

The Two Dimensions of the Lord's Table

Introduction: The context of this passage emerges from Paul's discussion on idolatry—specifically the eating of meat offered to idols.

1. Chapter eight deals with it on the natural level—matters of conscience that could easily offend and ultimately destroy a weaker brother.
2. Here he answers their objection regarding the harmless nature of an idol.

What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?
1 Corinthians 10:19 NKJV

- Am I saying an idol is anything? A real god?
- No! But the demon behind false worship is real (supernatural)

Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. *1 Corinthians 10:20 NKJV*

- You cannot fellowship with both the Lord and demons.

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. *1 Corinthians 10:21 NKJV*

3. Table of the Lord is invoked
4. Two aspects are invoked
 - a. Vertical dimension of the meal (cup of the Lord, the blood of Christ)
 - b. Horizontal dimension of the meal (table, the bread, the body of the Lord)

(ILL) When you go to a restaurant—greeted by host

- How many in your party? (Can you imagine not knowing?)
- Do you know why you are here? (No, not really)
- We would think they are confused. When you go to a restaurant you need to know why you are there and who you are going with.
- At the Lord's table—the same is true

5. The word “communion” implies being with someone.
 - a. Having in common
 - b. Partnership
 - c. Fellowship
6. It’s more than a wafer/juice issue
7. You can have communion (ordinance) without communion (fellowship)

QUESTION #1: Why are we here?

In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. 1 Corinthians 11:25-26 NKJV

- a. A remembrance of His death
- b. Awareness of His presence with us now
- c. Anticipation of His coming again

QUESTION #2: How many in your party?

I. Communion is first—a table for two

NOTE: Two’s company; three’s a crowd!

A. Even with hundreds of others around it should be a deeply personal time

1. He died for you
2. He shed His blood for you
3. You have been forgiven
4. You have been made a child of God
5. His Spirit dwells in you personally
6. His body broken for you
7. His healing and restoration is available to you personally

B. There must be a personal examination of one’s own life

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 NKJV

1. Some have misread this—heaps condemnation

NOTE: I'm not worthy to take communion. I have missed it this week.

2. Having sinned does not disqualify you from communion—if it did no one would qualify!

Barclay—“If the table of Christ were only for perfect people, none might ever approach it.”

3. Examining ourselves is NOT the same as condemning ourselves.

Examine:

- a. In light of God's love and mercy
- b. In light of His shed blood
- c. In light of His word
- d. If you see an area that needs adjusted-adjust it-repent, ask forgiveness
- e. Remember HE is FOR you! NOT against you
- f. He wants to help you overcome—not condemn you for falling short

C. We must also discern the Lord's body

1. Certainly includes what the broken body of Christ did for you
2. It accomplished so much

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. Isaiah 53:4-5 NKJV

Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes you were healed. 1 Peter 2:24 NKJV

Body broken for you! A table for two!

II. Communion is also—a table for all

NOTE: Also part of discerning the Lord's Body

(ILL) Great banquet hall, diverse, all who respond can come

A. A unity is established when we partake together

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 NKJV

When we drink the cup of blessing, aren't we taking into ourselves the blood, the very life, of Christ? And isn't it the same with the loaf of bread we break and eat? Don't we take into ourselves the body, the very life, of Christ? 17 Because there is one loaf, our many-ness becomes one-ness — Christ doesn't become fragmented in us. Rather, we become unified in him. We don't reduce Christ to what we are; he raises us to what he is. 1 Corinthians 10:16-18 The Message

B. Discerning the Lord's Body is to recognize the Universal Church that is comprised of all believers everywhere; all of the time.

1. Not a charismatic/Pentecostal table
2. Not a white/black/Hispanic table
3. Not a protestant or Methodist or Baptist table
4. It is the Lord's table—all who belong Him have equal access and a right to participate here

And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation. Revelation 5:9 NKJV

Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. 1 Corinthians 12:27 NKJV

C. The eating and drinking unworthily has to do with failing to discern the Lord's body

NOTE: This was the Corinthian issue

Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. 19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. 20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. 21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you. 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 NKJV

In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. 1 Corinthians 11:17 NIV

1. If you are going to enjoy communion at a table for two—must also enjoy it as a table for all.
2. Cannot harbor ill-will toward another (bitterness, unforgiveness, jealousy, hate, critical nature)

And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Job 42:10 NKJV

Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-24 NKJV

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. James 5:16 NKJV

- D. In a few moments elements passed—you will hold a wafer and a cup
1. Wafer represents the Body of Christ
 2. You will handle it respectfully—would be grievous if I threw it on the ground and stomped on it
 3. But the wafer only represents the Body of Christ
 - a. If you treat the symbol disrespectfully
 - b. And much worse the true Body of Christ
 4. The person to your right and left is that Body of Christ
 5. You can't honor a piece of bread while dishonoring brother and sisters in the Lord
 6. If you do—NOT discerning the Lord's Body

THIS IS WHERE THE CORINTHIANS MISSED IT!

Conclusion: Before us today is a table.

1. You need to know why you come and how many are in your party.
2. A table for two
 - a. Where you and Jesus can fellowship in remembrance of all He has done for you.
 - b. Where you can celebrate all he provides for you in His shed blood.
3. Also a table for all
 - a. Where all natural barriers cease to exist.
 - b. Where we recognize, honor, and respect all others who are also a part of the Body of Christ.
 - c. A place where we acknowledge and give thanks to God for what He's done for all of us through Jesus Christ.