

EMMAUS EQUIPPING COLLEGE

Grasping God's Word – Assignment 8

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Assignment 8-1

Write a paragraph describing the surrounding context of the following passages:

Acts 1:7-8

7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

The location of this account is the Mount of Olives, forty days after Jesus' resurrection and just before His ascension. During this period, Jesus had been appearing to his disciples, proving he was alive and **"speaking about the kingdom of God"** (Acts 1:3).

The disciples are still thinking in terms of a political or national rescue. In verse 6, they ask, **"Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"** They were looking for a localized, immediate revolution against Roman rule. Jesus' response in verses 7 and 8 shifts their focus from a political kingdom to a spiritual mission: Jesus tells them that **"times or seasons"** are God's business.

In verses 4 and 5, Jesus ordered them **"not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father... you will be baptised by the Holy Spirit not many days from now."** Unlike the Old Testament, where the Spirit was temporary and selective, Jesus is announcing a New Covenant shift. The **"power"** promised to the disciples in verse 8 is the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit for all believers, which occurs shortly after in Acts 2. This **"power"** they will receive is for bearing witness to Jesus, His resurrection and the Gospel message. They are not expected to spread this message in their own strength but by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus also states that the Gospel and the kingdom are not just for Israel but for the whole world to the **"end of the earth."** So, Jesus is essentially saying, don't worry about the 'when' (the restoration of the Kingdom); focus on the 'who' (the Holy Spirit) and the 'where' (the whole world)." The focus moves from "When will the Kingdom come?" to "Where the Gospel must go." It marks the transition from Jesus' physical presence to his presence through his followers. They are no longer just followers; they are **"witnesses"** of Jesus and the mission is no longer restricted to the lost sheep of Israel but for the whole world.

Immediately after saying these words, Jesus was **"lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight"** (Acts 1:9). This makes verses 7–8 his final instructions on earth. The disciples were left standing there gazing into the sky until two angels told them to stop looking up and start getting to work, because Jesus would return in the same way.

1 Corinthians 11:27-32

7 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

1 Corinthians 11:27–32, points to the messy, real-world situation in the Corinthian church. The original context was about social injustice and communal division. The "Love Feast" In the early church, the Lord's Supper wasn't what we Christians see today; a tiny cracker and a sip of juice, it was a full meal known as the Agape feast. However, the church in Corinth was deeply divided by social class. The wealthy members were arriving early, eating their gourmet food, and getting drunk, while the poor members, often slaves or labourers, arrived late and found nothing left to eat. Paul was not happy because the "Lord's Supper", which was supposed to symbolize unity, had become a display of inequality.

In verses 17–22 Paul rebukes them sharply. He says their meetings **"do more harm than good"**. He argues that by ignoring the hunger of their brothers and sisters, they aren't actually eating the Lord's Supper at all, they are just eating their own private meals and **"humiliating those who have nothing"**.

In verses 23–26, to correct them, Paul reminds them of the night Jesus was betrayed. He recites Jesus' own words; **"This is my body... this is my blood"**. The point being that Jesus gave himself for everyone. Therefore, if the meal represents Jesus' sacrifice for the whole **"body"**, then mistreating members of that body while eating the meal is a contradiction.

In verses 27–32, when Paul speaks of eating in an **"unworthy manner"**, he isn't necessarily talking about someone having private sins or bad thoughts. **"Discerning the body"** believing **"the body"** refers to the Church (the Body of Christ). To eat without **"discerning the body"** means to eat without recognizing that the person sitting next to you is your equal in Christ. Paul tells them to examine themselves, not just for their personal unworthiness or sins, but specifically for how they are treating others in the church community.

In verse 30, Paul makes the claim that some in Corinth have fallen ill or died because they have desecrated the communal unity of the meal. Paul's claim suggests that the spiritual health of a church is tied to its social health. By turning a meal of unity into an act of division, they were essentially "poisoning" the spiritual life of the congregation.

Paul gives the practical solution in verses 33 and 34; **"So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another."** demonstrating that the **"unworthy manner"** was specifically about the lack of hospitality and communal love.

Assignment 8-2

Turn to the Old Testament book of Jonah and do the following;

1. Read the entire book of Jonah and identify how the book is divided into paragraphs or sections.
2. Summarize the main idea of each section in about a dozen words or less,

Jonah:

Ch 1, V 1-2: God commands Jonah to go to Nineveh with His call for their repentance.

Ch 1 V 3-16: Jonah's disobedience, flight, judgement and casting overboard.

Ch 1 V 17: Jonah is swallowed by a great fish.

Ch 2 V1-10: Jonah's prayer, repentance and deliverance.

Ch 3 V 1-2: God repeats His command to Jonah regarding Nineveh.

Ch 3 V 3-4 Jonah enters Nineveh and proclaims God's call to repentance to the Ninevites.

Ch 3 V 5-9 The Ninevites repent in earnest.

Ch 3 V 10: God relents.

Ch 4 V 1-4 Jonah's express anger at God's mercy on the Ninevites.

Ch 4 V 5-11 God's masterclass in compassion, challenging Jonah to trade his petty resentment for a heart for all of humanity.

3. Explain how your practical passage (use Jonah 1:13-16 for this exercise) relates to the surrounding context.

Jonah 1:13–16 exhibit an irony that highlights the spiritual theme of this book, God's inclusive love and the nature of His mercy. These verses relate to the surrounding context as follows.

There is a strong contrast between the pagan sailors and Jonah, a Hebrew Prophet of God. Throughout Chapter 1 a reversal of roles takes place: Jonah, who is called upon by God, disobeys God's direct command and runs. The pagan sailors are responsive and desperate to hear God's voice. Jonah, is indifferent and sleeps while the pagan sailors are in danger. The pagan sailors are compassionate and row harder to save a stranger's life. Jonah only cares for his own kind. The pagan sailors worship Jonah's God and make vows. By verse 16, the pagan sailors, who started the chapter praying to various idols, end up offering sacrifices and making vows to Jonah's God.

In verse 13, the pagan sailors **"rowed hard"** to save Jonah's life, even after Jonah admitted he was the reason they were in a terrible storm! Jonah would rather be thrown into the sea than see his enemies, the Ninevites, saved. The pagan sailors show more "God-like" mercy toward Jonah than Jonah shows toward the Ninevites.

In verse 14, the sailors acknowledge Jonah's God's power and absolute sovereignty **"For you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you."** The Storm wasn't bad luck; it was God's pursuit of Jonah. The Fish isn't a punishment; it's God's insistence upon Jonah to obey Him.

The sailors recognize that God is in charge of the situation. This from God sets up the "surrounding context" for Chapter 2, where Jonah finally stops running and prays while inside the fish.

The end of verse 16 shows the sailors in a state of "**exceeding fear**" of the Lord. In Hebrew, this is the same root word Jonah used in verse 9 "**I fear the Lord**". Jonah's fear was a shallow, religious statement that didn't change his behaviour. The Sailors' fear was transformative awe that led to immediate sacrifice and making of vows.

Who is the true follower of God? The one with the right theology - Jonah, or the ones with the right heart - the sailors?

Thank you Carlo. Excellent closing comment on Jonah!

Did writing this out help you in prioritising what was important and did you find that you might find a sermon or sermonette as you've spent time researching this?