

The Communion

1 Corinthians 10:16-24

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread. 18 Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? 20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? 23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. 24 Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.

On that first Lord's Supper night Jesus set up something that has become a subject of great controversy.

It was the observation of the Passover that Jesus was partaking with His disciples. It seems that at the end of that that Jesus instituted a new ordinance for His church.

It is simple in its method and simple in its meaning for those who will understand it that way.

Some have brought in other passages that do not relate to the ordinance and tried to make this something more than Jesus here intended.

The subject is discussed in several passages subsequent to the crucifixion and this is one of them.

I want to look at this passage this evening and let it help us understand the significance of what we are here doing tonight.

I. The subject under discussion.

A. V-14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

1. When we see this verse connected with v-21 "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons" we understand the subject that Paul is addressing.
2. It seems from and other passages that some of the believers in Corinth had either returned to the pagan temples or had never left.
3. We must understand that sexual immorality was a part of the worship at these pagan temples.
4. Also there were sacrifices made that the worshipers would partake of.
5. Some might claim that they were not really worshiping these false Gods but were just there for another reason.

- B. Paul understands the destructive nature of these pagan worship and was trying to convince these people not to participate.
- II. So Paul illustrates the contrast of the two by signifying what took place during the Lord's Supper observed in the Church at Corinth.
- A. The Lord's supper is a communion.
 - 1. The word is the word *koinonia*
 - a. 1) fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse
 - (1) 1a) the share which one has in anything, participation
 - (2) 1b) intercourse, fellowship, intimacy
 - (a) 1b1) the right hand as a sign and pledge of fellowship (in fulfilling the apostolic office)
 - (3) 1c) a gift jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution, as exhibiting an embodiment and proof of fellowship (*Strong*)
 - b. AV-fellowship 12, communion 4, communication 1, distribution 1, contribution 1, to communicate 1; 20
 - 2. It is a fellowship, an association with the blood and body of Jesus.
 - 3. That is His sacrifice as is stated in the Gospels.
 - 4. Mt 26:26 ¶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.
- III. There is a direct relationship with the sacrificial system in the Old Testament.
- A. V-18 Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?
 - 1. The Old Testament sacrificial system was meant to bring the sinner and God together in more than one way.
 - 2. It brought them together in that in the sacrifice the offerer would admit his sin in bringing a sacrifice.
 - 3. In confession of their sin God offered forgiveness.
 - B. But with many of the sacrifices the sinner was invited to fellowship with God.
 - 1. Eating a meal together in the Old Testament is one sign of fellowship.
 - 2. So God received part of the sacrifice as it was burned with fire, usually the

fat.

3. The priest also partook of this.
4. And the sinner and his family also partook part of the sacrifice.
5. It was considered a great blessing and a time of celebration.
6. The sinner's sin problem was dealt with and he was invited to God's table so to speak for fellowship with God.

C. This principle had carried over into the pagan worship of the day and so fellowship with the deity could not be avoided when you partook of the sacrifices offered.

1. So Paul's primary teaching in this passage is "Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry." V-14
2. V-20 "Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?"

IV. Inferences to the Lord's Supper in this passage.

- A. That there is a sense in which we are in fellowship with God at the Lord's Table.
- B. That there is also a sense that when we come together for this purpose we have a special fellowship with one another as one bread and once cup.
- C. At the original Lord's Supper there was but one cup.
 1. Most Christians, for sanitary reasons have abandoned that method.
 2. But we have something similar that you cannot do with one cup. That is that we all drink in unison, at the same time.
- D. Also Jesus probably took one loaf and broke it into much larger sections that we partake when we observe the supper.
 1. Once the church at Jerusalem reached 50,000 they would have abandoned both of these.
 2. But tonight we go to one loaf so that we can better symbolize our fellowship together.

V. There is also a call in the passage for us to not be involved with false worship of this world.

- A. V-21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.
- B. It is not that these false gods are anything for they are not.

- C. But the powers of this world are either of God or of Satan.
- D. That is why Paul says, "I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say."
V-15

So tonight as we partake of the cup and this loaf we recognize that we are not simply going through a motion but that we are in fellowship with Jesus Christ in His suffering for us as our Sacrifice. And we are in fellowship with one another realizing that we have this in common that Christ bled and died for us at Calvary and that we have put our faith and trust in Him alone.