

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" (I 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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Message
of
Jesus Christ

A Problem in The Church ?

Part II: Discerning the Word

I

n last month's message, we dealt with a problem in the Church in Corinth. They failed to discern the Lord's body (Read I Cor 11.23-30).

We come together for the communion of His body and blood, we focus on the bread and wine and His presence at that time of worship, and certainly we should; we tend to go away believing this is sufficient until "next time." The Body of Christ becomes weak subject to attack by the enemy – because we have not discerned the Lord's body. We have neglected to continue eating of His Body in every way that He is available to us. We **must** feast on Him so that He can flow in us to nourish and strengthen us that His Word shall go forth through us to others.

The discerning of the Lord's Body is to experience the presence of the Lamb of God; however, it is not a one-time experience nor something experienced periodically; it is a daily walking and feasting on Him continually: 1) at the communion table eating His body and drinking His blood, 2) in our closets in the presence of Jesus the Living Word as well as the written word, and 3) in our function as one of many members of the Body of Christ, the true Church.

I. At the Communion Table (I Cor 11.23-25)

Remembrance (*anamnesis*) means recollection: remembrance (again).

Every year when the Israelites remembered/kept the Passover, they re-lived it so much so that it became an integral part of their whole being. This re-living of the experience was passed from one generation to the next, not just with words, but even in their inner being from a babe in the womb throughout the rest of life. They did not remember in their minds only, but experienced it in their emotions and in their spirits. They were there again in their homes with the blood on the lentils and doorposts with

was called to speak the Word of the Lord to Israel, to a rebellious people. In chapters two and three of Ezekiel, God prepared him for what he would face. More than once God told him not to be afraid of them, "...though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions..." (Eze 2.6; 3.8, 9). This warning and the encouraging words from God were not all of his preparation. He was to eat the Word of the Lord (Eze 2.6-10; 3.1). Ezekiel ate the roll and was filled with the word that God gave him (3.3). Only then was he prepared to speak God's word to the children of Israel (3.10, 11).

If we have **not** spent time in Holy Communion with Jesus, in prayer and in study, **we are not prepared** to live a life for Him, and certainly **not prepared to minister life to His Body**. May we learn to cherish time with our Lord and hunger for the Word; may we then be a **prepared** fruitful and holy vessel in the Body of Christ.

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Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ

Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31)

the death angel passing over them as they ate the Pascal lamb, experiencing the mercy of the Lord granting them life through the blood.

When Jesus said, “this do in remembrance of me” (I Cor 11.23-25), He was telling them to transfer that re-remembrance of the spilling of the blood of the Pascal lamb to Jesus, the Lamb of God Who shed His blood for us on the Cross of Calvary. The Israelites feared God with a godly fear that caused them to stand in the presence of the Lord God with awe and respect – as should we. To “remember again” Him as the Passover, their whole being must experience His presence as they once again feasted on His flesh and His blood, and passed on the re-remembrance to following generations.

Holy Communion is a time of experiencing the *real* presence of the Lord Jesus as we eat of Him. A memorial? What kind of witness is a memorial service? I am not talking theological issues, but I am asking the question of us when we come to the Table of the Lord: Do we believe in the *real* presence of the Lord? If we do not believe in the *real* presence of the Lord, in what do we believe! When we fill ourselves with Him at the Table of the Lord, He washes us clean; He gives new life to us. We will find supernatural strength in the time spent in His presence, letting the Holy Spirit minister to us, body, soul, and spirit.

Discerning the Lord’s body is knowing who He is and who we are not – but knowing whose we are. When we stand with Isaiah in His presence, standing before the Mercyseat, the experience of His glory will bring us to our knees as we cry out with Isaiah, “... Woe *[is]* me! for I am undone; because I *[am]* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts” (Isa 6.5). But, when we, with Isaiah, recognize who the Lord is and how unclean we are, when we fall in humility and repentance before Him (I Cor 11.29), the Lord can touch us with the purifying coal of fire from off the altar and say to us, “...Lo this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.” The Lord asked, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Not until this purging had taken place was Isaiah able to answer the Lord, “Here am I; send me” (Isa 6.6-8).

We receive strength from the Lord as we worship and feast on Him in Holy Communion at church, but we need nourishment continually. This time of Holy Communion will create in us a hunger for more of Jesus. It will draw us into a secluded place in the presence of the Lord, into our “closets” feasting on the Bread of Life.

II. In Our Closets (Matt 6.6)

Jesus taught His disciples not to be as the hypocrites were, desiring to be seen of men: “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret...” Discerning the Lord’s Body is also to recognize and feast on Him when we are alone in His presence. The Bread is the Living Word, Jesus, and the Written Word which reveals Jesus to us (See Jn 1.1, 14; I Jn 1.1). We must set aside time to be alone with Him and in His word; otherwise, we become malnourished and weak. Just as one’s body cannot survive if it does not receive sufficient food, so our spiritual man needs nourishment continually. Jesus said, “...except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you” (Jn 6.53). Life comes from time spent with Jesus in prayer and in His Word. When we feel a lack of life and spiritual strength, perhaps we should ask ourselves if we have been spending sufficient time alone with the Lord to be nourished.

Jesus taught his disciples and the multitude to “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life...” (Jn 6.27, 35a).

Lord Jesus, grant that we hunger for and eat of that Bread until we truly experience abiding in You and You in us! That our lives might become a pure and holy vessel through whom the Bread of Life may be ministered to others in the Body of Christ.

Jesus took time to be alone with the Father and taught His disciples the importance of prayer (See Mt 14.23; Mk 1.35; Lk 18.1-8). Paul instructed the church in Thessalonica to “Pray without ceasing” (I Th 5.17). Mark 1.35 tells us that Jesus sought a solitary place to be with the Father in prayer. It was after He spent much time in prayer with the Father on another occasion that the disciples recognized the power in His life and asked, Lord, teach us to pray. It is as we are in prayer and listening to the Lord through His Word in our hearts that we know His voice, His Word, the Holy Bible. He has given us His Word that we might come to know Him and recognize His voice.

Jesus was strengthened in prayer by the Father. The Lord speaks to us His followers in different ways as we are in prayer but always in a way that aligns with the Bible. Our study of His Word prepares us to discern between truth and error, in other words, to know Jesus and His Word so well that we will not be led astray by anything contrary to the Word of God. Paul told Timothy to “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (II Tim 2.15). Timothy was to consume the Word (study) and be prepared to minister to The Church.