

## Daily Bible Study

### *“Idolatry, Worship, & Communion”*

#### *1 Corinthians 10:1-22*

*September 26 – October 2, 2010*

**THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY** – This week we will take a break from our study in Mark as we prepare to come together to The Lord’s Table. We will take for our text this week **1 Corinthians 10:1-22**. In this text among other things The Apostle Paul addresses this matter of *Idolatry, Worship, & Communion*. He shows this sin of idolatry is connected to how and who we worship as well as our observance of The Lord’s Table. Let’s start by giving a definition to “Idolatry”. God made us worshippers; we were made to worship Him. In proper worship of God we value, esteem, treasure and hold Him above everything else. Worship also involves sacrifice; we sacrifice for whom or what we worship and God created us to sacrifice and worship Him the creator and not the creation of His hands (**Romans 1**). Summarized simply, “Idolatry is a worshipping of ANYTHING other than the one true God”. It takes away the deserved adoration belonging only to God Himself. Anything that a person loves or adores more than God is an idol and when honor due to God alone is given to any of His creation or creatures; you have idolatry. Idolatry says in essence that the Lord is “deficient” and that He is not enough to satisfy a person and must be supplemented with something else. Idolatry is not merely isolated to pagan jungles or remote distant lands and cultures but it is rampant in our society and tragically within the professing Church of Jesus Christ. Read our text: **1 Corinthians 10:1-22** *“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. 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? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread. Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What am I*

saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? 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. 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. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?"

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

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Suggestion for Prayer: Ask the Holy Triune God to teach you this week and show you what Idolatry is. Ask Him to help you adore & worship Him alone & tear down the idols in your life.

**TUESDAY** – **1 Corinthians 10:14** “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry”. Here The Holy Spirit through the pen of the apostle issues a command to God’s people as He says, “...flee from idolatry...” Even before he gives any explanation or illustration he warns them of the danger by telling them first and foremost, “flee...” Paul then says later in **verse 15** the people are to hear him and “judge for yourselves what I say”. He is saying that the truth he is about to share with them can’t be understood and “judged” correctly by people participating in idolatry; so “flee” it. Men become “fools” when they participate in idolatry and a Christian who has idols in his life; taking the place reserved for God alone is first in a dangerous place; but secondly, he is in no place to discern or judge anything else with wisdom. God has given us His Law to reveal our sin and idolatry against Him. We need to know as believers, “what is the idolatry in my life”? If the Lord allows, we will ask some questions in our upcoming sermon that will help us discern the idols in our lives. We must *flee from idolatry* because it not merely hurts us as believers but it is the enemy of justification by faith. Simply, men go to hell because they are idolaters. Martin Luther in many writings helps us understand this. Luther said the Ten Commandments begin with a command against idolatry. He argued the root of our sin, our law breaking is always idolatry; that we never break any of commandments #2-10 without first breaking #1. The 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment is a command to believe God alone and trust Him alone and not have “other gods”. Failure to believe and trust God (unbelief) is idolatry and is the root of all that displeases Him. Commenting further Luther said: “Therefore it is the intent of this commandment to require true faith and trust of the heart which settles upon the only true God, and clings to Him alone. That is as much as to say: “See to it that you let Me alone be your God, and never seek another,” i.e.: Whatever you lack of good things, expect it of Me, and look to Me for it, and whenever you suffer misfortune and distress, creep and cling to Me. I, yes, I, will give you enough and help you out of every need; only let not your heart cleave to or rest in any other.” He also said, “All those who do not at all times trust God and do not in all their works or sufferings, life and death, trust in His favor, grace and good-will, but seek His favor in other things or in themselves, do not keep this [First] Commandment, and practice real idolatry, even if they were to do the works of all the other Commandments, and in addition had all the prayers, obedience, patience, and chastity of all the saints combined. For the chief work is not present, without which all the others are nothing but mere sham, show and pretense, with nothing back of them...If we doubt or do not believe that

God is gracious to us and is pleased with us, or if we presumptuously expect to please Him only through and after our works, then it is all pure deception, outwardly honoring God, but inwardly setting up self as a false [savior]”. These are wise words we should think about and pray about. Read **Romans 1:20-25, Exodus 20:3**.

*(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?*

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*Suggestion for Prayer: Ask God to help you truly be wise & worship Him alone & not be a fool; worshipping as He has said, “the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever, Amen”.*

**WEDNESDAY** – In light of yesterday’s lesson lest we be crushed beyond hope, we need to remember that God not only gave us The Law but He gave us The Gospel as well. There is One; namely Jesus our Savior who never was an idolater and it is His righteousness which is credited to us by faith. In our text Paul now speaks to the incompatibility of idolatry and The Lord’s Table as he illustrates the unity with Christ through the Gospel that is pictured in the elements of The Supper. **1 Corinthians 10:16 - 17** “*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? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.*” You may remember we looked at this text from a prior lesson entitled “The Union in Communion”. In **verse 17** Paul tells us that we also have communion and shared fellowship with all true believers who partake at The Table with us. He says that although we are “*many*” we are actually “*one bread*” and “*one body*” for we “*all partake of that one bread*”. He is not saying that all those who merely partake of the Lord’s Supper are unified and one body. It is those who by faith trust Jesus, repent and believe who have actually “*eaten and drank*” (**John 6:43-58**) of Christ by faith that are actually united. It is because we partake by faith of “*that one bread*” (Christ) we are one. We find our union together by finding our union with Christ. That is the only source of true unity (**Romans 8:9-11, 1 Corinthians 6:17, 19-20, 12:13**).

*(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?*

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*Suggestion for Prayer: Dear God, help me continually believe the Gospel, trusting Jesus alone for my salvation and realize that I do have shared life & union with Him and my fellow brethren. Help me remember at Your Table the sacrifice of You Jesus that made forgiveness and union possible.*

**THURSDAY**– In **verse 18** Paul uses an illustration from the Old Testament regarding sacrifices. All those who ate of the sacrifice identified with it and showed their obedience toward God in this

act of worship (**Leviticus 7:15-18, 22:29-30**). Those who participated, who ate of the sacrifice; in doing so identified themselves as people united with God and with each other. We as believers gather together around The Lord's Table and partake of it to proclaim Jesus death and celebrate the shared life we have with Him and with each other (**Romans 12:5, Ephesians 4:4-6**).

*(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?*

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*Suggestion for Prayer: Ask God's help to be more aware, concerned, & serving toward His body.*

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY** – As we grasp the reality of the union that exists with Jesus for us as Christians we more clearly understand the warning not to take and participate in The Supper while we are serving or worshipping “idols” over Christ. We also see the need to confess sin and then take The Supper, communing with Jesus as a means of grace to help strengthen us in the battle against idolatry. In **verses 19-20** Paul makes the point that “idols” have no Spiritual power or nature in and of themselves. They are nothing of themselves; but they represent demonic, satanic power which is very real. We may not have carved images of gods in our homes but we may very well still be worshipping “idols” which is just as sinful and demonic as bowing before a wood god. Whatever replaces the rightful worship of the only true God in our lives is idolatry; hobbies, recreation, family, entertainment, furniture, food, automobiles, homes, and tools (etc...) may actually be idols; promoting idolatry in our lives. The Lord's Table so beautifully demonstrates and exhibits the union we have in Christ. Idols in our lives are so inconsistent with that beautiful picture that we must be careful to put to death at the root all the things that rob God of His deserved glory. We must be careful and beware of things in our lives that rob God of His rightful place. Read **1 John 2:15-17**. Lord willing tomorrow we will see some more interesting observations from Luther concerning Idolatry but for now lets close with another short quote: “Ask and examine your heart diligently, and you will find whether it cleaves to God alone or not. If you have a heart that can expect of Him nothing but what is good, especially in want and distress, and that, moreover, renounces and forsakes everything that is not God, then you have the only true God. If, on the contrary, it cleaves to anything else, of which it expects more good and help than of God, and does not take refuge in Him, but in adversity flees from Him, then you have an idol, another god.”

*(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?*

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*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, in The Spirit's power help me enjoy You & keep all other things in their place—below You and see the folly of loving things rather than You with all my heart. Amen*