



A Principle Of Communion – Bread & Betrayal

1 Corinthians 11:23 KJV For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

I. INTRODUCTION -- THE FIRST COMMUNION

- I shall never the first time that I was able to take communion. For years, I had sat back and took far too much heart and thought into those who took on communion “unworthily.” The first time that I took communion was the Thursday of the preceding Easter Sunday of 1990.
- I was at Texas Bible College and the custom then was to take communion prior to Easter Sunday. Honestly, I was nervous about it but we had spent the time leading up to the service in fasting and prayer. I am almost certain that Brother J. R. Ensey preached a message to us on “Loving Much” which was about the alabaster box of ointment that was broken in an act of worship.
- After he preached there was a time of prayer and consecration around the altars and then we returned to our seats. I can remember the passing of the broken piece of cracker and the grape juice that accompanied it. Then Brother Ensey began to read the passage from 1 Corinthians 11 and then he went to Isaiah 53 and read that. Needless to say, the whole entire service still means something to me.
- There were other times that I have taken Communion that really spoke greatly to me. There was a time on Sunday morning at Life Tabernacle in Houston that the Lord moved tremendously in my heart. I also took Communion one year at Because of the Times and felt the power of the Lord in the whole act of worship.
- That is what I hope happens here every time that we take Communion. It is my desire for it to be a time of commitment, anointing, and spiritual refreshment for you and for this church.

II. 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23

A. The Passage of Scripture

- This very Scripture marks a passage in time. It is important to understand that when Paul wrote these words that he was under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. I am certain that the higher voice of the Spirit was beckoning Paul to illustrate a principle to a New Testament Church.
- The Principle: Communion with God is a very weighty issue and invariably where there is communion there will also be betrayal.
- Paul could have written to us, “in the same night in which he. . .”
 - Washed the feet of His disciples.
 - Spent the Passover meal with those closest to Him.
 - He prayed in the Garden.
 - He gave the Disciples a lasting message.
 - He simply was present with His disciples.
- If Paul would have written that Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, we could see the aspect of moral and spiritual cleansing.
- If Paul would have written that Jesus prayed the great prayer of John 17, we could see the Lord’s desire for unity and holiness in the Church.
- If Paul would have written that Jesus wrestled in the Garden, we would have seen the weight of redemption played out in tandem with the process of Communion.

- These events would have seemingly marked Communion with a greater glory.
- But now Paul writes:

***1 Corinthians 11:23** KJV [23] For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:*

- He is not marking a point in history but rather he is setting a precedent for those who were at Corinth and those many that have followed throughout history.

B. The Communion Principle: Bread But Also Betrayal

- One of the Communion Principles: You will enjoy Bread. . . but you will encounter an enemy. It is always going to be like this until death or the Rapture. Communion has price tags.
- Yet Paul is displaying to us a power that says, “Betrayal is not the point, the glory of Communion rises higher than does the dilemmas of life.”

Rembrandt, the masterful artist, used this method with many of his paintings. He would paint a very decisive contrast of light and shadow. The backgrounds of his work are always dark. The face he paints stands out in strong relief to the darkness of the background.

- Paul puts the lamp in the feast. The background is dark with betrayal. But the foreground shows the patience, compassion, and steadfastness of the Lord in the midst of the greatest trial of His life.

William Clow -- “Those long and heavy hours of the night in which Judas sat by Christ’s side make the darkest background against which any character was ever set.”

- See the malicious glint in his eyes.
- Grasp the madness of his mind.
- Feel the turmoil of eddying emotions darkening Judas’ heart.
- Watch the racing of the heart as he contemplates the next move.
- Paul shows Jesus spreading a table of forgiveness and cleansing in the very hour when malice and greed and hatred are raising their wicked heads.
- We have some contrasts here:
 - Grace with Sin.
 - Faithfulness with Treachery.
 - Love with Hate.
 - Gentleness with the Calloused.
- The betrayal was not a single act. It just came to a head at the kiss in the Garden.
- It was a series of thoughts, decisions, resolves and every single one of these were known to Jesus.
- The Lord had watched in a similar fashion that a physician watches a disease destroy a patient’s body. Now on this last night, he watches the final stage coming together.
 - The fever rises to a burning flame.
 - He sensed the meaning of betrayal in Judas’ words.
 - He saw the shiftiness in his eyes as he could not meet His gaze.
 - He sensed the sullen anger that was in Judas’ heart.
 - All that was hideous and repulsive, the Lord saw it.
- We could almost take it in a better manner if the villain had been a wild ruffian but he wasn’t. His face and his words were fair and light but there was a malice that was inspired by hell.
- You may ask how that I come up with such a surmising. . . I would simply direct you to look to the reactions of the disciples.
- To a man in that small upper room that night, they all wanted some insight as to whom the traitor was. Therefore it would appear that there was nothing that Judas did or said that would have given them an inkling as

to what he was up to.

- The disciples could not see this. . . But the Lord saw it all. . . Judas was like a runaway train headed at breakneck speed toward a bridge that was out over a deep canyon.
- What did Jesus do? He could have avoided Judas or He could have opened up with a withering rebuke to him. . . but He did not. He served him the sop. He did His best to fellowship the villain.
- I will not spend my life fighting. . . I do not want to do this. . . (not speaking of doctrine etc.) But I want the very focus of my life to be Communion with God!
- Look to the element of character that the Lord displayed. He still was trying to reach the troubled soul of the man.
- More than one woman has taken back a sorry husband who betrayed trust and destroyed finances and broke apart a home. This is walking in heavenly places and allowing grace to triumph over sin.
- Paul gives us a Lord who is quenching sin with grace. He gives us a principle that says that the highest form of communion will be the one in which the bread rises far above the betrayal.
- It is always in the dark night of betrayal that grace will find its widest opportunity.
 - It was on the first night of betrayal when man had been false to God and ate the bitter fruit of failure.
 - It was in the night of great sin that Noah built his Ark that saved his family.
 - It was in the night of the great unrighteousness of Sodom that Lot was rescued from.
 - We could wander throughout all of Scripture to see this particular pattern over and over again.

III. A LOAF OF BREAD AND A FLAGON OF WINE

- Greatness is always summoned from misery. For the bread to really rise to the occasion, somewhere there will be the lurking monster of betrayal. For there to be redemption, there must be a Cross.
- This is the way that the gifts of the Spirit flow. In the hour of duress and difficulty, you shall take bread. Pain is always the forerunner of revelation.
- Pilgrim's Progress Story. The sisters in the great house (which is the church) filled Christian's bag with a loaf of bread and a flagon of wine. He had no idea how important that would be to him at a later point in his life.