



The Lord's Supper can Kill

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 1 Corinthians 11:23-25

The Lord’s Supper is not some dry tradition that men mindlessly perform. Nor should it be a happy moment filled with lively music, dancing, and celebration. To partake of the Lord’s Supper is one of the most holy and serious moments in our worship of the Lord. We should drink the cup with the utmost soberness, judgment, and self examination. To take the Lord’s Supper in an “unworthy manner” causes us to sin against Jesus.

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 11:27

Indeed, such people sin against the very blood and body that Jesus sacrificed for their sins.

Because of this we should do as Scripture demands and examine ourselves, looking for sin in our lives. If we fail to judge ourselves before taking the Lord’s Supper, we may face some serious consequences.

That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 1 Corinthians 11:30

Many had fallen asleep—in other words, died—because, they did not take the Lord’s Supper in a proper way. In fact, many in churches today are weak and ill because the Lord judges them for the way they partake of Communion. Truthfully, many people who are listed in church bulletins as sick are that way because they took the Lord’s Supper in an unholy manner. Looking at today’s church and how it takes Communion, it is a wonder anyone is healthy at all. The only conclusion we can draw is that God is not present in such churches.

If you’re thinking that such teaching is extreme, simply read Acts 5:1-10 and notice how God judges church members when His Spirit is truly present.

the church body

When we sin, we sin against the whole body of Christ. No man sins in such a way that it only affects himself. We are all part of one body and even to sin in the privacy of our homes will send shockwaves throughout the church. Just look around at the churches today to see the truth of that statement. When Adam sinned privately at the forbidden tree the whole future world of mankind felt the effects. As Paul wrote, when one part suffers disgrace, the whole body suffers. When a church comes together each member must recognize the body of Christ, and how their sins affect everyone else.

For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. 1 Corinthians 11:29

Christ never intended for the Lord’s Supper to

be a personal event where everyone selfishly focuses in on their individual salvation experiences. Everything about the Lord’s Supper concerns the church as a whole. When we fail to recognize the “body of the Lord” we drink judgment upon ourselves. The body of the Lord consists of the whole church—the arms, legs, feet and mouth. When we take the Lord’s Supper we must think of ourselves *and* everyone in the church. Is each person healthy in the Lord? Is there a bitter root beginning to grow? Is there gossip brewing in the church? Have I sinned against someone in the Body? Are their special groups or cliques forming? Is my clothing fitting in the Lord? Is there any hint of sexual immorality? Is all greed being dealt with? Was my conversation holy during the week? Not only do we need to be very serious about taking the Lord’s Supper with a good heart, but we also need proper table manners, so that “judgment” does not occur.

So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment. And when I come I will give further directions. 1 Corinthians 11:33-34

Put simply: whether physically or spiritually, feed yourselves at home so that you can serve others at church. Again, everything about the Lord’s Supper has to do with the church as a whole. This is why Paul says he will “give further directions.” We have a lot to prepare for and perform in a holy way before we drink the cup and eat the bread.

the Lord’s death

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 1 Corinthians 11:23-25

The Last Supper denotes a time of betrayal, a night before immeasurable suffering, and a time when God would hide His face from His Son. It recalls the death of all deaths, which we must remember when we take Communion.

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:26

It is of the utmost importance for us to understand what we do when we take the Lord’s Supper. While of course we have the resurrection of Jesus in mind, Scripture commands us to meditate upon the *death* of Christ. We must remember Christ crucified, and see clearly what our sin forced God to do to His beloved Son. We should specifically consider the death of Jesus and understand that we too must suffer with Christ. As the following passage shows, we must always carry around in our body the death of Jesus if we hope to have the overflowing life of Christ.

We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 2 Corinthians 4:10

The resurrected life of Christ is not the focus of the Lord’s Supper. The spilled blood and the broken body of Jesus drive us to sober judgment—we must declare His death. Let us remind ourselves of the demands of Jesus—to deny self and carry our cross daily. Those who willingly rejoice in this suffering will discover the resurrected life of Jesus. For this reason, Peter told us to prepare ourselves for suffering against sin in our lives. Those unwilling to suffer against sin in their lives will not go to heaven.

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. 1 Peter 4:1-2





Those who allow God to crucify their sin will overcome and be done with that sin in their life. “As a result,” Peter writes, we can live for righteousness and holiness in this world. Whenever we partake of the Lord’s Supper we declare this death, and should expect to experience the suffering of Christ in our lives so that we can be “done with sin.”

confession of sin

To proclaim the Lord’s death means to admit our weakness, failure, unworthiness, and sinfulness. We declare God’s love for us, in that He took our sins upon Himself and publicly triumphed over them. This is why God tells us to confess our sins. Jesus was crucified naked, and confession of sin should be out in the Light for all to see and hear. We feel humbled, just as Jesus felt shamed when He hung on the Cross for us.

1 John gives the requirement for the forgiving blood of Jesus to overflow in our lives. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:7-9

As John wrote, if we have “fellowship with one another” in the Light, then the blood of Jesus forgives and heals us from our transgressions as we confess our sins. At Sound Doctrine Church you will hear individuals confessing their sins to one another during the week *and* when we take the Lord’s Supper before the whole church. This is not a rule or a law, but a matter of the heart. As the Holy Spirit and Word of God move in our

lives, we judge ourselves and confess as the Lord leads.

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. James 5:16a

After visiting us, one person said, “It is no wonder you guys change. You really confess sin.” As we obeyed James 5:16, this person saw the work of the Holy Spirit that directs us to confess our sins and to pray for each other so that we may be healed. Our relationship with God is restored and renewed when we confess our sinfulness. Therefore a church remains strong and healthy only to the degree it confesses sins to one another and becomes healed of those sins. Overcoming sin and finding forgiveness should be an experience for the church as a whole, not just each separate individual.

promise of Forgiveness

After Adam sinned he hid from God.

But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” Genesis 3:9-10

Of course, we must use great wisdom when confessing sins in the church and toward other men. But if we seek to hide our sins from God and from others, we stop the blood of Jesus from bringing forgiveness. We do not have time to examine this closely here but, as David learned, God grants forgiveness only to those who acknowledge their sins. As we found in 1 Corinthians 11:30, Psalm 32 agrees that keeping silent about our sins causes our bones to waste away. Like David, a man after God’s own heart, when we “confess” our transgressions then the Lord will forgive the guilt and heal us of our sin.

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning

all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord”—and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah. Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him. Psalms 32:1-6

As James and John told us to come into the Light, so David urges us to seek the Lord while He may be found; to acknowledge our sin and not cover up our iniquity. By confessing and renouncing our sins we find mercy. Those who only confess their sins, but do not renounce them by a holy life, only remind God why He should send them to hell.

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. Proverbs 28:13

Those who have sinned against others and yet declare, “Oh, I confessed to the Lord and He forgave me,” live a colossal lie if their confession stops there. Such a declaration comes from Satan. Those who sin against others should stand up as Zacchaeus did, confessing specific sins and going to each person they sinned against.

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. Luke 19:8-9

Jesus said that salvation had come to Zacchaeus because he stood up in the Light and confessed His sins. He did not confess his sins in a booth, nor claim that God had forgiven him. He publicly declared the sin and repented to each person, in the same way he did to God. Anyone who does not beg for forgiveness from those he sins against should not dare to take the Lord’s Supper—for, as we have seen, it could kill them.

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-24

conclusion

If by faith (Romans 12:3) you judge yourself before taking the Lord’s Supper and need to confess a sin, make certain you do the following things by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Ask yourself if you are really a Christian. (2 Corinthians 13:5)
- Speak from the heart. (Psalms 51:17)
- Keep your words few and to the point. (Ecclesiastes 5:2)
- Declare specifically the sin. (Luke 19:8)
- Have a Scripture to share. (Colossians 3:16)
- Make a plan for repentance. (2 Corinthians 7:11)

Once these things are present, allow the Holy Spirit to guide you into forgiveness and healing in God’s timing (1 Peter 5:6). Know, however, that in the Holy Spirit we will pray according to the quality—or lack of quality—of your confession and repentance (Matthew 12:37).

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