

Daily Bible Study

“The Union in Communion – Part 2”

Selected Scripture

January 31 - February 6, 2010

THE LORD'S DAY – This week as we again approach The Lord's Table we want to return to our “perpetual” series on The Lord's Supper looking back at a topic we first saw March 4th, 2007 with then message #5 pertaining to this Sacrament. We specifically would like to look at the “union” that is displayed at The Table between Christ and His Church and also between the people of God among themselves as brothers and sisters. Remember that you can review our past Bible Studies as well as sermons in this series archived via the website for a continuing, and more complete picture of The Lord's Supper. To begin with, I want to point out that these verses in their proper context belong to a larger passage being given by the Apostle Paul to the Church at Corinth where He is primarily dealing with the subject of Idolatry. Paul will go on in **Chapter 11** to specifically lay out the churches directive's pertaining to The Lord's Supper. Here in **1 Corinthians 10**, amidst this discussion of Idolatry, Paul alludes to The Lord's Table to make a point by way of illustration. He is showing the inconsistency of trying to participate in The Lord's Supper and not see in it, the reality of being united to Him. In participation there is an identity and union that is pictured between who is being worshipped and the worshippers themselves. Read **1 Corinthians 10:16-18**.

The Word Applied & A Suggestion for Prayer: Ask God to teach you from His Word this week and to help you prepare to come before His table this Lord's Day.

MONDAY – Notice in **1 Corinthians 10:16** that Paul uses the Word “*communion*” or “*sharing*” or “*fellowship*” or “*participation*” depending on your translation. The Greek word is “*koinonia*” which means all of those things and speaks to a shared, joint, participating fellowship. This is the “union” in communion. Regarding this union **Matthew Henry** said, “Is not this sacred rite an instrument of communion with God? Do we not therein profess to be in friendship, and to have fellowship, with him? Is it not a token whereby we professedly hold communion with Christ, whose body was broken, and blood shed, to procure remission of our sins, and the favour of God? And can we be in alliance with Christ, or friendship with God, without being devoted to him? In short, the Lord's Supper is a feast on the sacrificed body and blood of our Lord, and to eat of the feast is to partake of the sacrifice, and so to be his guests to whom the sacrifice was offered, and this in token of friendship with him. Thus to partake of the Lord's Table is to profess ourselves his guests and covenant people. This is the very purpose and intention of this symbolical eating and drinking; it is holding communion with God, and partaking of those privileges, and professing ourselves under those obligations, which result from the death and sacrifice of Christ; and this in conjunction with all true Christians, with whom we have communion also in this ordinance.” Read **1 John 1:1-7**. Here *koinonia* is used 3 times explaining the union we have with God as believers and listen closely to the final verse where we find that it is made possible through the death of Jesus for our sins.

The Word Applied: In claiming to have union with Jesus; being a friend with joint partnership & shared life what habits, actions, & attitudes in your life demonstrate your devotion to Him?

Suggestion for Prayer: Praise God for the “union” you have with Him given freely by His great grace through the obedient sacrifice of Jesus Christ in your place.

TUESDAY – As we have seen, the Greek word *koinonia* (meaning fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse) speaks of a shared, joint, intimate, participating fellowship. This is the “union” in communion. It is the first and foundational “union”. Are you in “Union” with Christ? How do we achieve that Union? (**John 1:12-13**) It is only those who by faith have “*received*” Christ that have any “*fellowship*” with Him.

The Scripture says that at that moment, when we are “born of God” we are brought into union with the Father, The Son, and The Spirit. (**1 Corinthians 1:9, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Philippians 2:1**) We see back in our text how this relates to the Sacrament. When Paul says, “*The cup of blessing...*”, and “*...the bread that we break...*” he is speaking of the cup and bread of the Passover feast. This is the cup and bread the Lord Jesus used while He was celebrating the Passover with His disciples when He instituted The Lord’s Supper. Paul says we “*...share...*” in the blood and body of Christ when we participate in this Sacrament. It is a “visible sign of an inward grace”. Think about it, we as believers are already “one with Christ”; we already have union with Him. But we have been commanded to do this “*in remembrance of Me*”. It points us to Christ; it reminds us of Christ, and it proclaims Christ’s death to us and it is His death which brings us into union with Him. We “*have communion*”, and share, participate, and have partnership with Jesus Christ at The Table. The Holy Spirit uses the symbols of the Sacrament (bread and wine) to help us see physically the sacrifice that was made for us to spiritually have communion and union with Christ. We are reminded of His great payment for our sin and by the work of The Spirit in our lives as His children we now commune and feed on Jesus.

The Word Applied: How should this reality of being “one with Christ” affect the way you live?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, remind me always that I have shared fellowship with You, Jesus and The Spirit by faith. Help me live a life of faithful obedience that gives You honor & thanks.

WEDNESDAY – In Communion, the elements portray a visible picture of the Gospel. We are reminded of Jesus’ great payment for our sin that our “union” with Christ is only available and possible through the ONE sacrifice of the ONE Savior on the cross—no other way. No way can a person have union with The Holy Triune God apart from the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. When we come to the Lord’s Table we visibly demonstrate our union with Him. By the work of The Holy Spirit in us we as His children spiritually speaking by faith, “commune and feed on Christ”. This Sacrament is a “means of grace”. Not that in and of itself it imparts salvation. Saving grace, faith and repentance are only imparted through the supernatural work of God alone (**Ephesians 2:8-9, Acts 11:18, 2 Timothy 2:25**). The Sacrament of The Lord’s Table, as well as Baptism, Scripture reading, study, meditation and Prayer are some of the God ordained “means of Grace” that He uses to build up our faith and maturity in Him as His children. Lots of people who have taken communion will be in Hell. It is “*by grace you have been saved through faith*”...not by communion. But in and at The Table we see the picture displayed for us so clearly that our blessed union with Christ was only made possible through the “blood” (the wine) and the “body” (the bread) of The Lord Jesus. Read **Hebrews 10:19-22**.

The Word Applied: What “means of grace” are you using in the “working out of your salvation”?

Suggestion for Prayer: Thank God for His “means of grace” and for the indwelling Holy Spirit who empowers you to grow in maturity as You obediently participate in His ordained means.

THURSDAY – In **verse 17** Paul moves on to tell 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 therefore one body. It is all those who by faith believe and actually have “eaten and drank” (**John 6:43-58**) of Christ by faith that are actually united. It is because we partake of “*that one bread*” (Christ) that we are one. We find our union together by finding our union with Christ. That is the only source of true unity. 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 and ate of the sacrifice were the ones who identified themselves as being 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. Read these verses speaking of these truths of being united with Christ AND also of being united with each other. **Romans 8:9-11, 12:5, 1 Corinthians 6:17, 12:13, 27, Ephesians 4:4-6**.

The Word Applied: Do you come to The Lord's Table in a "selfish" way; thinking it is only about you and Jesus? Be reminded we all eat the one bread and proclaim our union together in Jesus.

Suggestion for Prayer: Thank God that we are unified with brothers and sisters who help us along in this life and pray that God would help you to be more aware, concerned, loving, and serving toward the other parts of His and "your" body.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – We come to this Sacrament as the "Family of God"—diverse yet united and one. Sadly, this entire picture of "union" we find in The Lord's Table is so very foreign to most professing believers. This is a tragedy that is detrimental to those very professing believers who in the vernacular, "just don't get it". The very ones who think Christianity is about them and Jesus "don't get it" by the fact they miss this entire point of union we see in The Lord's Supper. These "self-centered", selfish persons usually miss the point of both Sacraments. They argue and only seem to emphasize the "private and personal" aspects of the Christian faith. This is the "Baptism in the bathtub & Communion on the couch" crowd if you will. Sacred Scripture however speaks to a public proclamation (**Acts 2:38, 20:7, 1 Corinthians 11:33**). This is not to say the Sacraments can't be rightly observed in a less public setting; it's not about numbers of people per say but we do see in the Sacraments, the principle of public proclamation. Well, the very fact that we are one body requires that certain things must take place within the local church (body) that go beyond the Lord's Supper. The "body" is not isolated or individualistic but dependent and accountable to ALL its parts and in order to be healthy must follow certain Biblical mandates. Church discipline is a huge part of this entire truth of union and communion (**Matthew 18: 15-20**). There must be accountability and admonishment of sin and sin must be dealt with within the professing body for the body to remain healthy. Beyond mere confrontation of sin and admonishing we help the repentant brother or sister by teaching them and holding them accountable to the practices outlined in Scripture that edify and build up (**Galatians 6:1-6**). We are to teach and help the immature grow into full maturity (**Acts 18:24-26**). We do this by turning to the only infallible source for answers; God's Holy Word and we obey and follow the prescription therein. In the New Testament we find that all the things that go into "church life" were being practiced by those who were followers of Jesus. Believers were saved, baptized, and joined (membership) to the local body (**Acts 2:40-47**) and they submitted to God's leadership and participated fully. Beloved, this is union demonstrated. Anything less is foreign to the Apostles doctrine. Sadly, today there are a lot of "believers" who pick and choose their level of "union". We've tried to take a brief overview of this matter of union with Christ and with each other and what that all means. There is much more we could say on this matter but I want to leave us with focusing on this great reality and how we fit into it personally. Examine yourself as we prepare to come to The Lord's Table tomorrow. Have you by faith come to Christ and are you embracing Jesus Christ and His gospel and feeding on Him right NOW? Are you obedient to His Word in the areas of union and "shared life" we see Scripture tell us we are to be doing? Do business with God today by coming before Him with an open, sincere, contrite and longing heart.

Suggestion for Prayer: Pray that you would be faithful to Scripture and be a unified and participating member of the local body. Ask God by His grace to help you live a life that is full of sweet fellowship and union with Him and all of His true body.