

“What Communion Is All About”

1 Corinthians 10:15-22

INTRO:

The Apostle Paul was still concerned with answering the question of meats offered to idols in **1 Corinthians 10:15-22**. We must remember this fact if we are to understand what Paul wrote. Paul did write about the Lord’s Table, but he is using the Lord’s Table as an illustration of what meals dedicated to a deity involve. Although, Paul wrote about the Lord’s Table as an illustration, the only reason it is a good illustration is because what Paul wrote is true. We will seek to mine the truth about the Lord’s Table without missing Paul’s point in regard to meats offered to idols.

There are two parts to the paragraph about meals dedicated to deities. First, Paul illustrates the principle in verses 15-18. Then he draws the application to the issue of eating meats offered to idols in an idol temple.

I. Illustrating the Principle (v. 15-18)

II. Drawing the Application (v. 19-22)

I. Illustrating the Principle (v. 15-18)

A. I did not include **verse 14** in our text, but the more I think about it, the more I think it is the overall point of this paragraph. *“Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.”* (**1 Corinthians 10:14**) Having stated this point, he will return to it in the end of the paragraph. In verse 15, Paul described how he wanted the Corinthians to think about what he wrote. *“I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.”* In effect, Paul said, think about these things with the wisdom I know you possess.

B. What were they supposed to think about? Paul outlined the things they were to consider in questions. *“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.”* (v. 16-17)

1. What happens when we gather around the Lord's Table and take part in this little ceremony? Are we just eating a little cracker (unleavened bread) and drinking a little juice together? No, it is more than that. When we obey this ordinance, we show visibly our participation in the blood of Christ. Paul began with the cup which Christ blessed and we bless also. We come to the table because we are blood-bought believers. We were saved by His blood. We are united to Christ in His blood and we are able to share together in common because He has saved all of us. The Lord's Table is not for those who do not know the Lord Jesus as their Savior.

2. The second question Paul asks is about the other part of the Lord's Table. "***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.***" When we break the bread, are we not celebrating our union with Christ, our identity as the body of Christ? We come together as a body to take communion because we are sharing together and demonstrating to others that we are a part of Him and a part of each other. Therefore, our special time at the Lord Table is a time of identification with the Lord we worship.

C. Paul's second illustration was the Old Testament worship of the living God. This is Paul's third question, (v. 18). "***Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar?***"

1. In the old Levitical system of worship, worshippers and priests always had an identification with the sacrifice and with God Himself. For example in Leviticus 16:20-22 it says, "***When [Aaron] finishes atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat. Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.***"

2. Religions ceremonies used in the worship of the living God are always identified with the Lord Himself and involve our participation with Him. The Lord Table demonstrates

our relationship to God through the blood and body of His Son and shows that we are a blood-bought people, a part of the body of Christ, His church.

II. Drawing the Application (v. 19-22)

A. ***“What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?”*** (1 Corinthians 10:19) What did Paul mean by this illustration? First, he returns to the discussion in **chapter 8**. He did not change His mind. He is not asserting there is any other god except the true and living God. Do the pagan sacrifices accomplish anything of saving value? No.

B. However, this is not the whole story. ***“No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons.”*** (1 Corinthians 10:20) There are no other gods, but there are demons who are behind the worship of idols. It is not neutral. This worship is clearly anti-god and demonic.

C. Paul succinctly sums up the overall issue of eating meats offered to idols in pagan feasts in **verses 21-22**. ***“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we?”*** You cannot worship the true and living God and involve yourself with worshipping demons in pagan temples. You identify (fellowship) with demons if you participate in their worship in eating the idol meats. **Our God is a jealous God and He will not stand by idly and let this happen.**

Let me apply this to us at the Lord’s Supper. Do we think about this when we come to the Lord’s Table? When we come to the Lord Supper we show the Lord’s death until He comes. We also demonstrate that we are all blood bought believers and a part of His body the Church. Are we aware we are doing this? Let us approach the table with respect, confessing our sins and participating together with one another and please the Lord.