

Reformation Church, Boerne, TX
www.WorldUnderChrist.com
W. J. Mencarow, Pastor

"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 being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."—1 Cor. 10:16-17.

To understand this passage, we must know what the word “communion” means.

What the Apostle Paul is asking, is not what we do in the Lord’s Supper EXPRESS-ING the communion of the blood of Christ? And of course it is.

Communion, or the Lord’s Supper, is a simple ordinance. Men have tried to complicate it with ritualism, shrouding it in mystery, making it so obscure that the average Christian hopes no one will ask him what it really signifies. Ritualism and mysticism have thus robbed communion of much intelligible meaning.

I hope you all know that there is nothing special about the communion table, the plate and cups, or the bread and wine. All of that can be found at Wal-Mart, and the last time I checked they don’t sell anything that has magic powers. Not even the Harry Potter merchandise. And we don’t bow down to the bread and wine, or genuflect before them, or consider them holy in any way — in fact, in the Westminster Directory for Public Worship, a product of the men who gave us the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, the minister is specifically prohibited from holding up the bread and wine as objects to be worshipped or adored. It is just unleavened bread and inexpensive wine. It was grocery store bread and grocery store wine before it was used in communion and it never changes into anything else.

Furthermore, when the Lord Jesus sat down with the 12 apostles on that Passover night he didn’t wear special robes or preside in front of an altar. There was no bowing down to the bread and wine. He didn’t say or intimate in any way that they were holy objects. The cups were pottery or at best pewter, certainly not gold chalices. They sat in chairs at a table, not kneeling on the floor at an altar. Our Lord did not make this a mysterious, superstitious rite.

But men have. We at Reformation Church follow the Lord Jesus, not men's inventions. That's why in a little while we will sit at the Wal-Mart table in the Wal-Mart chairs, eat the grocery store bread and drink the grocery store wine from cups that are decidedly not made of gold. And I won't be wearing special robes or burning incense or holding up the bread and wine to be venerated.

What is this communion, this Lord's Supper, that we are about to participate in? Com means with or together in Latin. We use it in other English words like compassion, "with passion, meaning feeling; compute, with thinking and some others. So communion means union with. Union, joining together, is the essence of communion. Believers are in union with Christ, and in union with one another, because believers are His Body on earth, and thus all believers are part of His Body. To be in union with Christ means to be in union with His Church, since His Church is His body. Col 1:18: "he is the head of the body, the church..." Rom. 12:5: "we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." I Cor. 10:17: "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."—1 Cor. 10:16-17. Eph. 5:30: "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." and many more. We cannot have true communion with Christ till we are in union with Him; and we cannot have communion with the Church till we are in union with it. By the Church I do not mean a particular congregation or denomination, I mean the true church, sometimes called the invisible church, the saints, those who have saving faith in Christ.

Jesus, in praying to the Father, spoke of this union, this oneness of believers:

Jn. 17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

[21] That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

[22] And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

[23] I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

This is why only those who trust in Christ alone for their salvation are invited to the communion table, and it is why the leadership of the church interviews those who wish to come for the first time. In communion we profess our oneness with Christ and with each other, and it is therefore necessary that the church is satisfied that all who come to the table are professing Christians, that they understand and believe the Gospel. Otherwise our profession of oneness before God would be a lie.

This is not the only reason for examining first-timers for admission to the table. The Lord warns those who are not believers to stay away from His communion table. I Cor. 11:29 “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation F39 to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.”

Those who have received Christ into their souls as Savior and Lord are in communion, with union, in Him. They are the only ones who have this union with Him. They are the only ones who are invited to His table. They are the only ones who may speak with Him, through prayer, and the only ones He speaks to, through His Word, the Bible. That is a form of communion. All the prayers and even Bible reading that unbelievers may engage in are useless — He does not hear them nor does He enlighten them through His Word. Job 35:13, Ps. 66:18, Isa. 1:5, Isa. 59:2, Jer. 7:16, Jer. 11:14, Jer. 14:12, Ez. 8:18, Mic 3:4, if you are an unbeliever the Lord will not hear your prayers.

For believers, He not only instructs from His Word, but He guides our emotions and our thoughts through the influence of the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of Christ. Don't think of communion as only the Lord's Supper. You can and should be in communion with Him all the time, for that is one of the highest privileges you have as a believer— take hold of it, it is a precious, precious gift. His thoughts must be your thoughts: I Cor. 2:16b: “we have the mind of Christ.”

Here are some of the ways you can have communion with Christ all the day through: When you have compassion and try to help the poor, the elderly, the sick, the unloved outcasts, those no one else will love, much less help, you are in communion with the Great Physician who did the same.

When you weep over the death of a loved one, you are in communion with the Man of Sorrows (Isa.53:3). When you believe that in Adam all sinned but in Christ all who believe in Him are made alive, you are in communion with the Second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45). When you meditate upon God's Word in faith, you are in communion with the one called the Word of God (Revelation 19:13). When you believe Christ when he promises eternal life, you are in communion with the one called the Word of Life (1 John 1:1). When you trust in His wisdom and not your own, you are in communion with the one called the Wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24). When you draw your sustenance from him as a branch does from the vine, you are in communion with the one called the True Vine (John 15:1).

When you believe He has the power to forgive sins, you are in communion with the one called the Power of God (1 Corinthians 1:24). When you trust in Him to redeem all of your sins and wash you clean, you are in communion with the Redeemer (Job 19:25; Isaiah 59:20; Isaiah 60:16).

When you profess belief in Him as the only way to salvation, you are in communion with Him who called Himself The Way. When you receive God's Word as the inerrant, infallible Truth, you are in communion with Him who called Himself The Truth. When you know that He has given you eternal life, you are in communion with Him who called Himself The Life. When you pray to the Father in the name of the Son, you are in communion with the Mediator between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5). When you bring the gospel to the lost, you are in communion with the Messenger of the covenant (Malachi 3:1). When you reject the claims of others to divinity and believe in Christ alone, you are in communion with the Only Begotten Son (John 1:18). When you flee to Him in repentance and trust in His protection from the punishment you deserve for your sins, you are in communion with Him who is called Our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7).

When you see the progressive growth of righteousness in your life, you are in communion with the King of righteousness (Hebrews 7:2). When He is the beginning and end of your life, you are in communion with Him who called Himself the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

When you bring the message of the Gospel to the lost, you are in communion with the messenger of the Lord (Exodus 3:2; Judges 13:15-22). When you pray against the darkness of the world, you are in communion with the Light of the world (John 1:8; 8:12). When you seek to find and help another to return to the faith, you are in communion with the Good Shepherd (John 10:14) who seeks and saves His lost sheep. When you acknowledge that His Law-Word should govern the nations, you are in communion with the King of Kings (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14), the Lawgiver (Isaiah 33:22). When you feed upon His Word, you are in communion with the Bread of Life (John 6:35, 48). When you know you are His completely, you are in communion with the Bridegroom (Matthew 9:15). When He is the light of your life, you are in communion with the Sun of righteousness (Malachi 4:2). When you wake up in the morning prayerfully thinking about Him, planning how you can glorify Him today, you are in communion with the Bright and Morning Star (Revelation 22:16). When you know the peace that passes understanding, you are in communion with the Prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6).

When you seek to worship Him as He ordains in His Word and not to satisfy your own feelings and make up your own worship, you are in communion with the Head of the Church (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18). When you trust in Him for eternal life, you are in communion with the Captain of Salvation (Hebrews 2:10). When your life is built upon Him, you are in communion with the Chief Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6) and the Sure Foundation (Isaiah 28:16). When you believe that your body will be resurrected and changed at the last day, you are in communion with the Savior of the Body (Ephesians 5:23). When you believe you will be with Him eternally, you are in communion with the Resurrection and the life (John 11:25).

Those are just some of the ways to have moment-by-moment communion with Christ. But at the Lord's Supper we have a holy, which means set apart, way to commune with the Lord Jesus. I think of the Lord's Supper as an outward way to express inner truth. We, being guilty sinners, publicly acknowledge Christ's sacrifice for us in the most intimate fellowship with him, by making His Body and His Blood symbolically and spiritually ours by the simple acts of eating and drinking. The communion of symbolically receiving him into your body, just as you received Him into your soul, is close fellowship of the highest order.

Such fellowship is eternal. No power upon earth, no devil of hell, can take from you the piece of bread which you eat in the Lord's Supper, it is ingested and becomes tissue and blood and bone. It becomes an inseparable part of you, as does the wine which courses through your bloodstream throughout every fibre of your body. It is all a picture of your eternal security with Christ. You see, the bread and wine symbolize what is in our hearts, a union of Christ with us: what the Apostle Paul meant when he wrote in Gal. 2:20, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Just as no power on earth or in hell can separate you from that bread and wine, receiving them is an outward act illustrating an inward truth: "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:38-39).