

## Article

# Recalibrating Christian Ethics at Corinth: Paul's Use of Jesus the Prototype and Collective Remembrance to Provide Spiritual Guidance on Weaker Brothers and Food Offered to Idols

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**Abstract:** Social identity theory has provided a fresh lens that can be used to look at Paul's letters. Prototypes provide a helpful means to examine social identity and ethics in communities, as suggested by Warren Carter. In 1 Corinthians, Jesus Christ is presented as a prototype, although the Corinthians did not meet him. Collective memory theory has also provided a means to look at recollections of the person of Jesus recorded in the New Testament. While the number of recollections of Jesus that his recipients had is still open to question, this study finds Bauckham's approach to the memory of Jesus in Paul to be the most sustainable. Studies by Dale Alison and Richard Burridge provide a general picture of ideas in the Synoptic tradition. When the fruits of prototype studies are combined with the collective memory of Jesus, it provides fresh insight into Paul's commandment to imitate Jesus Christ, which was issued in 1 Cor 11:1. The fruits of these combined methods reveal the influence of the life of Jesus in the commands to look after the weak brother, abstain from idol feasts, and to do everything to God's glory. Through the recollection of the lifestyle of Jesus, Paul recalibrates the Corinthian behavior so that it agrees with the prototype.

**Keywords:** prototype; imitation; memory; diversity; idol feast; weak brothers; Corinthians



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## 1. Introduction

Social Identity Theory has provided a fresh means to evaluate the New Testament (Tucker and Baker 2016, pp. 13–39; Tucker and Kuecker 2020; Brawley 2020; Campbell 2023; Esler 2016). As this field has developed, identities are being considered to be more complex than originally envisioned. In his 2014 article, Kobus Kok recognized that identities are more complex than simply an approach that distinguishes an “ingroup” and “outgroup”. At times a variety of different identities can be expressed in a group (Tucker 2016, pp. 407–24).

Writers of the New Testament and early Christian literature frequently appeal to certain prototypes within a congregation to encourage them to adopt a certain belief or behavior. The American Psychological Association Dictionary defines a prototype as “an object, event, or person that is held to be typical of a category and comes to represent or stand for that category”. Several studies identify similar people who represent their group in the New Testament and early Christian literature and note the use of specific figures to encourage a group to act appropriately (Carter 2020, pp. 235–51; Williams 2019b, pp. 115–35). The prototype then functions as a reference point within the group and carries the main ideas of that body of people. That figure exemplifies and defines the attributes of the group's identity and also helps to develop key qualities of the outgroup (Baker 2012, p. 132). Since the prototype represents the group identity norms, members follow its actions (Burke 2006, p. 121).

Such a person may have resided in the community or be known by the circulated memory of the individual. This latter situation is the case in 1 Corinthians, when Paul says,

in 1 Cor 11:1, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ”. The Corinthians come from a complex background. Members of the Corinthian church would not have met Jesus, as the church was founded in 49 CE; however, they would have had a common memory of him that was shared by Paul and possibly other traveling teachers.

This paper seeks to show how Paul uses the most likely collective memory of Jesus at Corinth as the basis of a prototype that will be imitated, and presents it in 1 Cor 11:1. The paper begins by exploring the complex identity of the church at Corinth and the ways in which Jesus was established as a prototype within the church. It then suggests why the Corinthians would have known of a larger set of material about Jesus, which extended beyond a few sayings or awareness of his death on the cross. It provides a reasonable collective memory of Jesus at Corinth by employing the work of Dale Allison and Richard Burridge, and explains how these recollections are seen throughout 1 Cor 8:1–11:1. It then concludes by assessing how Paul employs this memory of Jesus to address the complex identity of the Corinthians and adjusts their behavior, specifically in relation to weak and strong brothers and food sacrificed to idols, by drawing on the prototype that he employs.

## 2. Identity at Corinth When 1 Corinthians Was Written

Identity concerns how a people defines itself to be, and why, by referring to categories that can be ethnic, socio-economic, religious or based on kinship-, gender, trade, beliefs, or other identifiers. When a group contains multiple overlapping identities, its identity is known as being complex. The Corinthians had many identities that influenced them at the time when 1 Corinthians was written (Brewer 2010, pp. 15–17).

### 2.1. The Complex Identity of Corinth

The majority of the Corinthians are from Roman background (Strabo, *Geography*, 8.6.20–23). After its destruction in 146 BC, Corinth remained desolate and largely uninhabited. Julius Caesar transplanted Romans to Corinth shortly before 44 BCE. Rome founded Corinth as a colony with Roman freedmen, veterans, and urban trades persons and laborers. The formal name of the colony was Colonia Laus Julia Corinthiensis (‘Colony of Corinth in Honor of Julius’). It was no longer a Greek provincial town, but instead became the capital of a Roman province. The influence of the Roman imperial cult was also known to be present in Corinth (Winter 1994b, p. 95). As part of their civil duties, Roman citizens in Corinth were required to worship the emperor (Dio Cassius 51.20.6–7; Winter 2001, pp. 270–73). The Temple of Octavia is also in Corinth, showing evidence of Roman influence (Pausanias 2.3.1; Coutsoumpas 2015, pp. 45–59).

In addition to having a Roman identity, the Corinthians employed many things that would be associated with being Greek. They were also influenced by Greek culture, by living on the Peloponnesian peninsula and speaking, writing, and reading Greek. Many would have worshipped Greek gods like Apollo, Poseidon, Aphrodite, Demeter, Kore, and Asclepius. Corinth was filled with Greek deities but also some Roman and Egyptian. Temples in the ancient world represented the characteristics of cities and communal values. Building a temple in an area signified the presence of the deity, which suggested a benefactor relationship (Stevenson 2001, pp. 78–80; Neyrey 2005, pp. 471–77; Liu 2013, pp. 75–105). The presence of a very large temple in Apollo’s honor illustrates its importance. The temple of Asklepios was also very popular due to its healing ministry. Two statues were erected to Dionysus in Corinth, revealing that it was a significant cult in Corinth, too (Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.2; Foutopolos 2003, p. 134). In his travels in the second century through Corinth, Pausanias mentions that there were temples to Aphrodite, Asclepius, the Egyptian goddess Isis, Artemis, and Tyche in and around Corinth. He also mentions statues of Poseidon, Apollo of Claros, Aphrodite, Zeus, Kthonios, and Hypsistos; a temple of Athena Chalinitis; sanctuaries dedicated to Zeus and Ilythia; and a temple dedicated to Aphrodite on the Acrocorinth (Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.1.3; 2.2–5, 8; Grant 2001, pp. 63–65).

Greek and Roman values circulated within Corinthian society. In his study of the place of wisdom in Corinth, White refers to the value that other Greek and Roman

writers attributed to education, including Aristotle, who frequently reiterated the value of education for an ideal ancient society (*Pol.* 1.1255B; 2.1277A; 2.1263B; 7.1332A-B; White 2015, pp. 39–52). The value of the educated elites within the early Roman Empire is also displayed in the writing of Pseudo-Plutarch (*Lib. ed.* 2B; 4B; 5B-C). A proper education was believed to be the source and root of all goodness (*Lib. ed.* 4B). Ideas similar to *paideia*, as found in Quintilian, affirm that the truly caring father will give his son education at the earliest point in life to enable him to attain his place in broader society (*Inst.* 1.1.1; 1.1.35). Seneca also argued for the study of wisdom, which he declared to be “lofty, brave, and great souled,” the “perfect good of the human mind,” and the “perfect goal of life” (*Ep.* 88.1–2; 89.4; 93.8).

These Greco-Roman ideas appear to be present within 1 Corinthians. The letter begins by confronting the wisdom of the world, a Greco-Roman interest (1 Cor 1–2). Some within the congregation were wealthy benefactors. The Erastus inscription, which likely shows a Corinthian freedman, was also an indication of wealth within the Corinthian church (cf. Rom 16:23) (Winter 1994a, pp. 180–97; Murphy-O’Connor 1998, pp. 268–70). The Corinthians continued to struggle with issues of sexuality and idolatry (cf. 1 Cor 6:12–20; 10:1–33). Paul also employs several Greco-Roman quotations throughout the letter (Watson and Culy 2018).

The Corinthian Christians had also picked up elements of Jewish culture that had become incorporated within their identity. Some had a Jewish background, as evidenced by a Jewish synagogue in the city (cf. Acts 18:1–8). While most of the Corinthians were from a Gentile background, they were evidently respecting the use of Jewish Scripture. Paul employs Scripture citations and allusions throughout the letter (Williams 2008, pp. 7–38).<sup>1</sup> The somewhat frequent use of Scripture, which at least at some points is best understood by its context and the frequent appeal to “do you not know?”, suggested the Corinthian church appeared to understand and respect Jewish ideas (cf. 1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19–20; 9:13) (Williams 2019a, pp. 160–70). This would not be customary for those from a Greco-Roman background and indicated that their Greco-Roman identity had merged with Jewish sensitivities.

Other disparities were present within the congregation. Paul mentions that not many were of nobility or wealth in 1 Cor 1:26. Some, however, were most likely wealthy, as the core of the city of Corinth was founded upon trade, business, and entrepreneurial pragmatism. In his archeological study of Corinth, Murphy-O’Connor notes that Corinth had many warehouses, inns, taverns, and restaurants (Murphy-O’Connor 2002, p. 34). In comparison to other cities like Athens or towns in Macedonia, Corinth had an immense volume of business, and profits came easily to those who were willing to work (Murphy-O’Connor 2002, pp. 108, 258; Engels 1990, pp. 113–14). Strabo also asserts that Corinth was wealthy because of its two harbors and the celebration of the Isthmian games (*Geogr.* 8.6.20–23). Honor and shame disparities were also present, as acknowledged by Paul when he spoke of variances between the wise and foolish, weak and strong, the lowly and the powerful (in 1 Cor 1:26–28) that leads to boasting. He then proceeds to point them to Jesus Christ, who does away with these variances in 1 Cor 1:30–31. The letter of 1 Corinthians also references honor and shame dynamics by referring to the man caught committing incest (1 Cor 5). Studies by A. D. Clarke and J. Chow have indicated that the man was an elite at Corinth and likely a patron (Clarke 2006; Chow 1992). In 1 Cor 5, Paul employs a rhetoric of honor and shame to shame this patron (see further McNamara 2010, pp. 307–26).

Paul also recognizes that they have a Christian identity as well. The letter begins with Paul addressing the Corinthians as those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Cor 1:2), and he then joins their identity directly to other Christians by connecting the Corinthians “together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours”. They are “recipients of the grace of God,” “enriched”, and “strengthened in Christ”, and “have an abundance of spiritual gifts” (1 Cor 1:4–9) (Tucker 2020, p. 295). He assumes the value of the cross of Christ when he emphasizes that he would never want to nullify the cross of Christ (in 1 Cor 1:17) and considers them

to be the field, building, and the temple of God (1 Cor 3:6–17). Throughout his letter, he frequently puts forward Christological references, suggesting they are now “in Christ” and must respect the cross. In 1 Corinthians he does not in any way suggest that they are outside of Christ, which clearly contrasts to his tone in the letter of Galatians. Truly, their identity is a complex mixture of Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian, and also of the rich and poor, and honor and shame.

Within the church, various other subgroupings were causing stress. Some were married, while others were single (1 Cor 7); some had knowledge (1 Cor 8); and some had more extravagant spiritual gifts that others lacked (1 Cor 12). Most disturbing of all, some of the Corinthians identified with particular leaders. In 1 Cor 1:12, Paul criticizes them, observing that some say that they belong to Paul, others to Apollos, others to Cephas, and then others to Christ. Paul is unhappy about this and asserts the need to refocus on the person of Christ, rather than the diverse leaders of the community (1 Cor 3:21–23).

## 2.2. Christ as a Recognized Prototype at Corinth

To help the Corinthians adjust their conduct, Paul employs a prototype. Prototypes have been recognized to be an important approach within investigations of social identity. As a group defines itself, these types of individuals emerge. The prototype then becomes a reference point within the group and carries key group principles (Baker 2012, p. 132). This person highlights critical common values of the group and clearly contrasts with those considered to be outsiders. Due to the strength of the prototype, group members respond positively to their actions (Burke 2006, p. 121).

The significance of a prototype is accentuated when polarities exist in the group (Turner et al. 1989, pp. 138–44). When group members are discussing an issue, the discussion can move in the direction of the prototype within the group. The appeal to a prototype can define the ingroup norm that is polarized away from the outgroup.

Throughout 1 Corinthians, Paul elevates Jesus Christ as the prototype within the community, as shown by the frequency of his references to Christ. Throughout the letter, the name “Christ” appears 64 times, the designation “Lord” appears 66 times, and the name “Jesus” 26 times (Ciampa and Rosner 2006, pp. 205–18). This is also shown by the way that Paul employs the name “Jesus Christ”. In 1 Cor 1:1, he introduces himself to the Corinthians as being an apostle of Jesus Christ. He then refers to the Corinthians as those who are sanctified in him (1 Cor 1:2). He begins to use Christ as a prototype in 1 Cor 1:10, when he changes their group affiliation from particular leaders to those who are brothers, whose superordinate identity is in Christ (Tucker 2020, pp. 295–97). Paul had already heard from Chloe’s people that subgroups had formed, and he is now trying to reorient them. He deemphasizes the role that he, Apollos, or Cephas has had and focuses on their place in Christ’s identity (1 Cor 1:12; cf. 1 Cor 3:21–22). Indeed, he points to Christ as the one upon whom the community relies, who is not divided (1 Cor 1:13). In 1 Cor 1:26–31, he focuses the Corinthians on their overarching identity. Instead of pointing to matters of wisdom, strength, or riches, he draws their attention to their true source of life, who is Christ, through whom they obtain wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor 1:30). In rejecting a diversity of opinions, Paul insists Christ is the “power and wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1:23–24) and instructs his followers they are to have the “mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16).

As he retells the way that the Corinthians were founded, he turns their attention away from diverse people to those who are one in Christ. In 1 Cor 3:6–9, he speaks of himself and Apollos as “servants”. Instead of focusing on their roles, he emphasizes the role of God for causing the growth (1 Cor 3:5–7). Rather than being primarily diverse, they are “God’s field, building, and temple” (1 Cor 3:9, 16). The temple functions as a unifying symbol of Corinthian diversity and is also a warning of desecration (Lim 2017, pp. 147–57). The foundation stone is Jesus Christ (1 Cor 3:10). Instead of focusing on human leaders they belong to Christ (1 Cor 3:21–23) Paul, in declaring “you belong to Christ”, orients the attention of the group to the highest level (Tucker 2020, p. 300).



Other sections of 1 Corinthians reveal the raising up of the person of Christ, such as through worship in the community and holiness, and reiterate that Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us (1 Cor 5:7) (Barentsen 2011, p. 96). In addressing problems of sexual immorality in 1 Cor 6:12–20, Paul begins by stating that the body is meant for the Lord (1 Cor 6:12–13). In 1 Cor 6:15–18, he states bluntly that one should shun fornication because one belongs to the Lord, rather than to a prostitute. The Corinthians are reminded they were bought by the great cost of the blood of Christ (1 Cor 6:19–20) (Tucker 2020, pp. 304–305). The image of the body, which is Christ, and the members that compose the body also subsumes the Corinthians' individual experience in Christ's greater one (Eastman 2017, p. 91; cf. Ferguson 2020, p. 249).<sup>2</sup> In later referring to matters that involve social standing, such as being married or divorced, or being a slave or free, he points to their calling in Christ as being more important (1 Cor 7:17–24) (Tucker 2011).

Perhaps the most telling point about the supremacy of Christ is the role that he plays in the body. Paul writes about the body of the church as being Christ's. In 1 Cor 12:12, Christ is used as shorthand for the church as the body of Christ. In his comments on the passage of 1 Cor 12, A. C. Thiselton remarks that "Christ remains the main subject whom the rhetoric serves... [he also] retains an emphatic position as a nominative at the end of the long sentence" (Thiselton 2000, p. 996). After proceeding through the discussion of diversity within the body, Paul then returns to the main point in 1 Cor 12:27, which is that the Corinthians are the body of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 8:1–11:1, Paul responds to a difficulty in the diverse Corinthian church, which concerns food offered to idols and the proper behavior of weak and strong brothers to each other. He commands the Corinthians to protect the weak (1 Cor 8:8–13), flee from idolatry and food sacrificed to idols (1 Cor 10:14–22), and do everything to the glory of God (1 Cor 10:23–33). At the end of his argument, he brings forward the person of Christ for the final concluding argument, asserting "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ". From a social identity perspective, Paul has now referred to a prototype, namely someone who is universally recognized within the Corinthian community as providing a descriptive norm that others ought to align with. What is intriguing, however, is their knowledge of Christ is, given they never received a visit from him. This leads us into a discussion of the collective memory of Jesus at Corinth.

### 3. Collective Memory of Jesus in Corinth

Of the many studies about the topic of memory in New Testament studies, many focus on the person of Jesus in the gospels (Havukainen 2020). While the role of memory in other fields of early Christianity has gained notice, more attention needs to be devoted to these areas (Keith et al. 2019).

Two understandings of memory of Jesus have affected the study of the Pauline Epistles. Is Paul somebody who is communicating knowledge about Jesus that has been passed along from the broader church that then becomes a collective memory at Corinth? This is the approach taken by Richard Bauckham, and others. The other viewpoint is that the memory of Jesus was substantially adjusted in response to the present needs of the apostle and the Corinthian church. This is the perspective that is taken by Christine Jacobi, whose work has been propelled by recent memory investigations. The following surveys the two approaches and suggests which one is more sustainable.

#### 3.1. The Maximum Approach—Richard Bauckham

The maximum approach is well represented by Richard Bauckham in his book, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*. (Bauckham 2017; see also Allison 1982, pp. 1–32; Byrskog 2000; Bird 2014; Dunn 2015). Bauckham's writing focuses on the reception of tradition by key tradents, who preserve and pass along the tradition. These include the twelve but also others, such as minor figures in the canonical gospels who were willing to support the viewpoint of Jesus passed along. Since all of the canonical gospels are written in the living memory of Jesus' immediate followers (even if a long time after

the death of Jesus), they are assumed to be communicating the same ideas about Jesus. In Bauckham's writing, he acknowledges the value of memory in the ancient world, holding that it is different from the value it is given in the modern world. He also insists on the value of listening to the memory of eyewitness testimony, as also stressed by Papias, and his interest in "a living voice" (Bauckham 2017, pp. 12–38; cf. Byrskog 2000, pp. 265–300).

In his analysis of Jesus material in Paul's letters, Bauckham finds evidence of the process of tradition (about Jesus' life and teaching) generally being faithfully passed from one to another, which is similar to the transmission of tradition from one teacher to another that was taking place at that time. He sees patterns of this within the first century. In referring to Josephus' writing, he describes how the Pharisees passed along (using the verb *παράδιδωμι*) certain ordinances to the people that originated in a succession of fathers (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 13.297). Greek philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and Zeno also passed their philosophy on to their successors (Mason 1991, pp. 217, 239). In Mishnah *Pirke 'Avot*, the process of receiving and transmitting can be seen when Moses received the Law, committed it to Joshua, then Joshua to the elders, the elders to the Prophets, and then the Prophets to the men of the Great Synagogue (*m. 'Avot* 1:2–12). This transmission process could have taken place from Peter to Paul. Other prominent members of the Jerusalem church, such as Barnabas, Mark and Silvanus, could also been responsible for passing along ideas about Jesus to Paul (Bauckham 2017, pp. 269–71).

Bauckham refers to several texts within Paul's writing, which he claims shows a tradition about Jesus being passed along.<sup>3</sup> As Paul speaks of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 11:23–26, he also speaks of a tradition that has been received.<sup>4</sup> Bauckham views this as a unit of Jesus tradition that he received, citing it in a form that is close to the version found in Luke 22: 19–20. The way that he represents it shows, in Bauckham's view, "a considerable degree of precise memorization" (Bauckham 2017, p. 268).

### 3.2. The Minimal Approach—Christine Jacobi

In contrast to the maximalist approach, Christine Jacobi is a minimalist. Instead of seeing a wealth of material about Jesus passed through individual tradents, she restricts the knowledge of Jesus to only what can be found in 1 Corinthians. She does not contest the view, espoused by Bauckham and others, that tradition about Jesus was circulating, but she does not believe that it has necessarily become a part of the Corinthian congregation.

Her study is based upon fresh findings in social memory theory, which holds that "If all memory is constructed from the perspective of the present, there is no 'tradition' or 'memory' that can be extracted from those present social frameworks" (Keith 2015, pp. 354–76). This leads her to her reception perspective, which Jacobi calls "*Erinnerungshermeneutik*". The result of this perspective is that the entire Pauline setting, including his thought world and rhetorical aims, must be thoroughly evaluated in terms of the present. What then results is not a straight route from tradents to recipients to recorded tradition, as Bauckham presents, but instead a network of common topoi, parallels, and analogies, which led to Paul's representation in an epistle like 1 Corinthians (Jacobi 2015, pp. 42–43).

In her exploration of the recollection of Jesus in the Pauline letters, Christine Jacobi points to a comprehensive Christ event that would have been in his mind at about the time that 1 Corinthians was written (Jacobi 2015, p. 12). Jacobi finds that a comprehensive Christ event rests upon Jesus' preexistence, incarnation, earthly activity, suffering, death, resurrection, and then ascension (e.g., Rom 4:25; 8:34; 1 Cor 15:3b–5; Phil 2:6–11) (Jacobi 2019, p. 1:3). These letters, then, provide a basis point for the examination of memory of Jesus that Paul was expressing near the time that he wrote 1 Corinthians. Instead of the Pauline letters primarily incorporating recollections that have been passed down from other members of the early church, she views the passages as *Erinnerungszeugnisse* that have a complex background. She finds no parallels to a Jesus tradition existing, and instead finds an overall story (Jacobi 2015, pp. 45–46).

While she limits the recollection of Jesus to these aspects, Jacobi believes that Paul presents Jesus as having a profound effect on his existence. He speaks about the revelation

of the person of Christ in his life, which becomes the starting point for his depiction of Jesus (Gal 1:12–16). The knowledge of Christ changed his perception of what was of greatest importance as he became a member of the body of Christ (Phil 3:7–8). It also led him to proclaim his ministry and make sense of his suffering (Rom 14:8–9; 2 Cor 4:5, 10–11; 12:8–10). The ongoing life of the Christian is then directly related to the salvific death of Jesus and his resurrection (Rom 6:3–4, 11; Phil 3:11) (Jacobi 2019, pp. 4–9).

According to Jacobi, the most prominent recollection of the life of Jesus within Paul's letters is the cross.<sup>5</sup> It becomes the key event that changes Paul's means of living, so that he lives as Christ crucified (Gal 2:20). The cross creates a new relationship that God can have with both Jews and Gentiles (Gal 3:6–29; 2 Cor 3:4–18; 1 Thess 5:10). He interprets Christ's experience as being cursed so that he might redeem Jews and Gentiles (Rom 8:32; Gal 3:13). Paul then employs Scripture texts to explain the significance of the cross event (Isa 28:16 in Rom 9:33 and 10:11; Deut 21:23 in Gal 3:13) (Jacobi 2019, pp. 9–10).<sup>6</sup>

As a result of their two different stances on collective memory, Bauckham and Jacobi arrive at two different positions for understanding Paul's letters. Bauckham assumes a wealth of material from Synoptic tradition was present at Corinth, which would include his life, example, teaching, death, and resurrection. This wealth of tradition was not set forward in his writing but was instead the backdrop of 1 Corinthians (Thompson 1991, pp. 66–76). Jacobi, however, sees little of Jesus's teaching in Paul's writing, for the reason that the collective memory of Jesus at Corinth is mainly focused on either his preexistence, incarnation, earthly activity, suffering, death, resurrection, and then ascension. In 1 Corinthians, it is particularly the death and resurrection of Jesus. She does not believe that the teaching and example of Jesus's earthly life would have been part of the collective memory of the Corinthian congregation.

### 3.3. Pauline Passages That Reveal Some Knowledge of Jesus's Lifestyle in Corinth

With these two positions in mind, this study now turns to specific passages in Paul's writing where specific actions of Jesus are recorded. Three passages in 1 Corinthians are traditionally regarded as being from Jesus (1 Cor 7:10–11; 9:14; 11:23–25). Each is considered regarding actions of Jesus recognized at Corinth, in order to see if it refers to a particular event transmitted from one to another (maximalist) or if it emerges from Paul's conversion experience (minimalist).

In 1 Cor 7:10–11, Paul encourages those who are married to stay together by using the phrase “not I, but the Lord” (οὐκ ἐγὼ ἀλλ’ ὁ κύριος). Bauckham and Jacobi both recognize the change of wording from the Jesus tradition but explain it in different ways. In proceeding from the maximalist position, Bauckham explains 1 Cor 7:10–11 as emerging from the words of Jesus and then being expressed by Paul. He then claims that this “envisages a chain of transmission that *begins from Jesus himself* and passes through intermediaries to Paul himself, who has already passed it on to the Corinthians when he established their church (*italics his*)” (Bauckham 2017, p. 268). By contrast, Jacobi does not see a chain of tradition taking place in 1 Cor 7:10–11, and instead attributes this to the conversion experience that he had and the authority that resulted from it (Jacobi 2019, pp. 25–26).

The surrounding context of 1 Cor 7, however, favors Bauckham's perspective over Jacobi's. Throughout 1 Cor 7, Paul has not resorted to his own authority (cf. 1 Cor 7:6–9) and only uses the word παραγγέλλω once, in 1 Cor 7:10. It is the only time that he uses this word in 1 Cor 7:1–11:1, when it would be easy for him to appeal to his own authority. The only other appearance of the word in 1 Corinthians is 1 Cor 11:17, in the chaos occurring when the Corinthians are celebrating the Lord's Supper.

Right after he has appealed to the Lord's word, Paul seems to be deescalating his authority. In 1 Cor 7:12, he lessens his appeal to authority as he writes about Christians married to unbelievers who might want to divorce the believer. Paul speaks with less certainty in his directives, as shown in his statement that the believing husband or wife may save the unbelieving spouse (1 Cor 7:16). Paul then uses a similar phrase, ἐγὼ οὐχ ὁ κύριος which makes most sense if it is seen as referring to his own opinion, which is

of lesser value. His use of this phrase ἐγὼ οὐχ ὁ κύριος shows that he does not want to identify his statement about Christian believers living with unbelievers with the authority that comes from the Lord (Schrage 1999, p. 97).

In 1 Cor 9:14, Paul appeals to another indication of Jesus' teaching. Within this chapter, Paul is writing about the rights that he has as a minister of the gospel. When he showcases the lifestyle that he feels able to demand, he claims that he has the right to food, to take a wife, and receive compensation. He chooses, however, not to take his rights due to a greater goal. In the renunciation of his rights, he presents himself as an example of one who submitted his rights for the benefit of others. He then appeals to the Lord's commandment that the one who proclaims the gospel should receive his living from that work.

When he considers the source of 1 Cor 9:14, Bauckham views this statement as presenting his understanding of 1 Cor 7:10–11. He sees a chain of transmission that started with Jesus and passed through the Jerusalem apostles before reaching Paul. The casual way that Paul introduces this idea suggests that the Corinthians would already have been familiar with the assertion in 1 Cor 9:14 (Bauckham 2017, p. 270).

In her analysis of 1 Cor 9, Jacobi focuses on Pauline authority. She sees Paul's main purpose in this argument as being to renounce his right to receive a reward for his work. Thus, when he reaches 1 Cor 9:15, Paul changes his approach to say why he preaches the gospel freely, rather than be supported by the Christian community. She sees Pauline authority in the emphatic use of ἐγὼ and in Paul's appeal to his relationship with Christ (1 Cor 9:17–18). She also notices that Paul refers to his stewardship (οἰκονομία) that he must maintain from his commissioning (cf. 1 Cor 9:1) (Jacobi 2019, pp. 224–28).

Jacobi, however, makes more of Paul's command (διέταξεν) than what the context implies. In 1 Cor 9:3–14, Paul is defending the right of Christian workers to receive support. The Scripture of Deut 25:4 and the reference to "the Lord's command" reinforce the assertion made in 1 Cor 9, namely that workers are worth their wages. The purpose of the command, as Fee rightly states, is that it "is not given to the missionaries, but for their benefit" (Fee 1987, p. 413).

Bauckham's approach makes better sense. The ideas from 1 Cor 9:14 correspond closely to Jesus's tradition that is later recorded in Luke 10:7. While the vocabulary is not identical, the word ἐσθίω is in the vicinity (1 Cor 9:13), and the two passages relate thematically, as both passages speak about the worker being worthy to receive his wages. While the passage from Luke 10 does not refer to the gospel like 1 Cor 9, the allusion to this work is evident.<sup>7</sup> The worker in Luke 10:7 is represented by the word ἐργάτης, which also has agricultural connections.<sup>8</sup> Paul uses agricultural imagery in his argument in 1 Cor 9:7. The surrounding context of 1 Cor 9 speaks of eating and drinking, and also shows correspondence with Luke 10:7.

A further connection between Luke 10:7 and 1 Cor 9:14 can be seen in the association of 1 Cor 9:14 with 1 Tim 5:18. Both the passages in 1 Cor 9 and 1 Tim 5 are preceded by a quotation from Deut 25:4. Both 1 Tim 5 and 1 Cor 9 speak thematically about the worker receiving adequate compensation. The passages from 1 Tim 5:18 and Luke 10:7 have essentially identical wording (ἄξιός ἐστιν ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ).<sup>9</sup> This further suggests a connection between 1 Cor 9:14 and the Jesus tradition.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, both 1 Cor 7:10–11 and 9:14 represent an aspect of Jesus's lifestyle, namely his teaching. His actions, however, can be more clearly seen in 1 Cor 11:23–25. This paper will now consider the lengthiest section in 1 Corinthians where Jesus's actions are referenced.

When Jacobi explores 1 Cor 11:23–25, she believes that the wording needs to be considered in relation to the words Ἐγὼ and ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου. She evaluates these words to show the source of what Paul is saying about Jesus. She also considers the words παρέλαβον and παρέδωκα. In other places in Paul's writing, these not only describe the passing along of tradition but also Paul's participation in the tradition itself. She sees a parallel with 1 Thess 2:13, where Paul uses the word παραλαβόντες to refer to the reception of Paul's word and lifestyle by the Thessalonian community. In 1 Thess 4:1–2, Paul employs the verb παρελάβετε, and refers to instructions received from his lifestyle.



In this case, Jacobi believes that he is passing along tradition about the message and the messenger that were received (Jacobi 2015, pp. 46–48).

She also sees 1 Cor 11:23–25 as analogous to 1 Cor 15:3, where Paul uses both *παρέλαβον* and *παρέδωκα*. As in 1 Cor 11:23–25, Paul provides a tradition to correct the practice of the Corinthian church. In this situation in 1 Cor 11, however, Paul begins with *Ἐγώ* and the prepositional phrase *ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου*, which point to the origin of what he received. Paul's special position within the community gives him the authority to pass along the tradition he possesses (Jacobi 2015, pp. 282–84, 289–90).

Despite Jacobi's focus on the wording of the passage, several factors make her viewpoint more difficult to uphold and sustain. The comparison that she makes between 1 Cor 11:23–26 and 1 Cor 15:1–3, where she highlights *Ἐγώ* and the prepositional phrase *ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου* in 1 Cor 11:23–25, is less convincing because of the nature of the traditions being compared. The Lord's Supper tradition is represented in Matthew, Mark, and Luke to some degree, showing correspondence with Jesus's tradition. The early creed of 1 Cor 15, however, is the anonymous account of an early Judean community (Conzelmann 1975, pp. 251–54; Collins 1999, pp. 529–33; Drimbe 2020, p. 61). The original source of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 11:23–25, does have earlier antecedents, while the creed, like the statement of 1 Cor 15, does not refer to a specific incidence.

Perhaps more importantly, the wording within 1 Cor 11:23–25 does not appear to be Pauline but seems to include aspects that are unlike his other phrasings. Several words and idioms found within 1 Cor 11:23–26 do not fit the pattern of Pauline language and thus favor the notion of tradition passed from one to another. For example, while Paul uses the verb *εὐχαριστήσας* (infinitive) in other places in his writing, this is the only instance where he uses it in relation to a meal, unlike the other instances in which he talks about meals (cf. Gal 2; 1 Cor 10).<sup>11</sup> The word *ἀνάμνησιν* is only used in 1 Cor 11:24–25 in Paul's writing, and is also found in Luke's later rendition of the Lord's Supper in Luke 22:19.<sup>12</sup> Words such as *δειπνῆσαι*, *ὁσάκις*, *ἔκλασεν*, and the phrase *καὶ εἶπεν* are only used in relation to the Lord's Supper in Paul's writing (Sumney 2017, pp. 140–41). Heinz Schürmann has pointed out that, in Paul's writing, the word *τοῦτο* only precedes the noun when Paul writes "this is my body" and "this is the cup" (Schürmann 1955, p. 12). Jeremias also notices that this is the only time that Paul uses the word *σῶμα* in relation to the earthly body of Jesus (Jeremias 1977, p. 104). The many non-Pauline elements in 1 Cor 11:23–26 reveal that it was more likely a tradition that did not come from Paul and was therefore less likely to have emerged from his own experience.

It is also striking that Paul does not use other revelatory language. As Paul has stated, he uses several words that are absent in 1 Cor 11:23–25. When Paul is employing revelatory language in Gal 1:11–12, he uses the word *ἀποκάλυψις*. Other words related to revelation in epistles with Pauline influence include *ἀποκαλύπτω*, *φανερώω*, *γνωρίζω* and *μυστήριον* (cf. Eph 3:3–9; Col 1:26–27). In this case, these words are not found in 1 Cor 11:23–25; however, it is possible to find wording with similarity to other Eucharistic traditions circulating in the church (Drimbe 2020, p. 61). The contents overlap significantly with Jesus material, most obviously shown later in Luke, although there are also similarities with passages of Matthew and Mark.

Other characteristics of 1 Cor 11:23–26 make it appear as if this commemorative meal has undergone liturgical adaptation (Schrage 1999, p.11). The parallelisms between "this is my body" and "this cup is the new covenant in my blood" are more developed and symmetrical (Collins 1999, p. 427). Paul omits the blood was "poured out for many" and instead inserts "which is for you", appearing to broaden the focus of the Supper and apply it to those commemorating the memorial meal at the time. The use of the word *ὁσάκις* ("as often as"), which only appears in 1 Cor 11:25, 26 in Paul's writing, likely reflects an adaptation rather than Paul's personal experience.

This paper's viewpoint also agrees with many commentators who see a knowledge of more than a broad story of Jesus's life present in Corinth. Many affirm that 1 Cor 11:23–25 is pre-Pauline and has been transmitted from earlier points in the church's life, and were

not solely composed by Paul (e.g., [Marshall 1981](#); [Fee 1987](#); [Wolff 1996](#); [Thiselton 2000](#); [Ciampa and Rosner 2010](#); [Perkins 2012](#); [Schottroff 2013](#)).

The three texts in 1 Corinthians point to instances where Paul's readers would have understood aspects of Jesus's lifestyle by referring to circulating Jesus tradition. However, admittedly only three instances of Jesus's lifestyle are referred to, and more examples would make Bauckham's approach stronger. The characteristic of first century letters written near the time of 1 Corinthians, do not, however, display many appearances of Jesus tradition, which may be due to the occasional nature of the epistles. Furthermore, these epistles are not meant to be reciting Jesus material due to their paraenetic concerns. Unless it is assumed that Paul did not know any Jesus tradition, these short appearances are customary for the time era and reveal that the recipients would have known something more than an overall story ([Thompson 1991](#), pp. 61–63, 70–76).

One other document within the church at Corinth suggests that the Corinthians would have understood Jesus's lifestyle. While the epistle of 1 Clement is traditionally dated 96–97 CE, it provides a recollection of Jesus's deeds (1 Clem. 16) and also, his words (1 Clem. 13; 47). Several interpreters of 1 Clement believe that the author was drawing from one or more pre-Synoptic sources in these passages ([Hagner 1973](#), p. 151; [Gregory 2007](#), pp. 129–58; [Young 2011](#), pp. 107–50). The 16th chapter of 1 Clement also refers to the example of Jesus ([Thompson 1991](#), pp. 44–48). In 1 Clem. 16, Jesus' humility and suffering are discussed at length (1 Clem. 16.1–16). Aspects that are held to be worthy of emulation include Christ's humility and endurance of suffering. While Jesus could have come to earth with pride, he came with humility (1 Clem. 16.2). In addition to his humble actions, Christ's suffering is evident from Clement's use of Scripture texts that speaks of suffering in 1 Clem. 16.3–14. Christ was a man of stripes, knew how to endure weakness, and was dishonored rather than blessed ([Lindemann 1992](#), pp. 62–63).

The chapter of 1 Clem. 16 concludes with a clear exhortation to follow Jesus in his humility. In 1 Clem. 16.7, the author writes: "You see, dear friends, the kind of pattern that has been given to us; for if the Lord so humbled himself, what should we do, who through him have come under the yoke of his grace?" ([Holmes 2007](#), p. 67). Clement draws attention to this example by using the word ὁρᾶτε.<sup>13</sup> What is significant in 1 Clement 16.17 is his use of this word along with ἄνδρες ἀγαπητοί. This is the only place within his writing where he uses ὁρᾶτε together with ἄνδρες ἀγαπητοί, thereby drawing attention to and emphasizing the significance of what he is saying. Christ's recognized pattern (ὑπογραμμὸς) of enduring suffering patiently and humbly is the pattern for the community ([Lona 1992](#), pp. 233–34). While later than 1 Corinthians, 1 Clement indicates that the Corinthians would have understood Jesus's lifestyle.

### 3.4. A Collective Memory of Jesus from the Synoptic Tradition

After establishing that some specific aspects of the lifestyle of Jesus were most probably known at Corinth, this paper now proceeds to see which recollections of Jesus would be more likely. No document exists from Corinth that would provide specificity in this regard. While we cannot be certain, the following suggests the most likely recollections that would have been circulating at the time of the writing of 1 Corinthians.

The most probable remembrances of Jesus are those that occur most frequently in the Synoptic Gospels. In his examination of Jesus in *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History*, Dale Allison points to recurrent traditions. His study aims to articulate the larger patterns about Jesus from within the Synoptic tradition. For Allison, the material about Jesus is not an amorphous mess. "Certain themes, motifs, and rhetorical strategies recur again and again" ([Allison 2010](#), p. 15). He speaks of this as the principle of recurrent attestation. The particulars of these teachings and acts are to be considered generally reliable, although each specific detail might be less certain. These provide the recognized understanding of Jesus, even if, from his perspective, specific details might be "fuzzy" ([Allison 2010](#), p. 13; cf. [Reyna and Brainerd 1995](#), pp. 1–75).

The picture of Jesus that goes beyond specific details is also helped by the general role model of Jesus that emerges from the Synoptic accounts. In his work *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to Christian Ethics*, Richard Burridge points to the general actions of Jesus that provide a picture of who he is. While every action within Synoptic tradition cannot be assumed to be present in the minds of the Corinthians, the general overall picture is to be expected (Burridge 2007, pp. 33–80, 138–54).

What would that general picture of the life of Jesus include? It would include a demanding call of discipleship, a key theme of Mark's Gospel (Verhey 1984, p. 75). This begins at the opening of the Gospel in Mark 1:14–15, which issues a call for the first disciples (Mark 1:16–20). The nature of discipleship is then clarified in Mark 8:27–32 at Caesarea Philippi. If Jesus is going to go to the cross, they must be prepared to do the same thing (Mark 8:34). The three passion predictions that follow serve to underscore the demanding call upon the disciples (Mark 9:31; 10:32–34). Following Jesus involves self-denial and then picking up the cross. As Ernest Best said: "Jesus took up his cross, denied himself, served others; the disciple is summoned to all these" (Best 1981, p. 248). The disciples may fail frequently within Mark, but they succeed in following Jesus to Jerusalem.

Matthew's Gospel presents Jesus as the "true interpreter of righteousness under the law" (Burridge 2007, p. 224). Righteous conduct was also a key aspect of the person that Jesus was considered to be (Matera 1999, pp. 50–53; Gerhardsson 1981, pp. 54–60). The disciples in Matthew are called by the lakeside, and as they follow Jesus it involves leaving everything that they have for him (Matt 19:27). While they will still deny Jesus (Matt 26:25, 47–50; 26:31, 56), Matthew presents the disciples as understanding Jesus's teaching (Matt 13:51; 16:12; 17:13), and they do worship him (Matt 14:33). As the Gospel progresses, they do what Jesus directs them to do (Matt 21:6; 26:19; 28:16). Furthermore, they begin to become the new community that Jesus desired (Matt 16:18–19) (Burridge 2007, pp. 219–20). In arguing from Jesus's teaching in Matt 10, Luz asserts that the lifestyle of the master becomes that of his follower (Luz 2005, p. 159). Just as Jesus taught about the new righteousness of the kingdom, so he expected his disciples to act in the same way. Other scholars, like Matera and Gerhardsson, concur with this after undertaking studies of righteousness in the Gospel of Matthew (Matera 1999, pp. 50–53; Gerhardsson 1981, pp. 54–60). The disciples are supposed to emulate the righteous Jesus (Burridge 2007, p. 224).

In Luke's account, Jesus is presented as being the "friend of sinners" and is repeatedly presented as reaching out to the socially marginalized. In comparison to the other canonical gospels, Luke presents Jesus as spending a large amount of time with those who are on the margins of society (Burridge 2007, p. 275). He is with the poor,<sup>14</sup> those with physical disabilities,<sup>15</sup> those afflicted by evil spirits,<sup>16</sup> and with women.<sup>17</sup> At points the narrative even points out the fact, as in Luke 7:33–34, where Jesus is declared to be a friend of tax collectors and sinners. Jesus teaches the importance of reaching out to the lost when he speaks the parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son in Luke 15. When he defends his presence in the home of Zacchaeus, he declares that "the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost". In considering the Gospel of Luke, David Neale declares that Jesus's connection with sinners is one of the central parts of the Gospel (Neale 1991, p. 191). His followers are encouraged to follow him in other sections of the Gospel of Luke: they are, for example, to be the true neighbor to the one who was robbed on the road to Jericho in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29–37). In other sections such as the parable of the banquet, Jesus encourages his audience to invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame, and to extend the same care to the weak (Luke 14:13, 24–25). Rather than aspiring to be the greatest, a disciple's calling is to be a servant (Luke 22:27) (Burridge 2007, pp. 280–81).

These biographical narratives of Jesus reveal his main characteristics. This study does not assume that the Corinthians would have known every story that led to the composition of the Synoptic Gospels. It does accept the general picture of Jesus, as one who was sacrificial, pursued righteousness, and cared for the weak, would have been known in

Corinth. It is reasonable to expect this to have been part of a collective recollection of the life of Jesus in Corinth.

#### 4. Recalibrating Corinthian Ethics in Relation to Jesus the Prototype

In 1 Cor 11:1, Paul gives his commandment, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (NRSV), in a verse that also functions as a conclusion of 1 Cor 8:1–11:1. Many of the ideas found in the general picture of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels can also be found within this section of Paul’s writing, as the following section illustrates. When particular vocabulary is encountered that would connect the Jesus tradition to this section from 1 Corinthians, it is noted and brought to the reader’s attention. Then conclusions are drawn about how Paul used a collective memory of Jesus, the prototype, to provide spiritual guidance for the Corinthians.

##### 4.1. Care for the Weaker Brother

In 1 Cor 8, Paul guides the Corinthians to look after the one who is weak, a theme in the life of Jesus. For the Christian, “there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (1 Cor 8:6). The remaining part of 1 Cor 8, however, focuses on why the weak need to be protected, and explains that the strong may destroy the weak by their conduct.

The influence of the lifestyle of Jesus can be seen in this emphasis on the protection of the weak. This is a consistent theme throughout Synoptic material, particularly in the Gospel of Luke. Two words in particular stand out in 1 Cor 8 that show parallels to Synoptic representations of Jesus. The first is the word ἀσθενής, in 1 Cor 8:7,<sup>18</sup> which establishes that those who are weak eat foods sacrificed to idols and have their consciences defiled (1 Cor 8:7). When collective memory of Jesus is considered, it is possible that the word ἀσθενής may have some relation to someone who is connected to Jesus but who is vulnerable to compromising. Jesus spoke the word at the Garden of Gethsemane, when he warned the disciples against falling into temptation (Matt 26:41; Mark 14:38), and it is also encountered in several other places in Synoptic tradition.<sup>19</sup>

The second word is σκανδαλίζω which appears in 1 Cor 8:13 and relates to causing a brother to stumble. The word makes multiple appearances within Synoptic tradition, including in the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>20</sup> On multiple occasions within Synoptic tradition, the word is used to warn people not to stumble and is often used in relation to the weak. This includes Matt 18:6, where Jesus uses it to warn against causing little ones to stumble.

With the recollection of the lifestyle of Jesus in mind, Paul then urges the Corinthians to change their Christian conduct so that it is aligned with what Jesus would have done. He exhorts the strong brother to look after the weak, even though the strong brother has the right (ἐξουσία) to do what he wants. He also exhorts the strong not to become a stumbling block for the weak. The knowledge that the strong brother possesses could destroy (ἀπόλλυται) the weak (1 Cor 8:11). Robertson and Plummer supply the translation “finds destruction” for the verb ἀπόλλυται (Robertson and Plummer 1911, p. 172). The middle voice of this verb accentuates active participation and emphasizes the serious result that could take place if the strong one uses his right. Although the weak may not possess the same knowledge as the strong, the weak brother is still the brother for whom Christ died (ἀπέθανεν) in 1 Cor 8:11. Paul then declares this to be a sin against Christ (εἰς Χριστὸν ἁμαρτάνετε) in 1 Cor 8:12, thereby refocusing the strong, encouraging them to consider their relationship to the lifestyle of Jesus, who looked after the weak. The appeal to the lifestyle of Jesus produces the motivation for the strong to look after the weak brother, irrespective of his identity.

##### 4.2. Turning from Idolatry

In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul’s argument moves to idolatry. After identifying the Corinthian situation with the narrative of Israel in 1 Cor 10:1–13, he then moves to focus on the Lord’s



Supper. He recalibrates the Corinthian ethics once again by recollecting Jesus, but this time in relationship to idols (Tucker 2020, pp. 309–10). He urges the Corinthians to be separate from the idol feasts that are taking place in Corinth and urges them to flee from them, based on the meal that Jesus has initiated.

The vocabulary of 1 Cor 10:14–22 contains several words that overlap with the Jesus tradition on the Lord's Supper, later found in Matt 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; and Luke 22:15–20, and alluded to in words such as ποτήριον, ἄρτος, εὐλογέω, αἶμα, κλάω, and εὐλογέω.<sup>21</sup> While the wording is not identical, the general understanding of the Lord's Supper is assumed in 1 Cor 10:14–22.

In 1 Cor 10:14–22, Paul proclaims that any participation with idols is to be avoided at all costs, which was also anticipated by 1 Cor 8–10 (Schrage 1995, p. 435; Schnabel 2006, p. 547). Idolatry is a great danger since eating foods sacrificed to idols puts the consumer in the grasp of those entities and compromises the proper allegiance to Jesus. Thus, Paul urges the Corinthians to flee from them (Foutopolos 2003). This action would make sense from a Jewish perspective, where idolatry was considered to be evil (e.g., Exod 20:3–6) (Rosner 2007, pp. 69–100). There is more to this, however, as is shown when the connection with Jesus is considered. The Supper that Jesus initiated is contrasted with the feasts offered to idols in 1 Cor 10. Paul employs the strong connective word Διόπερ, which links his exhortation in 1 Cor 10:14–22 with their identity as being God's people from 1 Cor 10:1–13. This meal, then, provides a marker of identity for the extremely diverse Corinthians, as meals tend to do (Tucker 2020, pp. 310–11). It is also a meal that is directly connected to the paragon of the community, Jesus Christ. Paul points to the body and the blood of Christ, using the word Χριστοῦ twice (1 Cor 10:16). Thus, it is not any meal, but rather one connected to the key representative of the diverse Corinthian community.

Paul's language is emotive in this section. He addresses the Corinthians as beloved brothers, pointing to their common identity (ἀγαπητοί μου) in 1 Cor 10:14. This is one of two times that he uses this address in the letter.<sup>22</sup> He gives no doubt about the urgency of fleeing idols, using the verb φεύγετε in 1 Cor 10:14. As in its prior and only other use in 1 Corinthians, it is used for extreme measures to avoid an ethical problem. In 1 Cor 6:18, Paul urged the Corinthians to put great distance between themselves and immorality, and now he expects them to do the same in relation to idolatry. By warning them to flee, he indicates extreme and imminent danger, which he reiterates in other places in his letters by warning against idolatry (Ciampa and Rosner 2010, pp. 26, 470–71).<sup>23</sup> He seeks to recalibrate their practice and spiritually guide them by pointing to this meal, and emphasizing its focus on the person of Christ.

#### 4.3. Conduct for God's Glory

One final parallel to the life of Jesus can be seen in 1 Corinthians 10. Just as Jesus lived sacrificially and righteously, Paul encourages the Corinthians to do likewise, and show the same spirit. They are to do all for the glory of God and care for the weak.

Some words within 1 Cor 10:23–11:1 may even overlap with Jesus material. One word that stands out is the word οἰκοδομέω in 1 Cor 10:23. There are multiple attestations of the word in Synoptic material.<sup>24</sup> Other words in this section can also be found in the Jesus tradition, such as καλέω and ἐσθίω (Schnabel 2006, p. 569).<sup>25</sup> These words, however, are more commonplace and thus may be viewed as less significant in showing a connection to Jesus tradition.

While it is not explicitly stated from what things the diverse Corinthians should seek liberty, Paul does state that it may not be helpful (συμφέρει) or even possible to build up (οἰκοδομεῖ) the church. While they can eat whatever they find in the marketplace whatever is set before them at dinner, Paul's conduct is not focused upon himself, but rather on using his rights to benefit and build up others in the body of Christ (Fee 1987, p. 486). This is a theme that Paul addressed previously in a letter (1 Cor 3:9; 8:1, 10), and he also speaks further about it on other occasions (1 Cor 14:3–5; 12, 17, 26) (Thiselton 2000, p. 781).

The basis for Paul's exhortation is explained in 1 Cor 10:24, where he gives a maxim: "Do not seek your own advantage but that of the other" (NRSV). This maxim is the third strong adversative contrast that uses ἀλλά in 1 Cor 10:23–24. Paul uses the word (ζητείτω), a present tense imperative signifying the continuous need to seek the benefit of the other. Instead of cherishing a love for oneself (ἐαυτοῦ), he suggests, we should love the other (τοῦ ἐτέρου).

While some have pointed to the crucified Christ as a motive for this type of behavior (Schrage 1995, p. 464; Winter 2001, p. 95; Schnabel 2006, p. 566), the lifestyle that Jesus lived, as promoted in multiple places by the Synoptic tradition, supports Paul's assertions more fully. The tradition's emphasis on caring for the weak, committing to the will of God and being willing to suffer all reinforce this. The particular link that the word οἰκοδομέω has with parts of the Jesus tradition, like the Sermon on the Mount/Sermon on the Plain, that emphasize righteous behavior and care for others (e.g., Matt 7:24, 26; Luke 6:48–49) may help to further illustrate this connection to the lifestyle of Jesus found in the Jesus tradition.

## 5. Conclusions

The Corinthian church that was founded by Paul emerged from great diversity. Although the members were predominantly from Roman and Greek backgrounds, they were diverse in many other ways before becoming Christians. The diversity continued even after they became a church. This is evident from their internal divisions within the community between the single, divorced, married and between the weak and strong. Further diversity was apparent from the use of different spiritual gifts, along with the predisposition of some to follow different leaders.

In addressing weak and strong brothers on the problem of food sacrificed to idols, Paul does not base his reasoning on diversity, but instead appeals to Jesus Christ, their prototype figure, in 1 Cor 8:1–11:1. In acknowledging that the community is split between weak and strong brothers, he seeks to recalibrate the Corinthians's conduct by using Christ as the paragon when he urges the Corinthians to imitate Christ. This concluding statement, however, refers to his earlier commands to look after the weak (in 1 Cor 8:1–13) abstain from food sacrificed to idols (in 1 Cor 10:14–22), and do everything to the glory of God in (1 Cor 10:23–33). The way that Paul presents these commands noticeably aligns with the themes of Jesus's life and shows some connection to the Jesus tradition.

In having this picture of Jesus in mind, Paul is not introducing a new picture of Jesus, but is instead recalling a reasonable general picture of Jesus, as Allison and Burridge would suggest. This understanding of Jesus Christ is intended to dominate their thinking and cause the diverse Corinthians to act in a way like their prototype. They must take care of the weak in their midst, just as Jesus did. They should flee idol feasts and their fruits, since they are contrary to the Lord's Supper. Furthermore, they are to do what Jesus did and do all things for the glory of God. By appealing to this lifestyle of Jesus, Paul is recalibrating the Corinthians's conduct by invoking a collective memory of their prototype, Jesus Christ.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Cf. Isa 29:14 in 1 Cor 1:19; Jer 9:23–24 in 1 Cor 1:26–31; Isa 64:4 and 65:17 in 1 Cor 2:9; Isa 40:13 in 1 Cor 2:16; Job 5:13 in 1 Cor 3:19; Psalms 94:11 in 1 Cor 3:20; Deut 17:7 in 1 Cor 5:13; Gen 2:24 in 1 Cor 6:16; Deut 25:4 in 1 Cor 9:10; Exod 32 in 1 Cor 10:1–10; Deut 32:17 in 1 Cor 10:20; Psalms 24:1 in 1 Cor 10:25; Isa 28:11–12 in 1 Cor 14:21; Psalms 110:1 in 1 Cor 15:25; Psalms 8:6 in 1 Cor 15:27; Isa 22:13 in 1 Cor 15:32; Gen 2:7 in 1 Cor 15:45; Isa 25:8 in 1 Cor 15:54; Hos 13:14 in 1 Cor 15:55.

- 2 Cf. Rom 12:4–5; 1 Cor 6:15; 12:12–27.
- 3 See 1 Cor 7:10–11 (cf. Matt 19) and 1 Cor 9:14 (see Matt 5:31–32; Mark 10:9–12; Luke 16:18).
- 4 Cf. Matt 26:25–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:14–23.
- 5 Cf. 1 Cor 1:17, 23; 2:2, 8; 2 Cor 13:4; Gal 2:19; 3:1; 6:12; Phil 2:8; 3:18. Also, 2 Cor 1:5; Gal 6:17; Phil 3:10.
- 6 See other texts: He represents the broad consensus about the death and resurrection of Jesus upon which the gospel is based (Rom 4:23–25; 1 Cor 11:2; 15:1–11). In Rom 3:25–26, he writes about Christ’s death as functioning as the atoning sacrifice (Rom 3:25). He also represents Jesus as the Son of God from David’s flesh and risen with power according to the spirit of power (Rom 1:3–4). The hymn from Phil 2:6–11 represents Jesus who lowered himself, then was crucified, and raised (Phil 2:5–11). In 1 Cor 8:6 and 10:4, Paul represents also speak of Jesus as the preexistent Son of God. Paul’s letters represent Jesus as Lord (1 Cor 12:3; 16:22).
- 7 E. J. Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 495.
- 8 BDAG, 390.
- 9 Luke 10:7 inserts a γάρ.
- 10 R. E. Ciampa, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 413–14. See also P. H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 366; H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 157.
- 11 Paul only uses the word ἐκλάσεν twice in his writing, and it is employed only in relationship to the Lord’s Supper (cf. 1 Cor 10:16; 11:24).
- 12 See also Heb 10:3.
- 13 This word is used to draw attention to the end of a section in Clement’s writings See also his use of these words in *1 Clem.* 4.7; 21.1; 50.1
- 14 Luke 1:52–53; 6:20–21; 7:22; 12:13–21; 16:19–31; 18:22–25.
- 15 Luke 5:12–26; 7:21–22; 13:10–17; 14:12–24; 17:11–19; 18:35–43.
- 16 Luke 4:31–37; 6:18; 9:37–42; 49–50.
- 17 Luke 1:24–56; 2:5–7, 36–38; 7:11–17, 36–50; 10:38–42; 13:10–17; 15:8–10; 18:1–8; 23:27–31.
- 18 See also 1 Cor 8:9–10; 9:22.
- 19 Other appearances in Synoptic material include Matt 25:43–44; Luke 9:2; 10:9.
- 20 Cf. Matt 5:29–30; 11:6; 13:21, 57; 15:12; 17:27; 18:6, 8–9; 24:10; 26:31, 33 (2x); Mark 4:17; 6:3; 9:42–43, 45, 47; 14:27, 29; Luke 7:23; 17:2.
- 21 Also, in the surrounding context of Matt 26, Mark 14, and Luke 22 are the words ἐσθίω and πίνω which are found in 1 Cor 10:18 and 10:21. These are employed with the consumption of food sacrificed to idols, however.
- 22 1 Cor 15:58. See in 2 Corinthians the following verses—7:1; 12:19.
- 23 Cf. Rom 1:21–28; 1 Thess 1:9–10. Note the strong opposition between wisdom and idolatry. Pss 96:5; 97:7; 115:3–8; Isa 40:18–20; 41:7; 44:9–20; Jer 10:1–14; 51:15–17; Wis 14–15.
- 24 Cf. Matt 7:24, 26; 16:18; 21:33, 42; 23:29; 26:61; 27:40; Mark 12:1, 10; 14:58; 15:29; Luke 4:29; 6:48–49; 7:5; 11:47–48; 12:18; 14:28, 30; 17:28; 20:17.
- 25 Cf. Matt 22:3, 9; Luke 7:9; 10:8; 14:8–10, 12–13, 16.

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