



# the Source

*Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...*

My comments here have to do with only Protestant practices related to what we call communion or the Lord's Supper. The apostle Paul is a little upset with the divisions among the Corinthians as to how they carry out this practice. A couple of thousand years later, divisions still exist, though of a different nature.

Some argue over the frequency, ranging from never to weekly; some over the elements to be used, ranging from unleavened bread and real wine to beer and pizza. Others disagree over who is eligible to participate, from only the baptized members of the presiding group to "this is not a Methodist table, it is the Lord's table and all are welcome to participate," and some over who can officiate.

Paul felt the need to rehearse again for these early believers as to how it was that this practice was instituted. It seems they were coming together for a complete meal; however, the haves were not sharing with the have nots. Some were gluttonous and getting drunk while others were going hungry. Christians have solved this problem by eliminating the meal and using small pieces of bread and mini-cups of wine as symbols of the bread and cup of the Last Supper.

Paul advised the Corinthians not to involve themselves in this ceremony if they were unworthy, and told them to examine themselves. Unfortunately, he failed to lay out for them, and hence us, what constitutes worthiness and many adherents have been filling that void ever since.

However, the Apostle here calls for self-examination, or as he says in another instance, "work out your own salvation." It is not someone else's job to examine us, but Paul claims there can be serious consequences if we partake in an "unworthy manner."

As you prepare for this event, remember, the key to self-examination is honesty. The prophet Jeremiah declares the heart of man is deceitful. To some degree, we all deceive others, but when we deceive ourselves we invite disaster. Come to the Lord's table with an honest, open and examined heart.

*Joe Grove, First Church member*

## A Family Affair

Can you think of a time you got in trouble this month.....what about this week? Share with your family a time that you didn't give your very best, or made a poor choice. Discuss how God views the poor choices you may make. Would Jesus sit down at a table and eat with you, knowing you have made mistakes?

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 together.

When we partake of Holy Communion, we remember the last supper. In the Methodist church, we have an open table. It is open to everyone, members and nonmembers. It is not just our church table, it is God's table. Even when we do our best, sometimes we all make mistakes. Regardless of our sinful nature, we are all invited to the table. God sees your heart, loves you, and by His grace, God offers forgiveness. God wants to be in relationship with you and he wants you at His table.

*Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for your gift of grace. Even when we make mistakes we know you are there to offer forgiveness. We appreciate that we can talk to you anytime and you keep an open table for us. Amen.*

*— Tammy Parks, Elementary Coordinator*

## Consider the Source I Corinthians 11:17-30

### Monday: I Corinthians 11:17,18

"In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you." Paul is not the least diplomatic here. How would you respond if our district superintendent showed up on a Sunday morning and laid a trip on our church using this tone?

- *His concern is divisions among them. Where two or three humans are gathered, there will be divisions. How should Christians handle them?*

### Tuesday: I Corinthians 11:19

"No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval."

- *What do you think Paul means by this?*
- *What is there about our differences that would highlight God's approval?*

### Wednesday: I Corinthians 11:22

"Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing?" The people of Corinth were celebrating the Lord's Supper as part of a regular meal. However, those who had a lot to eat were being gluttonous while others were going hungry.

- *In what way does our plenty humiliate the poor?*
- *How do we handle this without also becoming poor?*

### Thursday: I Corinthians 11:23-26

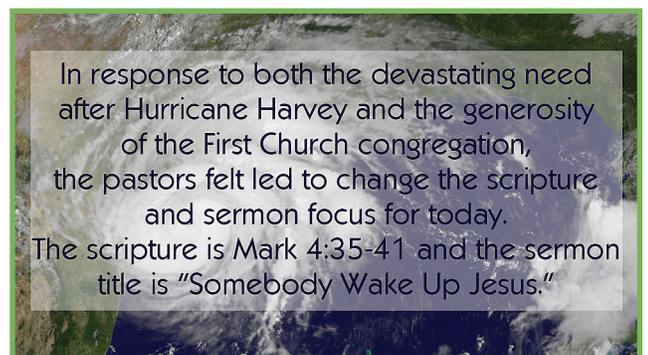
In this passage, Paul again rehearses for the church the actions of Christ in the first communion service.

- *How important is communion to you?*
- *Are there changes you would like to see in the way our church conducts this tradition?*
- *What are they?*
- *Are we allowed to make changes or are our traditions cast in stone?*

### Friday: I Corinthians 11:27

"So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord."

- *What does "an unworthy manner" speak to you?*
- *How should one prepare for participating in this tradition?*



In response to both the devastating need after Hurricane Harvey and the generosity of the First Church congregation, the pastors felt led to change the scripture and sermon focus for today. The scripture is Mark 4:35-41 and the sermon title is "Somebody Wake Up Jesus."