eucharist" 45.

<sup>218</sup> Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 199-200.

<sup>219</sup> Jeremias, "Eucharist Words" 253.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

have not yet arrived; at this meal they are to be reminded that there is yet a future for themselves, as well as for all of the people of God.<sup>221</sup>

The Eucharist should serve as a sign pointing beyond itself to a greater, yet to come feast. Jesus, in his last meal with his disciples, makes a promise that all of history will culminate in a glorious banquet. Paul here is urging the Corinthians to adopt this futuristic view of the messianic banquet into their current Eucharistic practice. Thiselton agrees with the assessment, seeing the fellowship meal as the first initial example of the final Supper of the Lamb consummation to which the Lord's Supper points in promise.<sup>222</sup>

### 3.4.3.3 *Discern the Body/ (11:27-34)*

27. ὥστε ὃς ἂν ἐσθίῃ τὸν ἄρτον ἢ πίνη τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ κυρίου ἀναξίως ἔνοχος ἔσται τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ κυρίου

ὥστε denotes a logical consequence. Thus, a sufficient rendering would be “therefore,” as the NRSV and NIV have it, or consequently.<sup>223</sup> ὃς ἂν is indefinite, meaning “whoever.”<sup>224</sup> In the previous verse, Paul employed the second person. Here, he generalizes his argument to be in the third person indefinite pronoun.<sup>225</sup> Although τοῦ κυρίου is only attached to τὸ ποτήριον, it should be seen as modifying τὸν ἄρτον as well, hence giving the idea: “whoever eats the Lord's bread or drinks the Lord's cup.”<sup>226</sup> ἀναξίως refers to doing something that does not square with the character or nature of something.<sup>227</sup> The reference is to the actions of the church (eating and drinking) and not to their character.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 616.

<sup>222</sup> Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 888.

<sup>223</sup> Firtzmeyer, *1 Corinthians*, 444.

<sup>224</sup> Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 888.

<sup>225</sup> Firtzmeyer, *1 Corinthians* 444.

<sup>226</sup> Barret, *1 Corinthians*, 230-231.

<sup>227</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthian*, 550.

<sup>228</sup> Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 230-231.

Thiselton writes that Paul's primary point is that attitude and conduct should fit the message and solemnity of what is being proclaimed.<sup>229</sup> For Hays, this brings it all back to the surrounding context of social abuses among the Corinthian believers. To eat the meal unworthily means to eat it in a way that provokes divisions, with disregard for the needs of others in the community.<sup>230</sup> During the communal meal, the wealthy host treated the other wealthy Corinthians better than the poorer members of the community.<sup>231</sup> The wealthy members ate luxuriously while the poor members ate insufficient portions of the bread and wine. Such behavior took place not only at the δεῖπνον but also at the symposium or worship service that followed the supper. Their behavior hence brought disunity in the Church. That whosoever conducts themselves around the fellowship table is liable (ἔνοχος) for Christ's death.<sup>232</sup> ἔνοχος is a judicial term, which means that the Corinthians are answerable to God, the final judge, for this kind of abuse.<sup>233</sup> This criminal language is not meant to show that the Corinthian church members are somehow insulting a holy rite. Rather, as Fee argues, they have missed the point of the meal, which is to proclaim the salvation gotten through Christ's death, but, instead, they place themselves under the same liability as those responsible for that death in the first place.<sup>234</sup> Corinthians therefore become guilty of the death that they should be proclaiming.

28. δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν καὶ οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου πινέτω. δέ operates as an adversative, connecting this thought to the previous verse.<sup>235</sup> δοκιμαζέτω is a third person singular present active imperative with a hortatory function. With the subject of ἄνθρωπος and the reflexive ἑαυτὸν, one could give the translation: but let a man genuinely examine himself. Paul used the adjective δόκιμοι in verse 19 which Thiselton has translated as "those who

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<sup>229</sup> Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 889.

<sup>230</sup> Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 200.

<sup>231</sup> Duff, "Celebrating the Lord's Supper in Corinth" 558.

<sup>232</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 550.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 550.

<sup>234</sup> Fee, *First Epistle Corinthians*, 618-619.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

are tried and true.”<sup>236</sup> He translates the verbal form as ‘a person should examine his or her own genuineness.’<sup>237</sup>

Fee does not see this as a call for deep personal introspection to determine whether one is worthy of being at the table.<sup>238</sup> Rather, this should be seen in conjunction with the eschatological promise of verse 26 since they will be examined by God at the end. They should test themselves now as to their attitude toward the table, especially, on their behavior toward others at the table.<sup>239</sup> This self-examination is meant to encourage the church to leave their pride out of the communal meal. Garland writes saying that the genuine Christian recognizes that there are no class divisions at the Lord’s Supper.<sup>240</sup>

29. ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα.

γὰρ is used in an explanatory sense, setting up the reason why the Corinthians should examine themselves before coming to the table.<sup>241</sup> This verse has resulted in much misunderstanding in the Eucharistic importance and practice. What does Paul mean by discerning the body (διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα)? In this text, Fee reflects on verse 27 about ἀναξίως in the celebrating of Lord’s Supper with the thought that anyone who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgment on oneself. Paul’s concern is on the improper eating that brings them to be under judgment. This is different as compared with the understanding in verse 27 whereby it seems like the Corinthian church put themselves under the same kind of liability as those responsible for the death of Christ.<sup>242</sup>

So, eating without recognizing the body has been interpreted by Fee as a failure to distinguish between the Eucharist (food) from the common food of their private meals. For Hays,

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<sup>236</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 891.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 891.

<sup>238</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 621

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 621.

<sup>240</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 551.

<sup>241</sup> Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 622.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 622.



the discerning of the body means recognizing the community of believers for what it really is the one body of Christ.<sup>243</sup> This interpretation looks back to 10:17; because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. So, σῶμα is both a reference to Christ's body as symbolized by the bread and the church body as symbolized by the breaking and distribution of the bread.<sup>244</sup> Garland comments on this interpretation saying that the body to be discerned is not just the piece of bread on the table but the body at the table.<sup>245</sup> Blomberg observes to this idea writing that σῶμα probably refers to the corporate body of Christ, the church, particularly since Paul does not refer to both body and blood.<sup>246</sup> Garland does not see how this reading fits with the idea of to judge rightly.<sup>247</sup> Barrett agrees that such an interpretation stresses the meaning of the verb.<sup>248</sup> However, Thiselton extracts the phrase as to recognize what characterizes the body as different.<sup>249</sup> This is an appeal to see the uniqueness of Christ and his self-giving acts of love. The elements of the Eucharist display that action. Therefore, a proper understanding of what these elements represent should change the Corinthians' attitude and behavior towards others.<sup>250</sup> It seems that the great lengths that Paul has gone through to show that the abuse at the table in a "wealthy/poor" divide gives weight to seeing σῶμα as the church, the very body of Christ. Therefore, the view promoted by Hays, Garland, and Blomberg seems to be the best reading of this verse.

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<sup>243</sup> Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 200.

<sup>244</sup> Bornkamm, "Lord's Supper and Church in Paul" 123-160.

<sup>245</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 552.

<sup>246</sup> Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 231.

<sup>247</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 552.

<sup>248</sup> Barret, *1 Corinthians*, 275.

<sup>249</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 893.

<sup>250</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 553.

30. διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἄρρωστοὶ καὶ κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί.

διὰ τοῦτο shows a causal development of what happens when one fails to “discern the body.”<sup>251</sup> Many (πολλοὶ) are ἀσθενεῖς (sick or weak), ἄρρωστοὶ (ill), and κοιμῶνται (dying or literally falling asleep).<sup>252</sup> This verse has been a puzzle to interpreters, both past and present. What exactly is Paul communicating here? Fee argues that, Paul is here stepping into the prophetic role by the Spirit since he has seen a divine cause and effect between two otherwise independent realities.<sup>253</sup> Barrett sees this both as an explanation for current events at Corinth and a warning against future judgment against those who abuse the Lord’s Table.<sup>254</sup> Morris also sees this as the humbling hand of the Lord.<sup>255</sup> Others argue that this is a natural consequence for the drunkenness, gluttony, and absolute greed done by the Corinthians.<sup>256</sup> Garland puts out the idea that not only is the rich sick from greed, but the poor are weak from hunger.<sup>257</sup> Whatever the exact message Paul wished to communicate that such theological insight is not uncommon in Scripture.<sup>258</sup> The simple truth is this: judgment and blessing, death and life, are indeed in the hands of God, but there is also a cause or effect relationship in the natural and divine laws of the world. Paul wants the Corinthians to appropriately put this belief into their attitudes toward the Lord’s Table and in the behaviour that they exhibit on one another.

31-32. εἰ δὲ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν οὐκ ἂν ἐκρινόμεθα κρινόμενοι δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου παιδευόμεθα ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν.

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<sup>251</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 897.

<sup>252</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 553.

<sup>253</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 625.

<sup>254</sup> Barret, *1 Corinthians*, 275.

<sup>255</sup> Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 16.

<sup>256</sup> Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 894.

<sup>257</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 553.

<sup>258</sup> One of the best examples of the abuse of church fellowship incurring divine judgment is Ananias and Saphira in Acts 5.

The NRSV gives the simple reading of verse 31, “But if we judged ourselves we would not be judged.” Thiselton repeats his understanding of διακρίνομεν from 29 as to “recognize” what characterizes the body as different.<sup>259</sup> Therefore, he sees Paul’s admonition here as an appeal to discern our distinctiveness, not as individuals, but as dying and being raised by the one body of Christ.<sup>260</sup> If we are discerning it in this manner, then we should escape the judgments described in verse 30.<sup>261</sup> But a failure to examine one’s self results in judgment from the Lord (τοῦ κυρίου). According to Hays, Paul here is advocating that the church exercises self-discipline within itself.<sup>262</sup> Garland summarizes Paul’s argument from these verses: “Joining the Lord’s Supper in the spirit of the world that put Christ to death means that they will be condemned with the world. Eating the Supper with the spirit of Christ means salvation and requires loving behavior towards others.”<sup>263</sup> By so instructing the Corinthians, Paul is showing that their current sufferings are not purposeless evils, but are being used by God to bring them into closer communion with himself and with one another.<sup>264</sup> Thiselton writes that such discipline plays a positive role in the process of being conformed to the image of Christ, in suffering as well as in glory.<sup>265</sup>

33-34. ὥστε ἀδελφοί μου συνερχόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε εἴ τις πεινᾷ ἐν οἴκῳ ἐσθιέτω ἵνα μὴ εἰς κρίμα συνέρχησθε τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ὡς ἂν ἔλθῳ διατάξομαι.

Paul now seeks to draw to a close his words on the Eucharistic fellowship meal at Corinth, using ὥστε, meaning “so then,” to conclude his argument.<sup>266</sup> συνερχόμενοι (gather together) harks back

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<sup>259</sup> Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 897.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 897.

<sup>261</sup> Barret, *1 Corinthians*, 276.

<sup>262</sup> Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 202.

<sup>263</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 554.

<sup>264</sup> Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 162.

<sup>265</sup> Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 898.

<sup>266</sup> Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 567

to the verb used in 11:17-18 to this discussion and serves to bracket this unit.<sup>267</sup> As shown earlier, this describes the act of meeting together as a church. εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν puts the context directly on the eating of the Lord's Supper. Paul refers warmly to the Corinthians, calling them ἀδελφοί μου, which when used of a group of mixed gender is rendered as my brothers and sisters (NIV). When they gather to eat the Eucharist, they are instructed to ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε. Most translations render the phrase as “wait for one another.”<sup>268</sup> However, many commentators, employing a wider range, see this as an appeal for hospitality. Fee writes that they are to welcome or receive one another when they come together to eat.<sup>269</sup> Even if the verb does mean, “to wait for,” it still necessitates that the members share their food with one another and, this, is not merely a temporal idea.<sup>270</sup>

Paul's final instruction is that “if anyone one is hungry” (εἴ τις πεινᾷ), then they should “eat their meal at home” ( ἐν οἴκῳ ἐσθιέτω ). Fee reads εἴ τις πεινᾷ not as referring to the famished, but as carrying the satirical weight of if anyone wants to defile. Garland does not see Paul here giving them advice about eating at home before worship.<sup>271</sup> Rather, as Thiselton notes, if the well-to-do take their meals in their own private houses, the poor and disadvantaged will not be shamed as they are in the case of current practices. The fellowship table of the church is not a place for greed and selfishness. It is where, by the breaking of bread and the sharing of wine, the death of Christ is proclaimed.

Jesus came preaching a new covenant and a coming kingdom, and promised a future banquet where he would gather with his people around one table. It is in light of his act of redemption and eschatological promises that the Corinthian members were to take of κυριακὸν δεῖπνον. Therefore, it is around a unified and hospitable meal table where the community creating

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<sup>267</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 554

<sup>268</sup> NKJV, NIV.

<sup>269</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 628

<sup>270</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 554

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 899

effect of Christ's death is most vividly pictured; to distort that picture is to profane the body and blood of Christ and may bring about the very judgment of God.

## 4 CHAPTER FOUR: PAUL'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

### 4.1 Introduction

This section aims at presenting on Paul's understanding of Eucharist. However, there would be an explanation, first, about a brief background of the nature of Eucharist according to Paul. Secondly, there will be a part dealing with Paul's understanding of Eucharist.

### 4.2 The Nature of Eucharist According to Paul.

According to Paul the nature of the Lord's Supper is not a duty itself or a duty apparent to us from the nature of things but a duty made such to Christians by the positive institution of Jesus Christ. Paul himself records the tradition authorizing the Lord's Supper as the account of the last supper of Jesus with his Disciples which Paul himself received and passed on to the Corinthians at the foundations of their Church (11:23).<sup>272</sup>

When Paul founded the church in Corinth, he taught the Christians there to celebrate the Lord's Supper which was known as the *kuriakon deipnon* (1 Cor. 11:20) in the same way as Jesus did on the night in which he was betrayed and delivered to his enemies and faced death. He placed upon the Christians of Corinth a text which was supposed to set the standard for their celebrations of Lord's Supper. The apostle cites this paradosis in 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 as responding to the Lord's Supper factions as follows: For I received (παρέλαβον) from the lord what I also handed on (παρέδωκα) to you, that the lord Jesus on the night when he was handed over (παρεδίδοτο) took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks (εὐχαριστήσας), he broke it, and said, "This is my body (τὸ σῶμα) that is for you. do this in remembrance (τὴν ἀνάμνησιν) of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper (μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι), saying, this cup is the new covenant (ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη) in my blood (ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι). do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance (τὴν ἀνάμνησιν) of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the lord's death until he comes.

Most commentators believe Paul received this tradition from Christ indirectly through the Apostles who were with Christ before him. But others hold that just as Paul received the Gospel

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<sup>272</sup> Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 606.

itself directly from Christ through revelation (Galatian 1:12), so he received the important traditions related to the Gospel such as the Lord's Supper tradition through similar revelation.<sup>273</sup> On the contrary, to Garland argues that although Paul does not imply any communication from the risen Lord, but it does affirm the authoritative nature of this tradition. Christ is the source of the tradition.<sup>274</sup> This tradition of celebrating the Lord's Supper was kept and maintained throughout the course of Christian's tradition.<sup>275</sup>

### **4.3 Paul's Understands of Lord's Supper**

Paul's understanding of the Eucharist reinforced the relationship between baptism, Spirit and the Church.<sup>276</sup> The church, as the body of Christ, is therefore a pneumatic reality. It has been there ever since Jesus' death and resurrection, before and independent of individual believers. By baptism they are taken up into the body of Christ, and in every celebration of the Lord's Supper their membership in it is reaffirmed (1 Corinthians. 10:14-17).<sup>277</sup>

Baptism initiated the believer into one body which is Church (1 Corinthians. 12.13). Individual believers did not make a church, but an initiation into the Church through faith and baptism made the believer. By faith and baptism believers are drawn simultaneously into both communion (koinonia) with God and communion with the members of the Christian community (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).<sup>278</sup>

Paul sees the Eucharist as a deepening of the experience of two things. One is the communion with God in Christ; and, second, is the communion within the community of believers, the church. As we can see in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, Paul reminds the Corinthians what they gain by partaking of the bread and wine in their celebrations of the Lord's Supper, stressing above all the koinonia in which the celebrants participate with the Lord and each other. Through the

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<sup>273</sup> Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 226

<sup>274</sup> Garland David, *1 Corinthians*, 545

<sup>275</sup> Dunn, D. G James, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 600.

<sup>276</sup> Marrow, *Paul His Letters and Theology*, An Introduction to Paul's Epistle, 136-138.

<sup>277</sup> Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, 468.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 462.

Eucharist, the believer enters a koinonia into the body of Christ.<sup>279</sup> This koinonia is then what constitutes the community, through the Eucharist, as it becomes the body of Christ. Therefore, wherever the Eucharist is celebrated, the body of Christ is present.

According to Paul, the Eucharistic ecclesiology denies the possibility of church division. Where the Eucharist is celebrated, there the church of Christ is in full. Paul held that it is only in the Eucharistic celebration that the local church is an ideal manifestation of the church of God. All local churches are thus in full union in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Furthermore, since it is impossible for the body to be only partially present, as if it could be apportioned, wherever the Eucharist is celebrated there the whole body of Christ is made manifest. The church lives in the world on the basis of the Christ who was delivered to death and raised for them. It is filled with his Spirit and is obedient to him. Internally, the church forms a free body of people living together in love, who as bearers of the Spirit, together seek what is best for the one body with their very different spiritual gifts and abilities.<sup>280</sup> In reading 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, verse 16 says, “Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?” And verse 17 reads, “Because there is one bread, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”<sup>281</sup> That’s why the Lord’s Supper is often called the communion to emphasize that it upholds the community and unity of all believers despite being individuals.<sup>282</sup>

Basically, the Lord’s Supper is a mini gospel presentation. Paul takes it in its uniqueness that when we partake of the Lord’s Supper, we share our harmonious cooperation and interdependence within a human community. Paul applies these implications of the imagery in detail in his exposition of the spiritual gifts and their mutual contribution to building up the church. As we individually reach out and take the cup for ourselves, each one of us is by that action proclaiming the benefits of Christ’s death to ourselves; that is the unity of believers and when

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid., 473.

<sup>280</sup> Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, 468

<sup>281</sup> NIV, Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17.

<sup>282</sup> Adna, “Institutions of the Emerging Church” 104.



Christians participate in the Lord's Supper together, we also give a clear sign of their unity with one another (1 Cor. 10:17).<sup>283</sup>

In fact, the body of Christ is more than an image that we have in our mind. The body of Christ has a clearly and purposive symbol that expresses the joining together of the individual believers to harmonious communities as clearly expressed in 1 Corinthians 12: 12-13 through baptism. The unity of being in the body of Christ is grounded on issue that the members are brought into that body through baptism; and their constant reception of Christ' body and blood as found in the Lord's Supper.

Hence, the sacramental body unites the ecclesiastical body as is quoted in 1 Corinthians 12 verse 13 saying that we all were baptized with one Spirit into one body. Therefore, there is a clear theological exposition between baptism and Eucharist that can be seen in both sacraments. The sacraments of baptism and Eucharist are consistent to the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 and 12:13-14. The statement in 1 Corinthians 10:16 that the cup and the bread are a *koinonia* with Christ's blood and body runs parallel between baptism as a sharing in the death of Christ.<sup>284</sup>

Therefore, there is a clear parallelism between baptism and Eucharist as sacraments with both soteriological and ecclesiological significance in Paul. Baptism applies the soteriological and ecclesiological significance in Paul. Baptism applies to the soteriological reality of Christ's death and resurrection to the individual believers and puts him into the ecclesiological realm of Christ's body (1Corinthian 12:13). And accordingly, it is a sacramental act which only takes place once, namely at the beginning of the joining life with Christ. The Eucharist in contrast is the regular and frequently repeated sacrament that reaffirms and renews the believers' share in the salvific fruits of Christ's death as well as his participation in the one body of Christ.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Ibid, 105

<sup>284</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 105.

## 5 CHAPTER FIVE: GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERM

### 5.1 Introduction

As expressed in the title of this master thesis and explained in the introductory chapter, the understanding of the term ἀναξίως in the 1 Corinthians 11:27 with special regard to its interpretation in the ELCT-UKD is the central aim of this study, for this reason I consider it as appropriate to include this chapter between the exegetical analysis of verse 27 within the context of the whole textual unit 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 in the Chapter Three and the investigation of the reception of ἀναξίως in the Eucharistic practice of the ELCT-UKD in the following chapter six.

### 5.2 Meaning of ἀναξίως

The term ἀναξίως, which is used by Paul in 1 Cor 11:27, is derived from the adjective ἀναξίος meaning unworthy.<sup>286</sup> The root stem of this word comes from the Greek verb ἀξιόω. The verb ἀξιόω simply means to consider worthy, to deserve or to make an evaluation concerning the suitability of something.<sup>287</sup>

### 5.3 Occurrences and usage in the New Testament

The term ἄξιος is not very often used in the LXX (Septuagint). But it frequently appears in the papyri in the form of an adverb ἀξίως.<sup>288</sup> The word ἀξίως appears in the New Testament 41 times as an adjective and 6 times as an adverb. This word ἀξίως has two specifications. First, with the adjective form, the ἄξιος can be used as having a relatively high degree of comparable worth or value, corresponding, comparable, worthy of things in relation to other things.<sup>289</sup> In a narrow sense the adjective ἀξίος can be defined as equivalent, worthy, or appropriate and in broader sense it indicates the relationship of the two quantities.<sup>290</sup> In a positive way, the term ἄξιος can be used in

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<sup>286</sup> BDAG., 93.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>288</sup> EDNT, 113.

<sup>289</sup> BDAG., 93.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 113.

the sense of considering two things or one thing in relation to other things (Romans 8:18).<sup>291</sup> For example, in Romans 8:18 Paul is comparing the value of human suffering and the glory of God to come. The adjective ἄξιος in Romans 8:18 is used in a sense of weighing of the two entities and contrasts the suffering of the present time with the future glory.<sup>292</sup> In other hand, Paul wants to say that, no matter what befall us, nothing is comparable to the visible glory to be bestowed by God. The adjective ἄξιος can be translated as the use of things in relation to other things with the translation corresponding, or comparable. It can operate within the semantic domain of value and it is usually translated worthy. It usually means that one item has equal value and worthy in comparison to another. By extension, the word can be used within the semantic domain of proper or improper when something is worthy in the sense that it is fitting or proper in corresponding to what should be expected. For instance, Matthew 3:8 the Pharisees and Sadducees are told to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance.<sup>293</sup>

Second the term ἄξιος can be also used as an appearance of being corresponding, fitting or appropriate, worthy, fit or deserving of person. For example, in the book of Revelation 4:11 says, God is worthy to be praised. The ἄξιος sometime has the sense of “in a position to” (cf. 1 Cor 6:2), Do you not know that the saint will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? <sup>294</sup> The problem happened in 1 Cor 6:2 has related to the problem happened in 1 Cor 11:17-34 where by the rich despised the poor at the communal meals presents parallel situation in 1 Cor 11:21.<sup>295</sup> And in 1 Cor 6:2 we see the wealthier member were the one who brought the civil cases against the poor. Paul rejects the idea of Christians initiating lawsuits against fellow Christians.<sup>296</sup> The adjective ἀνάξιτοι which is in plural form of ἀνάξιτος has been used by Paul in a sense to denote the comparison of two things, that the church of God is

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<sup>291</sup> BDAG, 93.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>294</sup> Foerster, ἄξιος, ἀνάξιτος, 379

<sup>295</sup> Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 108.

<sup>296</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 200.

unworthy of civil courts and not civil court are unworthy of the Church and God is the one who judge the world.<sup>297</sup> He argues that by taking disputes to a pagan court is violating Christian community,<sup>298</sup> the same as taking the Lord's Supper as one's own meal violating the unity of the body of Christ.

The adverbial form of ἄξιος occurs 7 times in the LXX and NT and in this case, ἀναξίως occurs only twice in 1 Cor 27-29.<sup>299</sup> The adverbial ἄξιως has been used by Paul as a word of consideration, to consider something worthy, or deserving.<sup>300</sup> For instance, in the 1 Tim 5:17, Paul consider the church elders who preach and teach about the gospel, to deserve honor and worthy. Also, the same meaning has be explained in the gospel of Luke. Luke gives us an example of person who considered himself as not worthy to come near to Jesus and he wanted Jesus to say a word so that a servant can be healed (Luke 7:7).<sup>301</sup> But sometimes the ἄξιος can denote the negation. That negation in such a case generates the equivalent of ἀνάξιος (unworthy) which in 1 Cor 16:2 and in 1 Cor 11:27, occurs in form of adverb that refer for the partaking of the Eucharist in an unworthy manner.<sup>302</sup>

The vocabulary in verse 11:27 and 11:29 correspond to 11:27a ἀναξίως and 11:29b μὴ διακρίνων if not discerning 11:27b and 11:29a. The correspondence does not occur merely on the level of vocabulary but, rather, these words cause the half of verses to correspond. Eating and drinking unworthy occurs, if people do not discern the body (11:27a and 11:29b).<sup>303</sup> We should therefore understand 1 Cor 11:27a to implicitly be modified by the phrase τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ κυρίου as seen in the parallel 11:27b. In the New Testament records, Paul uses the positive ἄξιως four times and except 3 John 6 it is used only by him. In Ephesian 4:1 the term ἄξιως is used by Paul to mean worthy which literally means bringing up the other beam of scale,

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<sup>297</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle to Corinthians*, 428.

<sup>298</sup> Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 164.

<sup>299</sup> Trummer, ἄξιος, 113.

<sup>300</sup> BDAG, 94.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>302</sup> Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 69.

<sup>303</sup> Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 232.

bringing into equilibrium and therefore it is equivalent or worthily, a manner worthy of or suitability. In this context the ἀξίως refers to the lifestyle of the believer. Paul uses this word to instruct Christians to live ἀξίως of their calling. In Col 1:10 it's connotation is to instruct Christians that, they should live a life worthy of the Lord (cf. Rom 16:2) and 1 Thess 2:12 the phrase ἀξίως is encouraging, comforting and urging Christians to live lives worthy of God who calls them into his kingdom and glory. In Philippians 1:27 Paul instructs Christians to live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.<sup>304</sup> And in the present context the emphasis is on the conduct that is in balance with or equal to one's call.<sup>305</sup> In the 3 John 6, the Greek text literally reads worthily of God. The church has been called by God to show hospitality to its members. This refers to the way God has treated us or the kind of treatment that will bring praise to God.<sup>306</sup>

However, it does not appear that in any of the uses of the term worthy is in the sense of "equal to" or "in value" can apply.<sup>307</sup> To some extent the word "corresponding to" fits better than other comparing words. In this case, the negative ἀναξίως stands in relation to τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ κυρίου and "equal to" or "in value" does not suits appropriately. "Correspond to" works much better. They should treat each other at the Lord's Supper in a manner which corresponds to what they are eating and drinking, the body and blood of Christ. Thiselton says that the Church of Corinth were not good enough to perform the Eucharist because Paul's view was to see their moral behavior, replicate and fit to the message they preached in the Eucharist.<sup>308</sup>

In addition to that, the word ἀναξίως is not speaking of how worthy the Corinthians or any Church are to partake of the Supper. And since that English adverb seems more applicable to the person doing the eating than to the way it is being done, this word became a threat for generations of English speaking Christians.<sup>309</sup> But here, the word unworthy is an adverb. According to the Greek rules, the adverb modifies verbs while adjective modify nouns. Because unworthy is an

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<sup>304</sup> BDAG, 94.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., 94 and Hoehner, Ephesians, 504.

<sup>306</sup> Burdick, The letter of John, 451

<sup>307</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 550.

<sup>308</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 888-889.

<sup>309</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*,

adverb, it describes in what manner the bread and drink are being taken. Some believe that Paul is making a reference to people taking communion who have un-confessed sin; but unworthy does not describe the worthiness of the people as that would be an adjective. Hence the warning to receive the Lord's Supper ἀναξίως does not denote a moral quality, but an attitude determined by the Gospel.<sup>310</sup>

In context, whether from the Greek text or English, Paul is stating that, they are not discerning the body of the Lord (the Lord's physical body that hung on the cross) and His shed blood,<sup>311</sup> but rather are eating in such a manner as to fill their empty stomachs. Paul describes their conduct towards one another in the Lord's Supper setting with the adverb ἀναξίως. To eat and drink unworthy is clarified well in verse 27. Basically, it means to treat the Lord's Supper as one's own meal (11:21). Schottroff says that eating the bread and drinking the cup unworthy has the meaning of celebrating the Eucharist in a manner that wounds the holiness of the body of Christ. So, what the Christians of Corinth were doing was dangerous before God because the church is a property of God and sanctified by God. They had treated the common property consecrated to God as if it were private property.<sup>312</sup>

So, the Church of Corinth had to discern the body before having the Lord's Table because failure to discern the body can mean only inability to perceive the Christians' unity rooted in the sacrifice of Christ and that is actualized in the sacred meal (1 Corinthians 10:16-17); and this is unworthy way of partaking the Eucharist.<sup>313</sup>

Therefore, the term ἀναξίως as it is translated as unworthy; it is not in keeping with and corresponding to the character and nature of something, but instead to the nature of their action. Paul's warning to the church of Corinth was not to those who were living unworthily, but to those who were making a mockery of that which should have been most sacred by their behavior at the meal.<sup>314</sup> The body of Christ in verse 27b again refers to Jesus' crucifixion and its significance.

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<sup>310</sup> Foerster, ἀξίως, ἀναξίως, 380.

<sup>311</sup> Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 232.

<sup>312</sup> Schottroff, 53-54.

<sup>313</sup> Talbert, *Reading Corinthians*, 79.

<sup>314</sup> Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 231.

Instead of eating and drinking without consideration of others, the Corinthians should share with each other and partake in moderation. Indeed, in Paul's view the cup is not identified with the blood in any case but with the new covenant brought through the poured-out blood, thus through the Christ's death.<sup>315</sup>

All are to examine themselves. All must remember that Christ's atoning death was necessary because of our sinfulness.<sup>316</sup> Thus is why in verse 27 Paul says, "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. The word ἔνοχος is the juridical term. One can be guilty to the point of a particular punishment. In this case of the body and blood of Christ, since Jesus gives it to believers, there seems that there is no way we can take it to be a bad thing. When paired with some items, it means "sin against." The Church of Corinth were publicly associating themselves with the pagan altars of idolatry and then coming to the Church and observing the Lord's Supper. (cf. 1 Cor 10:20-21). They were observing the Lord's Supper while disgracing the poor families in the church (cf. 11:21). They were observing the Lord's Supper while being getting drunk in the public assembly. In doing so, they were sinning not only against one another but also Christians who eat this bread and drink this cup in an unworthy way sins against the body and blood of the Lord;<sup>317</sup> and the consequences of this is found in 1 Cor 10:16-17 as the answer. Paul is teaching that, the Lord's Supper sustain and renews the believers in their identity as the one body of Christ. One of the effects and purpose of the Eucharist is the preserving of the unity of the church.<sup>318</sup>

With this background, we can discern the connection between 11:27a (cf 11:17-27b and 11:23-26). It rests that the Lord's Supper is the body and blood of the Lord and that it does makes them one body.<sup>319</sup> The Corinthians partake of the Lord's Supper even as they wrong one another and divisions exist among them (cf. 11:18). In doing so they ignore that it is the Lord's Supper which they are eating and drinking. Their actions are not in line and are not keeping with the Lord's

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<sup>315</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle*, 619.

<sup>316</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 551.

<sup>317</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 438.

<sup>318</sup> Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 233.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

body and blood which make them one body. For this reason, their actions on the horizontal plane (cf. 11: 17-22) make them guilty of the body and blood of the Lord and the vertical meet at the Lord's Supper.

Paul's view is that the Lord's Supper is to encourage social leveling. The Lord's Supper is meant as a sacrament of both horizontal and vertical communion, not as a rite of incorporation.<sup>320</sup> Garland argues that, eating the bread and drinking the cup unworthy refers to do something that does not square with the character or nature of the Lord's Supper. That means eating the Lord's Supper in a manner that violates its purpose. The Lord's Supper represent the death of Christ and when Christians celebrate the Eucharist, we have to make this meal holy and different from other meals. And thus why in 1 Corinthians 11:28 Paul says that, those who partake in an unworthy manner and abusing the meals are liable in some sense of the body and blood of the Lord because they are partaking without discerning the body (verse 29).<sup>321</sup>

The concept of Eucharist especially in this Pauline letter and its interpretation in the New Testament has meaning to the people of God. Eucharist has a great meaning to the Christian, not only on its emphasis on the anamnesis and proclamation of the death of Jesus, but it also has a theological meaning that through the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup for the Christian, it shows a mutual contribution to building up of the church.<sup>322</sup> And through sharing the Lord's Supper, they are proclaiming the significance of the Lord's death that is the effect and the outcomes of Jesus death for his people.<sup>323</sup> In Paul's eyes, those who eat the bread and drink the cup unworthy without discerning the body represent the members of the community who fail to recognize that the church represents the body of Christ which is made by Christ's own sacrificial death. So, when the Corinthians participate in the Lord's Supper unworthy, they then refuse to acknowledge the new covenant brought about by Christ's blood.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Witherington, 241-252.

<sup>321</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 550.

<sup>322</sup> Hays, *First Corinthians*, 204-205.

<sup>323</sup> Malina and Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letter of Paul*, 111.

<sup>324</sup> Duff, "Celebrating the Lord's Supper" 571.



The Lord's Supper is not simply a religious ritual; and therefore, it must not be taken lightly. It has incredible significance to the Church of God. The Corinthian believers had taken it lightly because they were observing it while living in sin. That the sinless Son of God shed His life's blood on the cross as their sacrifice was apparently not even on their minds as evidenced by their attitudes and actions. Therefore, they failed to regard the significance of the communion, and they bore their guilt for such disrespect.

## **6 CHAPTER SIX: APPLICATION OF THE EXEGETICAL FINDINGS TO THE EUCHARISTIC PRACTICE IN THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN TANZANIA-ULANGA KILOMBERO DIOCESE.**

### **6.1 Introduction**

As a New Testament master thesis this study has concentrated on the exegesis of the textual unit 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 about the Lord's Supper (cf. Chapter Three), with particular focus on the term "unworthily" in verse 27 (cf. Chapter Five), within the context of early Christian meals (cf. Chapter Two) and Paul's overarching understanding of the Eucharist (cf. Chapter Four). As explained in Chapter One, an important motivating factor for me to engage in this topic is the Eucharistic practice I have observed in my home church, i.e., the Lutheran Church of Tanzania – Ulanga Kilombero Diocese (ELCT-UKD). Although it is not possible to do an in-depth study of this practice and how pastors and lay members in the ELCT-UKD reflect on it in general terms and on the 'unworthiness' mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11:27 in particular, nevertheless, I want to include an excursus-like chapter in which I attempt to apply my exegetical findings to the current challenges in the ELCT-UKD.

### **6.2 The Practice of Lord's Supper in the Context of Ulanga Kilombero Diocese**

The Ulanga Kilombero Diocese is one of the 27 Dioceses in the Lutheran Church in Tanzania. The Diocese is found in the Southern part of Tanzania. The Lutheran Church of Ulanga Kilombero believes that, the Eucharist is one of the sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ for the remembrance of his death on the cross for our salvation. The Lutheran Church of Tanzania believes that the Eucharist is a true representation of the body and blood of Jesus Christ; that the body and blood are hidden in and under the bread and wine. It is a means of grace that is meant to help us to affirm of the reason why we join in partaking of the one body and blood yet we are many parts; it makes us one regardless of our diversity and differences. We partake of it as an affirmation that we who are sinful need the forgiveness that was granted by the death and resurrection of Christ. We also partake of it as a fulfilment of the command of Christ to do it till the end (John 14:15, 1 Cor 11:24-26).

We do also partake of the Holy Communion to show out our unity in Christ to be one as He is with the Father and fulfil His desire for us (John 17:21). In partaking in Holy communion, we also proclaim of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and we are to do it as often as possible (1 Cor 11:26). The participation in the Eucharist is by invitation, not a demand, through the church to all those who are baptized and who have confessed their sins and received absolution. The members of the Church are encouraged to make the sacrament a frequent celebration rather than an occasional part of their lives.

Earlier it was said that Christians had stopped taking communion for a number of reasons; some of which have survived to the present day. However, the main reason that the Lutherans, especially in Tanzania, stopped taking Communion was that there were not enough Pastors to give communion at every congregation every week of the year. Churches only had communion when a Pastor was there, and since the available Pastors were covering more than one location at a time, which was often far apart from each other, they could not administer the sacrament everywhere every week. With time, this exception became the expected norm for the church. Even when the Lutheran churches were sufficiently staffed by Pastors every week, the expectation was that Communion was only on occasional thing; sometime once a month, sometimes a quarterly in a year.

The Tanzania Evangelical Lutheran Church and its predecessor churches fought this trend eagerly until now the weekly or monthly Communion has returned as the common practice nearly everywhere; but this again can be different according to the contexts, every Sunday, some once a month while still others once in three months (periodically). This is because of the different challenges we face in Africa like: scarcity of clergy, financial constraints (because of the claim that wine is expensive), people's requirements and our own restrictions to make it to be a special meal that people prepare to celebrate. There are many considerations and many issues like each one has to prepared spiritually, mentally and even ethically. We also ask people to do penance, seeking forgiveness before time and/or forgiving one another as a preparation to celebrate the Eucharist. It also has to be celebrated by ordained pastors or deacons and has to be given in order; body and blood before the blessing. Each communicant must examine himself or herself before God (11:28) and must also conduct himself in a Christian manner towards his/her fellow Christians (1 Corinthians 11:17). To partake of the Lord's Supper with malice toward a fellow communicant

is seen as being sinful (Matthew 5:23-24). But also, to communicate without faith in Christ's promise is to eat and drink judgment upon oneself (1 Cor 11:29).

### **6.3 Who should partake of the Holy Communion?**

As the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, we commune only those who are not under church discipline; while all those who have committed open sins and who have not repented of them are not allowed to partake in it. The issue of church discipline in African Christianity, and particularly in the Tanzanian Lutheran Church, is of great concern as it is also liturgical. It is practiced and enforced through the liturgy. And this is practiced not only in some certain dioceses, but in the ELCT in general; whereby the practice lies in categorizing the body of Christ (the church) into the groups of the righteous and unrighteous, saints and sinners. So the critical application of church discipline in the partaking of Eucharist means the person who is under church discipline is a sinner or unworthy and therefore faces exclusion from the privileges of joining in the celebration of the Holy Communion. The practice is disciplinary by nature and the most vulnerable members of the church are the unwed women.

### **6.4 Reinstatement Process in the participation of the Eucharist**

Apparently, the reinstatement process in the Ulanga Kilombero Diocese is not very clearly stated in its constitution. Its background and use is from a tradition which is not consistent even within the church congregations. In most cases, the process begins with the initiative of the persons under church discipline. In order to be accepted back, a systematic procedure must apply as follows:

- 1) The issue is taken in by the church elder, either male or female
- 2) The Church elder reports the issue of the inquirer to the parish pastor
- 3) The inquirer pledges for pardon
- 4) The inquirer, if accepted, will confess his or her sins before the community of believers on a particular Sunday with a public announcement about it in the church.
- 5) The pastor pronounces forgiveness to the person under church discipline before the community of faith.

## **6.5 Restoration service**

Once clear in the parish council, a reinstatement date is set, which is normally on a Sunday, and is announced in the church and the names of the beneficiaries are made public, except for a few; the so called ‘important ones’ and ‘untouchables’ who are served in a special way and, mostly, privately. Generally, for the lapsed, this is a great day in their lives. Some will even invite relatives and friends to accompany them in this special Sunday and thereafter join together in celebrating a special banquet in the same manner of the prodigal son who returned home (Luke 15:11-24).

On the reinstatement Sunday, the pastor will begin with the normal service using the Lutheran Book of Worship, “Swahili Version”. After the confession of sins, absolution and the word, the lapsed are invited to the altar. They are instructed to face the congregation while confessing their sins, denouncing Satan and pledging allegiance to follow and serve Jesus without turning back. After that, there is a recitation of the Apostle’s Creed which is concluded with the Lord’s Prayer. After absolution is announced, the lapsed who have repented are declared to be new creatures in the presence of their fellow Christians.

The process, by its nature, is humiliating and laborious especially in the case when the pastor takes the position of a judge in a law court to determine the eligibility of who is to be reinstated, at what time and under what conditions. There are cases where the lapsed is penalized before reinstatement takes place. In some congregations, this results in a great deal of hardship for those seeking absolution and reinstatement into the celebration of the Holy Communion. Some congregations are inclined to use strict disciplinary measures at the church’s disposal to bring trespassers into line. For example, in one of the Congregations witnessed, members are forced to perform a punishment of manual work in the church garden and its surroundings before being reinstated back from church discipline. In some of the congregations, the lapsed may get forgiveness but not be allowed in partaking of the Eucharist for a given time, like three or six months, or even a year. In this case people pay back in advance for their reinstatement. In such extreme cases, one is left to wonder whether there can be forgiveness and partaking in the Holy Communion without church discipline.

Sometimes the procedure is biased to the extent that some members are treated in a special and private way while others are dealt with in a humiliating manner depending on their social or economic status. Again, the church leadership divides the church into social classes. The Eucharist is used to punish the sinners. Are not the sacraments gifts of grace meant for sinners? When will

the church stop locking out its members during the institution and celebration of communion? Members wonder whether a time will come when the church will administer communion to the congregation without chasing away those who are considered unworthy so that the meal is consumed by those regarded to be holy and worthy Christians. The question of use of the Eucharist as a means to enforce or punish the lapsed is probably the same as what Reumann points out:

Although the Jews had rules that one should not be defiled by eating with the unclean people, Jesus Christ received and ate with sinners such as tax collector, prostitutes and outcasts (Matthew 11:19), By eating with sinners as friends Jesus gave the assurance of God's grace (Luke 19:1-10, Matthew 11:19).<sup>325</sup>

After all, we are all sinners before God's eyes. The clean and the unclean are equally in need of God's grace. The Bible witnesses to Jesus himself giving sinners communion. Therefore, denying the sinners of Holy Communion is contrary to the Christian teaching about the Eucharist.

When Paul speaks of the Lord's Supper, he writes, "When you come together...." (1 Corinthians 11:18, 20). He envisages the celebration of the Lord's Supper as per an assembly. It should be well understood that the primary meaning of the Greek noun *ecclesia* is a translation of the Hebrew *qabal* which means "assembly," and if we may define the church, it may be termed as a Eucharistic assembly. The church is to be found wherever Christians assemble around the table of the Lord to celebrate his Supper. And if we wish to appreciate the full nature of the Eucharist in keeping up with the scripture, we must begin by freeing ourselves from an individualistic understanding of it. This certainly does not mean that communion is something other than a personal fellowship and unity with Jesus Christ. But in the early church, and even in Paul's view on the Eucharist, the Bible asserts that unity with Christ in the Eucharist is always seen in the larger context of the fellowship or communion of the church.<sup>326</sup>

## **6.6 The Application of the Message of 1 Cor 11:17-34**

Exegesis has demonstrated that the Pauline message in 1 Cor 11:17–34 reflects on the selfishness of the members of the Corinthian church at the Lord's Supper which is then confronted with the

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<sup>325</sup> Reumann John, "The Supper of the Lord" 4.

<sup>326</sup> Kasper, "Sacrament of Unity" 117-118.

gospel of Jesus' giving up of Himself on behalf of others. Paul calls the Corinthians to proclaim this gospel and have their identity and behaviour shaped by it. According to Paul's view, the Eucharistic is an assembly of all, an assembly of the entire church and not just of a selected few. In the Lord's Supper, we remember the owner of the Supper Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, His sacrificial death, and God's love for us who made peace with us through Christ's blood and who ushered in a new covenant. The Eucharistic assembly should be gathered for the service of God manifested in the celebration of all baptized. According to Paul, to belong to the church meant to participate in the Eucharistic assembly. That is why initiation into the church is concluded with the participation in the Eucharist. However, there will develop an idea of worthiness and unworthiness for the celebration of the Eucharist.

1 Cor 11:17-34 is reminding us that there was no private meal when Jesus and the disciples celebrated the Passover during the Last Supper. In other words, everyone ate the supper together during the Last Supper thereby suggesting that there was no division among Christ and his disciples. This is clearly in contrast to how the church of ELCT is observing the Lord's Supper (see v. 18–22) by individualizing people. 1 Cor: 23–26 describe the Lord's Supper as both a remembrance and proclamation of Christ's death. The nature of the atonement is thus somehow related to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. What is to be remembered and proclaimed is that Christ died for all of humanity, not specific groups of humanity.<sup>327</sup> All are equal at the foot of the cross and Paul is suggesting that in eating a private meal during the Lord's Supper, the church is behaving as if there is some sort of special privileges over and against the other.

The key phrase in v. 27 is an unworthy manner should not be understood to mean that believers should ensure that their relationship with God is worthy of the elements. This has caused the Lord's Supper to be an individual and self-experience, but this unfortunately goes against Paul's message in this passage. Paul's concern here in v. 27 is not with who may take the elements, but with how the elements are taken.<sup>328</sup> Believers are to consider carefully their attitudes toward the body, how they are treating others, since the meal itself is a place of proclaiming the gospel.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 548.

<sup>328</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 559–60.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, 562.

There is a strong assumption of the Church's unity running throughout this passage and Paul's command here in v. 28 is probably calling upon believers to assess the degree to which they believe and behave as if the gospel is for all people. We cannot be certain what the believers in Corinth understood regarding the gospel, but we can see from 1 Cor 11:18, 20–21 that the believers in Corinth behaved as if poor disciples of Jesus Christ were essentially second-class Christians. It is practices like those described in v. 18, 20–21 that come under the scrutiny of Paul's command to examine in verse 28. Paul is encouraging the Church believers to wait for each other to begin eating the supper portion of the Lord's Supper. He is encouraging the church to abandon the practice of private meals that separate people but, instead wait for all believers to gather together to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Ultimately, Paul is encouraging the believers to live out the gospel by showing hospitality to their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.<sup>330</sup> With his third solution to the Corinthian abuse of the Lord's Supper (see v. 34), Paul essentially exhorts the Corinthian believers not to view the Table as an opportunity to fill their bellies.

According to Paul, the private meals that the believers are engaged in merely satisfy physical urges and needs rather than proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and satisfying the spiritual needs (see v. 20, 24–26). Since the Lord's Supper in Corinth had essentially become a normal meal, Paul urges the Church to eat before the Lord's Supper so that the focus of the Table shifts from the participants to the gospel and Jesus Christ. In contrary to that, we would miss the point with the implication of sharing food and enjoying fellowship together and prevent the believers from living out the unity that has been achieved through the gospel. In summary, Paul wants the church to evaluate our understanding of the gospel and ensure that we realize that it offers salvation to all people. The church should show hospitality to all members within the church before celebrating at the Table and eat beforehand so that the focus of the Lord's Supper is on the gospel and Jesus Christ, and not on food and social status.

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<sup>330</sup> Ciampa & Rosner, 558,



## 7 CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1 Conclusion

The thesis topic was to discuss about “To eat the body and to drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner: An investigation of the Greek term ἀναξίως in 1 Corinthians 11:27 within the context of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 with special regard to its interpretation in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania-Ulanga Kilombero Diocese.” The theme and the goal of this thesis was to take part in the discussion of the text (1 Corinthians 11:17-34) in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the term ἀναξίως (unworthy) as it has been used by Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:27. The Thesis was geared to find out the criticism to the practice of the Eucharist which mentions about eating the bread and drinking the cup of the Lord unworthily.

The study observed that the practice of the Lord’s Supper requires active participation of taking, eating and drinking. However, the Lord’s Supper is not for those who cannot participate in it actively, but it must be possible to respond to the command to personally take it and eat it, and more importantly when the Church celebrate the Lord’s Supper, it should be able possible to discern the body of the believers around the meal because this is a corporate not individual, act. Concerning the issues of discerning the body, member of the Church as an assembly is meeting the unseen Host, Jesus himself at the Table. In other words, faith is required to worthily participate in the Lord’s Supper.

1 Cor 11:27 is reminding us that celebrating the Lord’s Supper, is not about being worthy because Christ is the only worthy one, it is about the member of the church willingly to partake the Holy Communion in a way that honor Christ,<sup>331</sup> and this implies repentance of sins and a willingness to be forgiven and to forgive. The Lord’s Supper or Eucharist is primarily a corporate and communal act of worship. It is an occasion for community and communion rather than a time for a personal, or a private meeting with God. It is a family meal. The Lord’s Supper is a community ritual meant for the community to take together signifying their unity with Christ and with one another in and as the body of Christ. It is something one must be able to actively partake of, responding to the imperative to take and eat and drink and do this in remembrance which

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<sup>331</sup> Ciampa and Rosner, *First letter to the Corinthians*, 541.

requires conscious reflection.<sup>332</sup> The Church has not been called upon to fence the table but rather to call the family of faith to dinner.

As discussed in chapter four, Paul's view of the theology of Eucharist is to see as the grace of God given to his people. And according to him it is inevitable to note that there is nothing that a person must do before coming to Holy Communion except having a desire for sins to be forgiven. Wherever we have that desire, even if we were or are sinners, we are welcome to Holy Communion. Even those who have repented of their sins can be assured of God's forgiveness by receiving the Holy Communion. It is about having that attitude towards the forgiveness that we help us come forward to receive. The significance of Holy Communion lies in that which we receive from God. Participating in the body and blood of Christ is determined by what God has to offer, and that alone. The rest is about our response to it, either to accept or not to.

From my viewpoint, the church has been overlooking the use of church discipline and on the ways that people can use in worship so that they can make the gospel go deep in their understanding according to their context; instead, it seems that the church uses the sacrament in punishing the lapsed. So, instead of using it as a means to do reconciliation, the sacrament then seems to alienate them. Furthermore, instead of redeeming these 'sinners,' it is condemning the 'sinners' even more damnation. As it is discussed in this thesis, worthily partaking in the Eucharist is one of the very important elements in the church, and since it is at the centre of Christian life as it is in Christianity, it should never be taken lightly. In the Holy Communion, those who are called unworthy they find the Godly assurance; they find hope, courage and strength.

## **7.2 Recommendations**

Since I have witnessed that most of the clergy had problems with the interpretation of the theology surrounding the Eucharist, with the emphasis of how to celebrate the Eucharist in a worthy or an unworthy manner, it is high time that the church needs to strengthen and give the proper interpretation and understanding of the term ἀναξίως and the theological scope and understanding

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<sup>332</sup> Witherington, *Making A Meal of It*, 135.

of the clergy so that they can have a proper teaching and practice of the Eucharist within the church. This is because what they are doing in the celebrating the Lord's Supper is unbiblical.

Coming to the end of concluding remarks, I am hereby bringing forth the call to all members of ELCT-UKD to consider the significance and theology of the Eucharist. It is my utmost belief that if the church uses effectively what I have written from this study, the church will effectively teach and administer the Eucharist with little or no misunderstandings coming through. The research therefore paves the way for more research to be done in order to find the best theological and contextual ways to deal with issues relating with the partaking of the Eucharist in a worthy manner.

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