

Communion

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[0 : 00] I've already read in 1 Corinthians chapter 10. 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and we could read at verse 15.

Verse 15 of chapter 10 of 1 Corinthians. I speak as to wise men. Judge ye what I say. 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? For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.

Be whole, thrill after the flesh, are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar. What say I then, that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything?

But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, their sacrifice to devils, are not to God. And I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

[1 : 13] He cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. He cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the tables of devils.

Now, to consider the Lord's Supper. Now, I'm not trying to appear as if I'm a theologian, because I'm not. And I would take that upon myself in the wrong area, because we feel that Lewis is well steeped in theology.

But just to consider maybe the Lord's Supper. As Paul, in his day, he had his problems in connection with the Lord's Supper.

And before the Lord's Supper, they had the love feast, the agape. And things went wrong in that area.

They came there to be as if a love feast. They came to be there as one in Christ.

[2 : 22] But things didn't work out that way. Some of them brought much to eat and to drink of. Those who were well able to do it.

But there was the poor among the people that could hardly bring anything. Now, it should be, if they were going in the right direction, a matter of sharing.

Those who had enough, that they would give to those who had much less. But it didn't work out that way. Those that had much to eat and to drink, they took it all themselves.

And ignored the wants of those who were less well off. And so, on the one hand, it went to excess. They were even drunk at this love feast.

But it didn't stop there. From the love feast, they went on to the Lord's Supper. And things were going wrong there also.

[3 : 31] Somewhere at the Lord's table, under the influence of drink. And so, Paul would tell them that in that manner, they were eating and drinking damnation or perhaps judgment to themselves.

And God did judge them and sent as if a mysterious illness among them. Some of them were weak and sickly.

And some of them slept. Some of them died because of the misuse that was made of the Lord's Supper. And Paul would be endeavoring to put things in proper perspective, in proper order.

And then there was this, the mixing with those who sacrificed to idols. Maybe some of these believers going there. And almost partaking of these things knowingly that were sacrificed to idols. So, this was Paul's great problem. To put things in proper order regarding the Lord's Supper.

[4 : 56] That it was being abused. Now, it may be true that in certain areas, the Lord's Supper is still being abused.

But we feel that perhaps we could say, as Paul said to the Philippians, when he was writing them, he said, Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife.

They haven't got the love of Christ. They preach Christ even of envy and strife. And some of goodwill. The one preached Christ of contention, not sincerely supposing to add affliction to my

bonds.

To hurt me when I'm bound in prison. They are not sincere. They haven't got the love of Christ shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel. Those who love the Lord, they also love me and would help me and would encourage me.

[6 : 05] Behold how good a thing it is and how becoming well together such as brethren are in unity to dwell. And the promise is in connection with that.

But he says, What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretense or in truth, whether without any sincerity or insincerity, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice.

And perhaps we could say that in connection with the Lord's Supper, it is possibly in areas abused. But nevertheless, the Lord is mentioned, and the supper is dispensed.

And so, these problems did arise. And I say, Paul is endeavoring to set things in order.

And I have drawn a little from Hodge, and another man, who was the professor of the Free University of Amsterdam, a man by the name of Groscheide.

[7 : 20] What I couldn't think of myself, I'm taking them into consideration, that the Lord's Supper is a divine institution.

It was instituted by Christ himself. And that shows to you and to me the importance of having the Lord's Supper.

Jesus felt that it was important that his people should remember his death until he come.

And that this supper was instituted on the night in which he was betrayed. When they had partaken of the last Passover.

You see, Jesus kept the Passover. Jesus said that he didn't come into this world to destroy the law, but to magnify the law and make it precious as if it were.

[8 : 29] So, Jesus observed the Passover. And, of course, the Passover from the very outset was just leading on to the Lord's Supper.

It began in Egypt on that memorable night when God was going to do a great deliverance deliverance when the people held in bondage would be set free.

He told Moses, you must have a Passover before you leave. And so, you must kill this lamb and sprinkle its blood on the doorposts and on the lintel of your homes.

so that when the destroying angel of death is passing over Egypt this night, when I see the blood, when I see the blood, I will pass over.

You will be sheltering under the blood of the everlasting covenant. That certainly was just looking symbolical of the Lord's Supper, of the sacrifice that Christ would give to satisfy divine justice.

[9 : 48] It began there and continued and the Lord said to Moses, you will continue having the Passover as a remembrance of that great deliverance that was brought for you in the land of Egypt.

and not only that, but when your children who will be born will ask you, why do you observe the Passover? You will tell them, it is because the Lord wrought a great and marvelous deliverance.

And so today, when our children would ask us, why do you go to the Lord's table? Why do we have a communion? That, in simple language, you could tell them, it is because that Jesus died for our sins and that he was raised again for our justification.

It is because we love Jesus and that Jesus told us if we love him to keep his commandments and to profess him openly.

so, as the Passover was a divine institution, so is the Lord's Supper.

[11 : 15] And that, someone has said, this has never been doubted in the Christian church, that Christ intended that the ordinance should continue.

yes, he said, is to continue until the last trumpet shall sound. It is to be continued until I come again. So, we are assured that the Lord's Supper will be observed until the end of the age. Do it in

remembrance of me, do it until I come.

Do it until the last trumpet shall sound and time shall be no more. And so, it is to be observed in the church until the second advent.

Until I come. And that the apostles understood the command of Christ, that it is plain from scripture itself, that there is a continuing observance of this ordinance to which such frequent references is made in the writings of the scriptures.

[12 : 40] The breaking of bread, the Lord's Supper, and the Lord's Table. It was instituted on that night in which Jesus was betrayed.

And indeed, his followers just couldn't really understand that Jesus would die. Peter said, Lord, it will never happen to you.

They were believers, but they couldn't understand that Jesus must be crucified. It will never happen to you.

And even after the institution of the Lord's Supper, they're still expected to find the body of Jesus in the tomb on the morning of the resurrection.

They were believers, but they were still somewhat seeing through a glass darkly in connection with the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[13 : 50] But he did institute the supper. They had the Passover, they had the unleavened bread, they had the cups of wine, and there was no change.

He just simply passed from the Passover and instituted the Lord's Supper with what he had at hand for the Passover, the unleavened bread and the cup of blessing, which was one of, I think, four cups that was used at the Passover.

There was no change in that connection, but that he did institute the Lord's Supper. And we are told that the elements used in the Lord's Supper, bread and wine, because they symbolize or are symbols of the body and blood of Christ.

But as the Lord's Supper was originally instituted in connection, as we said already, with the Passover, there is no doubt that unleavened bread was used on this occasion.

But it will appear that the apostles used whatever bread was at hand. They didn't keep themselves bound to unleavened bread when they continued to observe the Lord's Supper.

[15 : 32] And this is what Professor Hodge is saying. that there is no significance either in the kind of bread or in the form of the loaf.

It is enough that it is bread. This makes it the proper emblem of him who declared himself to be the true bread of life which came down from heaven.

That's what Jesus said. I am the bread of life which came down from heaven. And if you do not eat my flesh and drink my blood there is no life in you.

The wine he said as preserved to be used in this ordinance is to be understood as the juice of the grapes. that the wine of the Bible was a manufactured article not the juice of the grape as it exists in the fruit but that juice submitted to such process of fermentation as secured its preservation and gave it the qualities ascribed to it in scripture that it was in a form alcoholic it was fermented not unfermented wine now this could cause maybe a problem in our day professor John Murray I think insisted that it should be the fermented wine and

I think also he would be supported by professor Dolma Cloud but one feels that there could be problems because people who were alcoholics and were converted they could still might be afraid to take the alcoholic form the fermented wine in kiss it would set them off again I have a young man that visits me now every Tuesday I befriended him many years ago and it turned up that we have met again and for a number of years that young man took to strong drink and would say that he was an alcoholic and went to the alcoholic anonymous for eight years and kept him sober but he didn't come back to church things were in such a state for a while that his wife who was a member even stopped going to church but then she couldn't have it any longer and she went back and renewed her membership but this young man did not and would not go to the house of

[18 : 44] God but a year come next month September there was the Strathpuffer Convention and his wife was going and on the Sabbath he asked her are you going tonight she said I'm hoping to well he said I think I'll go myself well she said I was afraid to ask you so Willie went and it was a man Mr.

Bloodshirt that was preaching and that was the turning point in Willie's life and I have no doubt but he's well and truly converted he's a member of our congregation and I was just talking to him last Tuesday evening and telling him I was coming to Stornoway here and we came round to the Lord's Supper and he still would have a certain fear that he could fall back if he took the fermented wine you see I would say that God would keep the alcoholic in that situation and I said that to him well yes he said but perhaps it's not so easy to think that when you were an alcoholic easy enough for me who by the grace of

God was saved from being alcoholic he was still afraid and I think that at the first communion he took there was consideration made for Willie when he partook of that cup but that is of course an open question but what Willie was saying well if we could change from unleavened bread to any other bread would it be wrong to change from fermented wine to unfermented I don't know what the

answer is is it altogether important that we have fermented wine I'm just mentioning that I'm not trying to cause a controversy but just how things can happen as the years go on and so it was fermented when

Christ observed the sacrament he had unleavened bread but the followers of Christ used any bread that came to hand now Hodge is going on to tell us about the sacramental actions he said the first of these is the introduction and consecrating prayer you remember Jesus prayed Jesus gave thanks before he broke bread or drank the wine the object of this prayer says Hodge is threefold to give thanks to God for the gift of his son whose death he said we are about to commemorate we are going to God willing commemorate the death of Christ tomorrow and secondly to prepare the hearts of the communicants for the solemn service on which they are attending and to this end the prayer must be appropriate dwelling on the sacrament and then the third object of this introductory prayer is the consecration of the elements taken from a common to a sacred use the bread and the wine taken from a common use to a sacred use when therefore it is said that the

Lord gave thanks or blessed the cup and the bread it is it is understood that he not only thanked God for his mercy but that he invoked his blessing or in other words prayed that the bread and wine might be what he intended them to be the symbols of his body and blood and the means of spiritual nourishment to his disciples that is the purpose of the Lord's table is to witness but it is also a means of grace for the spiritual nourishment and growth in grace of the Lord's own people 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

[24 : 04] Christ it's a communion it's a fellowship all one in Christ Jesus and then he said another important action is the breaking of the bread it is a significant part of the service the bread is the symbol not merely of Christ's body but of his body as broken Christ when he instituted the Lord's offer he took the bread and he said this this is my body this is the bread that came down from heaven this is the body that is broken and will be broken and he broke that bread and he also took the cup and he said this is the new testament in my blood this is symbolical of the blood that will be shed on the cross and so

Christ blessed broke and gave the bread and then added this do you follow my example the command includes the blessing the breaking and the giving of the bread and of the wine that the apostle asserts that the bread which we break this is what Paul is saying is a participation of the body of Christ and the cup which we bless is a participation of the blood of Christ except ye eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood ye have no life in you there must be a sense therefore in which believers receive the body and blood of

Christ now we know that in the Roman Catholic Church they have the mass transubstantiation when at a certain point in the mass and as Professor MacLeod said when he was still an ordinary minister it's the greatest drama that was ever made the mass I don't know if you have attended mass but I must confess that I did because I have so many friends within the Roman church it may shock you but I have and I have been at masses and I saw it and the first time I saw it I must say I had it all through that night I could see the priest with that big cross on the back of his jacket I could hear the bells ringing and the host and all this till it was all complete and at that point the bread was the very flesh in their estimation of

Christ the wine was the very blood of Christ but we know that that is blasphemous it's not right but in another sense that by faith those who partake of the bread and the wine by faith they are partaking of the body and blood of Christ and so the effect of this reception of Christ he and his people become one Christ and his people are one in such a sense that it is not them that live but Christ is living in them and then finally the qualifications for the Lord's Supper those who would be worthy to partake of the

Lord's Supper the sacrament is meant for believers and the apostle makes the distinction in verse 21 here he said you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils you can't participate in both you cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils you cannot be one day in the world and doing all that the world is doing and the next day sitting at the Lord's table and so Paul's discourse on the idols are given in full in this verse 21 Paul had begun to discuss the communion established in the Lord's Supper and after that the communion established through the sacrifice of devils he asserts emphatically that there are two that these two are wholly incompatible there is no agreement with idols and with the altar of

[29 : 50] God and so Paul proceeds in the assumption that after everything which he has written the congregation will recognize the absurdity of desiring to have communion with Christ through the Lord's Supper and to have communion with the evil spirits through pagan sacrifice there is no communion between Christ and idols these two exclude one another he goes on to say that we could enjoy communion with the Christ less or worldly associations but if we do we cannot enjoy communion with Christ and that's true if we are still enjoying the world and all that the world is prepared to give us we certainly cannot enjoy sitting at the

Lord's table they are totally incompatible some things may appear harmless as we read in verse 19 what say I then that the idol is anything or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything but someone said that behind every idol because it is an idol lurks a devil the dumb image and the supposed deity associated with it are but masks hiding the face of the fiend you see in Inverness I think next week there's a witch coming from England it's more or less this occult affair and they're expecting to have a crowd there it's as if devil worship it's frightening and so the dumb image and the supposed deity associated with it are but masks hiding the face of the fiend and idol is nothing yes it says but nothings are generally the veil of very palpable somethings beware of the nothings of life they are the most dangerous because the least dreaded when any objects are worshipped in place of God the devil kingdom is served idolatry of whatever sort involves sacrifice to devils therefore come ye out from among them and be separate and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you and I will be a father unto you and ye shall be my sons and my daughters now that doesn't mean that those who come to the

Lord's table and those who wish to come for the first time must be perfect that will never be there will be as Spurgeon says there will never be a perfect church on earth while I'm in it and that's true it is not to look for perfection in God's people we are full each one of us of imperfections and just perhaps to end up on a note of some encouragement to quote Hodge again and maybe what the Westminster divines would say in the larger catechism Hodge said it is not to be inferred that a man must be assured that he is a true believer before he can properly approach the Lord's table maybe lack of assurance maybe one day we have more assurance than the other day that's how I'm sure David felt when he said Lord say to my soul I am thy salvation Spurgeon felt that David was somewhat afraid that maybe after all he wasn't saved and he's saying it again Lord speak to me again and say I am thy salvation and so he's saying that it doesn't mean that we must have assurance before we can properly approach the Lord's table and this is something that may sort of make us wonder he said it often happens that those who are most confident that they are Christians have the least of Christ's spirit I don't know what to say about that but maybe it won't be a good thing to be over confident and say yes

I'm fit to sit at the Lord's table and then you see this is what the Westminster divine say in the short catechism the question is asked may anyone who doubteth his being in Christ or of his due preparation come to the Lord's supper and the answer given is one who doubteth his being in Christ or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's supper may have true interest in Christ though he be not yet assured thereof that the signs are that it's there and that individual is going in that direction and in God's account hath it that he has grace in God's account and unfeignedly would be found in

[36 : 13] Christ and to depart from iniquity in which case because promises are made and this sacrament is appointed for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians he is to be will his doubting and unbelief and labor to have his doubts resolved and so doing he may and ought to come to the Lord's table that he may be further strengthened as we said at the outset it is a means of grace it is for the strengthening of the faith of God's people and Louis Berkhoff says it should be stated explicitly however that lack of assurance of salvation need not deter anyone from coming to the Lord's table since the Lord's supper was instituted for that very purpose some feel

I'm not fit to go to the Lord's table that's right it's when we feel fit I feel that we should stay away I'm not fit I'm afraid that I will make shipwreck of course that's what the devil will say the devil doesn't want anyone to profess the Lord openly and he will tell you today you'll make shipwreck leave it this time but don't let us listen to the adversary if you feel that you love the Lord and you feel that you are now what you are not once upon a time that you will say like Murray McChain I once was a stranger to grace unto God I knew not my danger nor felt not my Lord but when Fran spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree Jehovah said cano it was nothing to me but then he goes on to describe the change in his life when he came to love the

Lord you are not what you once were you don't enjoy the world as you once did you now love the Lord's people you love the Lord's house and you come to the prayer meeting one feels that your place is at the Lord's table it is a means of grace unbelief will keep you back but you remember what that man said to Jesus when he came with his son who was taking fits or what not he came to Jesus and he said if thou canst do anything for us help us and Jesus said to him that believeth all things are possible and that man was very honest in his reply says Lord I believe but help thou my unbelief is that your prayer and mine today Lord I want to believe Lord I believe I believe but help my unbelief and so let us purge out therefore the old leaven purge therefore the old leaven purge out therefore the old leaven that he may be a new lump as he are unleavened for even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us therefore let us keep the feast not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth and say with the psalmist I'll of salvation take the cup on God's name will I call I'll pay my vows now to the Lord before his people all Amen let us pray O Lord that thou was blessed thy word was and do pardon Lord where we may have erred in our holy things if we have discouraged rather than encouraged anyone do graciously forgive us but but if anything has been said or thought if anyone has been encouraged by thy word we pray that thou wouldst follow it with thy rich and enriching blessing give us grace now to sing our parting song of praise and dismiss us with thy blessing for Jesus sake Amen