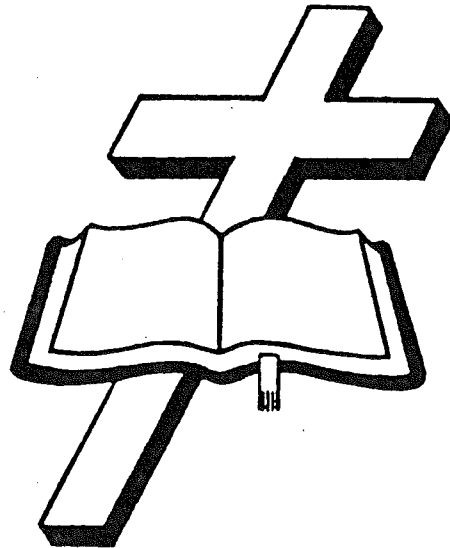


PRAISEWORTHY COMMUNION

(How Genuine Communion Protects The Heart Of A Growing Christian)
I Corinthians 11:17-34



LORD SPARE US FROM...

- ◆ A Sour Spirit (Vs. 18, 19)
- ◆ A Selfish Spirit (Vs. 20, 21)
- ◆ A Superior Spirit (V. 22)
- ◆ A Shallow Spirit (Vs. 23-26)
- ◆ A Stubborn Spirit (Vs. 27-34)

“Now in this that I declare unto you **I praise you not**, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse”. (I Corinthians 11:17)

Bill Kirk

"PRAISEWORTHY COMMUNION"

Text: I Corinthians 11:17-34

Subject: How Genuine Communion Protects The Heart Of A Growing Christian.

Introduction

Fact: This passage of Scripture is given for one reason only. (What is it?)

- ◆ To understand how to get the most out of Holy Communion.
- ◆ To understand how to observe this sacred occasion.
- ◆ To understand how to be better off (and not worse off) after we partake of the table of the Lord.

Question: Is it really possible to be worse off after coming to partake of communion?

Answer: (V.17) Declares it is possible!

(Notice Verse 17):

"Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together **not for the better, but for the worse**".

- ◆ In (v.2) Paul praises the Corinthians for their diligence in spiritual matters.
"Now I praise you brethren because you are doing what I taught you to do" (v. 2)
- ◆ In (v.17) Paul says "**I praise you not**" concerning the Lord's supper:
"Now in this that I declare unto you **I praise you not**, that you come together **not for the better, but for the worse**". (v. 17)

Question: Pastor, is **Praiseworthy Communion** that important?

Answer: In (v.17) the word "Declare" (PARANGELLO in the Greek) means: "**To command**"

- ◆ Paul is commanding and stressing this. (v.17)
- ◆ He is using forcefulness to convey how important communion ministry is.
- ◆ He declares the necessity of genuine communion producing something.
- ◆ He reveals to us how a spirit filled communion service will protect the heart of a growing Christian (on a continual basis).

Question: What does the Lord tell us about spirit-filled communion?

Question: How does Paul relate this communion service to the Corinthians?

Question: Why is I Corinthians 11 relevant to you today?

Question: How does Genuine, Biblical, Spiritual Communion protect the heart of a healthy, growing Christian?

(5 Words Of Power From The Table Of The Lord)

I. Genuine Communion Protects You From A "Sour" Spirit (Vs. 18 & 19)

Question: Pastor, how am I protected (safeguarded) from a sour spirit?

Answer: (V.18) holds the secret:

"For first of all, when you come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you"

Question: What was going on in Corinth?

Answer: The Lord's Supper was being corrupted by a party spirit that was divisive.

Question: Why was this going on in Corinth?

Answer: Because (v.18 declares) that a sour spirit was causing division because of anger, pain, rumor, gossip, pride and disease in the heart of some believers.

Question: Why did Paul address it?

Answer: Because people were distracted and deceived and couldn't put their heart and mind upon the Lord.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Believers with unresolved internal injuries were not benefiting from communion. (Why not?)
- ◆ Because they came to the table with a **sour spirit** that impeded their progress in the Lord.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Genuine communion should correct us and protect us from internal unresolved injury that would injure someone else.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ The communion service forces me to ask some questions:
 - #1. Do I have any symptoms of a **sour spirit**?
 - #2. Do I speak any **evil reports** about anyone?
 - #3. Do I harbor any **ill will** towards somebody?
 - #4. Do I carry any **unresolved anger** that distracts me in my spirit?
 - #5. Do I feel **bitterness** towards anyone or anything at any time?

Guess What?

- ◆ You can be healed at the table of the Lord.
- ◆ You can be honest, transparent and made well by faith in a living Savior.

II. Genuine Communion Protects You From A “Selfish” Spirit (Vs. 20 & 21)

Question: Pastor, how do we know there was a selfish spirit in the Corinthians?

Answer: (V. 21) “For in eating, everyone taketh before another his own food while others go hungry in their midst”.

(Understand The Context Here)

- ◆ When the early church gathered together for communion, they celebrated it with a full fledged meal (or Love Feast).
- ◆ Everyone brought all the food they could.
- ◆ Food was provided for everyone including the poor and the slaves who had little.
- ◆ The purpose of the meal was community, to make sure that everyone was blessed: Rich and poor, Jews and Gentile, upper and lower class, free and enslaved, educated and uneducated, male and female.

What Happened?

- ◆ The Corinthians began to abuse the communion service.
- ◆ People sat off in their own little group of friends.
- ◆ Some were indulging and failing to share.
- ◆ Thus, many were neglected, many went hungry and many looked on at the gluttons.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ What was supposed to be spiritual and edifying, became meaningless at the table. (Why?)
- ◆ Because hoarding, indulgence and self preoccupation (made a mockery of the sacrifice of Jesus they were celebrating).

Illustration

- ◆ On Tuesday evening at our all church celebration diner, out front, 2 men stopped a young person from our church
- ◆ I went over to them and asked “Is there something we can do for you?”
- ◆ Both men were tattered, soiled and carrying huge bags of cans they collected to redeem.

- ◆ One man said “Do you have any food”? I said yes, can you come back at seven o’clock. His eyes got big and he said, “We’ll be back at 7. He said they lived under the bridge down by the river behind the church. They came back at 7 and we gave them as much food as they could carry.

(Genuine Communion Protects Us From A Selfish Spirit)

- ◆ It reminds me of what Jesus paid.
- ◆ It reminds me of what my salvation cost.
- ◆ It reminds me of what I owe the Lord.
- ◆ It reminds me of what a servant is.
- ◆ It reminds me of how blessed I am.
- ◆ It protects me from a self centered spirit.
- ◆ It provokes me to live with a purpose to help people.
- ◆ It moves me from my comfort zone.

III. Genuine Communion Protects You From A “Superior” Spirit (V. 22)

Question: Pastor, how does God address a “Superior Spirit”?

Answer: In (v.22), the middle of the verse:

“Despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not”.

(2 Words Reveal A Superior Spirit Here)

Word # 1: “Despise” is a word that means: “To treat lightly”.

Word #2: “Shame” is a word that means: “To look down upon another as less important than myself”.

Paul Says:

- ◆ Pride caused some to be robbed at communion.
- ◆ Pride caused some to feel inflated and superior.
- ◆ Pride caused some to “Treat lightly” the Lord’s table, by looking down upon others.
- ◆ Pride, self exaltation, self preoccupation, self promotion and self congratulations stole the sense of community and equal ground at the Table of The Lord, (all through unfair comparisons).

(Genuine Communion Protects Us From This:)

- #1. We humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God at the table.
 - #2. We humble ourselves before one another at the table.
 - #3. We elevate ourselves above no one because of the table.
 - #4. We all understand (at the table) that without grace we would be on the outside looking in, (instead of on the inside looking out).
- ◆ Genuine communion protects us from a haughty spirit!!!

IV. Genuine Communion Protects You From A “Shallow” Spirit (Vs. 23-26)

Question: How does Paul reveal a shallow spirit in Corinth?

Answer: In vs. 24 & 25, Paul quotes the Words of Jesus:

- ◆ (V.24) “Take eat, this is My Body, which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of Me”
- ◆ (V.25) “This cup is the New Testament in My blood, this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me”

(The Key Is One Word: “Remembrance”) It Means:

- #1. “To strike deeper into your heart” (and)
- #2. “To be greatly impressed in your spirit”.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Communion often (if it is genuine and spiritual) protects me from a shallow spirit.
(How?)
- ◆ Because I ask the Lord to strike it deeper and impress more upon my heart these 4 things:

- #1. That Jesus died **personally** in my place and He didn't have to.
- #2. That Jesus died **sacrificially** in pain and He didn't have to.
- #3. That Jesus died as **substitution** for sin and paid my debt and He didn't have to.
- #4. That Jesus died **expecting** to rise from the dead, ascend into heaven and come back again for the rapture of the church, and He doesn't have to.

(The Result Of This?)

- ◆ Genuine communion protects us from shallowness and silliness when it comes to surrender.
- ◆ The Lord's Table causes me to remember where I've come from and where I am going.
- ◆ I'm arrested at the table by the One who deserves my 100% allegiance and devotion.

V. **Genuine Communion Protects You From A "Stubborn" Spirit (Vs. 27-34)**

Question: How does Paul address a stubborn spirit in the Corinthians?

Answer: By using 5 words of conviction:

- #1. "Unworthy" (v.27)
- #2. "Guilty" (v.27)
- #3. "Examine" (v. 28)
- #4. "Damnation" (v. 29)
- #5. "Judge" (v. 31)

Question: Why were some believers in Corinth weak, sick and dying in (v. 30)?

Answer: Because of taking communion in an "unworthy manner".

Question: What does the work "unworthy" mean?

Answer: It means that some Corinthians were stubborn at communion time.

- #1. They refused to take time to examine the heart.
- #2. They failed to discern the seriousness of the matter.
- #3. They were guilty of insulting Jesus at the communion table.
- #4. They wouldn't judge themselves, which forced the Lord to judge them.
- #5. They were stubborn when it came to repenting of every known sin:

Question: How does communion protect us from a stubborn spirit?

Answer: We willingly embrace the words of God in v. 28 – "**Examine Ourselves**"

- ◆ "Search me O Lord" ◆ "Cleanse me O Lord"
- ◆ "Forgive me O Lord" ◆ "Change me O Lord"

- ◆ "Save me O Lord", from ever resisting your work within my heart

AMEN!
Bill Kirk, Pastor