

Text: 1 Cor 10.14-22

For our communion services I am always looking for passages that either touch on communion itself or on the doctrine of salvation in some way.

Today I want to turn to a passage we rarely consider when it comes to communion, though it speaks to the communion service directly.

Read 1 Cor 10.14-22

In this passage we are in the middle of a discussion about meat offered to idols, beginning in chapter 8. This passage is mostly misunderstood today, but the early church got the message.

Bottom-line: don't do it!

Three reasons

1. In consideration of the weakness of the brother (8)
2. In consideration of the worth of the gospel (9)
3. In consideration of the wickedness of the heart (10)

The end of chapter 10 answers a couple of situational questions related to eating idol-meat outside the context of the idol temple, but whenever the meat was known to come from the idol temple, Christians in the ancient church did not participate.

The most important reason for not participating comes from our passage, where a key concept about communion parallels with the consumption of idol-meat. This concept teaches us a key notion when it comes to us appropriately celebrating the communion meal.

Proposition: In communion, you enter a special sharing with the Lord and with each other.

I. The proposition of the passage (14)

- A. Paul's point as he comes to the end of the teaching on idol-meat
- B. He starts with this: flee from idolatry (run, do not walk...)

II. The doctrine of communion as an illustration (16-17)

- A. The terms for communion
 1. "cup of blessing" – comes from the name for the third cup of the Passover (from which communion is derived)

2. “bread we break” – not just bread at an ordinary meal

B. The spiritual connection made in the bread and the cup: *κοινωνία*, sharing, fellowship, partnership

1. The English word “fellowship” is often too weak, can mean simple friendship

2. The word means more than that: a real partnership, a real participation

3. When we drink the cup and eat the bread, we have a real sharing in Christ: he is ours — we are his

In Eph 6, Paul uses the marriage bond to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the church: our union with him is as close.

C. The connection we make with Christ, when we share the bread, is a connection we make with other believers (we are one body) (17)

Paul describes communion in this way for a reason. The communion service isn't the only religious rite with this significance.

III. The sacrificial system of Israel as an illustration (18)

A. The next illustration is the OT sacrificial system

B. The partakers of Israel's sacrifices are *κοινωνοὶ* — sharers — of the altar: in communion with God and the nation

IV. The significance of idol worship as a parallel of communion (19-20)

A. Paul is not saying that an idol has any real spiritual significance (19)

B. But Paul is saying that behind the idols of the Gentiles are demons (20)

1. Gentiles make their sacrifices to demons

2. Paul doesn't want the Corinthians to become *κοινωνοὺς* — sharers — with demons

3. In other words, in participating in idol worship, eating idol-meat, you make a spiritual connection with demons

V. The separation between the Lord and idols (21)

- A. You cannot drink the Lord's cup and the cup of demons at the same time
- B. You cannot eat at the Lord's table and the table of demons at the same time

Why? Because you are partners of the Lord, not of demons!

Conclusion:

Proposition: In communion, you enter a special sharing with the Lord and with each other.

You are partners of the Lord. You belong to him and him alone.

That's why we call Christians to be holy and unspotted from the world. You belong to Jesus, not the world.