

Proclaiming the Gospel

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1.18).

Edifying the Body of Christ (Eph. 4.10-16)

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The Wise Still Seek Him

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A Problem in The Church ?

Part I: Discerning the Body of Christ

Paul dealt with a problem in the Church in Corinth. Apparently the believers failed to recognize and honor the holiness of the bread and wine that was the body and blood of Jesus as separate from the meal on which they had come to feast (1 Cor 11.17-34). Verse 17 says that they came together not for the better, but for the worse. Paul reminds them how Jesus broke bread and offered to His disciples the covenant of His body and blood. Paul then admonished the Church to examine themselves before receiving the bread and wine. If one received unworthily, he received damnation [judgment] on himself.

Paul writes in I Corinthians 11:29 "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." Verse 30, "For this cause many [are] weak and sickly among you, and many sleep [die]."

When we come to the Lord's table, our self-examination must lead us to confess and repent of all our sins, including our failure to recognize with awe, respect, and godly fear (beyond just mental consent) the body of our Lord Jesus. We are in a moment of partaking of Him. Is it possible that it is sin in us if we neglect to eat of Him continuously? Jesus said, "... I am the bread of life..." (Jn 6.35). Should we not appreciate, respect, and give honor to Him as the Bread of Life in our whole being – in the eating and drinking of Him in Holy Communion as well as during all hours of the day in our relationship with the members of the Body of Christ?

Is it possible that discerning the Lord's body includes His body in its many members? Paul wrote to the Church at Ephesus, "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph 5.30). Paul also writes in I Corinthians 10.16-17:

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

In these last days, the Church must function as a powerful, loving Body of Christ. We must stand together united in the love of Christ, praying for each other, doing battle until the enemy is defeated and that member is restored to strength, health, and victory in Jesus.

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Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ

Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31).

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.

Although we are many, we are one bread and one body because we partake of that one Bread (Christ).

Sometimes it is hard to find in the Church, those who care for each other as thoroughly and carefully as one's hand takes care of an injured foot, or one's hand gently bathes the face. If one's foot is **injured** and not cared for, soon a degree of death begins to operate in that foot. If no healing is ministered to it, it eventually dies.

How often we see or hear those who know Jesus as Savior functioning against the body of Christ, against the **injured**, for example. Ungodly attitudes, actions, and words should not be found among the members of His Body.

Paul said the failure to discern the Lord's body causes weakness, illness, and death to that member; one member affects all members. As we receive the Communion of our Lord's body and blood, let us discern His Body (Bread of Life), His holy presence with us at that moment as well as the extension of His body in its many members. Examining ourselves includes examining our relationship with other members of His Body. Let us, with due respect and godly fear, discern His Body when we are in His presence at any time.

Jesus prayed in His prayer for His disciples in John 17.20-21,

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *[art]* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Jesus repetitively said in John 6 that we are to eat His flesh and drink His blood. John 6.56 states clearly what it means to eat His flesh and drink His blood.

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

Dare we eat His flesh and drink His blood when in our hearts is such ungodliness? When we do, we bring judgment upon ourselves; we become weak and sickly, and some die. Hear what He says to the hypocrites in Matthew 23.27-28.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *[men's]* bones, and of all uncleanness.

Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Love for the brethren as a command is in many books in the New Testament. Take time to read I John, especially I John 3.14-15 and 4.20-21.

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *[his]* brother abideth in death.

Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

When we stand in the Lord's presence and examine ourselves, do we find we have neglected to minister to the needs of other members of the Body of Christ? Have we failed to function with love in His Body?

Look again at I Corinthians 10.17, "For we *[being]* many are one bread, *[and]* one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." Jesus, the Bread of life, dwells within us so that we may become bread to one who needs nourishment.

Our understanding of salvation through Jesus Christ often falls short of His eternal purpose. We accept Him to abide in our hearts, then we concentrate on "Bless me, bless me, bless me," and we pray, "bless you" only if we like "you."

WHEN WE ACCEPT JESUS INTO OUR HEARTS, WE TAKE UPON OURSELVES A RESPONSIBILITY TO THE ENTIRE BODY OF CHRIST FOR THE PURPOSE OF BUILDING UP AND FORTIFYING THE BODY UNTIL WE FUNCTION IN POWER AND FULL STRENGTH AGAINST STRONGHOLDS OF THE ENEMY.

We need to stand with each other with encouragement, words that edify and strengthen. Paul writes in Romans 14.19, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. Encouragement and prayer must always be a major part of our support of each other.

Ephesians 6.18, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints".

James writes about the Body of Christ praying one for another in James 5.13-15.

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: