

**COME
AND
DINE**

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September 22, 2013

Sermon in a sentence: Come and take your place at the table of the Lord with the Body of Christ.

Scriptures: **Ex. 12:3-14**; Ex. 12:47-48; Ex. 14:13-14, 16, 29-30a, (1 Cor. 10:1-2); Ex. 16:4; Ex. 17:6; Num. 14:22-23, 29; **John 6:47-58**; Mark 14:17-31; 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Cor. 10:1-17; 1 Cor. 11:17-34

Old Testament types and shadows give us some early insights into what Communion was intended to represent:

- The blood of the Passover lamb on the doorposts saved the firstborn of Israel (Ex. 12:3-13).
- Only those who had entered into the covenant of circumcision were permitted to eat the Passover lamb (Ex. 12:47-48).
- The children of Israel were baptized in the cloud and in the sea (Ex. 14:13-14, 16, 29-30a; (1 Cor. 10:1-2)).
- God fed them manna from heaven (Ex. 16:4), and gave them water from rocks (e.g. Ex. 17:6). This was their only means of survival.
 - Could they feed themselves? No.
 - Could they find their own water? No.
 - Did they need God's help? Yes! (Food and drink were provided, clothes and shoes did not wear out, a cloud was provided to cool them by day, and fire to warm them by night.)
 - **God fed and cared for 'baptized' sinners and rebels.**

- **The Israelites did not receive God’s blessings in a “worthy” manner (see 1 Cor. 10:6-10):**
 - **They engaged in idolatry**
 - **They were grossly immoral**
 - **They tested God’s patience consistently**
 - **They murmured and complained daily**

- **The Israelites rejected God’s way, His will and His plan and a whole generation died in the wilderness (Num. 14:22-23, 29).**



New Testament fulfillment parallels Old Testament typology:

- **Jesus is the Passover Lamb whose blood alone saves (1 Cor. 5:7).**
- **We are eligible to partake at the Passover table after we have entered into covenant with Jesus Christ through baptism (Mark 16:16).**
- **Jesus identified Himself as the bread from heaven (John 6:51).**
- **He told the crowd that if they didn’t eat His flesh and drink His blood, they had no life in them. There was no other option for their survival (John 6:53).**
- **Jesus instituted the NT Passover feast: “The Lord’s Supper”, “Communion”, the “Eucharist” as the way in which we eat His flesh and drink His blood! (Mark 14:22-24).**
- **Who may participate?**
 - **Baptized believers.**
 - **Those who will partake in a worthy manner.**

How holy and righteous does one need to be to partake at the Communion table?

- As 'holy' and 'righteous' as the disciples were!
 - James and John – the Sons of Thunder – sought to call fire from heaven upon those who were unkind to them (Mark 3:17; Luke 9:51-56). (John is described as the apostle of love!)
 - James and John again, were seeking power over their brethren, causing anger and strife (Mark 10:35-41).
 - The disciples' discussion after Communion was "Which of us is the greatest"? (Luke 22:24-27).
 - Judas was a thief (John 12:6), betrayed Jesus and committed suicide.
 - Peter denied Jesus using foul language. (He and all the rest of the disciples had said they would die with Him: Mark 14:31).
 - Nine disciples fled and were absent from the trial and crucifixion.
 - Only ONE disciple (John) went all the way to Golgotha with Jesus.

- In spite of all this, Jesus served Communion to each and every one of them!

So what is Paul speaking about in 1 Cor. 11:27? What does it mean when he speaks against partaking "unworthily" (KJV)?

Most translations and commentaries expand on the word 'unworthily' to render it "in an unworthy manner". In other words, **the emphasis is not on my**

personal holiness and worthiness before God to partake at the table. The emphasis is on the condition of my heart as I partake.

As we come to the table, are we honoring God, bowing down in worship to Him and thanking Him for His unbelievable sacrifice, or are we treating Him with dishonor, disrespect and a “who cares” attitude?

Eating and drinking ‘in a worthy manner’ actually means we are treating the “Body of Christ” in a proper, godly fashion! We must constantly honor, recognize, distinguish and see the Lord’s Body – the Church, as precious. We must treat our brethren as if they were Jesus Himself!

Some time ago when we discussed the “Greatest Commandment”, we discovered a very simple way to test our love for God. All we have to do is look at the way we treat our brothers and sisters.

1 Cor. 11:29 is not a reference to the physical, symbolic or personal body of Jesus, as are vv. 23-28. In v. 29, Paul switches back to a discussion of our attitudes and actions toward fellow members of the Body of Christ: (see vv. 17-22).

The Corinthians *thought* they were coming together for a good purpose: to partake of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:17,20). Paul, however, felt it necessary to free them from that delusion. Their factions, divisions, fractures and ‘classism’ defeated any hope they had of celebrating the Lord’s Supper in the way Jesus intended! Instead of bringing them life, it was bringing them under judgment (v. 34).

At dinner, the rich ate well and got drunk, while the poor starved. No doubt the 'Paul Clique' had nothing to do with the 'Cephas Clique' and both stayed away from the 'Apollos Clique' or the 'Jesus Clique'.

As Paul addressed this very serious problem, he taught that our failure to treat our brothers and sisters properly can lead to sickness and even death if we desecrate the table by despising the Body of Christ.

However, this is not death leading to eternal damnation, but the complete opposite: this sickness and death is utilized by God to save us from eternal condemnation (1 Cor. 11:32)! Paul even delivered a sinning brother over to Satan for the "destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:1-5)

**Jesus said: "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick" (Matt. 9:12 NASB).
The Lord does not chase us from His table because of our imperfections.**

He welcomes us because of our need.

We cannot cleanse ourselves to make ourselves worthy, so He calls us to "eat His flesh and drink His blood" so we can have life. Not our life, but His life.

Do not avoid the table. It gives life. It draws us closer to God and each other. It shows the power of the gospel at work in us and in the body of Christ. It recalls the work of Christ at Calvary and celebrates Him.

Come to the table!