

Sermon Title: Communion

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Scripture Reference: **1 Corinthians 11:23-29**Thesis: **Paul shares with the Corinthian Church the proper approach, attitude, and meaning to conduct the Lord's Supper;**Purpose: **Today, we will focus on the importance God places on approaching Communion in the right way.**

Key Word: "Communion"

I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **1 Corinthians 11:23-29**

A) The Setting:

1) **This is Communion Sunday**

- (a) The first Sunday of the month most of the time; but not always.
- (b) Sometimes we move it due to circumstances that make sense to the deacons.
- (c) However, we try to celebrate communion at least once a month.

2) **We are reviewing some of the basics of our faith that make us Baptist.**

- (a) Specifically, I have been sharing what it is that I believe about these basic elements of our faith.
- (b) I have shared my testimony and call to ministry with you.
- (c) Last week, we explored God and the Trinity.
- (d) This week being our covenant Sunday where we most often celebrate the Lord's Supper, I thought it would be good to share my thoughts on Communion.

3) **Our Bible's give us 4 accounts of the Lord's Supper;**

- (a) **Matthew 26:16-29** and **Mark 14:22-25**, are almost identical and from two witnesses who were present with Christ when He shared this event.
- (b) **Luke 22:17-20**, where Luke who carefully investigated every aspect of the Life of Jesus in order to make a thorough report included it in his account.
- (c) And **1 Corinthians 11:23-29**, we have an account by Paul who also studied what Jesus taught His disciples.

4) **Some believe that Jesus guided Paul either in person or through His Holy Spirit to write His instructions concerning the Lord's Table.**

- (a) For Paul included instructions concerning the proper approach, attitude, and meaning, to conduct the Communion.
- (b) Paul did this as it had been reported to Paul that the Corinthians were abusing this celebration coming hungry or drinking wine to excess; not at all what the Lord intended.
- (c) And so, Paul gave them guidelines for anyone sharing in the Lord's Supper.

5) **It is called the Last Supper because it was the last meal Jesus would share with His disciples before facing His death on the Cross.**B) **So, let us see for ourselves what Paul has given for instructions in our scripture reading for today in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29.**A) *Sermon Prayer*

B) (The Hook)

1) **Communion, what is it and why do we do it?**

- (a) Yes, Jesus told His disciples that they were to continue to do the practice we call Communion until He returns to establish His Kingdom.
- (b) The literal meaning of the word communion means sharing.
- (c) It is a process by which we as Christians share in this ordinance of the church given by Jesus Himself at the Lord's Supper.

2) **But what is the significance of this event and do we understand that we need to come prepared to partake of this event?**

- (a) How do we prepare ourselves?

- (b) If you are part of the Roman Catholic faith you must go to confession and tell a priest who will absolve you of your sins and tell you what acts of penitence you must perform.
- (c) But in the Protestant faith, like Baptist, we believe in a priesthood of believers meaning that we all become priests when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior.
- 3) **Jesus who paid the penalty for our sins is the one who absolves of our sins when we confess with a repentant heart.**
 - (a) Nothing else is needed; no acts of contrition, no earning your salvation,
 - (b) the fine has been paid in full.
- 4) **In joy having been released from the prison of sin we gratefully desire to live a life that is pleasing to Jesus.**
 - (a) We won't be perfect; but, in **1 John 1:9**, we learn that,
 - (b) "**When we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us once again from all unrighteousness**"; meaning all that keeps us from being right with God.
- 5) **The disciples came on that night to celebrate the Passover meal.**
 - (a) This was the meal done to remember how God rescued His people out of Egypt by providing protection from the death angel.
 - (b) **God told Moses, that an angel of death was going to come and all first born children would die;**
 - (i) however, if they kill a young lamb without blemish and put the blood of the lamb over their door posts
 - (ii) the death angel would Passover and they would be spared the punishment.
- 6) **All those who believed and did as God instructed lived and were delivered from Egypt.**
 - (a) They had to exercise faith in what God told them to do to be spared.
 - (b) Likewise, we must place our faith in Jesus to be spared the punishment we deserve for our sins.

TS: **So, the first item of business is making sure we are . . .**

II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **Sharing Communion in a Worthy Manner**

- 1) **Communion is meant to be open to all believers; however, it comes with a warning.**
 - (a) **1 Cor 11:27-29** "**Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.**"
 - (b) **This could even affect your health or lead to a shortened life for in the next verse Paul says this, "That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep."**
 - (i) I remember the first time I heard this verse read during a communion meditation;
 - (ii) I have not taken communion in the same way since.
 - (iii) We are not to take communion unless we come in properly prepared to receive Jesus.
 - (iv) For you "**Do this in remembrance of Him**"
- 2) **If we approach this in the proper attitude we will experience spiritual growth.**
 - (a) Just as our physical body grows when fed properly.
 - (b) We will grow spiritually when we are fed properly.
- 3) **If we approach the table in a haphazard manner and make a mockery of it.**
 - (a) You could bring about God's judgment.
 - (b) We are warned not to take it too lightly.

- 4) **So, while Communion is open to all believers; we are personally responsible for our preparation.**
- (a) We must come with repentant hearts for any sins committed.
 - (b) Having confessed anything to God that has made us aware we are out of balance in our relationship with our Holy Lord.

TS: **Next, we come . . .**

B) Key Point #2: **Sharing Communion to Celebrate the New Covenant**

- 1) **All four accounts speak to the blood of the new covenant.**
 - (a) The old covenant refers to the Mosaic covenant.
 - (b) This is the covenant given to Moses by God that we know as the 10 Commandments.
 - (c) It was a covenant based on our keeping the laws PERFECTLY in order to be right with God.
 - (d) When that wasn't possible then they had to offer blood sacrifices to atone for their sins.
- 2) **Our sin is an important matter with God.**
 - (a) God is Holy, and must separate Himself from Sin.
 - (b) When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden and hid from God;
 - (c) The first thing God did was kill an animal in order to cover their shame and their bodies.
- 3) **When Jesus appeared before John the Baptist, John cried out; "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." John 1:29**
 - (a) John was announcing that the perfect Lamb of God had arrived.
 - (b) It was a reference to Jesus shedding his blood on the cross to establish a new covenant.
 - (c) This would be a covenant of grace; no longer based on what we did;
 - (d) But based on what Jesus did in dying for the sins of the whole world.
- 4) **This is something truly worth celebrating.**

TS: **Finally, we are . . .**

C) Key Point #3: **Sharing Communion to Remember Christ's Sacrifice**

- 1) **What is it that we must remember about Jesus?**
 - (a) I would like to suggest that Jesus would like us to remember;
 - (b) How He lived and what he taught through His life.
 - (c) Jesus set a glowing example of how we are to live in love.
 - (d) Our life should reflect our love for God, first;
 - (e) And second, our love for one another.
 - (f) He gave us His Holy Word to help us remember . . . we should take that to heart.
- 2) **The bread that we break together is a reminder of the body of Christ.**
 - (a) We are vividly reminded that God sent His Son to live as one of us when we partake of the body of Christ.
 - (b) When we physically eat this bread, it becomes a part of our body.
 - (c) Our body uses this bread for our nourishment.
- 3) **But Jesus doesn't only want us to be physically nurtured as we meet around the table; he also wants us to be spiritually edified.**
 - (a) This remembering is not simply the recalling of historical facts,
 - (b) It's a participation in spiritual realities.
 - (c) At the Lord's Table we have fellowship with a living Savior as our hearts reach out by faith.
 - (d) We should feel the full weight of the sacrifice that Jesus made on our behalf and the behalf of the whole world.

- 4) **ILL: There was an American business man who enjoyed a Passion Play at a local theatre.**
- After the play, the man went backstage to meet the actor who portrayed Jesus.
 - As they talked, the man saw the cross that the actor had carried in the play.
 - Before the actor had a chance to stop him, the business man handed over his camera and said, "*Hey, take a picture of me carrying the cross.*"
 - He bent over and tried in vain to lift the huge cross to his shoulders.
 - With sweat rolling down his face, he turned in frustration to the actor and said,
 - "*I thought it would be hollow; why is it so heavy?*"
 - With a smile of compassion, the actor answered, "*If I could not feel the weight of it, it would be impossible to play the part.*"
- 5) **When Jesus went to Calvary, He carried our sins with Him.**
- Perhaps this reality alone caused the cross to weigh so heavy upon the strong shoulders of the carpenter from Nazareth.
 - Unless we feel this weight which He bore, we can never fully understand the meaning of being indebted to Christ.**
 - We share in communion to remember the sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross.

TS: To sum this up let me say . . .

III) Conclusion (Life Application)

A) **What it is that I believe.**

- I believe the ordinance Communion first demonstrated by our Lord and Savior is an example we are commanded to follow.**
- We are to observe it even today as a continual reminder of:**
 - What He did to save us,
 - Our commitment to Him,
 - And as a continual witness of His life-changing power.
- The cross changed history and the way we keep our calendar.**
 - The cross represents a change in our relationship with God.
 - "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"** (John 3:16).
- On the cross Jesus became our substitute and paid for our sin.**
 - Not only is our sin paid for but we are given the righteousness of Christ.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**
 - 1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.**
- We have been made right with God.**
 - No longer are we marred with sin.
 - When we accept Jesus as Lord for what He did for us on the cross God sees us just as He sees His Own Son.
 - Instead of eternal punishment, we have been given an eternal hope.
- So, as we approach the Lord's table this morning, let us do so:**
 - In a manner worthy of our Lord King; understanding why it is important for us to be cleaned up and presenting our best to the one who sets us free from sin.
 - Celebrating the new Covenant that is based on His Free gift of salvation for all those who will accept it.
 - Remembering and honoring what Jesus did in coming here to be the Bread of Life, the Sacrificial Lamb of God who takes away the sins of all those who give their lives to Him.

IV) Invitation: **Let us Pray!**