

## Revival

Rev. George M. Schwab, Ph.D.  
March 25, 2024

1 Cor 11:21

(NA 28<sup>th</sup> ed.)

(YLT)

ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον	for each his own supper
προλαμβάνει ἐν τῷ φαγεῖν,	doth take before in the eating,
καὶ ὃς μὲν πεινᾷ	and one is hungry,
ὃς δὲ μεθύει.	and another is drunk

The Greek here is so alien to English sentence construction that I went with Young's Literal Translation, so you can see what is going on. What it means is clearly stated in other translations. Here it is in The Message, "you come together, and instead of eating the Lord's Supper, you bring in a lot of food from the outside and make pigs of yourselves. Some are left out, and go home hungry. Others have to be carried out, too drunk to walk."

So some in the Corinthian church were getting drunk on the Communion wine. (Paul had a perfectly good opportunity here to tell them to use grape juice instead, but didn't. Hmm.) In addition to this wild behavior, they were prone to arguments and suing each other in courts of law, they were unruly all around and needing basic instruction, unclear about the evils of idolatry, engaged in all sorts of sexual sins including a sort of incest that even heathens wouldn't do, and were full of pride about it (5:2)! In other words, it was a church of newly converted idolaters, who were still basically pagan in their attitudes and behaviors. Of course they had good points too. They were generous and enthusiastic to a fault in their worship. But they needed a lot of work!

I have always thought of the Corinthian church as a model of what revival looks like. And it makes me wonder: do we really want this in our churches? We say we want revival, but are we really happy with the idea of our churches suddenly doubling in size with unchurched, mostly secular in their thinking, worldly, untamed people with all the attitudes and behaviors we normally associate with an unbelieving sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll lifestyle?

Before we pray for revival and start evangelizing, we need to think about what this will mean to us. Our religious culture that we enjoy and feel comfortable with, that is maintained by people who are unified in their priorities and values, will be put under pressure. Sunday mornings won't be as safe. We will have to tolerate chaos and the sorts of people and their problems that we are not used to imagining being in the church. People won't behave. They won't know any better. At least not for a long while. Our kids will be sitting in pews next to people we have always tried to protect them from. Are we ready for that?

We won't be, as long as we conceptualize the church, our community of faith, and our worship, as being centered around us. But if we seek what pleases God, and not ourselves, we can grow. This is the cost we will have to count for revival. So the question remains: is this really what we want? Are we willing to put off the old comfort zone and put on a new one? Are we ready for new wineskins for new wine?

Do we *really* want revival?