Messy Grace **– wk 15 – I’ll Drink to That**

**A fire is burning in the corner - sound of screams all around. They sit eating lamb - prepared to specific instructions. Screams… outside a powerful force stops at their door. But as quick as it stops – it passes on. Running under the door… blood. Coming from the top and sides. It’s not the blood of a person, the blood of the lamb they are eating.**

**Exodus 12 - Moses, sent by the LORD God, asked Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. Again, and again - NO! God sent a series of plagues. The 10th plauge broke Pharaoh - Angel of Death to kill every first-born son.**

**Unless… a spotless lamb was prepared, its blood put on the doorposts and entirely eaten. Only then would it Passover.**

**Meals play a very significant role in the bible.**

* **Adam & Eve – original sin, fall of man was a meal – forbidden fruit**
* **Cain & Able – first murder was over a meal that God accepted**
* **Jacob & Esau – future of a nation by a meal – Abraham’s blessings**
* **Joseph – saving of nation of Israel was a meal – grace over a meal**
* **Moses – the saving of a nation Israel was a meal – the Passover**
* **Jesus - began his ministry are a wedding meal – Cana Wedding**
* **Jesus - Most of Jesus ministry events revolved around meals**
* **Jesus – last supper instituted a new covenant meal**
* **Return of Jesus is called the great – wedding feast – a meal**

**Eating in the bible is more than just consuming food – it is a bond – an alignment – a symbol of deep relationship and community.**

**Each have a special meaning – none more than the Passover and later the Lord’s supper.** **AKA. Communion, Eucharist.**

**We are in letter to the Corinthians in the NT - Written by Apostle Paul lived there nearly 2 yrs – it’s been 5 yrs and things are getting weird.**

**Paul lovingly & truthfully addresses each issue w/ grace no matter how messy it got. Everything in 1 Cor is corrective.**

**Today the most important meal of our lives and Corinth was blowing it. A glimpse into an early church practice, “the love feast”.**

**Longest passage on communion- 1 Corinthians 11:17 In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. (Ouch! Epic fail! Your gatherings are for the worse – I have nothing good to say them) 18 In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, (they were segregating people by class in church) and to some extent I believe it. (it is hard to imagine you would – but I know some of you… and I believe it…) 19 No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval.**

**There will be differences when we gather. We see the world diff and live diff. – and not everyone is a believer. Some will feel naturally disconnected (but never unwelcome) Some differences are expected.**

* **We are to embrace and celebrate diversity of people – (explain)**
* **But there is not to be diversity about the person Jesus - (explain)**
* **There are good divisions and bad divisions - I’m on the Jesus team**

**But they were dealing with bad visions – 1 Cor 11:20 So then, (or but) when you come together, it is not the Lord’s Supper you eat, (may look like it, but it’s not)**

**The weekly love feast – no shot glass of grape juice and wafer. A meal and in the context of their culture – with wine. Much like Jesus often did w/ his disciples and on that last night.**

**But they turned into a fat Greek party feast for rich people.**

**Imagine your small group - we are having a big meal (explain). But only those making $50,000+ yr can come first, everyone else wait until they finish – just sit to the side until we are full. That is disgusting – that is exactly was Paul was feeling.**

**21 for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. (Private parties - not waiting for others, eating w/out regard to who has not eaten) As a result, one person remains hungry (usually the separated poor) and another gets drunk. (drink, drink, drink – not thinking, not sharing, getting drunk and passing out at church) 22 Don’t you have homes to eat and drink in? (if you’re going act like a fool, at least do it at home, don’t do it here!) Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? (pointing out the underprivileged in the community - church had become cliques - making Paul angry) What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!**

**I have nothing good to say about your meetings! Nothing!**

**“You have turned about what was meant to be about Jesus into something about you. This makes me sick!” (disgust)**

**3 Issues Here: Communion Chaos**

1. **Segregating people - by income, rich / poor, upper / lower class**
2. **Selfish people – me first, front of line, takes w/ no regard for others**
3. **Slush people - Getting drunk at church events…**

**This is the opposite of everything the cross represents / brought us**

* **The cross of Christ breaks down barriers**

**Social, racial, and economic barriers – we take communion as a family**

**no longer separated – no longer an outcast**

**We are together from diff backgrounds on the same plain, all in need of a savior - sinners in need of grace.**

* **The cross of Christ points to selflessness- Jesus laid down his life**

**no longer selfish, set free to serve others, dies to self**

* **The cross of Christ breaks the power of sin**

**Unleashing the power to live w/ self-control thru the Spirit of God in us**

**no longer a slush – the control of sin can be broken**

**When we take communion, we memorialize this –**

**we are one and we are free in Christ.**

**Paul says – you want to take communion – “get back to Jesus”**

**He then instructs what communion should look like**

**(A Passover meal plot twist) 1 Cor 11:23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”**

**The bread = body of Christ beaten and crucified on the cross**

**Jesus said – do this, never forget the cost – thankful, humbled**

**25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”**

**The cup = blood of Christ poured out on the cross**

**Blood for blood – a life for life. A bonding covenant.**

**Jesus said – do this, never forget the cost – thankful, humbled**

**Earlier Paul said - 1 Cor 5:7b says, “Jesus Christ, our Passover lamb, has been slain.” / 1 Cor 10:16 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?**

**This is all about Jesus – they are reminders - of Jesus cross and our unity of faith in this. Everything points to Jesus!**

**Catholics - lit. becomes his body & blood / Protestant- only represents and proclaims it!**

**1 Cor 11:26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim (preach) the Lord’s death until he comes.**

**It is all about Jesus and it preaches to us / each other / the lost**

**“…until he comes” - it not only looks back – but it also looks forward.**

**It points to a bigger feast, the marriage supper (Rev 19:9) at the return of Jesus! We will not practice communion in heaven.**

**BTW - We are not told how often to do it**

**Some once a year, once a month, every week - how we do communion**

**Paul then says something that is really interesting and odd… 1 Cor 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. (unworthy?) 28 Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 29 For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. (people were dying - whoa??? As a kid that always scared me.)**

**Notice “Everyone” - Not just unbelievers, but believers too, who take lightly the price for sin – don’t mock the cost**

**Take a look in the mirror, confess sin, search your heart – how is your love and attitude towards others?**

**31 But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, (looked in the mirror) we would not come under such judgment. (discipline from God) 32 Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world. (discipline can be good to bring us to a closer place with Jesus)**

**BTW - Two indicators you are the Lords – Hebrews 12:6-11**

* **When you sin – you are convicted about it / it does not settle well**
* **When you continue to sin - God disciplines you like a good father**

**Big Point: when we gather, when we break bread, check your heart**

**This is an opportunity to reflect on and renew your walk w/ God**

**You can today – turn to Jesus and start over.**

**1 Cor 11:33 So then, (to wrap this issue up) my brothers and sisters, (Christians) when you gather to eat, you should all eat together. (don’t segregate) 34 Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment. And when I come, I will give further directions.**

**V34 - why churches over the yrs have reduced this to a wafer and small juice. This is not to fill you up or quench your thirst – take this, then go out to eat after and have your love feast.**

**BTW - It was first recorded in 1894 - North Baptist Church of Rochester, NY (Journal of American Medical Assoc) this is good!**

**4 Q’s of Communion – Questions Paul answers in Communion**

1. **What does it mean? It points to the price paid on the cross**

**Never forget the price paid for freedom - remember its value. The bread – Jesus body / the juice – Jesus blood. Violent.**

**John 6:53 Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. 57 Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” (this is not cannibalism – this is symbolism – a picture)**

**We don’t snack on Jesus, we consume Jesus. Filling our life. Jesus does not want to be a part of your life – he is to be your life. A reminder that he gave himself entirely, he wants us entirely**

1. **Who it is for? It is for Christian believers only**

**1 Co 11:33 So then, my brothers and sisters, (Christians) when you gather to eat**

**Like baptism, it is a knitting of hearts with other followers of Christ.**

**(1 Cor 10:16) Koinonia - Communion = fellowship = participation.**

**Together (those in the family in Christ) we proclaim the savior’s work! However, all are welcome to join the family - you can today…**

**3. How am I treating others? It reflects our love for each other**

**“you should eat together” - Stop segregating yourselves!**

**Build bridges and kick down walls! BTW - It is not to be a solo event.**

**“fill up at home so everyone can eat!” – stop being selfish!**

**As family in Christ and servants of Jesus - we are to esteem others in grace, love, and compassion.**

**At the heart of this “self-examination” – is not only of our sins unconfessed, but the sins of how we treat others.**

**Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others (esteem others) above yourselves… (ESV / NASB - Count others / regard others - as more significant or important than you) 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

**Paul goes on to say – this is the mindset of Christ when he (God) came to earth and died for the sins of humanity.**

**You are never too high, rich, special, or important - to serve others! Look next to you – consider them more important than you and serve them as Christ served you.**

1. **How am I living? It ultimately reflects a changed life**

**To follow the cross of Christ results in a change in the way we live**

**When we take communion, we memorialize this.**

**We are saying – I chose the cross wherever it will lead me.**

**As I prepared this sermon this week, I was planning on us taking communion. However, we are going to do this Corinth style - in homes.**

**The table is open – but this week in Life Teams – communion will be taken – don’t miss it.**

**Looking at the Passover and then at communion – One thing is clear – one way or another we are going to have to accept a death.**

**John 14:6 - I am the way…**

**Next week – some more tough love and correction on the how they were doing church…**

**1 Cor 15:27 For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. 28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. (this not saying Jesus is not God – but rather the eternal submission in his role. He is forever now a body – the image of the invisible God)**

**(this is in regard to not believing in our resurrection ) 33 Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” 34 Come back to your senses as you ought and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.**

**Paul is challenging them - Don’t be an obstacle for the gospel**

**build bridge bridges, don’t create walls – the good news is more important that our preferences and prejudices.**