

Communion – The Second Sign

The blood [of the Passover lamb] shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt (Exodus 12:13).

You are under the protection and blessings of the covenant if the signs of the covenant are present. When the Israelites had been enslaved by the Egyptians, God pried loose the Egyptians' fingers by destroying all those who had been first-born. That destruction would also have occurred against any Israelite family not having the sign. The sign was the blood of a lamb applied around the door of their house. This was called Passover because the angel passed over any house which had the mark of God's covenant. The Israelites continue to celebrate this day every year. The night of that first Passover was the founding of the nation of Israel.

On the night of the Passover in approximately 33 AD, one Man stood up and said this "is the new covenant in My blood." Christians no longer celebrate Passover; we celebrate the Lord's Supper, or Communion, initiated on that night. Christ's blood now protects us from every attack by the enemy. Communion celebrates Christ's victory over the powers of hell, our rescue from its dominion, and His slicing through the cords of the sin which held us in slavery to demonic power. That night was the inception of a supernatural people, Christ's church.

Communion is the sign, or second sacrament, of the New Covenant initiated that night. Communion re-commits you to what you began when you were first baptized into Christ. Communion includes two requirements that either return you to, or continue, your commitments: *repentance* from violations of God's commands; and *faith* that the life-changing power of God will continue to bring about all His promises, including His new nature within you. These two are mentioned as requirements in 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 which says that you are first to judge or examine yourself for sin and deficiency and then judge correctly the meaning of the life-saving power of the broken body of Christ: "Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man *examine himself [repentance]*, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and

drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not *judge the body rightly [faith in what Christ has done]*.” In order to correctly partake of communion, you must examine and judge rightly both yourself and the body of Christ: yourself, for sin and weakness; and the body of Christ, for how it will remove that sin and weakness. Repentance is important, but so is believing that Christ’s soul was cast into destruction so your soul could be purified and believing that His body was broken so yours could be healed.

The result of the absence of these two requirements is given in the next verse: “For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep (1 Corinthians 11:30).” Whether these Christians were sick, weak, or worse because they had not repented, because they did not have faith in Christ’s saving work on the cross, or for both reasons, the affected areas of their lives were no longer under the protection of the blood! The spiritual sign of the covenant was not present. They became targets for attack!

God does not demand immediate perfection but He does demand repentance. He will supply the perfection! God does not demand we immediately become Christ-like, but God does demand we have faith that He can transform us into His likeness.

Communion is a confirmation of both the commitments and the promises of the covenant. The promises include forgiveness, healing, and numerous other blessings, but the greatest blessing is being “in Christ!” Baptism initiates, and communion reaffirms and restores us to, the spiritual state of being “in Christ,” from which unbelief and sin had removed us.

You were baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3), but 1 Corinthians 12:13 says also, “we were all baptized into one body.” Communion re-emphasizes your union, not only with Christ, but also with Christ’s body, or His church, as says 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, “Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread [Christ].” When you entered the covenant, you became connected in spirit to Christ, and not only to Him, but also to every person who has entered into covenant relationship with Christ.

Because we are joined to the body of Christ, or the church, 1 Corinthians 12:26 says, “if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.” If you stub your toe against a chair, your entire physical body feels the pain; similarly, when another Christian is hurting, our spirits reel with the same hurt, though our minds are often too dense to be able to interpret what our spirit knows. Just as importantly, when another Christian gains a victory, our spirits share in the celebration.

Before taking communion, it is important to get your heart right with God through repentance, but also to get your heart right with your brothers and sisters in Christ. The intention of Matthew 5:23-24 applies to communion: “if therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you [because you have done something to him], leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.”

The Apostle John says, “this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also (1 John 4:21).” Though the focus of our love is upon God, our outward expression of God’s love is toward others. If we are right with God, we will love others, especially His church, and in the process sin will lose its grip upon us: “If we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have *fellowship with one another*, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).”

Again John says, “the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen (1 John 4:20).” Our image of God often appears artificially wonderful because we create a god in our own minds who would never correct us, never speak an unkind word to us, and certainly never require us to love others who are just as unlovable as we were, or are. It is easy to love an image of what we want God to be, even as the early Israelites loved their contrived images and idols. But the reality of, or the lack of, our true love for God and communion with Him is shown by the degree to which we love our brothers in Christ.