

Series: Divine Healing Series

Title: Session 12 – Taking the Lord’s Supper in an Unworthy Manner

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False Obstacles to Healing

10. Taking the Lord’s Supper in an Unworthy Manner

1 Corinthians 11:17–34 (NKJV)

¹⁷Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.

¹⁸For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

¹⁹For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.

²⁰Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper.

²¹For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk.

²²What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

²³For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

²⁵In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, **you proclaim the Lord’s death** till He comes.

²⁷Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord **in an unworthy manner** will be **guilty** of the body and blood of the Lord.

²⁸But let a man **examine himself**, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

²⁹For he who eats and drinks **in an unworthy manner** eats and drinks **judgment to himself**, not discerning the Lord’s body.

³⁰For this reason **many are weak and sick among you**, and many sleep.

³¹For if we would **judge ourselves**, we would not **be judged**.

³²But when **we are judged**, we are **chastened by the Lord**, that we may not be condemned with the world.

³³Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

³⁴But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

- Many Christians interpret the passage above in the following way. “Before you take Communion, you need to examine yourself very carefully, check for any unconfessed sins in your life and confess all of them. Then take the Communion. This is the worthy manner of taking Communion. Otherwise, if you take it with any unconfessed sin, God might punish you with sickness or even death, and you cannot come to God to heal you or reverse the sickness, because you did it with your own hands. So, if you feel too unworthy on occasions, it’s better not to partake of Communion, then to be punished by God.”
- However, the above interpretation and practice is far from the truth. Let’s analyze the passage carefully in its context.
- First, the expression “unworthy manner” from verses 27 and 29 doesn’t refer to the worthiness of the person taking Communion, but to the worthiness of the manner the person partakes, the worthiness of the way or the method. We can never become worthy to partake Communion, no matter what we do, not even through confession of sins. We have been made worthy once and for all by Christ’s blood and sacrifice. We are always worthy to partake. Our righteousness and

worthiness is Christ. However, there is a proper and worthy manner of partaking the Communion.

- Taking Communion in a worthy manner means first and foremost to assign to it a mental significance when you take it, to think about something and remember of Someone. It's not just eating and drinking food. We see that clearly in 3 places in the above passages: (1) in verses 17 to 22 when Paul rebukes the Corinthians for eating their suppers without waiting for the others, getting drunk, not thinking of Christ and believing that that's the Lord Supper; (2) then in verses 24 and 25 Paul cites what Jesus said that when we take Communion we need to remember Him; (3) in verse 28 there is an examination and evaluation of ourselves before taking Communion.
 - Taking Communion in a worthy manner means 2 things: to remember Christ in the right way, and to evaluate ourselves in the right way:
 - In verse 24, Jesus says He's body was broken for you, was judged for you, and in your place. The broken bread is a representation of Christ's body being torn apart for you, and He says you should always do this in remembrance of Him, of what He did. That is what correct discernment (or judgement or evaluation) of the Lord's body from verse 29 is. It's a matter of where you place the guilt and judgement of your sins: either on Jesus' body or on you. The same Jesus did with the wine (verse 25), which is a representation of His shed blood.
 - Verse 26 – Every time we take the Lord's Supper, we proclaim the Lord's death (or the Lord's judgement) until He comes. In other words, if you proclaim the Lord's judgment for your sins, then you also proclaim your freedom, your healing, your victory, your righteousness and your peace. You evaluate and judge yourself (consider yourself) as righteous, healed, and free. The proclamation of His death is a proclamation of your life.
 - Verse 27 – taking communion in an unworthy MANNER doesn't refer to a person being unworthy because of sins as I mentioned earlier. But rather it refers to not acknowledging correctly that the judgment for your sins was put on the Lord's body and in His blood. And so, by not evaluating correctly, you become again guilty and come under condemnation.
 - Verse 28 says the Christian must first do that evaluation in the light of what Jesus did, and then take the Lord's supper as a celebration of life for himself, and not of judgement. It's a celebration of what Jesus has accomplished at the cross. And that creates faith in the heart of the Christian for healing and victory. The Greek word for *examine* is *dokimazo* and it means "to test and by implication approve." Those in Christ see themselves approved by God. An old covenant picture may help. At the temple the high priest examined the sacrificial lamb, not the one who brought it. In the new covenant, Christ is our Lamb without blemish or defect (1 Peter 1:18-19). During communion we examine Him and see ourselves as tested and approved in Him.
- 1 Peter 1:18–19 (NKJV)**
¹⁸... you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,
¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, as ***of a lamb without blemish and without spot.***
- Verse 29 says that if someone doesn't discern the Lord's body in that way, then he eats and drinks judgment to himself. He celebrates his own judgment, he does that in remembrance

of himself and of his sins, and not in remembrance of the Lord. Today in the body of Christ instead of getting ourselves free of the conscience of sins, and acknowledging the judgement of Christ, we dig up our sins during the Lord's Supper, and become conscious of them (of the fact that we are still sinners). We think it's like going to someone's funeral. Being in that sad atmosphere makes us softer in our hearts, we remember the dead person, and feel like we owe something to him or her (especially if they died because of us), and we want to do something in return. So we do the same with Jesus' death during Communion. We think the best way to pay Jesus back for His sufferings is to at least remember our sins and ask for forgiveness, as if we would do Him a favor. But that's wrong. That is not remembering Him. It's interesting that in the Matthew 26:26-29 account of the Lord's Supper, when Jesus gave His disciples the bread and the wine for the first time, He didn't mention anything in any of the gospels about them confessing their sins before partaking.

Matthew 26:26–29 (NKJV)

²⁶And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

²⁷Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.

²⁸For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

²⁹But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

- Verse 30 says that those who don't evaluate themselves correctly by placing the judgment on Jesus Christ, they drink that judgment to themselves. That means they do not appropriate healing and strength for themselves by judging correctly the Lord's death, and thus they continue to be sick, weak and die before their time. The world is in a default state of sickness, death and decay. If you don't proclaim and believe your salvation through the Lord's death, you remain vulnerable to the same things that the rest of the world is vulnerable to. Sickness and early death is not a punishment from God for taking Communion without confessing your sins, but it is the normal way that world functions and to which you're no longer immune to.
- In Greek language, prepositions like FOR and BUT can also be translated as IN, THROUGH, BY, BECAUSE. Verses 31 and 32 can be translated in the following way: "³¹**For if we would judge ourselves** (that is discern and evaluate ourselves correctly in the light of the Lord's judgment, as already being righteous, healed and free of sin), then **we would not be judged** (that is we would not become vulnerable to sickness and death while on earth, as the world experiences by default). ³²**Because when we are judged** (evaluated correctly as already judged in Christ for our sins), through that **we are chastened by the Lord** (that is we are instructed, trained, disciplined – we form a healthy habit of going back to the judgment of the cross in our place), **that we may not be condemned with the world** (being under the same perils as the world)."
- So, the Lord's Supper is a celebration of life and a healthy discipline instituted by the Lord to help us always remember that our judgment was put on Christ. That discipline in itself causes faith to rise in our hearts, resulting in us being healthier and more victorious. If we became sick because we didn't take Communion in a worthy manner, that is not a punishment from God, and we still have access to healing and health, just by proclaiming with faith what we have in Christ. Taking communion when you're sick is a great way to exercise your faith. It's saying, "I don't identify with

these symptoms. I identify with Jesus, who carried my infirmities and who was wounded so that I might be healed.”

11. Generational Curses

- Some Christians believe that some sicknesses are caused by generational curses or genetic diseases. The Bible passages they rely on are the following:

Exodus 20:3–6 (NKJV)

³You shall have no other gods before Me.

⁴You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

⁵you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations** of those who hate Me,

⁶but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

Exodus 34:6–7 (NKJV)

⁶And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

⁷keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.**”

Numbers 14:16–18 (NKJV)

¹⁶“Because the LORD was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.’

¹⁷And now, I pray, let the power of my LORD be great, just as You have spoken, saying,

¹⁸“The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.**”

Deuteronomy 5:7–10 (NKJV)

⁷You shall have no other gods before Me.

⁸You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

⁹you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations** of those who hate Me,

¹⁰but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

- Then we’re moving on to the New Testament and we see a situation in which the disciples thought the sickness was caused by a sin passed down from parents. That is in John 9:1-2:

John 9:1–2 (NKJV)

¹Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.

²And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, **who sinned, this man or his parents**, that he was born blind?”

- Verse 2 above tells us that the idea of generational curses and sin being the cause of sickness was very prevalent in Jesus’ day. Obviously, the disciples thought that if something like that happened, it had to come from a sin, and it had to be either the person or his/her parents that sinned. So, the parents could pass down their sin to their children. This teaching comes from the Old Testament passages we quoted above.
- However, we can see that even from the Old Testament beginning with prophets Ezekiel and

Jeremiah, things regarding generational curses and passed down sins start to change.

Ezekiel 18:1–4 (NKJV)

¹The word of the LORD came to me again, saying,

²“What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge?’

³“As I live,” says the Lord GOD, “**you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel.**

⁴“Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; **the soul who sins shall die.**

Ezekiel 18:20 (NKJV)

²⁰**The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father,** nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

- Parents eat the sour grapes, and children reap the consequences. God instructs not to use that proverb in Israel anymore. Everyone will pay for their own sin and not for the sins and curses of their parents. This is happening even before the death and resurrection of Christ.

Jeremiah 31:29–34 (NKJV)

²⁹**In those days** they shall say no more: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’

³⁰But every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.

³¹“**Behold, the days are coming,** says the LORD, **when I will make a new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—

³²not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.

³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: **I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts;** and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

³⁴No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. **For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”**

- “In those days” refers to the days of the new covenant when that proverb and saying will no longer be valid.
- Who is God talking about in v. 33? About believers in Christ who are in the new covenant, who have become His people (1 Peter 2:9).

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation; old things have passed away;** behold, all things have become new.

- For the new creation in Christ, all things are new. Old things are passed away. Generational curses are passed away. The new creation no longer has the third and fourth generation. The new creation goes back only to one generation: God, the Father.

12. Conclusion

- We know that at some point Jesus fed 5,000 men, not including women and children. If only half of them were married, now we have 7,500 people. Together with their children, we safely say that there were at least 10,000 people there. There might have been 20,000 people, but let’s keep it conservative to 10,000. There is a statistic that almost in every gathering, no matter how small or large, 90% of everybody in the gathering need healing of something. That would mean 9,000

people out of 10,000. Let's be super conservative and drop it down to 50% - 5,000. Do you want to go lower than that? Let's say it was a long time ago, they were not eating so much junk food and were healthier. Let's cut it down to 2,500 people needing healing out of 10,000. Is that conservative enough? So, 2,500 people come forward for healing, Jesus lays His hands on them, touches all of them and 2,500 get healed. At least 5 times in the Bible it says that He healed them all. Now, either the church as a whole has got it wrong, or Jesus had to be the luckiest preacher that ever lived. I mean think about this: He was able to heal 2,500 people that didn't have any sin in their lives, didn't have any generational curses that needed to be broken, and every one of them had enough faith to get healed. Wow!!! Apparently over the years, the church got it wrong.