

This morning, I'd like to clear up some twisted truths about the Lord's Supper that we've probably all been taught/re-taught over the years! These distorted truths sound *right*, but leave us think-ing wrongly about God, sin, confession, judgment & salvation!

It's not remarkable to find out that we've misunderstood scripture; after all, we're involved in the unfinished process of "**working out our faith!**" So we'll let the Spirit use His word to untangle these untruths about Communion to benefit in 2 ways:

- 1) Recapture the full value of this celebration for the church
- 2) Recognize the powerful witness it can be to Unbelievers

Let's get started by setting the stage: communion – *even church itself* – is not today what it was for the FBC of Jerusalem during early centuries. Acts describes the life of the church this way: **42) They spent their time in learning from the apostles, taking part in the fellowship, and sharing in the fellowship meals and the prayers. 46) Day after day they met as a group in the Temple, and they had their meals together in their homes, eating with glad and humble hearts, 47) praising God, and enjoying the good will of all the people. And every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.** (Acts 2:42,46-47 GNT)

Jude calls these meals "**Love feasts**" (1:12). By all accounts, their communion involved full-fledged daily potlucks! Even sermons & teaching went on ALL day, and members sold what they didn't need to give to the poor among them! Oneness was practiced in shocking reality, stunning unbelievers & even devout people of other religions! **No group conveyed this kind of union**

But we've lost this fullest measure of oneness in our com-munion. By eliminating the full meal (Last Supper) & limited to the 2 symbols of Christ's body/blood, we're now celebrate only the Lord's Supper – *the end of Jesus' Last Supper and the feasts the first church experienced daily!* Our current day version has twisted at least 3 truths out of context about Communion!

### **D) We Can Eat/Drink Communion in an "Unworthy Manner"**

You and I have been taught that "unworthy manner" means with unconfessed sin that requires self-examination & repentance!

But originally, "*unworthy*" *meant to eat/drink in a selfish, me-first way, taking much more than one's share even before the others had arrived!* This gluttony is the opposite of caring for the body, mutual submission, & oneness; it's devastatingly careless!

#### **Paul requests Self-constraint (1Cor 11:20-22,27,30)**

**20) Therefore, when you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's Supper** (as opposed to the Last Supper). **21) For at the meal, each one eats his own supper ahead of others. So one person is hungry** (too little) **while another gets drunk!** (too much!) **22) Don't you have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you look down on the church of God and embarrass those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I praise you? I do not praise you for this! 27) Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy way will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord. 30) This is why many are weak** (too little) **and sick** (too much) **among you, and many have fallen asleep** (too much wine!).

- Some arrived early or hurriedly ate without waiting to share
  - gluttonous eating/drinking in *quantity & attitude*
  - for this reason some slept & others got sick (v30)**
- Others arrived later with little to add & nothing left over!
  - likely the poor among them – who went without!
  - this is the reason some were weak! (v30)**

#### **\*Problem: eating in an unworthy manner dishonored Christ**

- Guilty of sinning against Christ, His sacrifice, & church body
- Every thought/word/action not of faith/trust is sin!

#### **\*Solution: eat in a manner worthy of Christ & each other!**

**33) Therefore, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34) If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you gather together you will not come under judgment.**

- Wait for each other so that all have enough to eat/drink
- If you're hungry, eat at home before church communion!

#### **It's impossible for us to eat in this unworthy manner today!**

**We're eating the Lord's Supper – 1 wafer + 1 tiny cup of juice  
No one sick (too full) or sleeping (drunk) here!**

*-But make sure we apply this truth to our potlucks!*

## **II) Any Unconfessed sin brings God's Judgment upon Us**

While confession is natural to Christians, *it's not our confession that gains us forgiveness!* Neither does Keeping the Law, good works, or sorrow! Only Christ's sacrifice achieves Forgiveness for us. And **Christ died once for all...ALL people, times, sins!**

### **Paul requests Self-examination (1Cor 11:27-29,31-32)**

*27) Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy way will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord. 28) So a man should examine himself; in this way he should eat the bread and drink from the cup. 29) For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment (not God's) on himself. 31) If we were properly evaluating ourselves, we would not be judged (by others), 32) but when we are judged (not acting like Christ), we are disciplined by the Lord, so that we may not be condemned with the world.*

- Each one examines his own motives in participating
- Eat/drink in a way that honors Christ & others
- Self-examination = a time of correction, not confession!**
- Self-examination corrects perspective & behavior
  - change *unworthy manner* to *God-glorifying*
- Reflection prevents/relieves judgment from others
- God doesn't judge us: There is now NO Condemnation!
- God disciplines/corrects us = eat in worthy manner

### **\*Problem: Judging each other created divisions in the church**

- Paul has already called them out on division in this letter
  - Read subheadings on chapters 1,2,3,5,6,7,8!*
- This Church is not understanding/demonstrating oneness

### **\*Solution: Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ**

- Submission creates oneness, values diversity, honors JC

***\*Once again, this is not the context for our Communion: we celebrate what Christ has done for us in salvation! REJOICE!***

## **III) Unbelievers Eat/Drink Condemnation to Themselves!**

*You can bet that many Unbelievers participated in the Lord's Supper with their 1st century Christian friends/neighbors:*

for some, their first impression of church life was meeting their real need for a meal – let alone hearing the truth about a Savior who loved them & died to reconcile them to God! Communion is a great witness! By it, all who participate declare the truth about Jesus as Savior of the world – even if some were not yet convinced by His Spirit about salvation! ***But all those who became convinced about Jesus were added to the church daily!***

You and I have been taught to warn unbelievers not to participate so that they don't eat/drink judgment on themselves! *But unbelievers are already judged for not believing in Jesus!*

### **Paul requests a Christ Celebration! (1Corinthians 11:23-26)**

*23) For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when He was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, 24) gave thanks, broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." 25) In the same way, after supper He also took the cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant established in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26) For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (a glorious event!)*

- New/better Covenant inaugurated in Christ's blood/death
  - Death = forgiveness of all our sins (& the world's)
  - DD question: What else? Body= for righteousness
- \*Problem: Lord's Supper not declaring community of forgiven**
  - Christ/work not the focus: divisiveness & judgment were**
  - False testimony to believers; false witness to unbelievers!
- \*Solution: Eat/drink together proclaiming new life in Christ!**
- \*Let's Invite ALL to share in Our celebration of JC & E. Life!***

The purpose of the church in celebrating our oneness in communion, the Lord's Supper, is to commemorate, celebrate & declare ("preach") Christ's death on our behalf until He returns in His glory to get His Bride for the recreation! That's something worthy of celebrating...and that's just what we're doing today!

Seems like we should advertise Communion services all over the county so that everyone can join us in declaring the truth about Jesus – and so those who come to faith can be added to the

church! It's already happened to one among us – let's share Jesus with everyone we can!

**PRAY**