

**Teaching Series:** The Glory of Righteousness

**Title:** Session 17 – Confession of Sins and the Lord’s Supper

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## Confession of Sins

### Confession of Sins and the Lord’s Supper

Let’s first read the famous passage on the Lord’s Supper from 1 Corinthians 11:17-34:

#### 1 Corinthians 11:17–34 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> Now in giving these instructions I don’t praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.

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

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

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

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

<sup>22</sup> What! 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 don’t praise you.

<sup>23</sup> For 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;

<sup>24</sup> and 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.”

<sup>25</sup> In 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.”

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

<sup>27</sup> Therefore 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.

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

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

<sup>30</sup> For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

<sup>31</sup> For if we would **judge ourselves**, we would not **be judged**.

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

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

<sup>34</sup> But 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 I take the Lord’s Supper, I need to examine myself very carefully, check for any unconfessed sins in my life and confess them all. Then I can partake of the Lord’s Supper. This is the worthy manner of taking the Lord’s Supper. Otherwise, if I take it with any unconfessed sin, I might lose my salvation, I might lose the blessings of God, or God might punish me with sickness or even death. And I will not be able to come to God and ask Him to heal me, because I did it with my own hands. So, if I feel too unworthy on occasions, it’s better not to partake of the Lord’s Supper in order not to be punished by God.” This is how many believers read 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 and they treat the Lord’s Supper as something very sacred and dreadful, that can be partaken of only if they

have been completely honest about their lives with God and made sure they confessed every sin they know before Him. Otherwise, God will strike them with sickness and curse. Because of the fear of punishment, many believers refrain from partaking of the Lord's Supper for long periods of time. Overall, most believers consider the Lord's Supper to be something similar to the bitter water from Numbers 5:16-28, that women suspected of adultery had to drink to prove their innocence. If those women were dishonest and guilty and drank that water, their bellies would swell, their thighs would rot, and they would become a curse among their people. This is the mentality with which most Christians approach the Communion. However, this interpretation and practice of the Lord's Supper are far from the truth and rob believers of its precious benefits that Jesus intended when He initiated it.

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 the Lord's Supper, but to the worthiness of the manner in which the person partakes, the worthiness of the way, or the method. We can never become worthy to partake of the Lord's Supper through something that we do, no matter what we do, not even through confession of sins, because the only thing that could pay for our sins and could make us worthy is innocent blood, as seen in Hebrews 9:22:

**Hebrews 9:22 (NKJV)**

<sup>22</sup> And according to the Law almost all things *are purified with blood*, and without shedding of blood *there is no remission*.

Without shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins, and not without confession of sins. Our blood is guilty and tainted by Adam's sin that was transmitted to us when we were physically born on this earth. The only person that had innocent blood was Jesus Christ, the last Adam, because He didn't have an earthly father. The Holy Spirit conceived Him, Jesus had blameless blood, and He kept His blood innocent throughout His life by fulfilling all the Law of Moses and by not sinning even once. He was without spot when He reached the moment of the cross:

**1 Peter 1:18–19 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,

<sup>19</sup> but *with the precious blood of Christ*, as of a lamb *without blemish and without spot*.

Why could only innocent blood remove sins? Because the soul of a human being is in the blood. That is what Leviticus 17:11 tells us:

**Leviticus 17:11 (NKJV)**

" For **the life of the flesh is in the blood**, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for **it's the blood that makes atonement for the soul**.

The word "life" in the expression "the life of the flesh is in the blood" is the Hebrew "*Nephesh*," which translates into "soul, living being, self, or person." So, you have been made worthy once and for all by Christ's blood and sacrifice, and nothing else. Period! You are always worthy to partake of the Communion because of Jesus' innocent blood and not because of your confession. Your righteousness and worthiness are Christ. However, there is also a proper and worthy manner of partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Taking the Communion in a worthy manner means to assign to it a mental significance when you take it, to think about what it means from God's perspective, and remember the One Who established it. It's not just eating some food and drinking. We see this concept reiterated three times in the passage about Communion:

- (1) In verses 17 to 22, Paul rebukes the Corinthians for eating their meals without waiting for the others, for getting drunk, for not remembering Christ, and for believing that that was the Lord's Supper;
- (2) In verses 24 and 25, Paul quotes Jesus and says that when we take the Lord's Supper, we need to remember Him;
- (3) In verse 28, Paul mentions that there is an examination and evaluation of ourselves that needs to take place before taking the Lord's Supper.

To summarize, **taking the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner means two things: (1) to remember Christ in the right way, and (2) to evaluate ourselves in the right way**. What does it mean to remember Christ in the right way and evaluate ourselves in the right way? In verse 24, Jesus says that His body was broken for us, was judged for us, and in our place. The broken bread is a representation of Christ's body being torn apart for us, and He says we should always do this in remembrance of Him and of what He did for us. This is the correct remembrance or discernment of the Lord's body, mentioned in verse 29, and the appropriate evaluation (or judgment) of ourselves. It's a matter of where we place the guilt and the judgment of our sins: either on Jesus' body, or on us. In the same manner, Paul instructs us to take the wine (v. 25), which is a representation of Jesus' shed blood.

Every time we take Communion (v. 26), we proclaim the Lord's death (or the Lord's judgment) until He

comes back. In other words, if we proclaim the Lord's judgment over our sins, then we also proclaim our freedom, healing, victory, righteousness, prosperity, joy, and peace. We evaluate and judge ourselves, or consider ourselves as righteous, healed, and free. ***The proclamation of His death is a proclamation of our life.***

Taking the Lord's Supper in an UNWORTHY MANNER doesn't refer to a person being unworthy on account of her unconfessed sins, as I mentioned earlier. Rather, it refers to not acknowledging correctly that the judgment for our sins was put on the Lord's body and on His blood. By not evaluating correctly, we become again guilty and come under condemnation.

Verse 28 tells us to first examine ourselves and do an evaluation of ourselves before partaking of the Lord's Supper. The whole passage of 1 Corinthians 11 doesn't instruct anywhere to confess our sins before Communion, or that examining ourselves means confessing our sins. The Greek word for "confess," "*Homologeō*," is not even present anywhere, like we saw in 1 John 1:9. We've just assumed that examining ourselves refers to examining ourselves in the light of our sins. However, the examination depicted in this passage is the one done in the light of what Jesus did and not in light of our sins. After that, we can take the Lord's Supper as a celebration of life for ourselves and not of judgment. It's a celebration of what Jesus has accomplished at the cross for us. And this creates faith in our hearts for healing and victory. The Greek word for "examine" is "*Dokimazo*" and it means "to test and by implication approve." Those who are in Christ see themselves approved by God. An Old Covenant picture may help understanding this better. At the temple, the High Priest did not examine the people, who brought the sacrifices, of their sins. The priest didn't ask them to confess their individual sins. He only examined the sacrificial lamb of any blemish. In the New Covenant, Christ is our Lamb without blemish or defect (1 Peter 1:18-19). ***During the Lord's Supper, we examine Him and see ourselves as tested and approved in Him.***

Verse 29 in 1 Corinthians 11 says that if we don't discern the Lord's body in that way, then we eat and drink judgment to ourselves. In that moment, we actually celebrate our own judgment, and we take the Lord's Supper in remembrance of ourselves and of our sins, and not in remembrance of the Lord.

What is then the correct examination of ourselves? Today, most of us instead of getting ourselves free of the conscience of sins and acknowledging the judgment of Christ, we dig up our sins during Communion, and become more conscious of them. Unconsciously, we reinforce into our minds the lie that we are still

sinner. We think the Lord's Supper is like going to someone's funeral. Usually, when we go to funerals, being in that sad atmosphere makes us softer in our hearts, more humble, and we remember the deceased person, feeling like we owe something to him or her (especially if they died somehow because of us), and we feel like we want to do something in return. Likewise, we do the same with Jesus' death during Communion. We think that 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. However, that is wrong. That is not remembering Him. Again, it's worth mentioning 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 about confessing their sins before partaking. In fact, He didn't mention that in any of the Gospels. Let's read that passage:

**Matthew 26:26-29 (NKJV)**

<sup>26</sup> And 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."

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

<sup>28</sup> For this is **My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.**

<sup>29</sup> But 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."

Jesus simply said this about the Last Supper: "This is My blood of the New Covenant." What is a covenant? It's a verbalized oath, an exchange between two parties, and a binding agreement of promises. In this case, when Jesus ratified the New Covenant with His disciples and with all the believers that would come after them, He meant the following: "You give me your filthiness, and I will give you My blessings; I swear to do this for you." When we talk about the blood of Jesus, we think only about atonement, which is the negative part of the sacrifice, and we don't pay too much attention to the better and bigger part of that sacrifice, which is the positive part. That second part refers to what does that blood bring with it AFTER atonement. **Through Jesus' blood, God made a covenant with us and God swore to do something for us.** When Jesus went into the Holy of Holies of the Heavenly Tabernacle and sprinkled the Mercy Seat at the throne of God with His own blood, it was not just the blood of atonement and remission of sins that was sprinkled. It was also the blood of the New Covenant which affirmed this: "I, Jesus Christ, swear that I will heal them, that I will restore their families, their children, and that I will provide financially for them."

Usually, when God did a covenant with people in the Bible, what party of the covenant had to gain the most out of it? Always humans, of course. Let's see how God did the covenant with Abraham:

### Hebrews 6:13–14 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> For when **God made a promise to Abraham**, because He could swear by no one greater, **He swore by Himself**,  
<sup>14</sup> saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.”

God wanted to assure Abraham that what He promised He would do. But because He could not swear on anything greater than Him, He swore by Himself. Did God fulfill everything that He promised to Abraham? Yes. How much more will He keep for us the better covenant and the better promises He gave us through Christ! Hebrews 8:6 declares:

### Hebrews 8:6 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator (or *Intermediary*) **of a better covenant**, which was established **on better promises**.

Sometimes, we are so discouraged and we wonder whether God will really fulfill His promises towards us or not, because we think He looks at our mistakes when He decides whether to keep a promise to us or not. However, only Jesus' blood will give us the things for which it paid for and which were stolen from us by sin. Many times when we sin, especially when repeatedly, we start crawling slowly back into God's presence, after some time, through crying and regrets. We begin wailing in the following way: “Oh God, I don't deserve anything, I am nothing, I am just a sinner, I failed You again so badly, and You have forgiven me so many times that You might have already gotten sick of forgiving me, because Your mercy cannot endure forever.” However, what we don't realize is that, while we say all that in the presence of God, the sprinkled blood of Jesus says something else: “I paid for your sins, I swear that you have forgiveness, I paid for your deliverance, and I swear that I will deliver you from the bondage of lusts, and addictions.” ***We speak out of our emotions and out of the guilt we feel, but that is not on the same page with what the blood speaks.*** Our voices are not aligned with the voice of the blood. My voice says that I don't deserve anything, and the voice of the blood says: “Yes you do, you do deserve now.”

### 1 Corinthians 10:16 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not **the communion (or the fellowship, the sharing)** of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not **the communion (or the fellowship, the sharing)** of the body of Christ?

When we partake of the Lord's Supper, we have fellowship with the blood and the body of Christ. The Greek word for “communion” or “fellowship” in the verse we read is “*Coinonia*,” which means “active participation, involvement, and sharing with someone or in something.” It's not the same thing as socializing. The Bible talks about fellowship with each other and about fellowship with the Father and His Son:

### 1 John 1:3 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also *may have fellowship with us*; and truly *our fellowship is with the Father* and with His Son Jesus Christ.

When do we reach true fellowship with each other as brothers and sisters during a meeting? When we speak about the same things in unity, we speak the same spiritual language, and build each other up. Now, having fellowship with the body and the blood of Jesus when we take the Lord's Supper means that we come in alignment and unity with what the blood speaks, and we speak the same thing. ***Jesus' blood speaks and swears about our justification and makes an oath in our favor.*** What are we going to speak? "Oh, I don't deserve it, I hope I will not die if I drink this cup, I was so bad." That is not fellowship. How can there be fellowship between something righteous and something sinful? Yes, in ourselves we don't deserve it, but because of this blood and because we are in Christ, we now deserve. That is how what we say comes in unity with what the blood says.

We don't receive salvation by confessing how we fell and what our opinion is about Jesus, that maybe He was simply a prophet or a good man. No, we have to make a specific confession in line with what the Bible says about salvation and about Jesus, that He is Lord and Savior. We would not be in unity with what the Bible said to confess, if we declared something else. And until we are not in line with and speak exactly what the Bible says about salvation, we cannot be born again. In the same way, if we don't align ourselves with what the Bible says about our justification, healing, children, education, job, marriage, and finances, our words will come against the words of God Himself. God says that Jesus paid for all those things, He gave them all freely to us, and swears with blood to do them for us, but we say: "No, it doesn't apply to me. Let me give you the whole list why I am disqualified." And we begin looking for our sins and confessing. Revelation 12:10-11 says the following:

### Revelation 12:10-11 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down."

<sup>11</sup> And they overcame him ***by the blood of the Lamb*** and ***by the word of their testimony***, and they didn't love their lives to the death.

Whose report are we going to come in unity with? With the devil's accusations or with the blood of the Lamb? Are we coming in the throne room saying that we don't deserve anything, that God should not do anything with us and for us, like the devil says? Or are we going to say what the blood of the Lamb says

about us? We are the ones having the decisive vote when we come into the throne room. ***The manifestation of salvation in all areas of our lives (physical healing, peace, finances) depends on what voice we align ourselves with, both during the Lord's Supper and during our daily lives.***

Coming back to our initial passage from 1 Corinthians 11, verse 29 says that if we don't evaluate ourselves correctly by placing the judgment on Jesus Christ, we drink that judgment against ourselves or we drink our own condemnation. What does it mean to drink judgment to ourselves? It means we don't appropriate the resulting benefits of Jesus' sacrifice, in this case, healing and strength for ourselves, by judging incorrectly the Lord's death. As a result, we drink the judgment that should have been placed on Jesus and continue to be sick and weak like everybody else is, and even die before our time. This is not because God causes those things to happen to us, but because the world we live in is in a default state of sickness, death, and decay. If we don't proclaim and believe in our salvation and immunity provided by the Lord's death and resurrection, we remain vulnerable to the same things that the rest of the world is vulnerable to. Sickness and early death are not punishments from God for taking the Lord's Supper without confessing our sins, but simply the natural consequences of standing on our own performance instead of Jesus', in a sick and fallen world.

In the Greek language, prepositions like "FOR" and "BUT" can also be translated as "IN," "THROUGH," "BY," and "BECAUSE." Verses 31 and 32 can be paraphrased in the following way:

<sup>31</sup> **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).

<sup>32</sup> Because **when we are judged** (that is, 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** (that is, not being under the same perils as the world).

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. This discipline in itself causes faith to rise in our hearts and causes the renewal of our minds, resulting in us being healthier and more victorious. If we became sick because we didn't take the Lord's Supper in the worthy manner that I already explained, this is not a punishment from God, and we still have access to healing and health, by just proclaiming with faith what we have in Christ, that by His stripes we were healed (1 Peter 2:24). Taking the Lord's Supper when we are sick is a great way to exercise our faith for healing. 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.”

In closing, I would like to provide here a practical illustration of how we should approach the Lord’s Supper and of how to celebrate it in an worthy manner. When we, as believers in Christ, want to partake of the Lord’s Supper either at church with other believers or at home, while holding the bread in our hand, we should pray this way: “Dear Lord Jesus, I come to You, and remember all that You have done for me on the cross. Thank You for loving me so much, and for giving up heaven for me. Thank You for allowing Your body to be broken so that mine might be whole. As I partake of this bread, I receive Your resurrection life, health, and strength. By the stripes that fell on Your back, my body is healed from the crown of my head to the very soles of my feet. Every cell, every organ, every function of my body is healed, restored, and renewed. By Your grace, I shall be completely strong and healthy all the days of my life. No sickness can remain in my body because the same power that raised You from the grave flows through me. In Jesus’ name, I believe and I receive all these things.” Then, we can eat of the bread. Next, we take the cup in our hand and say: “Lord Jesus, thank You also for Your precious blood. Your sin-free, curse-free, disease-free, and poverty-free life is in Your blood. And Your shed blood has removed every sin from my life. Through Your blood, I am forgiven of all my sins—past, present and future—and made completely righteous. Today, I celebrate and partake of the inheritance of the righteous, which is preservation, healing, wholeness and provision. Thank You Lord Jesus, for loving me. Amen.” Then, we can drink of the cup.