

## Handout: 1 Corinthians Lesson 5

In Part III of his letter (11:2-14:40), Paul turns his attention to proper conduct within the liturgical assembly of the faithful:

1. He addresses the recommended proper attire (11:3-16).
2. He discusses improper conduct concerning the sacred meal of the Eucharist (11:17-34).
3. He advises on the proper use of spiritual gifts (12:1-14:40).

The Greek word *eucharistesas* in 11:24 means “giving thanks,” from the Greek word *eucharistia*, *eu* = good and *charizesthai* = to show favor, meaning “thanksgiving.” It has the same meaning as the Hebrew word for “thanksgiving” which is *todah*. A word designated the communion sacrifice and sacred meal that reestablished peace with God and consumed in the presence of God in the Temple (Lev 7:11-21; Mishnah Zeb., 8.7).

In 11:23-34, there is a series of wordplays using the Greek words for judgment, *krima* [Strong’s G2917] in 11:29, 34 and the word *krino* in the word *diakrino* [Strong’s G1252] in 11:29 and 31. The *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* gives two primary meanings for the word *diakrino* in 11:29 and 31:

1. to differentiate or judge (active voice)
2. to doubt or waver (middle or passive voice)

In 1 Corinthians 11:29 and 31 (*diakrino* Strong’s G1252), Paul uses *diakrino* in the active voice. Therefore, he refers to judging or distinguishing in a sense of evaluation. In verse 31, notice that self-examination is contrasted with God’s judgment (also see Strong’s G1252 in 1 Cor 6:5 and 14:29; see the related word *diakrisis*, “judicial estimation” [Strong’s G1253] in 1 Cor 12:10; Heb 5:14 and Rev 3:19 and in the Septuagint translation in Dt 8:5-6 and Prov 3:12.

*29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning [diakrino] the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

What does Paul mean by discerning/recognizing or judging the “body”? There are two main options for defining “body” in this verse:

1. Body may indicate Christ’s presence as in the body and blood of Christ on the cross that is made present in the Eucharist.
2. Body may indicate the body of believers as the “Body of Christ.”

However, Paul is clearly referring to what is consumed in the Eucharist when he warns: *without discerning [diakrino] the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself*. Therefore, he must be speaking of judgment associated with not discerning the Real Presence of Christ in what is consumed.

Recognizing or discerning “the body” depends on recognizing two interrelated concepts applicable to the Eucharist and related to Christ’s death on the cross:

1. The reality of His Divine Presence in what was formerly bread and wine but is now transformed by the Holy Spirit into His Flesh and Blood as He promised in the Bread of Life Discourse (Jn 6:51-58) and announced at the Last Supper.

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2. The reality of Christ’s atoning work in the gift of forgiveness of sin brought about by His unblemished sacrifice on the cross. It is the same sacrifice received by the community of believers to whom Christ gives Himself, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the Eucharist.

In Chapter 12 Paul begins a discussion of the spiritual gifts of grace that continues until Chapter 14. Grace is the first and greatest of the gifts of the Holy Spirit who justifies and sanctifies us. Grace also includes the gifts that the Spirit grants us in associating us with His work, to enable us to have a part in the salvation of others, and in the growth of the Body of Christ that is the Church (CCC 2003). The different kinds of graces:

1. Sacramental graces that are gifts proper to the different Sacraments.
2. Special graces or charisms, using the Greek term Paul uses meaning “favor,” “gratuitous gift,” “benefit,” in 1 Corinthians 12:4.
3. Graces of state that accompany the exercise of the responsibilities of Christian life and ministries within the Church.

Paul refers to what the Catechism calls the “graces of state” in verse 29 and in Romans 12:6-8; see CCC 2004.

Prophecy is often thought of as predicting future events. However, the Biblical meaning, expressed by the Hebrew word *hozeh* (Strong’s H2374), and *propheteia* (Strong’s G4397) in the Greek is more general. It can refer to a vision or an interpreted revelation, for example, discerning the meaning of Sacred Scripture.

In Chapter 13:1-13, St. Paul preaches a wonderful hymn to charity/love that is one of the most beautiful passages in St. Paul’s epistles. He begins by singing the praises of love as seen from three points of view:

1. The superiority of the gift of love and its absolute necessity (verses 1-3).
2. The features of the gift of love in action in its practical application (verses 4-7).
3. The promise that love endures forever (verses 8-13).

Paul defines “love” by what it does and by what it does not do. The Greek text contains fifteen verbs that are usually translated as adjectives in English. The passage on “love” in 13:1-13 is probably one of the most beloved and frequently quoted passages written by St. Paul.

What love is	What love isn’t
patient	jealous
kind	pompous/boastful
rejoices in truth	inflated
bears all	rude
believes	self-interested
hopes	quick-tempered
endures	hold on to injuries real or imagined
never fails/never ends	rejoice over wrongdoing