



# Participating with Jesus

## Introduction:

The Corinthians had been struggling with how to follow Christ within their existing pagan culture and all its practices. In his response to their questions, Paul wrote back to them, teaching them that worship to Christ always needed to be singular and comprehensive, and that in ALL things, they should glorify God. In today's text, Paul took applied teaching into to the area of Christian worship practice.

## Today's Scripture Text

1 Corinthians 10:15-22

## Sermon Points

Communion (or the Lord's Supper) is a proclamation of our oneness with Christ and a celebration of our oneness with each other. Throughout Christian history, there have been different views on what it means to *participate* in the blood and body of Christ, and these views still hold today in varying degrees. At BBC, we believe that when Christ went to the cross, he won the victory over sin and death for us, and he invited us into his victory. When we take part in the Lord's Supper/communion, we see the elements as reminders of what Christ did for us. The elements themselves have no power in and of themselves and they do not change during the ritual. However, when we partake by eating and drinking, we know that we are united to Christ's righteousness, through faith, and we know that Christ is present with us, through the Spirit and is reminding us of his lavish gift of grace. In these moments, we act in faith and receive by the Spirit, a greater manifestation of the spiritual power and presence of Jesus Christ, than we do at other times. (Sam Storms).

### **#1. In communion, Christians collectively participate in the righteousness of Christ – this must drive out a collective SINGULARITY of worship**

- Read 1 Corinthians 10:15-22  
Participating in a spiritual feast was a serious matter, and therefore Paul did not want the Corinthians participating in the Lord's supper only to then go and participate in pagan feasts. We cannot participate both with Christ, and with demons. In our day, we participate in the work of the demonic when we tamper with sin, lies and false worship and we then come to the communion table and want to participate with Christ! We have got to put these things away, and worship Christ only.
  - ♣ We do not go to pagan temples and worship there, but we do participate in demonic influence. In what ways do we do this?



- ♣ Why is this just as serious as partaking in pagan worship, and why does our pride stop us from admitting that this is true?
- ♣ In what way is your worship to Christ divided?

## #2. In communion, Christians collectively participate in the righteousness of Christ – this must drive out a collective UNITY of worship

- Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-24 & Matthew 5:23-24

Communion is a communal experience, not an individual one. Together we remember our salvation and remember our collective participation in the work of Christ. We acknowledge the death of Christ, and we embrace the ongoing work of the Spirit in us. It is a profoundly significant experience as the body of Christ. Therefore, when taking communion, it stands to reason that there is absolutely no place for us to have bitterness or unresolved conflict among those participating together. It is equally as absurd to have no concern for the needs of those around us, as though it has no bearing on us. If we are callous in either of these areas, then we are not genuinely partaking in the Lord's Supper, but merely going through the motions. Jesus instructed his followers to check their hearts, and to deal with these issues before coming to the communion table. The gospel is for both me as well as for my enemy, it is the great leveler. There is never a time when I cannot receive it because I have fallen so far, or a time when I do not need to receive it.

- ♣ Why is taking communion a community experience and not an individual experience?
- ♣ Why is it a farce for us come to the communion table with someone in community who is in desperate need?
- ♣ Why is it important to forgive those with whom we have relational grievances before we come to the communion table together?
- ♣ What would it look like for me/you to deal with a relational issue prior to coming to the communion table?  
Let's look at a practical example: What if you have an issue with someone in the GC or with one of the leaders in the church for some hurt caused, where you have bitterness towards him/her in your heart. Would it be right for you to take communion, knowing that you have this grievance towards them? When the music is playing and everyone is getting out of their seats, what should you do in this instance? What if the person is not present in the service?

## #1. In communion, Christians collectively participate in the righteousness of Christ – this must drive out a collective THOUGHTFUL HOPEFULNESS in worship

- Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-34

When we come to the communion table, we need to first stop and assess our lives and our hearts, and repent accordingly. Just coming to the table to partake in a religious ceremony is in no way pleasing to God, and we should refrain from participating if we are in that head-space.

In order to take communion seriously, in a way that is honoring to God, we should do the following before we eat and drink:



- Look back at Christ's atoning work
- Look at our own failures and rebellion
- Look around
- Look forward

- ♣ Why is it important to first look back at Christ's atoning work on our behalf?
- ♣ Why is it then important to consider where we have been sinning against God and others, before we consider where others have offended us?
- ♣ Why is it important to then look forward to the day when we will be fully united with Christ, when he returns?

Q: What is the one big take away that you need to apply to your life from this message?