

Subject: *The High Privilege of Holy Communion*

Scripture: *1 Corinthians 10:16-22*

Jesus prayed for His disciples and us:

John 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth reminds us that salvation changes us, but it doesn't change the world we live in. The members of this church once lived in the world and like the world, but when they came to Christ and were saved, they were different. The same is true of us. The word "church" means a called-out body. We are called out by God to be His people. God gave us two ordinances (sacraments), baptism and communion, to remind us of our separation from the world unto Christ. Baptism and communion are object lessons or visual signs that show our separation to Christ from the world. In this sermon I want us to see what the Bible teaches about "communion."

1. Communion involves our participation in Christ

In verses 16-17 Paul refers to communion with the emphasis on the special blessings we share in Christ. He refers to the cup of blessing as "the communion of the blood of Christ" and the bread as the communion of the body of Christ. He states that we are "one bread" and "one body" because "we are all partakers of that one bread" that represents Christ.

- Communion (Gk. *koinonia*) means fellowship, something in common

When we share communion we are reminded of the one thing that we all have in common, and that is our relationship with Jesus Christ. He is the glue that binds us together.

Philippians 1:3-5³ I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴ Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, ⁵ For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

I find it strange and disappointing that some churches attempt to bring people together by their devotion to someone or something other than Christ alone. Just recently I saw something about a "cowboy church" and I have a neighbor who has a sticker in his car window about "gamers' church." And those are not isolated examples. Some churches are bound by their devotion to the King James Version of the Bible or a certain style of music. Some churches are bound by their attraction to a certain pastor. Paul had to address that issue in Corinth. See *1 Corinthians 1:11-13*.

The unity of believers is not based on denomination, human leadership, style of music, type of Bible translation, outside interests and hobbies, or any other secondary issue. Our unity is based on our common faith in Christ, His work on the cross, and eternal life, period. And in the act of communion we are reminded of that and celebrate that.

When Nancy and I first visited Dustin, Sarah, and our grandbabies in Beaufort, SC, we attended their church and saw in their sanctuary the five "Solos" of the Reformation on the

pulpit and around their baptistery area. Immediately I felt a kindred spirit with those people because that's what we all have in common as believers.

Years ago we closed the Lord's Supper by singing an old hymn, "Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love, the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above."

2. Communion involves our separation from sin

In the greater context of this passage Paul is dealing with the issue of Christians participating in things related to the pagan worship of idols. He reminds them that not only are believers called to communion with Christ, but we must forsake fellowship with anything sinful, especially associated with false worship. See verses 21-22. There must be separation from idols. There must also be separation from our old sinful way of life.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ⁹ *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

The call to salvation is a call to separation from sin. See **1 Corinthians 5:9-11**. This was so important that Paul addressed it again in his second letter to Corinth. See **2 Corinthians 6:14-18**.

3. Communion involves our examination of self

See **1 Corinthians 11:23-32**.

When we come to the time for communion we need to ask, is there any sin of action or attitude? Am I just going through the motions or do I have the heart of love and reverence for Christ that I should have? In our recent revival Bro. Rick preached about leaving our first love for Christ. How can we keep our first love burning? One main way is through the Lord's Supper.