"Communing with Jesus" I Corinthians 11:23 – 26

Introduction:

This morning as we turn our attention to the Word of the Lord, let's think together about the incredible <u>Grace</u> and <u>Mercy</u> of God that we may experience in life because of who Jesus is and what He came to do to redeem us all. The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, in Romans 5:8 that "God demonstrated His love for us in this while we were still sinners Christ died for us".

The Father God chose to span the chasm of sin that stood between humanity and Himself, by offering His Son our Lord Jesus Christ, as a sin offering on our behalf. The work Jesus did for us all, on the cross, is just awesome in its scope. It is still the most magnificent act of grace and mercy ever known in all of human history!

Our Lord Jesus came into this world to bring eternal life to all who would believe in Him and receive Him as Savior and Lord. John 1:11 – 14: "He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to be children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of a human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

The incredible truth of the matter is this: Jesus became one of us for the singular purpose of dealing once-and-for-all with <u>Sin</u>, and <u>Sin's Fruit</u> in our lives in all of its forms: Guilt, shame, transgressions, and iniquities. He took upon Himself our humanity so He could bear our sins, sins committed against us, with its shame and guilt we feel, that separates us from God.

The author of the book of Hebrews tells us that He appeared in a body the first time to "do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself," Hebrews 9:26. He took into Himself all sins, wrongs we have done, the good deeds we should have done and neglected. He embraced it all on the cross, choosing to become **God's righteous**, **Acceptable Sin Offering** for us all, so that by Him and through Him we might experience grace and be saved.

Scripture is absolutely clear in this regard. God no longer holds our sins against us because Jesus has paid the penalty for what we have done. II Corinthians 5:19 and 21, "...that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. ...God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

These emblems, which are before us today, signify the incredibly wonderful act of God in Christ Jesus on the cross. By taking them into our bodies we are making a statement of faith. We are telling the Lord and those around us, "I have in fact by faith **Received** into my life the Lord Jesus Christ. This is an act of honor and remembrance for me. I am in Christ Jesus and He is in me!"

The Indwelling Spirit of Jesus is Living in the Life of the Believer:

John 14:20 "On that day you will realized that I am in my Father and you are in me, and I am in you."

John 14:23 "Jesus replied, 'If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him. and we will come to him and make our home with him."

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

I would like you to reflect on a very important issue with me. Communion is not just a ritual we observe, going through a form or checking off an item on a "To Do" list. The outward performance of a church ordinance has no power to transform us. Ordinances only have power to affect us when we use them to express Outwardly the Inward reality of the heart.

Jesus promised us He would come and live in our individual hearts and lives, by His Holy Spirit, as we believe in Him and receive Him as Savior and Lord. When we partake of these emblems of the Communion Table, recite the ritual, we are saying this is an outward expression of the truth that Jesus lives in this simple, ordinary life! **Communion with Jesus** should, therefore, be an intensely **Personal** and powerful **Expression** of **Love** and gratitude for each of us, who know Him.

Subsequently, as we gather here corporately, He is present with all of us to receive these acts of faith and remembrance. The Lord Jesus promised His people, "where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them," Matthew 18:20 He is here with us today, and He is figuratively, in these emblems.

He told his disciples this would be so in a spiritual way, in John 6:53 – 57 selected. "...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life... Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him."

No, these emblems aren't real food and drink in the merely physical sense. But they represent deep inner resources of spiritual food and spiritual drink. Truly the body of Jesus was broken to bear away our sins and the blood of Jesus shed to <u>Cleanse</u> us of all <u>Sins</u> and to <u>Purify</u> our <u>Hearts</u>! But the truth is, His presence dwelling in us is the living proof that we have believed Him for our salvation!

There is a scientific fact that touched my heart as I thought about it, and it serves as a metaphor for us as we eat the communion of our Lord today. In order for physical food to be received in the human body it has to be in some ways like what feeds on it, in order that it may fully assimilated and absorbed into the body for nourishment. This is a picture of the fact that Jesus became one of us in order that what He provides for us can be assimilated and absorbed into our lives as spiritual food and spiritual drink.

Paul's Words about the Communion Table:

I Corinthians 11:23 – 26 "For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you, do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'this cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

There are three verses in the passage here, which I want to highlight in order to help each of us to understand the simple truth that Jesus our Lord is present with us at this Communion Table. This can be a time where we simply go through the motions, "Oh its Communion Sunday morning, ho-hum." Or this can be an expression of a very **Special Relationship** we have with the Lord God our Father by our personal faith in what Jesus did for you and me.

First look at Paul's words in verse 23, "For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you." The instructions Paul received about celebrating communion with the Risen Lord Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit, flowed out of the dynamic of his personal walk with the Lord. The Lord came to Paul as the two of them prayed together, and spoke to his heart. The Lord Jesus taught him what to do and here's why that is so important. The Lord Jesus instituted communion. It is not a man-made ordinance! The Lord Himself told us to do this as often as we do it Remembering what He did for us.

The words of the Lord Jesus, which Paul quotes in verse 24, are in the present indicative active verb tense. "This (bread) is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." This bread is, now a physical emblem representing my body, which bore away the sins of the many and became the means of peace with God. It is now, present active, still today the emblem of the broken body of Jesus hanging on a cross, having **Borne Away** from you and me, our **Sins** and the **Power** of sin to **Enslave Us** to doing behaviors we don't want to do.

Paul's second quote in verse 25 is again, in the present indicative active verb tense. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me." The cup symbolizes the precious **Blood** of **Jesus**, which was **Shed** to **Cleanse** all of us of everything we have ever done wrong, and the sins and wounds done to us.

He is present among us today and his shed blood is powerful and active for the cleansing and canceling of sins we have committed, transgressions we have done, iniquitous patterns we see in our hearts, and our guilt and shame. The Hebrew author adds a tremendous truth for us when he writes that the blood of Jesus has the power to cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death!

Preparing My Heart for His Presence and Power:

The bottom line is that the Lord Jesus Christ is present among us as we gather here today. He deeply desires to commune with each one of us at intensely personal and private levels. If we go away from here today, having merely gone through the motions, without personalizing the

meaning of these emblems, we have made a grave error. Paul talks about this in the concluding verses of the chapter.

Verses 27 - 31 "Therefore, whoever eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment."

The judgment the Lord desires for us to make is not to sit here morbidly pouring over our lives, feeling guilt motivation as though that were somehow God's way of making us feel more spiritual. All of us can remember things we did that broke our hearts, God's heart, and the hearts of people we love. That is not what Paul means at all, feeling guilt over forgiven sins!

The judgment He asks us to subject ourselves to is to first of all hedge ourselves in with Him alone right now, by faith, and commune with Him in prayer. It is to recognize that He is here with us to commune with us in this table. If we go from here without entering into this reality we will have failed to take by faith the most basic and beautiful thing about the sacrament of communion.

What He is asking of us is to invite Him to speak into our hearts and lives right now. As He does He may convict us of sin, something we did or did not do, which grieved Him. We may remember experiences or words that wounded us, or sins committed against us, which we have not yet dealt with. Any matter of the heart that is preventing us from receiving deeper mercy and grace from His presence must be confessed and given to Him by faith at the cross.

As we give them to Him, inviting Him to wash and purify us, we experience the Holy Spirit's washing and cleansing power, fresh mercy and grace! What He is asking of us is that we would each come to Him by faith, and invite Him to turn His face toward us, that His Holy presence in us will enable us to search our hearts and to invite Him to cleanse the contents.

Paul wrote a word to the Romans that I want to share with you as we come to the communion table to be with Jesus this morning. He wanted his readers to understand that all of us who have responded by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ, inviting Him to dwell in our hearts by faith, have become a part of the most powerful kingdom the world has ever seen, the Kingdom of God on earth.

Paul writes about the nature of this kingdom in this verse to the Romans. Romans 14:17 "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit,"

Notice the significant fact about the Kingdom of God, which Paul shared with his Roman readers. The Kingdom of God is not a matter of merely doing something outward and physical. His Kingdom dwelling in our hearts means that we are experiencing His presence and power in our lives, by His Spirit, as He works in us His righteousness, peace, and joy!

Conclusion:

As you come with me now to the communion table of the Lord, come by faith in deep surrender. Hedge yourself in with the Lord alone. Do you know Him and has His life in your heart and life become personal to you? Is His kingdom working in your life His righteousness, peace, and joy? Do you see yourself changing, being transformed, incrementally into the image of Jesus?

"Communing with Jesus" I Corinthians 11:23 – 26

Introduction:

As we turn to the Word of the Lord, let's think together about the incredible $\underline{\mathbf{G}}$ and $\underline{\mathbf{M}}$ of God.
John tells us the Lord Jesus came into this world to bring eternal life to all who would $\underline{\mathbf{B}}$ and $\underline{\mathbf{R}}$ Him as Savior and Lord, John 1:11 – 14.
The truth is Jesus became one of us to deal with \underline{S} , and \underline{S} \underline{F} in our lives in all of its forms.
The Hebrew author tells us Jesus came to "do away with sins," He embraced it all on the Cross, choosing to be God's righteous, <u>A</u> <u>O</u> .
Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers that God no longer holds our sins against us because of who Jesus is and what He did for us: II Corinthians 5:19 and 21.
By partaking of the emblems today we are saying that we have received Jesus' presence in our lives. "This is an act of $\underline{\mathbf{H}}$ and $\underline{\mathbf{R}}$ for me."
I. <u>The Indwelling Spirit of Jesus Living in the Life of the Believer</u> : John 14:20 and 23 Galatians 2:20
The Communion Table of our Lord should never be done as a ritual we observe without sincerely meaning what we do. Ordinances of the Church have no power to affect us at all. Ordinances merely express O the I reality of the H!
When we partake of the emblems and recite the ritual, we are telling Jesus and each other, "Jesus lives in this simple, ordinary life." C with Jesus should be intensely P and an E of love and gratitude to Him we feel deeply!
Matthew $18:20$ we are promised His presence when we meet. John $6:53 - 57$ Jesus tells his disciples to eat His flesh and drink His blood.
The emblems are not merely physical. They represent spiritual food and spiritual drink. The body of Jesus B A from us our sins and the blood of Jesus C us and P our H of all unrighteousness.
II. Paul's Words about the Communion Table:
I Corinthians 11:23 – 26
This table can be meaningless to us. Or it can be an expression of the S we have with God our Father because of what Jesus has done in our lives!
Paul's three great thoughts to ponder: 1. Verse 23, Jesus instituted communion asking us to eat it R what He did for us all. 2. Verse 24, this bread is now an emblem representing my body broken for us, and it has B from us sins and sin's power to enslave us to doing things we don't want to do! 3. Verse 25, this cup is now an emblem representing my blood, the P B of Jesus

Jesus is present here today and His precious blood is the active agent for the cleansing of sins we have committed and the fruit of sin in our lives!

III. Preparing My Heart for His Presence and Power:

I Corinthians 11:27 – 31

Paul tells us if we go away from here today having taken the emblems without making it intensely personal and an act of faith we have made a grave error!

The judgment Jesus asks us to make is not pouring over sins for which we have been forgiven. The judgment He asks us to make is to hedge ourselves in with Jesus deeply and personally. **R** the Spirit of Jesus is **H** with us to **C** with us. He is asking us to permit Him to <u>S</u> to us, to <u>C</u> us of sins, or remind us of <u>W</u> . As we give sins and sins done to us to Jesus, we may invite the Holy Spirit to wash us deeply and purify our hearts. Paul wrote to the Romans, the believer in Christ Jesus has become a part of the greatest movement on earth, the kingdom of God. Romans 14:17. The kingdom of God is not a matter of doing something outward and physical.

It is His presence dwelling in our lives producing the fruit of His presence: Righteousness, peace, and joy!

Discussion Starter Questions for Home Groups

- 1. In your opinion, do you think most people really "get" how merciful and gracious God really is toward us?
- 2. What are some Bible passages or stories you can think of that illustrate just how much, how desperately we needed God to act on our behalf to save us?
- 3. In your opinion, do you think most people understand the truth that because of what Jesus has done for us, He no longer holds our sins against us? (See II Corinthians 5:19 21)
- 4. What is the difference between knowing that our sins are forgiven by the grace and mercy of God and knowing that our sins were borne away from us in Jesus' body as He died on the Cross?
- 5. Why is it so important for the believer in Christ Jesus to be sincere when partaking of the Communion emblems?
- 6. What is the significance of Paul telling his readers that he was passing along to them what the Lord gave him to understand about the Communion emblems?
- 7. Why is it important for us to recognize the presence of Jesus in the Communion table? What should we invite the Holy Spirit to do in our hearts as we partake of it?
- 8. What does Paul mean, "the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of being made righteous, full of peace and joy?"
- 9. Read together aloud Isaiah 53 and I Peter 1:17 25 and share insights you have regarding what Jesus did for us in His once-and-for-all sacrifice for sins.
- 10. What was the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart as we looked into His Word together? Would you be willing to share your observations with your Home Group members?