

New Testament Lesson # 34
August 26-September 1
I Corinthians 8-13
Ye Are the Body of Christ

I. To strengthen faith in the resurrection, Paul made brief reference to the ordinance of baptism for the dead (1 Cor. 15:29).

A. This showed that baptism for the dead was definitely a part of the early Christian Church, as established by Jesus Christ.

1. But apostasy did occur. And many ordinances were changed or totally abandoned.

a. Isaiah had warned of this very thing: “they have ... changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant” (Isaiah 24:5).

b. An early painting in the catacombs of Rome shows **that the priesthood keys given to Peter were to be used to free spirits from spirit prison.**

(Fabrizio Mancinelli, “The Catacombs of Rome,” p. 31.)* The text concerning this painting says there was a change from that early view to a later view. The later view was that that **the keys are simply a sign of authority, and had nothing to do with the dead.**

Yet Christ’s words in bestowing these keys was “the Gates of Hell would not prevail!” (Matthew 16:18). This meant Hell’s Gates would no longer continue to hold captive the spirits of the dead who came to accept Christ and repented.

c. Other sources confirm baptism for the dead was practiced until the Council at Carthage in 397 A.D. That council forbade any further practice of it.

d. **Now, except for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, this ordinance is completely lost among all other Christian churches.**

B. But we should understand that Baptism for the Dead shows God’s love for those who died without hearing the Gospel and receiving its precious ordinances. It is a powerful witness of God’s Love.

II. Paul also spoke of the partaking of the sacrament, and said partaking of it worthily is highly important.

A. He indicates that when ancient Israel was given drink from a rock, it was a **foreshadowing of drinking the sacrament, in remembrance of Christ.** For we drink in remembrance of His atoning sacrifice, and **that He arose out of a Rock to bring us the Waters of Eternal Life** (1 Corinthians 10:4, 6).

B. Similarly, ancient Israel’s temptations and sins in the wilderness after partaking from the water of the Rock were a witness of the temptations and sins Christians were facing then, and what we still encounter.

1. “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; [examples to us] and they are written for our admonition,” (verse 11).

2. After reminding them of how the Lord instituted the sacrament, Paul warns of partaking unworthily: “Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup [worthily, or with a repentant heart]” (11:27).

3. We have additional witnesses of this important counsel. “See that ye partake not of the sacrament unworthily” (Mormon 9:29; D&C 46:4; 3 Nephi 18:28-32).

III. Paul set forth the true concept of the relationship between man, woman and God (1 Cor.11:1-3) and especially how they are totally dependent upon each other (See verses 11-12). These teachings lead up to later ones pertaining to the ordinance of Eternal Marriage (See upcoming Lesson # 35).

- A. Many misjudge Paul when he says that “the head of the woman is the man.” (1 Cor. 11:3). In God’s order of things, there must always be one who presides, as is shown by Paul. The Father – The Son- Man – Woman (11:3). We should remember that the major sin of Lucifer was that he sought to take over the power of the Father.
- B. However:
Elder Jay Jensen in his address at BYU’s Education Week, August 2011, gave special insights into how a true relationship between husband, wife, and even children should be carried out. He explained how in the church **those who are given leadership are to use it only to “lead out in suggesting” what things might be considered. And then to listen, participate and guide as **all** speak, discuss, and come to resolution. He gave this as the pattern for families. He gave it as the pattern for counseling in families, and the way to unity in marriage and in families. His teachings actually follow that taught by Paul and the brethren today when we truly understand them as a whole.**
- C. **While there must be one who presides, true relationships under God the Father are ones of counseling, and of counseling in love, wisdom and unity.**

IV. Paul’s seeming references to himself as single are also misunderstood, (See Bruce McConkie DNTC II, pp. 346-7 for correct explanation). These are the truths.

- A. Early church leaders were married. Celibacy for priests began very late in history.
- B. **While I served a mission in Ireland, after I pointedly raised the question, a monk verified to me that originally all priests there were married, *not celibate*. I raised the question because of something he said which seemed to indicate this was so.**
- C. The “Falling Away” continues. In modern times the majority of the people, and now the Supreme Court, have rejected the Bible and its teachings on marriage as being between a man and a woman. So even today they have, **“changed the ordinance.”**

V. Paul gave profound teachings on how and why the Gifts of the Spirit are given.

- A. This teaching is so important, the Lord, as with the Sermon on the Mount, gave it again. He repeated this counsel to the saints in the Book of Mormon through Moroni (Moroni 10:8). And He also taught it again to Latter-day Saints in the Doctrine and Covenants (Section 46). Obviously this is very important revelation necessary to be given to all!
- B. The key meaning is that the Lord gives to all of us different gifts of the Spirit so that we can all carry out our own unique and separate work in building up the Kingdom of God.

C. Different gifts are also given so that we will not compete with each other in regard to our gifts. This is was obviously what the early Saints had been doing. Some had been given the gift of tongues, and were lording it over others because of that gift. And so the Lord said,

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” (1 Cor. 13:1).

Our separate spiritual gifts were not given to us to compete with each other, but to help each other. True Charity is to recognize and appreciate the value of each other’s gifts.

D. Different Gifts were also given so that we would recognize our need for each other:

1. “And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you” (v. 21).

2. Because different gifts are given to each of us, we all need each other.

VI. Thus, it is very foolish for those who have not been given the priesthood to feel their contributions are less important.

A. While the Priesthood is required to carry out the essential ordinance work performed in the Church, each and every member of the Church is blessed with special gifts that will allow them to contribute in very meaningful ways to the Lord’s Kingdom.

1. I must add that it has been a special gift and a blessing to serve as a temple ordinance worker, and to be allowed to bestow precious ordinances. So this too is a gift which can be obtained by all who are worthy and desire it.

B. Paul’s teachings continue to explain why separate gifts are important to produce a wholly efficient Body.

1. “And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

“If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

“**But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body**” (I Cor. 12:16-7).

C. While serving as a Temple Ordinance Worker in the Palmyra Temple, I was intrigued to see that three of the Churches on Palmyra’s famous 4 Church Corner, were then serviced by women ministers. Like many churches, they decided to give women the roll of ministers as a way of giving women greater rolls in Church. However, in speaking to other women of the congregation, and asking them how they served, the response was that they occasionally brought flowers. **So the truth is that women in general, serve far more in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in significant ways, than in any church which now allows women ministers.** [The fourth church was empty as the congregants had stopped paying the salary of their minister because he refused to quit saying evil things about the Mormons].

VII. How Great the Wisdom and the Love of the Father! The Lord gave to the members of His Church separate spiritual gifts. Each then is blessed by having that Gift. Each then can bless the whole body with that gift. Each can then know they are an essential part of the Whole Body of Jesus the Christ!