

Communion: Why We Take It

1 Cor. 10:16, 17

Introduction: We should understand that there is no power in tradition or religion. Neither requires any practical faith in a living God as it's true object. They only require faith in the practice of the tradition or religion. This can be seen in the chants of Buddhist monks and other such religions. The Bible tells us that “whatever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23). Yet if we observe an ordinance that was instituted by God with faith in the living God then it is no longer a tradition but an act of obedience that will be rewarded with power and blessing.

We observe communion, not because of tradition but because we have been commanded by Christ to do it. Yet, this observance is blessed by Christ when we obey Him by faith. The commands of God always have meaning. In this lesson we will learn the meaning of Communion.

1. What is communion?

- a) As 1 Cor. 10:16, 17 shows us, the Lord's Supper is known as a “communion.”
- b) Communion – Comes from the Greek word *Koinonia*. Greek scholar W. E. Vine defines this as “a having in common (koinos), partnership, fellowship” (see COMMUNICATE), *denotes (a) the share which one has in anything*, a participation, fellowship recognized and enjoyed of sharing the realization of the effects of the Blood (i.e., the Death) of Christ and the Body of Christ, as set forth by the emblems in the Lord's Supper.
- c) The taking of the Lord's Supper makes us an intimate partner with Him. He died and shed His blood in our place. His body was broken in our place. He did it for us as our representative. He suffered for us as our sinless substitute that which we should have suffered and receive the benefits of it as if we ourselves had suffered it.

2. It represents the redemptive work of Christ in His death:

- a) The bread represents the body of Christ.
- b) The bread represents healing for the body – Matt. 15:22-28; 1 Pet. 2:24
 - (1) **1 Cor. 11:24** - Notice that His body was broken for YOU!!! This is personal. It personally did this for YOU and me.
 - (2) John 6:35, 51, 54 – A. B. Simpson wrote, “Here He promises us not only spiritual life, but physical life from His own body. This is the blessed truth which our faith has learned to apprehend in the Lord's Supper. It is the truth commonly known as divine healing. It is deeper than mere healing; it is the actual participation in the physical strength, vitality and energy of our risen Lord. It is again and again referred to in the writings of Paul as the Lord's Supper, and is especially to us glorious and vivid, simple and expressive. (Christin the Bible Commentary (Vol. 5), p. 212).
- c) Take the communion when you are sick and trust God for healing.
- d) The wine represents the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus is the basis for forgiveness, cleansing, redemption, sanctification, and the many other great blessings Jesus wrought for us.

3. It represents a COVENANT

- a) 1 Cor. 11:23-25
- b) *Likewise also the cup after the supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This*

do, as often as ye drink it, for my memorial. (ACV)

- (1) In the primitive rite of blood-covenanting, men drank of each other's blood, in order that they might have a common life; and they ate together of a mutually prepared feast, in order that they might evidence and nourish that common life. In the out-reaching of men Godward, for the privileges of a divine-human inter-union, they poured out the substitute blood of a chosen victim in sacrifice, and they partook of the flesh of that sacrificial victim, in symbolism of sharing the life and the nourishment of Deity. This symbolism was made a reality in Jesus Christ. (The Blood Covenant by H. Clay Trumbull, p. 274)
- c) A covenant always comes with guaranteed promises. God makes covenant with us to strengthen our faith and remind us that His promises are guaranteed.
 - (1) If we begin to examine the terms of the Covenant as the deed of our inheritance and the riches we are to possess even here on earth, we will be different. If we will think of the certainty of their fulfillment and turn to the God who has promised to do it all for us, our life will be different from what it has been. It can and will be all that God desires to make it. (Covenants and Blessings by Andrew Murray, p. 13)

4. It is a MEMORIAL

- a) 1 Cor. 11:23-25
 - (1) *Likewise also the cup after the supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as ye drink it, for my memorial.* (ACV)
- b) We need constant reminders of what God has done for us because we have a tendency to forget, especially in times of adversity. God uses the memorial of the Lord's Supper to help our faith in reminding us of what Jesus did on our behalf.
- c) A memorial is something used to bring something back to our remembrance.
 - (1) *And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.* (Ex. 12:13, 14)
- d) **Gen. 14:17-24** – The king of Sodom came with a temptation but God sent Melchizidek, the high priest to remind Abraham who really wrought the victory for Abraham and Melchizidek brought the covenant meal for this necessary memorial.
 - (1) There are two “firsts” record here: *The first record of the covenant meal being served and the first record of tithes being paid.* Jesus was not the first to introduce communion but a Melchizidek is a type of Christ (Heb. 7:17) and he gives us the first introduction of what is to come. Also, Abraham paid tithes 400 years BEFORE the law of Moses ever came into being, showing that tithing is not a practice under the law and is not legalistic.

5. It is something that we are to personally PROCLAIM

- a) *For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.* (1 Cor. 11:26; ACV)
- b)the verb makes clear that the partaking of the elements at the Lord's Supper is a "proclamation" (an evangel) of the Lord's death (W. E. Vine)
- c) Taking communion is a public confession of your faith in Christ, what He has done, and the benefits derived thereof. You are declaring to Christ you believe in Him and what He has done on your behalf, to the devil that you acknowledge his defeat, and to men everywhere that you

- are not ashamed to be identified and to be in union with Christ.
- d) There is power in confessing and proclaiming the blood of Christ. God moves where He sees faith and He certainly will move when you declare and make a proclamation of the blood of Jesus.

6. In what manner do we take the communion

- a) It must be done with regularity and consistency (1 Cor. 11:26)
- b) We must take it in a WORTHY manner (1 Cor. 11:27).
- (1) *Anyone who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Master **irreverently** is like part of the crowd that jeered and spit on him at his death. Is that the kind of "remembrance" you want to be part of? (MSG)*
- c) With self-examination (1 Cor. 11:28-31)
- (1) Self examination (or self judgment) prevents us from receiving the consequences of taking the communion of God in a manner that is irreverent. One of the very things the communion was meant to do (bring healing) will do the exact opposite in judgment if one disdains this ordinance.
- (2) A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance church wrote: "There is no doubt, on the one hand, that the Lord's supper is very intimately connected with our physical life, and it brings to us the actual bodily strength of the Lord Jesus Christ if we rightly partake. And so, on the other hand, it brings to us sickness and death if we abuse it. The two-edged sword cuts both ways, either in blessing or in judgment as we meet it. There is no doubt that many Christians are suffering from sickness, and perhaps their very lives have been shortened because they have sat down at this holy table cherishing willfully unholy resentments and knowingly indulging in forbidden things." (Christ in the Bible Commentary (Vol. 5), p. 209).