

TRUE COMMUNION

By Rev. Chris Meier

With so many on lockdown lately, I've been hearing an odd word come from pulpits that we can be in fellowship Online, even if we don't attend church. Fellowship is different from communion. While it is possible for a short period of time to be in fellowship with an Online situation, it may also be stated that we can be in communion with the Body of Christ in the same way. This is not the ideal situation. As leaders in the Christian community, we must fight the normalization of such a thing. In America, we must do so even more vehemently. The reason has to do with our founding and the rights of the faith-filled community under our Constitution.

Politicians cannot be trusted. While many churches believe this lockdown of the church is a temporary thing, we must realize that the Chinese virus was manmade. I believe it was also weaponized, based upon what I received from the Lord (see last month's word). I also don't believe this will be the only attempt to shut down the American society, along with her churches. Some pastors have stood up; others don't see the danger. Only time will tell whether nefarious forces will attempt another lockdown. Until then, I felt led to share what the Holy Spirit had me share as an Easter message.

1 Corinthians 11:27-34: "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come."

During this period of time, I've heard so many different sermons. Our local news station, in an effort to bring peace and comfort to their viewers put out a call for religious leaders to send in a one-minute sermonette, and many have. Recently, I heard of a pastor who tried to make it seem that if you didn't attend a particular church— that if you decided to go to another church— you were eating or drinking of the Lord's communion unworthily. I've heard a lot of stuff from preachers over the years. Most are exegetically correct and preached from a good heart. Unfortunately, some are not. If you ever hear anything from a preacher that tries to tell you that by not going to their church you are partaking of communion unworthily in another church: RUN in the other direction.

Here's the problem with that. The great Apostle Paul was dealing with gluttony and drunkenness during communion services in the Corinthian church. He had to immediately lay down proper biblical reality.

Here's what he said to them just before our passages on *eating unworthily*: “What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come” (1 Corinthians 11:22-26).

In these passages proper biblical reality for communion has to do with our relationship with Jesus as well as our relationship to His Body. It has to do with what He purchased on the cross, as He was beaten beyond recognition for the entire world. So, do those preachers who make it all about leaving their church and going someplace else have a point? That

depends. Usually what they're referring to is to be in fellowship. That is not the same as being in communion: though some differences can be minimal.

So let's look at what it means to be in communion with Jesus and in communion with His Body. Paul is clearly making a connection between Jesus' literal body and the 'Body of Christ,' which is a term referencing the true church. We make that connection because Jesus did: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:4-6).

"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. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 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" (John 17:21-23).

Communion is relationship. Fellowship needs relationship but not necessarily with one another. You can have a relationship with Jesus in communion but not necessarily know another saint within the Body of Christ. Yet, you can meet them for the first time and have fellowship because you are in communion with Jesus and they are in communion with Jesus, thus you can have fellowship one with another simply because of your respective communion with Christ.

What Jesus purchased on the cross was not only salvation and redemption for multiplied quadrillions. It was not only healing and deliverance— sanctification and transformation— it was a totally new human never before seen on planet Earth. This new creation now has the ability to partake of a totally New Covenant. This New Covenant now allows us to be in a whole new family.

Being in a new family now allows us a communion that other humans cannot partake in unless they are in this new creation. Christianity is a supernatural race of humans. Just because dead and denying ministers think the Bible is just a sweet book with no supernatural relevance for today doesn't make their thoughts and beliefs correct. When you study the fullness of the Book, you realize you are now in a different family structure.

2 Corinthians 5:16-17: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

All of us as Christians must come to know or commune with Jesus as Elder Brother, High Priest, King of kings and Lord of lords, Master, Great Shepherd and Husband. But we also come to know the Father and the Holy Spirit. While Father has made Jesus known to me in all the above ways, I have come to know the Father as Father and as King. As my Elder Brother, Jesus is sanctified precious to me. As my Savior and Redeemer, He has allowed me access to Father God as my Daddy and my King. I am royalty but I am also dedicated to my King as only a daughter can be. I am now in a Royal new family, functioning as a priest.

This is communion. Because of this communion I can now fellowship and commune with other believers in a specific location Father, God, sends me to. If He sends me someplace else, I may be called to explain this transition to the saints because I was in fellowship and communion with them. But there are situations where He may not. We must all be sensitive to this leading of the Holy Spirit. Father God releases us, empowers us, constrains us. He equips us and speaks to us to do what it is we should do. That is our communion. We must be sensitive to the Body of Christ. They are a part of us because we are one with them in

Christ. Leaving because God sends us someplace else is not partaking of the Lord's communion unworthily.

There is a place where we may be bitter or hurt. Are we holding bitterness or strife within our hearts because of what we experienced in another church or by others who claim adherence to the Body of Christ? Just because we are in pain when we partake, does not mean we are eating unworthily. In fact, the communion table can heal us over time, if we look to Jesus each moment pain enters our awareness.

Have we pretended to be Christian or a part of Christ's Body but we really don't believe? This is eating unworthily. You see, when the early church partook of communion, supernatural happenings would take place among them. Some churches still see this today, others do not. But communion is a supernatural occurrence. It's not that Jesus cannot work among unbelievers, it's that we are pretending to be one. Are we secretly abusing a member of Christ's Body with our actions or words? We are on dangerous ground if that's the case. Whenever we turn to look to Jesus and repent of our sin, we receive His deliverance. If this has never been done, we cannot claim Christ and His table of communion.

Remember what Jesus said to Saul of Tarsus: "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecute thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecute: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (Acts 9:3-5). Here on earth Saul, who later was renamed Paul, was persecuting the Christian believers; what we now refer to as the Body of Christ. Jesus says clearly Saul is persecuting Jesus Himself. He makes no delineation between His Body and Himself.

We must be very careful if we are in a place of authority that we do not discipline the believers harshly or if we have been called by Jesus to leave a place and say nothing, that we carry no bitterness. If people have been called to leave us and they say nothing about it, then we are not to harass them or talk about them or call them out for something they are

innocent of. They are the Body of Christ. I can't tell you how many men in the "church" are emotionally or otherwise abusing their wives and children. This is serious. It is also criminal. Yet, they can sit in church on Sundays pretending all is well and partake of communion.

These are situations where we have partaken in falsehood, thus fake communion. We may be fooling ourselves; but we are not fooling God. This is why it is so critical that we examine our hearts before the Lord to make sure we are not partaking in known or unknown sin. This is why Paul tells them they are experiencing weaknesses and death in the church. Remember, communion is a supernatural event and its results are supernatural; but, our bodies are connected to our spirits and when we are false in spirit it affects our soul, thus affecting our bodies.

Why has the church become such a place where these things happen? First and foremost, we do not understand God's grace. When we look to Jesus for redemption, His grace sustains. Yet, when we ignore Christ and think our actions can fix everything we neglect our real connection to Christ, and that is that He paid all. We have to rely on His grace and ask Him to give us His desire to love our family. If we have been a part of a dysfunctional and abusive human family, we will not understand the new family dynamic we have inherited because of Christ's sacrifice. Unless the Lord heals us of that past family strife, we may not know how to go forward in our new family communion. Love is at the heart of this relationship:

1 John 4:9-5:2: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in

God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear hath torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loves him that begat, loves him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.”

Everyone associates teachings concerning love with 1 Corinthians 13, and they are not wrong. But what John wrote here in 1 John 4, are basics to be learned from the word of God concerning love. So what other practical steps can we take to be in communion? First and foremost, eat or commune from the word of God daily, and hourly or minute by minute. This is not a works thing or a guilt trip. Do what you can to get God’s word in you. Right now it is physically difficult for me to pick up a Bible. I rely on seeing God’s word on a Christian television program, mostly. It’s getting a little easier for me now, but I still have some difficulty. What’s more important, beating yourself up for not having the time or ability to pick up a Bible, or doing what you can to hear or see His word by other methods? Please rely on His grace to sustain you and give you other methods like audio Bibles or other means to get His word while you work or go through whatever issues are preventing you from picking up a literal Bible.

Allow the precious Holy Spirit to speak Jesus to you. Allow the words of the Bible (in whatever method you use) to be sown into your spirit man and to be recalled in your memory by the Holy Spirit. If there be falsehood in us, as I have listed, we must repent of it, and allow Jesus to show us healing. His grace will sustain us while we go through the healing process. Praying without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) will

also help us. This can only be done once one is baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues. This is our prayer language. Sometimes a trusted counselor or member in the Body of Christ can help us as well.

Another practical way is by partaking of the bread and the cup or by taking communion, even daily. While I have written here about the dynamic of communion being a love relationship with God, there is the very real act of taking the bread and drinking from the cup. I don't have the space here to talk about transubstantiation. Here is a quick definition: the change of the whole substance of bread into the substance of the Body of Christ and of the whole substance of wine into the substance of His blood. The change is brought about in the eucharistic prayer through the efficacy of the word of Christ and by the action of the Holy Spirit.

Many believers, pastors and church leaders believe in transubstantiation. For me personally, I have no problem with partaking each day. It may actually help in allowing the Holy Spirit to commune with us in keeping our love relationship with Father and Son. The last is maintaining a love relationship with the saints, as much as is possible.

This is why Easter season is so important and why we cannot maintain a proper communion through the Internet solely and only. The church must fight all attempts to lock her down, especially on Easter. Jesus has already sent the Body of Christ today words from the mouth of confirmed prophets. We, as a Body, have been speaking them back to the Father and pronouncing them over news casts— as we may listen to them— when their words come in conflict with God's word concerning this situation. We are a spiritual body and can only maintain our communion with Him as well as the saints spiritually and through real contact. While a momentary quarantine can be important to fight a pandemic, truth is also important. We have not been told the whole truth concerning this virus; its origin or manufacture. Nor are we being told many other things. The source for our reality is the word of God, not the news media. Maintaining your communion with Christ and His Body is one of the best ways to maintain your health.

As we live through this period of time, and as we end this quarantine, remember what the world can force you to do once, it can force you to do again and again. If we would maintain our real communion, we would be set free from a spirit of death connected to this world. This is the reality of communion and it is why it is so crucial to know how not to partake unworthily. It has nothing to do with where you go to church, but who you go with and how you function once there. And being in real communion means everything to maintaining your fellowship with the God who redeemed you and the saints who partake with you.

ADDENDUM: I've never had to do this before with a teaching on this site, but because of the nature of the subject (communion), I felt led by the Holy Spirit to write this addendum. When published, the article ended with the previous paragraph. This article was not meant to encompass a thorough teaching concerning the Lord's Table or what we call communion. Communion is so much more than what I have written here. My husband and myself typically take communion each day. If I meet with other saints in the ministry physically, we always try to do the same each time we meet. This is because of the intense nature of Christ's gift to us of His stripes by the which we were (are) healed (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24), and His shed blood so our sins can be forgiven. Communion is for Christians only and solely.

I'm not sure the above article made that clear enough. Instead, it was a response to some attitudes I was hearing in the church worldwide. Quite often when I encounter such things, I will sense the grieving of the Holy Spirit and write concerning what it is I feel the Spirit wants me to share. I wouldn't want any younger believer or any other person to read this article and think it was a complete teaching on communion. It is a very limited and even lopsided approach to a communion teaching. Such a teaching would never begin the way this article started, but would begin with Christ, The Holy Spirit and The Father. I would have stayed in John's writings, 1 and 2 Corinthians and a few other select portions of Scripture. Such a teaching can easily take six months or more.

I pray I have offended no one, nor left any impression that a Christian must be perfect before they partake in a communion service. To the contrary, one could easily argue from the Greek words used in 1 Corinthians, that by partaking of communion and confessing Scriptures used by our Lord and written by the apostles, many of the temptations and sins which can hinder some Christians can be overcome. We overcome by the words of our mouth (testimony), the word of the Lord (Scripture) and the precious, Holy Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:11). The Bible says: "For as often as ye eat the bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

If you would like to come into fellowship with the Holy Spirit, the Bible is clear on how to do that. If you don't know Jesus, you can ask Him to come into your heart. Romans 10:9-10 says this: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Believe in your heart and ask Jesus to come in. Repent of your sin and invite the Holy Spirit to show you how to live. We mail out free Bibles and can help you find a church in your area. Just hit the contact link on this site. May Jesus bless you.