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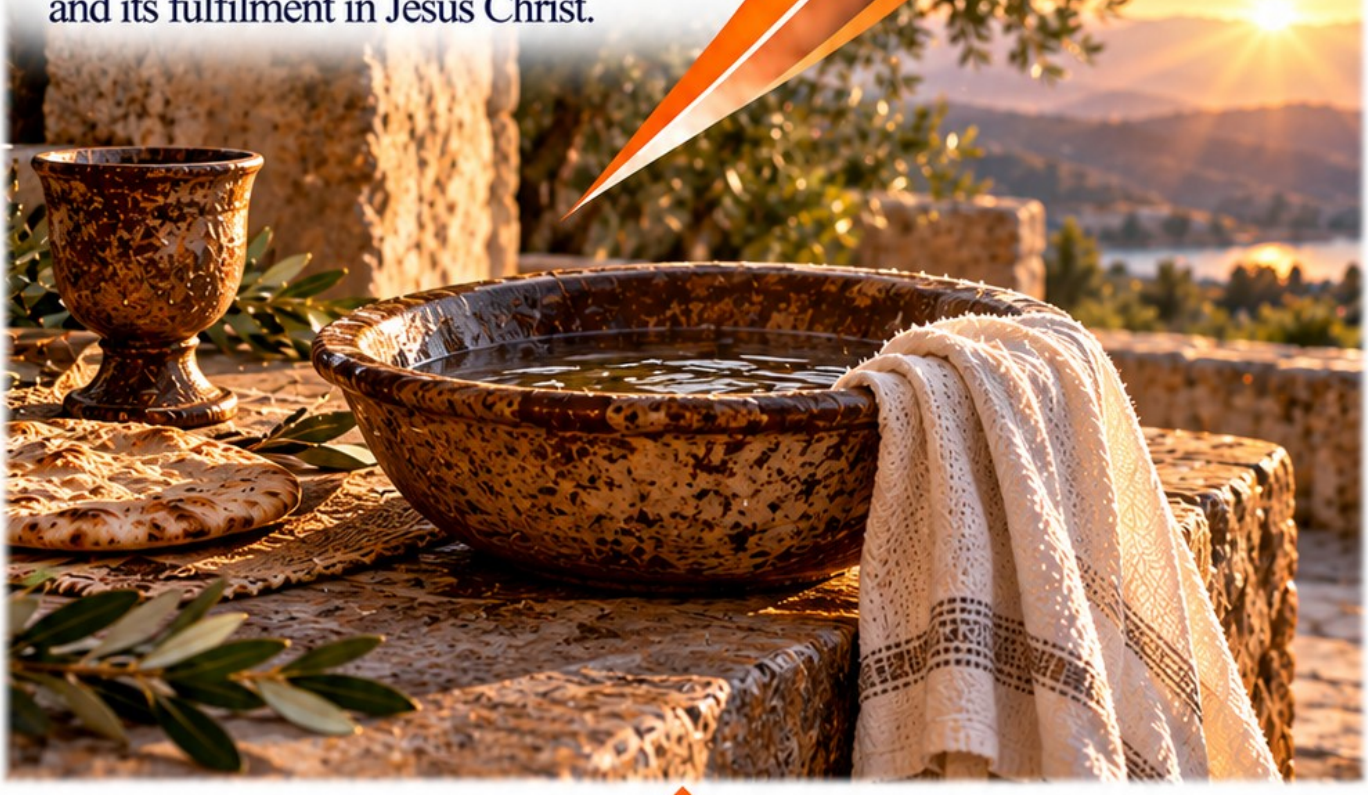
STUDY GUIDE 77

Ordinances Fulfilled in Jesus Christ

STUDY GUIDE 10 OF 12:

True Communion and Feet Washing Fulfilled in Christ

An overview of the spiritual reality and its fulfilment in Jesus Christ.



Equipping and empowering for effective service

2 Timothy 2:2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

My Study Plan

Preparing a Study Plan before starting this Study Guide will assist you in completing it within a designated timeframe. It also helps in developing the discipline required for studying God's Word effectively.

Proverbs 16:3:

> *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

My Study Guide Journal

Keep a record as you progress through your Study Guide, including the Personal Responses for each section, for future reference and goal setting.

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Important Points

- COGMA does not claim to be infallible or the authority.
- Infallibility and authority belong only to God and His Word.

COGMA therefore strongly advises that you prayerfully study the content of each Study Guide with the heart of a Berean (**Acts 17:10–12**).

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Email: admin@cogma.org.au

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PREFACE

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The Bible is a book of principles. Throughout Scripture, God used outward types, shadows and representations to point towards their fulfilment in Jesus Christ. These had an appointed purpose, but they could not produce the spiritual reality they represented. Jesus Christ is the fulfilment, and the believer possesses the Person rather than the outward representation.

Jesus Christ accomplished redemption through His genuine body and shed blood, establishing the New Covenant through His completed sacrifice. He returned at Pentecost in A.D. 31 as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people. Every born-again believer now possesses His indwelling life and is complete in Him.

This Study Guide examines the spiritual reality of the Lord's Supper and the washing of the disciples' feet. Both must be understood through the completed work of Jesus Christ and the principles established throughout Scripture. Neither outward ceremony can produce the spiritual life already received through the new birth.

Particular attention will be given to 1 Corinthians chapters 10 and 11, where Paul addresses the Lord's table, communion in Christ's body and blood, and the responsibilities of those who belong to Him. His instructions concerning eating and drinking unworthily, discerning the Lord's body, and the warnings about weakness, sickness and sleep require careful examination in harmony with the whole of Scripture.

We will also examine Paul's declaration, *"ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."* These words must be understood through the Scriptural teaching concerning the proclamation of Jesus Christ, His completed redemption and His fulfilled return as the Holy Spirit. We must not introduce historical assumptions or explanations that God's Word does not establish.

The washing of the disciples' feet reveals another important spiritual principle. Jesus Christ demonstrated humility, love and service, instructing His disciples concerning the example He had given. The New Covenant brings believers into something greater than outward imitation: the servant life of Jesus Christ dwelling within them and being expressed through their conduct.

Our purpose is to establish these truths through Scripture, allowing the clear principles of God's Word to govern our understanding of difficult verses. We must distinguish outward representation from spiritual fulfilment and recognise what Jesus Christ has already accomplished.

True communion is fellowship with the living Jesus Christ. True service is the expression of His indwelling life. The shadows pointed forward, the reality has come, and that reality is Jesus Christ Himself.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do true communion and genuine service arise from Christ's indwelling life?

Personal Reflection

What does receiving the Person help you understand about a religious demonstration? What difference should this make to your own response?

Action Step

What does fellowship with the living Christ mean for your own approach to communion or humble service? What attitude must change in you, and how should Christ's love within be expressed towards someone else?

INTRODUCTION

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The Lord's Supper and feet washing must be understood according to the spiritual principles established throughout God's Word. Scripture reveals that outward types and shadows pointed towards Jesus Christ, whose completed work fulfilled their appointed purpose. The New Covenant does not leave believers dependent upon physical representations because the spiritual reality is found in Jesus Christ Himself.

Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians chapters 10 and 11 must therefore be examined through the completed sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the unity of His spiritual body and His indwelling life. His instructions concerning the bread, the cup, the Lord's table and unworthy participation must be understood in harmony with these truths.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 10:16-17**:

> *"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."*

The Church is one spiritual body because every born-again believer possesses Jesus Christ through His indwelling Spirit. Physical bread cannot create that unity, and a ceremonial cup cannot establish participation in the redemption accomplished through His blood. True communion is fellowship in the living Person, not a spiritual relationship produced through physical eating and drinking.

Paul also spoke of showing the Lord's death until He comes. The expressions *"shew"* and *"till he come"* must be understood through the Scriptural teaching concerning Gospel proclamation and the fulfilled coming of Jesus Christ. He returned at Pentecost in A.D. 31 as the Holy Spirit, and the Gospel continues to be preached so that sinners may hear, believe and receive His indwelling life.

Paul's warnings concerning eating and drinking unworthily, self-examination, discerning the Lord's body, and those who were weak, sickly or asleep also require careful examination. These warnings concern serious spiritual matters, but they do not establish supernatural

power within ordinary bread, wine or juice. Their meaning must be determined through the clear principles and harmonious witness of Scripture.

The same principle governs feet washing. Jesus Christ humbled Himself and washed His disciples' feet, demonstrating the love, humility and service that characterised His life.

Jesus declared in **John 13:15**:

> *"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."*

His example reveals the servant life that His people are to express. The New Covenant brings believers into something greater than outward imitation because Jesus Christ Himself dwells within them. His love, humility and service are expressed through their conduct towards others.

Throughout this Study Guide, Scripture will govern every conclusion. We will distinguish outward representations from their spiritual fulfilment and will not establish doctrine through assumptions about historical conduct or inherited religious customs.

The shadows have fulfilled their purpose. Jesus Christ has returned as the Holy Spirit, and every born-again believer possesses His indwelling life. True communion and genuine service are found in the Person Himself.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must the bread, cup and feet washing be understood through their fulfilment in Christ?

Personal Reflection

Which distinction between an outward act and spiritual life has become clearer to you? Is there a familiar expectation of yours that now needs reconsidering?

Action Step

How might this distinction guide your own trust in Christ rather than in repeating an outward act? Examine where you have placed your confidence. What will you change to keep that confidence in Jesus Christ?

ONE BREAD, ONE BODY - THE TRUE COMMUNION OF CHRIST (1 CORINTHIANS 10)

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Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 establishes an important spiritual principle concerning communion with Jesus Christ. He speaks of the bread, the cup, the body and blood of Christ, and the unity of those who belong to Him. These expressions must be understood through His completed sacrifice and the spiritual life received through the new birth.

Throughout Scripture, God used outward representations to reveal greater spiritual realities. Those representations could not produce what they signified, and their meaning must be understood through the Person in whom they find their fulfilment. Jesus Christ is the living bread, and true communion is participation in His indwelling life.

The Communion of Christ's Body and Blood

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 10:16-17**:

> *"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."*

Paul speaks of communion in Christ's blood and His body. Communion concerns fellowship, participation and sharing in the spiritual reality accomplished through Jesus Christ. His genuine body was given in sacrifice, and His blood was shed to accomplish redemption.

The spiritual benefits of that sacrifice are received through faith in Jesus Christ, not through physical consumption of bread or wine. The outward elements could represent His body and blood, but they could not accomplish redemption or impart His indwelling life.

Paul then declares, *"For we being many are one bread, and one body."* This statement directs attention towards the spiritual unity of those who belong to Jesus Christ. The Church is one body because its members possess the same living Christ through His Spirit.

A congregation may gather in one building, share a meal and participate in the same religious ceremony without everyone present being born again. Physical association cannot produce the spiritual unity established through Jesus Christ. Neither denominational membership nor outward religious observance can make someone a member of His spiritual body.

The expression *"one bread"* must therefore be understood through the spiritual relationship believers share in Jesus Christ. He had already identified Himself as the true bread from heaven.

Jesus declared in **John 6:35**:

> *"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."*

Jesus identified Himself as the bread of life and connected everlasting life with coming to Him and believing on Him. Natural bread sustains the physical body, but it cannot provide spiritual life or unite believers in Christ. That life is found in the Person Himself.

When Paul speaks of believers being one bread, the spiritual unity of Christ's body must remain central. The many members belong to one spiritual body because they share the life of the one living Christ.

We are one bread because we partake spiritually of the one living Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does partaking of one Christ make believers one bread and one body?

Personal Reflection

What does sharing His life help you understand about unity with other believers? What does this reveal about an assumption you have held?

Action Step

How could the truth of one spiritual body guide your own response to another believer? Identify one attitude or assumption towards other people that you need to correct, and explain how you will treat them differently.

One Spirit Brings Believers Into One Body

Paul explained how believers become members of Christ's spiritual body.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:12-13**:

> *"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

Notice Paul's declaration: *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."* Entrance into the Church is accomplished through the spiritual work of Jesus Christ. Every person who is genuinely born again receives His Spirit and becomes a member of His one spiritual body.

Paul also declares that believers *"have been all made to drink into one Spirit."* This is spiritual language describing the life received through the Spirit, not an instruction to consume a physical religious drink. The same distinction must govern our understanding of communion because spiritual participation cannot be produced through ordinary food.

Jewish and Gentile believers enter the same body through the same Spirit. The New Covenant does not establish separate spiritual peoples, different means of salvation or additional ceremonies through which someone becomes more completely united with Jesus Christ.

One Spirit establishes one body, and that Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Paul also identified the determining reality of belonging to Christ.

He wrote in **Romans 8:9**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

The identifying reality is the indwelling Spirit of Christ. A person does not become a member of His spiritual body through religious performance, participation in a ceremony or membership in an earthly organisation. Those who possess His Spirit belong to Him.

Every born-again believer receives the Spirit of Christ at the new birth. The believer does not receive Jesus Christ first and then wait for another spiritual experience through which the Holy Spirit is supplied. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and the believer possesses the Person Himself.

Jesus Christ returned at Pentecost in A.D. 31 as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people. His promised coming has been fulfilled, and the New Covenant reality is now found in His indwelling life.

Communion with Jesus Christ is therefore not an occasional spiritual benefit obtained through an outward ceremony. It is the living fellowship established when a person is born again and receives Him.

Paul further declared the unity of God's people in **Ephesians 4:4-6**:

> *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*

The unity of the Church rests upon one Lord and one Spirit. It is not established through common ceremonial requirements, but through Jesus Christ dwelling within His born-again people. The same Spirit brings every believer into His one body.

This unity also establishes responsibility towards one another. Those who share the life of Jesus Christ are to express His love, humility and care in their relationships. Their conduct must agree with the spiritual fellowship they already possess.

True Communion Is Fellowship With the Living Christ

Paul identified the Person in whom the believer's fellowship is established.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:9**:

> *"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Believers are called into fellowship with Jesus Christ Himself. Paul does not identify a religious ceremony as the source of that fellowship because the spiritual reality is found in the living Person.

John likewise wrote in **1 John 1:3**:

> *"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."*

The fellowship proclaimed by the apostles centred upon Jesus Christ and the truth revealed through Him. Through His completed sacrifice and the new birth, believers receive the spiritual life that outward representations could never produce.

This fellowship is not established through human agreement alone. It is founded upon the indwelling life of Jesus Christ and expressed through those who belong to His one spiritual body.

Paul described this reality in **Galatians 2:20**:

> *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*

Notice Paul's declaration: *"Christ liveth in me."* This is the spiritual reality of true communion. Jesus Christ does not remain outside His people, waiting to be received through an outward religious ceremony. He personally dwells within every born-again believer.

The Christian life is therefore not an attempt to imitate Jesus Christ through independent human effort. It is His indwelling life expressed through faith, righteousness, love and obedience. The believer already possesses the Person whose life produces these spiritual qualities.

As believers study the Scriptures and grow in understanding, they learn to walk according to the life already received. Spiritual growth does not make them more completely saved or provide another portion of Jesus Christ. Salvation is complete at the new birth, while maturity concerns understanding and expressing His indwelling life.

The believer possesses the Person, and complete in Christ means complete.

This spiritual fellowship also governs relationships within the Church. Those who share the same Christ cannot rightly disregard one another while professing communion with Him. His indwelling life is expressed through love, consideration, humility and practical care.

A person may participate in an outward observance while remaining selfish, divisive or indifferent towards others. The ceremony cannot produce the love that comes through Jesus Christ dwelling within. True spiritual fellowship must be expressed through the life already received.

Paul's teaching concerning one bread and one body therefore directs us towards the living Christ and His spiritual Church. His body was given, His blood was shed, and redemption was accomplished through His sacrifice. Every born-again believer now possesses His Spirit and belongs to His one spiritual body.

The bread and cup could represent participation in His body and blood, but they could not create that participation. They cannot impart His Spirit, establish the new birth or make the believer more complete in Him.

True communion is fellowship with Jesus Christ Himself.

The Church is one spiritual body because its members possess the same living Christ. Their unity is established through His indwelling Spirit, and their fellowship is expressed through the life they share in Him.

We are one bread and one body because we are partakers of the one living Christ.

The outward representation cannot produce the spiritual fellowship already established through Jesus Christ. The believer possesses the Person, and the Person is greater than the ordinance.

Jesus Christ is the one living bread. His Church is one spiritual body, and true communion is found in His indwelling life.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does one Spirit bring believers into the fellowship of the living Christ?

Personal Reflection

What does Christ's indwelling life mean to your understanding of belonging to His body? Which part of your own understanding does it challenge?

Action Step

What response do you want to make to the truth that fellowship rests in Christ Himself? Explain what you will rely on for fellowship with Christ and what ceremony-based assumption you need to correct.

THE LORD'S TABLE AND THE TABLE OF DEVILS - SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP AND ALLEGIANCE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Paul's teaching concerning the Lord's table and the table of devils establishes a clear spiritual principle. Fellowship with Jesus Christ cannot be joined with allegiance to false worship. Outward actions may express spiritual fellowship, but physical elements cannot establish the relationship they represent.

The Church belongs to Jesus Christ, and every born-again believer possesses His indwelling Spirit. True communion is fellowship with the living Person, not a relationship created through eating bread or drinking from a cup.

The Lord's Table and the Table of Devils

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 10:14-15**:

> *"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."*

Paul's instruction is definite: *"Flee from idolatry."* He calls upon believers to recognise the spiritual significance of their worship and conduct. Those who belong to Jesus Christ must not give allegiance to worship that opposes the one true God.

Idolatry concerns more than the physical objects associated with worship. It involves the allegiance expressed through participation. The believer's relationship with Jesus Christ must therefore govern every expression of worship.

Paul then directed attention towards the sacrificial worship of natural Israel.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 10:18**:

> *"Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?"*

Those who participated in Israel's sacrificial meals identified themselves with the altar and the worship associated with it. The outward action had genuine significance within the former covenant, but physical eating could not accomplish redemption from sin or produce the new birth.

Israel's altar, sacrifices and ceremonial requirements belonged to the covenant God had established for that nation. Their greater purpose pointed towards Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice would accomplish the redemption those outward representations could never produce.

Paul used Israel's participation to establish the relationship between outward conduct and worship. The action expressed fellowship with the altar, but the physical food did not create the spiritual reality it represented.

The worship and fellowship expressed through an outward action must be distinguished from the physical action itself.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does Paul distinguish the Lord's table from the table of devils?

Personal Reflection

What has this distinction helped you understand about the worship expressed through an outward action? What difference should this make to your own response?

Action Step

How could allegiance to Christ guide your own choice about taking part in religious worship? Identify a change needed in the way you remember or speak of Christ's sacrifice, keeping the Person central.

Participation in Worship Reveals Our Allegiance

Paul continued in **1 Corinthians 10:19-20**:

> *"What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils."*

Paul distinguishes between the idol itself and the spiritual significance of participating in idolatrous worship. He does not recognise the idol as another true God, but he clearly condemns fellowship associated with worship directed away from God.

He had already established this truth in **1 Corinthians 8:4**:

> *"As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one."*

Notice the declaration *"there is none other God but one."* An idol cannot possess the divine authority belonging exclusively to the one true God. Neither does ordinary food become divine or acquire independent spiritual power because it has been associated with religious worship.

Nevertheless, Paul does not treat participation in idolatry as spiritually insignificant. A person cannot acknowledge that an idol is nothing while deliberately participating in worship directed away from God. The issue concerns the allegiance expressed through that participation.

Paul declared in **1 Corinthians 10:21-22**:

> *"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?"*

The words *"Ye cannot"* establish the incompatibility between fellowship with Jesus Christ and participation in idolatrous worship. Paul is confronting divided allegiance, not teaching that physical food possesses independent spiritual power.

The Lord's table directs attention towards the fellowship belonging to Jesus Christ. He accomplished redemption through His sacrifice, established the New Covenant and returned as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people. True communion is found in that living spiritual relationship.

The table of devils concerns fellowship associated with worship directed away from God. Deliberate participation in such worship contradicts the relationship and allegiance that belong to those who possess Jesus Christ.

True communion is fellowship with the living Christ. That fellowship cannot be joined with allegiance to false worship.

Ordinary Food and the Conscience of Others

Paul's further instructions establish that ordinary food must be distinguished from the worship associated with it.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 10:25-27**:

> *"Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake."*

Paul permitted believers to eat food sold in the market or served in another person's home without investigating its previous association with idolatrous sacrifice. He did not instruct them to fear ordinary food as though it possessed independent spiritual power.

The distinction was between eating physical food and knowingly participating in idolatrous worship. The food remained ordinary food, but the worship associated with an action could express allegiance contrary to Jesus Christ.

This principle also governs our understanding of the Lord's Supper. Ordinary bread and wine or juice cannot become the indwelling life of Jesus Christ through a religious ceremony or a minister's prayer. Spiritual communion is found in the Person who is received through faith and the new birth.

Paul also instructed believers to consider the conscience and spiritual welfare of others.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 10:28-29**:

> *"But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?"*

Paul's concern extended beyond the individual's freedom to eat ordinary food. When someone identified food as having been offered to idols, the believer was to consider how eating it might affect that person's understanding and conscience.

The food itself had not changed. The spiritual concern arose from the association with idolatrous worship and what the believer's participation might communicate to others.

This establishes an enduring responsibility within the Church. Believers must consider the spiritual welfare of others and express the love and wisdom of Jesus Christ through their conduct. Personal liberty must never become an excuse for selfishness or disregard for another person's conscience.

Such conduct does not earn spiritual fellowship with God. It expresses the life of Jesus Christ already received through the new birth.

Do All to the Glory of God

Paul brought his instruction to a practical conclusion.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 10:31-33**:

> *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."*

Notice the expression *"whatsoever ye do."* Paul's instruction extends beyond eating and drinking to the spiritual principles governing every part of the believer's conduct. Those who belong to Jesus Christ must honour Him through their worship, relationships and treatment of others.

His indwelling life produces love, humility, righteousness and genuine concern for the spiritual welfare of others. These qualities are not produced through outward religious observances. They are expressions of the life already received through the new birth.

Paul's instruction also prepares us to understand the problems he addressed in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. The divisions, selfishness and mistreatment of fellow believers within the Corinthian congregation contradicted the spiritual fellowship they professed.

The same principle governs both chapters. Worship and conduct must agree with the spiritual relationship established through Jesus Christ. Outward participation cannot replace the inward life that must govern those actions.

The distinction between the Lord's table and the table of devils therefore concerns spiritual fellowship and allegiance. Paul rejects idolatrous worship because it is incompatible with belonging to Jesus Christ, not because ordinary food has acquired independent spiritual power.

The Lord's table finds its spiritual reality in the living Christ. His genuine body was given, His blood was shed and redemption was accomplished through His sacrifice. He returned at Pentecost as the Holy Spirit, and every born-again believer now possesses His indwelling life.

The Lord's Supper is therefore fulfilled in the spiritual communion established through Jesus Christ Himself. The Church does not require a continuing physical bread-and-cup ordinance to obtain the fellowship already possessed through His indwelling Spirit.

The outward representation cannot create the spiritual reality.

True communion is fellowship with Jesus Christ, and that fellowship must govern our worship, allegiance and conduct. We cannot knowingly participate in false worship while claiming that such conduct agrees with His life and truth.

The believer does not obtain spiritual fellowship through physical food. The believer possesses the living Person, and His indwelling life is expressed through worship that honours God and conduct that shows love and consideration for others.

True communion is fellowship with the living Jesus Christ. His life within the believer governs worship, allegiance and conduct.

The believer possesses the Person. The Person is greater than the ordinance.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do concern for another person's conscience and doing all to God's glory guide freedom concerning food?

Personal Reflection

What does this teaching help you consider about your own use of freedom?

Action Step

How might you show care for someone else's conscience without treating ordinary food as a source of spiritual life? Name one opportunity to put this truth into practice through genuine care rather than an outward display.

THE CORINTHIAN CONGREGATION - DIVISION, SELFISHNESS AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

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Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 11 begins with a direct correction of what was happening when the Corinthians gathered. He identifies divisions, selfishness, drunkenness and disregard for those who had nothing. His words establish an important distinction between satisfying physical appetites and the spiritual fellowship belonging to the body of Jesus Christ.

We must follow Paul's explanation in order. He first identifies their conduct and then directs attention towards Jesus Christ, whose genuine body was given and whose blood established the New Covenant. The spiritual meaning of the Lord's Supper must be understood through His completed sacrifice and the life believers receive at the new birth.

Divisions and Selfishness in the Corinthian Gathering

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 11:17-22**:

> *"Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? what shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."*

Paul begins with a rebuke rather than a commendation. Their gatherings were not producing the spiritual benefit that should characterise fellowship among those who belong to Jesus Christ. Divisions had appeared among them, and their conduct concerning physical food revealed the selfishness that existed within the congregation.

Some were satisfying themselves while others remained hungry, showing little consideration for those around them. Those who had plenty were disregarding those who had nothing. Whatever understanding the Corinthians attached to their gatherings, Paul condemned their selfishness and failure to care for others. Their conduct contradicted the fellowship belonging to the spiritual body of Jesus Christ.

Paul's question is particularly important: *"What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?"* He was correcting their treatment of the gathering as an occasion for satisfying personal appetites without proper consideration for others. Physical hunger could be satisfied at home, but the spiritual responsibilities belonging to Christ's body could not be disregarded.

Paul returned to this distinction in **1 Corinthians 11:33-34**, telling them to wait for one another and instructing those who were hungry to eat at home. The instruction to wait for one another addressed their disregard for their brethren, while the direction to eat at home dealt with natural hunger. These instructions establish that physical eating must not be confused with the spiritual fellowship belonging to the Church.

Ordinary food has its natural purpose because it sustains the physical body. However, it cannot provide the indwelling life of Jesus Christ or produce communion with Him. Physical eating is not the spiritual nourishment of the Church. Jesus Christ Himself is the living bread.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What did division and selfishness reveal about the Corinthians' gatherings?

Personal Reflection

What does the difference between physical eating and spiritual nourishment help you see about fellowship? What does this reveal about an assumption you have held?

Action Step

How could you respond to selfishness in your own treatment of people when believers gather? Identify one conviction or attitude that this teaching challenges. What specific response will you make?

The Body and Blood of Jesus Christ

Immediately after correcting their conduct concerning food and fellowship, Paul recalls the words of Jesus at His final Passover. He directs attention towards the body that was given in sacrifice and the blood through which the New Covenant was established. The Corinthians needed to look beyond their physical meals to the redemption accomplished through Jesus Christ.

The importance of the Lord's Supper was not found in satisfying physical hunger, but in Jesus Christ and His completed sacrifice. Jesus had already declared Himself to be the bread of life in **John 6:35**. His teaching established that everlasting life is received through coming to Him and believing on Him, not through the physical consumption of ordinary bread.

The bread represented His genuine body given in sacrifice, and the cup represented His shed blood and the New Covenant. These outward representations could not produce the spiritual reality they represented. The benefits of Christ's sacrifice are received through faith and the new birth. The true Lord's Supper is communion with the living Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice accomplished redemption and whose Spirit now dwells within His people.

One Spiritual Body Expressing the Life of Christ

Paul had already addressed the divisions among the Corinthians earlier in his letter. His concern was the spiritual condition of those who professed to belong to Jesus Christ. He called them to unity rather than contention.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:10-11**:

> *"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you."*

Paul's concern extended beyond their outward gatherings to the spiritual relationships among those who belonged to Jesus Christ. Division, contention and selfishness contradicted the unity that should be expressed among members of His body. Their conduct needed to agree with the spiritual relationship they professed.

That unity is established through the one Spirit received at the new birth. It is not produced through gathering in the same building, sharing physical food or participating in an outward religious observance. Every born-again believer belongs to the one spiritual body because Jesus Christ dwells within them by His Spirit.

Paul explained the responsibility of members of Christ's body in **1 Corinthians 12:25-27**:

> *"That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."*

Notice Paul's words: *"the members should have the same care one for another."* This directly addresses the selfishness and neglect he condemned among the Corinthians. When one member suffers, the others must not remain indifferent, and when one member is honoured, the others should rejoice together.

Those who belong to Jesus Christ must recognise the needs of other members and express His love and care towards them. The spiritual body cannot be governed by individual appetites and personal advantage. Its members share the life of Jesus Christ, and that life must be expressed through their relationships with one another.

The Life of Christ Expressed Through Humility and Love

Paul wrote in **Philippians 2:3-5**:

> *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"*

The humility described by Paul stands in direct contrast to the conduct he rebuked in Corinth. Believers must not allow selfishness, pride or the desire for personal advantage to govern their relationships. They must recognise the needs of others rather than being concerned only with their own interests.

However, the Christian life is not an outward imitation of Jesus Christ produced through independent human effort. Every born-again believer possesses His indwelling Spirit, and His life is expressed through love, humility and consideration for others. The willingness to serve others flows from the life of Christ already dwelling within His people.

John established the importance of practical care in **1 John 3:17-18**:

> *"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."*

These words reveal the spiritual responsibility that was being neglected among the Corinthians. Those who have the means to help others must not disregard their needs while professing fellowship with Jesus Christ. Genuine love must be expressed through practical care, not confined to words or outward claims of fellowship.

Such love is not produced through the performance of a religious ceremony. It is expressed through the indwelling life of Jesus Christ, who gives His people the humility and willingness to serve one another. The reality of communion with Christ is therefore seen in the love and care expressed among the members of His spiritual body.

True Communion Is Found in Jesus Christ Himself

Paul's correction begins with selfish physical eating and directs attention towards the spiritual responsibilities of Christ's body. He then explains the body and blood of Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice established the New Covenant. The Corinthians needed to recognise that satisfying physical appetites could not produce the fellowship belonging to God's people, and their conduct had to agree with the spiritual relationship they professed.

The Lord's Supper is not a physical meal through which believers obtain spiritual communion. It is fulfilled in Jesus Christ Himself. His genuine body was given, His blood was shed, and His completed sacrifice accomplished redemption. Every person who is born again receives His indwelling Spirit and becomes a member of His one spiritual body.

That fellowship must be expressed through love, humility and practical care for others. These are not achievements through which salvation is obtained or completed. They are expressions of the life of Jesus Christ already received at the new birth.

Paul's correction directs us away from satisfying physical appetites as the purpose of the gathering and towards the living Christ, whose body and blood accomplished redemption. The spiritual fellowship of His Church rests upon His completed work and His present indwelling life.

The believer possesses the Person. Jesus Christ is the true spiritual nourishment of His Church, and His indwelling life is the reality of our communion.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does recognising one spiritual body call for humility and love?

Personal Reflection

What has Christ's indwelling life helped you consider about your attitude towards other believers?

Action Step

What might expressing His life mean in a relationship where you find serving difficult? Explain what you will rely on for fellowship with Christ and what ceremony-based assumption you need to correct.

"SHEW THE LORD'S DEATH TILL HE COME" - PREACHING CHRIST AND THE NEW BIRTH

BACK TO CONTENTS

Paul's declaration concerning showing the Lord's death until He comes must be understood through the clear principles and harmonious witness of God's Word. The meaning of *"shew"*

must be established from Scripture, while the words *"till he come"* must be understood through the teaching of Jesus Christ concerning His promised return.

Jesus Christ accomplished redemption through His sacrifice and returned at Pentecost in A.D. 31 as the Holy Spirit. He now dwells within every born-again believer. These fulfilled realities govern our understanding of Paul's words and the continuing authority claimed for outward religious observances.

"Ye Do Shew the Lord's Death" - Proclaiming Jesus Christ

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**:

> *"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: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."*

Paul recalled the words Jesus spoke at His final Passover, when He connected the bread with His body and the cup with the New Covenant established through His blood. The genuine body of Jesus Christ was given, and His blood was shed through the sacrifice that accomplished redemption.

The bread did not accomplish redemption, and the cup did not establish the New Covenant. These outward elements directed attention towards the sacrifice Jesus Christ would accomplish. The spiritual reality was found in the Person and His completed work.

The word *"shew"* in **1 Corinthians 11:26** is translated from the Greek word KATANGELLO, meaning to proclaim, announce or declare. The same word appears elsewhere in Scripture concerning the proclamation of Jesus Christ and His Gospel.

Luke recorded Paul's preaching in **Acts 17:3**:

> *"Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."*

The word translated *"preach"* is the same Greek word translated *"shew"* in **1 Corinthians 11:26**. Paul was proclaiming Jesus Christ, declaring His suffering, resurrection and identity as the promised Redeemer.

Paul also wrote in **1 Corinthians 9:14**:

> *"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."*

Again, KATANGELLO concerns proclaiming and making known the Gospel. It describes the declaration of the truth concerning Jesus Christ so that others may hear what He has accomplished.

Luke also recorded Paul's testimony in **Acts 26:23**:

> *"That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."*

The word *"shew"* again concerns making known the truth revealed through Jesus Christ. Paul connected that proclamation with Christ's suffering and resurrection. The emphasis was upon declaring the light that had come through Him.

These Scriptures establish the meaning of KATANGELLO as proclaiming, announcing and declaring. When Paul said that the Corinthians *"shew the Lord's death,"* he was describing a declaration of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The spiritual significance of this proclamation rests upon Jesus Christ Himself, whose genuine body was given and whose blood was shed to accomplish redemption. The Gospel declares His completed sacrifice and directs the hearer towards the living Person rather than an outward representation.

To shew the Lord's death is to proclaim Jesus Christ and the redemption He accomplished through His sacrifice.

Paul also identified the central testimony of the Gospel.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 15:3-4**:

> *"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"*

The Gospel declares the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His sacrifice accomplished redemption, and that completed work does not require another outward religious ceremony to make it effective.

The Church therefore proclaims the Person whose body was given and whose blood was shed. The message does not depend upon distributing physical bread and wine or juice because those elements cannot produce the spiritual life obtained through His sacrifice.

The outward representation pointed towards the work of Jesus Christ. The Gospel proclaims that completed work and directs people towards the living Redeemer. His sacrifice remains central to the message because redemption was accomplished through Him.

We do not need to preserve the shadow to proclaim the reality. We shew the Lord's death by declaring Jesus Christ, His completed sacrifice and His resurrection.

"Till He Come" - Christ's Fulfilled Promise at Pentecost

The expression *"till he come"* must be understood through the teaching of Jesus Christ concerning His promised return. He did not leave His disciples without explaining how He would come to them after His departure.

Jesus declared in **John 14:18**:

> *"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."*

This was a direct promise to His disciples. Jesus was preparing to depart from them in His genuine human body, but He assured them that He would return and that His presence would not be taken from them.

He further declared in **John 14:26**:

> *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."*

The promised Comforter was the Holy Ghost. Jesus Christ fulfilled His promise at Pentecost in A.D. 31 when He returned as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people.

The Holy Spirit is not another divine Person replacing Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and Jesus Christ Himself came as Spirit to establish His indwelling presence within His Church.

The promised coming has been fulfilled. The Person has come, and the New Covenant reality is now present within every born-again believer.

The covenant distinction must remain clear. Jesus spoke concerning the bread and cup at His final Passover before His completed sacrifice and before Pentecost. His body was given, His blood was shed, and His promised return as the Holy Spirit was fulfilled in A.D. 31.

Paul wrote these words to the Corinthians after Pentecost, when the bread-and-cup practice was still occurring among believers. We must acknowledge this historical setting without assuming that the continued practice established a permanent New Covenant ordinance.

Jesus Christ had already fulfilled His promise to return as the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in A.D. 31. Therefore, Paul's words *"till he come"* must be understood in harmony with that fulfilled coming, rather than used to establish a future physical return or require the continuation of an outward ceremony.

The New Covenant reality is Jesus Christ Himself dwelling within His born-again people, not a religious observance performed with physical bread and a cup.

The completed work of Jesus Christ must govern our understanding of the historical observance. His sacrifice accomplished redemption, His return as the Holy Spirit fulfilled His promise, and His indwelling life established the spiritual reality the outward representation could never produce.

The Church is therefore not waiting for a future physical return of Jesus Christ before His promised presence can be received. He has come as Spirit, and those who are born again possess Him within.

The Gospel Continues to Bring Sinners Into Christ

Although Jesus Christ returned at Pentecost to dwell within His Church, this did not mean that every person had received His life. Those who remain spiritually dead must still hear the Gospel, believe on Jesus Christ and be born again.

Jesus declared in **John 5:25**:

> *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."*

Jesus was speaking of spiritual life received by those who hear His voice. The spiritually dead must hear the truth concerning Him and receive the life that only He can give.

The preaching of the Gospel makes known His completed sacrifice and resurrection. Through that proclamation, sinners hear the truth concerning Jesus Christ and are called to believe on Him. When a person is born again, Jesus Christ comes to dwell within that person through His Spirit.

This is not another return of Jesus Christ to establish the Church. That promised return was fulfilled at Pentecost. The individual who is born again receives the Person who has already come as the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ returned to His Church at Pentecost. The Gospel continues so that those who do not yet possess Him may receive His indwelling life.

Paul identified the spiritual reality that determines whether a person belongs to Jesus Christ.

He wrote in **Romans 8:9**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

The indwelling Spirit of Christ identifies those who belong to Him. Every born-again believer possesses His Spirit and belongs to His spiritual body. This relationship is established through the new birth, not through physical eating and drinking.

A minister cannot impart the Spirit of Christ through an outward religious ceremony. The preacher proclaims the Gospel, but Jesus Christ Himself gives spiritual life. Those who hear His voice and are born again receive the living Person.

This is why the proclamation of Jesus Christ continues throughout the Gospel Day. People must still hear His Word, believe the Gospel and receive His indwelling life.

We preach Christ so that sinners may hear His voice, believe and be born again.

The Gospel Gathers Christ's People

Jesus Christ fulfilled His promise to return at Pentecost in A.D. 31, coming as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people. The Gospel continues to be proclaimed because those who are spiritually dead must hear His voice, believe and receive His life through the new birth.

The Church is the one spiritual body of Jesus Christ, consisting of those who are born again and possess His indwelling Spirit. This fellowship is established through the Person Himself, not through the physical consumption of bread and wine or juice.

The words *"till he come"* must therefore be understood in harmony with Christ's fulfilled promise and the continuing proclamation of His completed redemption. The Gospel directs sinners towards Jesus Christ, whose indwelling life is received through the new birth.

The enduring testimony of the Gospel is Jesus Christ Himself. His genuine body was given, His blood was shed, and His resurrection declares the victory of His completed work. He returned at Pentecost as the Holy Spirit and now dwells within every born-again believer.

We shew the Lord's death by preaching Jesus Christ and the redemption He has accomplished.

The Gospel continues to reach those who are spiritually dead so that they may hear His voice, believe and receive His indwelling life. The outward bread and cup cannot provide that life or add anything to the completed work of Christ.

We do not continue the shadow to proclaim the reality. We proclaim the living Person whose sacrifice has fulfilled what the shadow represented.

The sacrifice is complete. The promised coming has been fulfilled. The Gospel continues, and the reality is Jesus Christ Himself.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do proclaiming Christ's death, His coming at Pentecost and the continuing Gospel fit together?

Personal Reflection

What has the teaching about 'till he come' clarified or challenged in your understanding? What difference should this make to your own response?

Action Step

How could the Gospel's continuing call to receive Christ guide your own response to Him? What assumption will you examine, and how will your response change if it does not agree with the Bible?

BREAKING BREAD - THE APOSTLES MINISTERING THE WORD OF GOD

BACK TO CONTENTS

The expression *"breaking bread"* must be understood according to the spiritual principles revealed throughout God's Word. Jesus Christ is the living bread, and His Word reveals the spiritual life believers receive through the new birth. The apostles were commissioned to preach Jesus Christ, open the Scriptures and establish believers in the truth.

The New Covenant does not direct believers towards physical bread as the source of spiritual nourishment. Jesus Christ has fulfilled the former representations, and His indwelling life is the reality towards which they pointed. The spiritual application of breaking bread must therefore direct our attention towards the living Christ revealed through His Word.

Breaking Bread in the Early Church

Luke recorded in **Acts 2:42**:

> *"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."*

Luke identifies the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers among the activities of the early believers. Their shared life was centred upon Jesus Christ, whom they

had received through the new birth. The apostles continued teaching the Scriptures and establishing believers in their understanding of His completed work.

The apostles' doctrine concerned Jesus Christ, His sacrifice, resurrection and the spiritual life received through faith. Their ministry revealed the Person who had fulfilled the former covenant shadows and established the New Covenant.

The reference to *"breaking of bread"* does not establish a continuing sacred bread-and-cup ordinance. The historical action must be understood within its Scriptural setting rather than being given permanent religious authority simply because it was practised among early believers.

Luke also recorded in **Acts 2:46**:

> *"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,"*

Here Luke connects breaking bread with eating together in the homes of believers. Ordinary meals expressed hospitality, fellowship and practical care, but physical food could not produce the new birth or establish communion with Jesus Christ.

The spiritual Church consists of those who possess the indwelling Spirit of Christ. Its unity is established through the one spiritual life its members share, not through participation in the same physical meal.

These historical accounts must therefore be distinguished from the spiritual reality of communion. The early believers shared meals and fellowship, but their spiritual life came from Jesus Christ Himself.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why do accounts of breaking bread need to be distinguished from the source of spiritual life?

Personal Reflection

What has the difference between a shared meal and spiritual communion clarified for you? Is there a familiar expectation of yours that now needs reconsidering?

Action Step

How might you value a shared meal with believers while trusting Christ Himself for spiritual life? What will you personally change so that your confidence remains in Christ rather than in outward participation?

The Apostles Ministered Jesus Christ Through the Scriptures

Jesus had already identified Himself as the true spiritual bread.

He declared in **John 6:35**:

> *"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."*

Jesus Christ identified Himself as the bread of life and connected everlasting life with coming to Him and believing on Him. Natural bread sustains the physical body, but it cannot provide the spiritual life received through Jesus Christ.

Jesus further declared in **John 6:63**:

> *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."*

The Spirit gives life, and the words of Jesus Christ reveal the spiritual truth found in Him. Physical eating cannot produce the new birth or impart the life of Christ. His Word directs hearers towards the Person who alone gives everlasting life.

This establishes the spiritual application of breaking bread. As God's Word is opened and ministered, Jesus Christ is revealed to His people. The spiritual nourishment is found in the living Person, not in the physical consumption of religious elements.

Luke identifies the continuing ministry of the apostles in **Acts 5:42**:

> *"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."*

The apostles taught and preached Jesus Christ daily, both publicly and in people's homes. They proclaimed His accomplished redemption and made known the spiritual reality established through the New Covenant.

Their ministry was not to replace the completed sacrifice of Jesus Christ with another collection of outward religious requirements. Through the Gospel, sinners heard the truth concerning Him and were brought to faith. Those already born again continued growing in their understanding of the life they had received.

Luke also recorded in **Acts 6:4**:

> *"But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."*

The apostles identified prayer and the ministry of the Word as continuing responsibilities. Their work centred upon proclaiming Jesus Christ and establishing His people in the truth.

Jesus Himself had demonstrated this ministry after His resurrection.

Luke recorded in **Luke 24:27**:

> *"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."*

Jesus opened the Scriptures and revealed how the promises and former covenant representations pointed towards Him. He directed the disciples beyond the outward forms to the Person in whom God's purpose was fulfilled.

The disciples later declared in **Luke 24:32**:

> *"And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"*

Their understanding developed as Jesus explained the Scriptures. They were receiving spiritual instruction concerning the Person who had fulfilled what Moses and the prophets had declared.

The apostles continued this ministry by teaching and preaching the same Jesus Christ. Through the opening of God's Word, believers grew in understanding of His completed sacrifice, the New Covenant and His indwelling life.

The spiritual nourishment is Jesus Christ revealed through His Word, not ordinary bread given sacred significance through a ceremony.

The Living Christ Is Our Spiritual Nourishment

Peter also used natural nourishment to explain the importance of spiritual growth.

He wrote in **1 Peter 2:2**:

> *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"*

Peter used milk to illustrate the nourishment believers receive through God's Word. He was not establishing a religious ordinance involving physical milk. His instruction concerned the spiritual growth of those who had already received life.

The same principle applies to spiritual bread. Natural food can illustrate spiritual nourishment, but it cannot produce the life of Jesus Christ. His Word reveals the Person and teaches believers to walk according to His indwelling life.

The believer is already complete in Jesus Christ at the new birth. Growth through the Word does not supply another portion of salvation or make the believer progressively more complete. It develops understanding, discernment and maturity as the believer learns to express the life already received.

In its spiritual application, breaking bread therefore illustrates the opening and sharing of God's Word. The apostles ministered Jesus Christ through the Scriptures, revealing the truth of His accomplished redemption and establishing believers in their knowledge of Him.

This spiritual application does not require every historical reference to breaking bread to mean preaching. Acts records ordinary shared meals, fellowship and the continuing ministry of the Word. Each activity must be understood within its Scriptural setting.

Neither can these historical accounts establish a continuing sacred bread-and-cup ordinance. The completed work of Jesus Christ governs our understanding of the outward observances, and the born-again believer already possesses the spiritual reality found in Him.

The Church does not depend upon physical bread for communion with Jesus Christ. Through faith and the new birth, believers receive His indwelling Spirit and become members of His one spiritual body. His Word continues to reveal the truth concerning the life they already possess.

The breaking of spiritual bread is the ministry of God's Word through which Jesus Christ is revealed to His people.

We do not receive Jesus Christ through physical food or maintain spiritual communion through a ceremonial meal. We receive the Person through faith and the new birth, and His indwelling life establishes our fellowship with Him.

Jesus Christ is the living bread. His Word reveals Him, His Spirit dwells within His people, and true communion is found in the Person Himself.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How did the apostles minister Christ through the the Bible?

Personal Reflection

What does receiving nourishment through His Word mean to you personally?

Action Step

How could you give attention to the the Bible as you seek to know Christ more clearly? Identify one conviction or attitude that this teaching challenges. What specific response will you make?

REVERENCE FOR THE CEREMONY - BUT WHAT ABOUT THE LIVING WORD?

BACK TO CONTENTS

The Lord's Supper is often treated as a particularly solemn religious observance. Bread and wine or juice are carefully prepared, prayer is offered, and participants may be warned about the consequences of eating and drinking unworthily. Yet Scripture directs our attention towards something infinitely greater than the physical elements.

What place do we give to the living Word of God, through which Jesus Christ is revealed?

The spiritual reality is found in Jesus Christ Himself, whose sacrifice has been accomplished and whose Spirit dwells within every born-again believer. The outward ceremony cannot produce or add to that reality.

Ordinary Bread and Cup Cannot Give Spiritual Life

Consider the bread and wine or juice used during a communion service. These elements may be purchased from a supermarket, prepared for the congregation and placed before those attending. A minister then offers prayer, and the people participate in what they regard as a sacred observance.

But what has changed? The bread remains ordinary bread, and the wine or juice remains ordinary drink. Prayer does not transform physical food into the indwelling life of Jesus Christ or give it supernatural power to produce spiritual life or destruction.

Neither the bread nor the cup can create communion with Jesus Christ, complete salvation or produce spiritual judgment through physical consumption. These spiritual matters belong to the Person Himself, not to the outward elements.

The spiritual condition of a person is not determined by participation in a religious ceremony. It must be examined according to the Word of God.

The Word of God Discerns the Heart

The writer of Hebrews declared in **Hebrews 4:12**:

> *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

Notice the words *"a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* The Word of God reveals the inward condition of a person and establishes the truth by which spiritual conduct must be examined. Ordinary bread cannot discern the heart, and a ceremonial cup cannot expose sin, reveal righteousness or impart the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

God's Word must therefore receive our earnest attention. Through the Scriptures, Jesus Christ is revealed, His completed redemption is proclaimed, and believers are taught to walk according to His indwelling life.

Paul wrote in **1 Thessalonians 2:13**:

> *"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."*

The Thessalonians received the preached Word as the Word of God rather than the opinions of men. Paul commended their response because they recognised the authority of the truth being ministered.

The Church must approach God's Word with that same seriousness. Our attention must remain upon Jesus Christ and the truth revealed through the Scriptures, rather than giving greater spiritual importance to an outward religious observance.

If a ceremony receives great solemnity while the Word of God is neglected, the spiritual priority has been misplaced. The representation must never receive greater importance than the truth concerning the Person it represented.

James also explained the responsibility of those who hear God's Word.

He wrote in **James 1:22**:

> *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."*

Hearing God's Word must be accompanied by a faithful response to the truth received. Believers are to walk according to the life of Jesus Christ within them, allowing His Word to govern their understanding and conduct.

A person may participate faithfully in outward religious activities while disregarding the spiritual principles revealed through Scripture. No ceremony can compensate for unbelief, disobedience or departure from the truth.

The answer is not another religious performance. It is to receive God's Word and allow the life of Jesus Christ already dwelling within the born-again believer to be expressed through obedience, righteousness and love.

The Believer Possesses the Living Christ

Paul declared in **Colossians 2:9-10**:

> *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

The believer is complete in Jesus Christ. No outward ceremony can supply an additional portion of spiritual life, righteousness, fellowship or salvation missing from the Person already received through the new birth.

Jesus Christ returned at Pentecost as the Holy Spirit and now dwells within His people. His indwelling presence is the reality of true communion, while His Word reveals the truth concerning the life believers already possess.

We must therefore distinguish genuine reverence for God and His Word from the sacred importance attached to an outward representation. The ceremony cannot accomplish what belongs to Jesus Christ, and solemn participation cannot replace receiving and obeying His Word.

True reverence is expressed through honouring Jesus Christ, receiving the truth of His Word and walking according to His indwelling life. The believer does not need ordinary bread or a ceremonial cup to obtain the living Person already received through the new birth.

The Word of God reveals Jesus Christ, discerns the heart and teaches believers to walk according to His life within.

The bread and cup cannot give spiritual life. Jesus Christ Himself is the living bread.

The believer possesses the Person. The Person is greater than the ordinance. Complete in Christ means complete.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why should reverence for the living Word govern our understanding of a ceremony?

Personal Reflection

Does the difference between honouring a ceremony and receiving God's Word challenge anything in your own thinking?

Action Step

How might you respond when God's Word exposes something in your life that religious participation has left unexamined? Name one choice in your own life that should change because of this truth, and explain why.

"EXAMINE YOURSELVES" - THE WORD, THE HOLY SPIRIT AND EATING UNWORTHILY

BACK TO CONTENTS

Paul's instruction concerning eating and drinking unworthily must be understood through the spiritual principles established throughout God's Word. His warning concerns the seriousness of our relationship with Jesus Christ, the condition of the heart and the responsibilities of those who profess to belong to His spiritual body.

The New Covenant directs us towards Jesus Christ Himself rather than physical elements as sources of spiritual life or judgment. The spiritual condition of a person must be examined according to God's Word and the indwelling Spirit of Christ, not measured by participation in an outward religious ceremony.

"Let a Man Examine Himself"

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 11:27-29**:

> *"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."*

These verses contain a solemn warning and a direct instruction: *"Let a man examine himself."* The seriousness of Paul's warning must be preserved, but its meaning must be understood through the circumstances he was addressing and the spiritual principles established throughout Scripture.

Paul had already identified divisions, selfishness and disregard for others within the Corinthian congregation. Their conduct contradicted the fellowship belonging to those who professed to be members of Christ's body. His instruction concerning self-examination must therefore be understood in relation to their spiritual condition and their treatment of one another.

Ordinary bread and wine or juice cannot produce spiritual life. Neither can they acquire supernatural power to condemn someone through physical consumption. Paul's warning concerns the serious responsibility of those who profess fellowship with Jesus Christ.

A person may profess faith, participate in religious activities and identify with a congregation without possessing the indwelling Spirit of Christ. Outward participation cannot produce the new birth or establish membership in His spiritual body. The determining reality is whether the person belongs to Jesus Christ.

Paul gave another direct instruction concerning spiritual self-examination.

He wrote in **2 Corinthians 13:5**:

> *"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"*

Notice Paul's declaration: *"Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you."* He directs attention towards the spiritual reality of Christ dwelling within rather than confidence in religious participation. The question concerns whether the person genuinely possesses the living Christ.

Every born-again believer possesses the indwelling Spirit of Jesus Christ. Those who have not been born again cannot obtain that spiritual relationship through an outward ceremony. Participation in a religious observance cannot substitute for possessing the Person Himself.

Self-examination must begin with the reality of Jesus Christ dwelling within, not with confidence in religious performance.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must self-examination begin with whether Christ dwells within?

Personal Reflection

What does this help you understand about confidence in religious performance? What difference should this make to your own response?

Action Step

What personal question about trusting Christ rather than religious performance do you want to consider before God? What assumption will you examine, and how will your response change if it does not agree with the Bible?

The Word of God and the Indwelling Spirit

The Word of God reveals the truth by which our spiritual condition must be examined.

The writer of Hebrews declared in **Hebrews 4:12**:

> *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

The Word of God exposes the thoughts and intentions of the heart. It reveals what agrees with the truth of Jesus Christ and what contradicts His life. Through the Scriptures, a person can recognise unbelief, selfishness, division, disobedience and other conduct that must be brought into agreement with God's Word.

An outward religious ceremony cannot perform this spiritual work. Bread cannot discern the heart, and a cup cannot reveal the inward condition of someone participating in a religious observance. The Scriptures reveal Jesus Christ, His completed redemption and the spiritual life received through the new birth.

Spiritual self-examination must therefore be governed by the Word of God. The believer must receive its correction and respond according to the indwelling life of Jesus Christ.

The Word of God is the spiritual standard. The ceremony is not.

Paul also identifies the Spirit who dwells within those who belong to Jesus Christ.

He wrote in **Romans 8:9**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

Paul identifies the indwelling Spirit of Christ as the determining reality of belonging to Him. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and every born-again believer possesses that same living Person.

Jesus Christ returned at Pentecost as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people. His promised coming has been fulfilled, and His presence is not obtained or maintained through repeating an outward religious ceremony.

As the Scriptures reveal His truth, believers learn to recognise what agrees with His life and what contradicts it. The indwelling Spirit of Christ is the source of the spiritual life expressed through their conduct.

Self-examination is not an attempt to become more completely saved through personal effort. The believer is already complete in Jesus Christ and must learn to walk according to the life received through the new birth.

James also explained the importance of responding to God's Word rather than hearing it without allowing its truth to govern our conduct.

He wrote in **James 1:22-25**:

> *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."*

James compares someone who hears God's Word without responding to a person who looks into a mirror and immediately forgets what has been revealed. The Word exposes what must be recognised, but the hearer must respond faithfully to its truth.

A person may hear the Scriptures regularly while continuing in conduct that contradicts their teaching. Participation in an outward observance cannot correct that contradiction or substitute for walking according to the life of Jesus Christ.

The born-again believer possesses His Spirit, and faithful conduct is the expression of His indwelling life. We do not obey to obtain Christ or complete salvation. We obey because Jesus Christ already dwells within us, and His life governs our conduct.

David also recognised the importance of allowing God to examine the heart.

He prayed in **Psalm 139:23-24**:

> *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."*

David directed attention towards the inward condition of his heart, his thoughts and his conduct. He desired God to reveal anything contrary to His ways and lead him in the right way.

This establishes the seriousness of spiritual self-examination. We must not disregard the truth of God's Word or conceal conduct that contradicts the life of Jesus Christ. The answer is not another religious ceremony, but a faithful response to God's Word through the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

Discerning the Lord's Body and Expressing True Communion

Paul's warning concerning *"not discerning the Lord's body"* must be understood alongside his teaching concerning the Church and the spiritual unity of those who belong to Jesus Christ.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:12-13**:

> *"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

Paul identifies the Church as one spiritual body established through the work of one Spirit. Those who are born again belong to Jesus Christ and share His indwelling life. Their unity is not created through eating the same physical bread or participating in a common religious ceremony.

This spiritual relationship also establishes responsibilities towards other members of Christ's body. Those who share His life must recognise and care for one another. Disregarding another member contradicts the love and unity that should be expressed through the indwelling life of Jesus Christ.

The Corinthians had been corrected for divisions, selfishness and humiliating those who had nothing. These were serious spiritual failures because their conduct contradicted the fellowship they professed to possess.

Paul's warning about eating and drinking unworthily must therefore remain connected with the behaviour he had condemned. The Corinthians could not profess communion in the body and blood of Jesus Christ while disregarding members of His spiritual body.

To discern the Lord's body is to recognise the spiritual reality of those who belong to Jesus Christ and the responsibilities established through that relationship.

Self-Examination Must Address Our Spiritual Conduct

Paul's warning concerning *"unworthily"* must be understood through his instruction to examine oneself and discern the Lord's body. It must not be separated from the divisions, selfishness and disregard for others that he had already identified.

The seriousness of the warning concerns spiritual responsibility before Jesus Christ, not supernatural power within ordinary bread or a cup.

A person may participate in a religious ceremony while remaining unwilling to love, forgive, help or care for fellow believers. The outward action cannot produce the love and unity that belong to the life of Jesus Christ.

The seriousness of Paul's warning does not establish supernatural power within ordinary bread or wine. Spiritual judgment must not be confused with the belief that physical food becomes spiritually dangerous because a minister has prayed over it. The responsibility is to recognise the truth of God's Word and allow the life of Jesus Christ to govern our conduct.

Self-examination must therefore direct attention towards genuine spiritual reality. Does the person belong to Jesus Christ? Does the person recognise the spiritual body of Christ and the responsibility to express His love towards its members?

These questions cannot be answered through participation in an outward observance. The New Covenant identifies those who belong to Jesus Christ through His indwelling Spirit, received at the new birth.

Every born-again believer possesses the Person and is complete in Him. The Scriptures teach believers to recognise that spiritual reality and walk according to the life already received.

The warning concerning eating and drinking unworthily cannot establish that physical elements impart Jesus Christ or produce the spiritual fellowship belonging to His Church. The bread and cup cannot give the new birth, impart His Spirit or make a person more complete in Him.

Paul's instruction *"Let a man examine himself"* therefore directs us towards the spiritual condition of the person rather than confidence in religious observance. The Word of God reveals the truth, the indwelling Spirit governs the believer's life, and the members of Christ's body must recognise their responsibility towards one another.

We do not examine the bread to determine our spiritual condition. We examine ourselves according to the Word of God.

True Communion Rests in the Indwelling Christ

True communion is found in Jesus Christ Himself. His sacrifice accomplished redemption, His Spirit now dwells within every born-again believer, and His indwelling life establishes the fellowship that outward representations cannot produce.

The responsibility of believers is to recognise that spiritual relationship and express the love, humility and care of Jesus Christ towards one another.

We do not depend upon a ceremony to maintain communion with Jesus Christ. We possess the Person whose indwelling life is the reality of true communion.

The warning is serious. The Word of God is our standard. The spiritual reality is Jesus Christ Himself.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do God's Word and His Spirit guide discernment of the Lord's body and spiritual conduct?

Personal Reflection

What has this teaching helped you see about the seriousness of conduct towards other believers? Is there a familiar expectation of yours that now needs reconsidering?

Action Step

How could you respond to a concern that God's Word brings to light in your own treatment of Christ's body? What will you personally change so that your confidence remains in Christ rather than in outward participation?

"WEAK AND SICKLY, AND MANY SLEEP" - SPIRITUAL DEATH, DISCERNING THE BODY AND TARRYING ONE FOR ANOTHER

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Paul's warning concerning those who were weak, sickly and asleep must be examined through the spiritual principles established throughout God's Word. His teaching addresses the seriousness of failing to discern the Lord's body and the consequences of conduct contrary to the life and fellowship of Jesus Christ.

The warning must not be used to attribute supernatural power to ordinary bread, wine or juice. Physical elements cannot impart spiritual life or become instruments of spiritual destruction through a religious ceremony. The believer's spiritual condition must be examined through God's Word, not through fear of physical food.

The Spiritual Condition of the Corinthians

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 11:30-32**:

> *"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."*

Notice the expressions *"weak and sickly"* and *"many sleep."* These words must be considered alongside Paul's earlier correction concerning divisions, selfishness, disregard for others and failure to discern the Lord's body. The spiritual condition of the congregation was central to his warning.

Paul had already confronted their behaviour earlier in his letter.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 3:1-3**:

> *"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"*

Paul connected their spiritual condition with envy, strife and divisions. Their conduct was not expressing the life and fellowship they professed to possess in Jesus Christ. He was confronting spiritual behaviour that contradicted the unity of His body.

This establishes an important connection with the warnings in chapter 11. The problem was greater than an outward religious action being performed incorrectly. The Corinthians needed to recognise conduct contrary to God's Word and allow the indwelling life of Jesus Christ to govern their relationships.

Spiritual weakness must never be treated lightly. A person may continue participating in religious activities while disregarding God's Word, departing from the truth or allowing sin to govern their conduct. No ceremony can compensate for such a spiritual condition.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why can participation in religious activities never compensate for spiritual weakness or sin?

Personal Reflection

What does this warning help you consider about relying on religious activity? What does this reveal about an assumption you have held?

Action Step

What response, if any, do you want to make where outward participation has taken the place of listening to God's Word? Identify one practice or belief you will test against the Bible, and explain what you are prepared to change.

Spiritual Weakness, Sleep and Death

Scripture establishes that physical existence and spiritual life are not the same thing. A person may remain physically alive while being spiritually dead.

Jesus declared concerning Sardis in **Revelation 3:1**:

> *"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."*

Jesus exposed a spiritual condition that contradicted the outward reputation of life. The profession of spiritual life did not change the reality He identified.

Paul expressed the same distinction in **1 Timothy 5:6**:

> *"But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."*

The person described remains physically alive, yet Paul identifies the condition as death. Spiritual death therefore does not require the physical body to cease functioning.

Scripture also uses the language of sleep when addressing spiritual conditions.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:14**:

> *"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."*

This is a spiritual call to awaken and receive the light of Jesus Christ. Paul is directing attention towards spiritual understanding and life, not ordinary physical sleep.

These Scriptures establish that sleep and death can carry spiritual meaning. This spiritual application must be considered when examining Paul's warning that *"many sleep."* The answer to spiritual darkness and death is found in Jesus Christ, not in fear that physical bread has acquired supernatural power.

James also explained the seriousness of sin and its consequences.

He wrote in **James 1:14-15**:

> *"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."*

Sin must never be treated as harmless. James establishes that yielding to temptation and allowing sin to develop leads to death. A person who disregards God's Word and continues in disobedience must recognise the seriousness of that spiritual danger.

The answer is not another religious performance. An outward ordinance cannot preserve spiritual life while someone knowingly rejects the truth of Jesus Christ. The believer must recognise what is contrary to God's Word and respond faithfully to His correction.

Jesus Christ dwelling within is the source of spiritual life, righteousness and obedience. His life must govern the believer's response to temptation, sin and the truth revealed through Scripture.

The warning directs our attention towards the seriousness of spiritual life and death. It does not establish supernatural danger within ordinary food.

Examining Ourselves and Discerning the Lord's Body

Paul declared in **1 Corinthians 11:31**:

> *"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."*

Self-examination requires an honest response to God's Word. The believer must recognise conduct contrary to Scripture rather than defend, excuse or conceal what God has revealed. Paul's instruction concerns personal responsibility before God.

The Word of God reveals our spiritual condition, and the indwelling Spirit of Jesus Christ governs the believer's response. We are responsible for receiving the truth and walking according to the life already received through the new birth.

Paul continued in **1 Corinthians 11:32**:

> *"But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."*

Paul identifies the Lord as the One who judges and chastens. The authority belongs to Jesus Christ, not to bread, wine or a religious ceremony. His correction must be taken seriously because the believer is responsible for walking according to God's Word.

Notice the purpose expressed in Paul's words: *"that we should not be condemned with the world."* The spiritual warning is serious, and our response must be directed towards Jesus Christ rather than confidence in outward religious performance.

Paul's instruction concerning discerning the Lord's body must also be understood alongside his teaching about the Church.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:25-27**:

> *"That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."*

These words establish the spiritual relationship that must govern those who belong to Jesus Christ. His Church is one body, and its members are responsible for expressing genuine love and care towards one another.

Paul's earlier correction concerned divisions, selfishness and disregard for those who had nothing. Such behaviour contradicted the spiritual fellowship established through Jesus Christ. Those who belong to His body cannot disregard the responsibilities that arise from their shared life.

To discern the Lord's body is to recognise the spiritual unity of those who belong to Him and the responsibility to care for one another. Fellowship with Jesus Christ must be expressed through conduct that agrees with His indwelling life.

The life of Jesus Christ within the believer must be expressed through love, humility and care for other members of His body.

"Tarry One for Another" - The Servant Life of Christ

Paul concluded his instruction in **1 Corinthians 11:33-34**:

> *"Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come."*

The words *"tarry one for another"* direct attention towards consideration for others. To tarry means to wait, and Paul's instruction stood in direct contrast to the selfishness and disregard he had condemned.

Instead of satisfying themselves while neglecting others, the Corinthians were to recognise their responsibility towards fellow members of Christ's body. Their conduct needed to agree with the spiritual unity and fellowship they already possessed.

Paul also instructed those who were hungry to eat at home. Natural food could satisfy physical hunger, but the purpose of their fellowship was greater than meeting bodily needs. Their gatherings were to express the love and care belonging to the life of Jesus Christ within them.

This principle extends beyond any particular gathering. Believers must express Christ's servant life through patience, consideration and practical care towards one another. A person may need assistance, encouragement or someone willing to share a burden.

Such conduct is not an attempt to imitate Jesus Christ through independent human effort. It is His indwelling life expressed through those who have been born again. The spiritual body of Christ must be governed by His love rather than selfishness or personal advantage.

The words *"tarry one for another"* therefore reveal a responsibility that remains important for God's people. Believers are to receive one another, care for one another and allow the life of Jesus Christ to govern their relationships.

Paul's warnings concerning weakness, sickness, sleep, judgment and discerning the Lord's body must be understood through the spiritual principles established throughout Scripture. These warnings direct attention towards spiritual condition, correction and the fellowship of Christ's body.

Ordinary bread, wine or juice cannot give spiritual life or become instruments of spiritual destruction through a minister's prayer. The believer's responsibility is to examine their spiritual condition through God's Word, receive correction and walk according to the life of Jesus Christ.

The Church is one spiritual body through His indwelling Spirit. Its members are responsible for expressing His love, humility and care towards one another. A religious ceremony cannot produce that fellowship or substitute for the spiritual life already received.

We do not fear physical bread or a cup. We take seriously the spiritual warnings established through God's Word.

We do not depend upon a ceremony to preserve spiritual life. Jesus Christ Himself is our life, and His indwelling presence is the source of genuine fellowship.

We discern His body, care for one another and express the love of the living Christ within us.

The believer possesses the Person. The Person is greater than the ordinance.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do self-examination and waiting for one another express Christ's servant life?

Personal Reflection

What has the connection between spiritual condition and care for others clarified for you? Which part of your own understanding does it challenge?

Action Step

How could you make room for another believer's needs when gathering or serving together? Name a real relationship in which this truth should change your attitude or conduct. What response will you make?

JESUS WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET - THE MEANING OF JOHN 13

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The washing of the disciples' feet is one of the clearest demonstrations of humility, love and service in the ministry of Jesus Christ. His actions were deliberate, and His explanation reveals a spiritual principle greater than the physical washing itself. We must therefore understand what Jesus did, what He said and the spiritual reality His actions revealed.

Many congregations regard literal feet washing as a continuing Gospel ordinance. However, an outward action cannot produce the spiritual life it represents. The fulfilment is found in Jesus Christ Himself, whose servant life now dwells within every born-again believer.

Jesus Loved His Own and Took the Place of a Servant

John recorded in **John 13:1-5**:

> *"Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."*

John begins by directing attention towards the love of Jesus Christ. He declares that Jesus, *"having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."* The washing of the disciples' feet must therefore be understood through the love that governed His actions.

Jesus knew that His hour had come and that His suffering and death were approaching. He also knew the authority that belonged to Him, yet He willingly laid aside His garments, took a towel and began washing the disciples' feet. The physical action was genuine, but its significance reached beyond removing dirt from their feet.

Jesus Christ was their Master and Lord, yet He willingly performed a task associated with humble service. His conduct revealed that spiritual greatness is not found in seeking position, demanding recognition or exercising authority for personal advantage.

True Greatness Is Expressed Through Humble Service

Luke recorded in **Luke 22:24-27**:

> *"And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth."*

The disciples had been concerned about who should be considered the greatest. Jesus established a different principle when He declared, *"I am among you as he that serveth."* His washing of their feet demonstrated that principle through His own conduct.

The One who possessed the greatest authority willingly performed a humble task for those He loved. This was not a rejection of spiritual leadership or responsibility, but a demonstration of the humility and servant character that must govern those who belong to Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ demonstrated the life of a servant, not a religious performance through which humility could be obtained.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does Jesus taking a servant's place reveal about true greatness?

Personal Reflection

What does His humble service help you consider about your own attitude to recognition?

Action Step

How could you respond to a need in your own life by serving someone without seeking status or praise? Explain. What attitude must change in you, and how should Christ's love within be expressed towards someone else?

Peter's Misunderstanding and the Cleansing Only Christ Provides

John recorded Peter's response in **John 13:6-11**:

> *"Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean."*

Peter was troubled by the thought of his Master washing his feet. His response revealed that he did not yet understand the significance of what Jesus was doing. Jesus told him, *"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."*

Peter initially refused the washing, declaring that Jesus would never wash his feet. When Jesus responded, Peter immediately requested that his hands and head should also be washed. His attention remained upon the physical action, while Jesus was directing him towards a spiritual truth he had not yet understood.

Jesus declared, *"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."* These words are sometimes used to claim that literal feet washing is necessary for fellowship with Jesus Christ. Their meaning, however, must be understood through the explanation Jesus gave and the spiritual reality established throughout Scripture.

Jesus was revealing the necessity of the cleansing that comes through Him. Physical water could wash Peter's feet, but it could not remove sin from his heart, produce the new birth or establish the spiritual relationship that only Jesus Christ provides.

The distinction is between the outward washing and the inward cleansing accomplished through Christ. No person can possess spiritual life apart from Him. The physical action could demonstrate that truth, but it could not produce the reality.

We have part with Jesus Christ through the spiritual life and cleansing He provides, not through participation in a feet-washing ceremony.

Outward Washing Cannot Make the Heart Clean

Jesus then made another important distinction when He declared, *"He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all."*

John immediately explains that Jesus knew who would betray Him. The words *"Ye are clean, but not all"* direct attention towards the inward condition of those present rather than the physical washing alone.

The outward action did not determine whether someone possessed a genuine spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ. Washing feet could remove dirt, but it could not make the heart spiritually clean. Neither could increasing the amount of water produce greater spiritual cleansing.

Peter had asked for his hands and head to be washed because he was still concentrating upon the natural action. Jesus' answer revealed that the spiritual reality could not be understood simply through the amount of physical washing performed.

The physical washing and the inward spiritual condition were not the same thing.

Spiritual Cleansing Comes Through Jesus Christ

Paul later identified the spiritual cleansing accomplished through Jesus Christ.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 6:11**:

> *"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."*

Notice Paul's declaration, *"ye are washed."* He connects this cleansing with the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God. The spiritual reality is the inward work accomplished through Christ, not the washing of the physical body.

Paul also wrote in **Titus 3:5**:

> *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"*

Paul identifies salvation with the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. This cleansing is the work of God, not something produced through outward religious performance.

Jesus Christ returned at Pentecost as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people. Every born-again believer now possesses His indwelling life and has received the spiritual cleansing associated with salvation.

The believer does not require literal feet washing to obtain another portion of spiritual cleansing or to complete salvation. The physical ceremony cannot improve what Jesus Christ has already accomplished through the new birth.

Complete in Jesus Christ means complete.

The Servant Life of Jesus Christ Within His People

After washing the disciples' feet, Jesus directed their attention towards understanding what He had done.

John recorded in **John 13:12**:

> *"So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?"*

Jesus did not leave His disciples with the outward action alone. He asked whether they understood what He had done, directing their attention towards the significance of His example. The answer is found in the humility, love and service He demonstrated as their Master and Lord.

The physical washing revealed the servant life that characterised Jesus Christ. His disciples had witnessed their Lord willingly performing a humble task, and they needed to understand the spiritual principle governing His conduct.

This is essential when considering biblical examples. An outward action must be understood through the spiritual truth it demonstrates. Repeating the action does not establish that its meaning has been understood or that the spiritual reality is present.

A person may participate in a feet-washing ceremony while remaining proud, selfish or unwilling to serve others. The outward action can be performed carefully and reverently without producing the humility or love it represents.

The spiritual reality is greater than the physical demonstration because genuine humility and service come from the life of Jesus Christ Himself.

Jesus Christ accomplished redemption through His sacrifice, established the New Covenant and returned as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people. Every born-again believer now possesses His indwelling life.

The humility and service demonstrated when Jesus washed the disciples' feet are therefore not obtained through repeating that action. They are expressions of the life of Jesus Christ already received through the new birth.

Christianity is not an attempt to imitate Jesus Christ through independent human effort. It is His life within the believer, producing the humility, love and willingness to serve that characterised His own conduct.

Humility and Service Expressed in Everyday Life

A believer may express this servant life by assisting someone in need, caring for another person, accepting an unnoticed responsibility or placing another person's welfare before personal advantage. Such actions demonstrate genuine humility and love in ordinary relationships.

These acts of service do not create the life of Jesus Christ within the believer. They express the life already received through the new birth. The spiritual reality comes first, and the outward conduct reveals that life.

This distinction must govern our understanding of the washing of the disciples' feet. Jesus genuinely performed the physical action, Peter did not initially understand its significance, and Jesus connected the washing with a spiritual reality greater than the action itself.

The water could wash their feet, but it could not cleanse their hearts or establish fellowship with Jesus Christ. His love and humility were demonstrated through the outward action, but His servant life cannot be produced through ceremonial repetition.

The born-again believer already possesses Jesus Christ, whose Spirit now dwells within. His humility, love and service are expressed through His people as they walk according to the life they have received.

Jesus Christ did not demonstrate humility so that His people would depend upon ceremonial washing to obtain it. He demonstrated the servant life that now dwells within those who belong to Him.

The outward action revealed the principle, but the New Covenant provides the living Person whose conduct revealed that principle. We do not need to repeat a physical ceremony to obtain the spiritual life already possessed through Jesus Christ.

The outward action revealed the principle. Jesus Christ Himself is the spiritual reality.

The believer possesses the Person, and the Person is greater than the ordinance.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must the cleansing Christ provides be distinguished from washing the feet?

Personal Reflection

What has Peter's misunderstanding helped you consider about your own understanding of spiritual cleansing?

Action Step

What does Christ's cleansing and indwelling servant life mean for your own response to another person's need? Name one opportunity to put this truth into practice through genuine care rather than an outward display.

"YE OUGHT ALSO TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET" - THE SERVANT LIFE OF CHRIST WITHIN

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Jesus Christ washed His disciples' feet and instructed them concerning the example He had given. His words establish a spiritual principle that must be understood through the humility, love and service He demonstrated. The outward action revealed His servant life, but physical washing could not produce that life within another person.

The New Covenant brings believers into the greater spiritual reality. Jesus Christ returned at Pentecost as the Holy Spirit, and every born-again believer now possesses His indwelling life. The spiritual fulfilment of feet washing is the servant life of Jesus Christ expressed through His people, not the continuation of an outward religious ordinance.

Jesus Christ Gave an Example of Humble Service

John recorded the words of Jesus in **John 13:12-17**:

> *"So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."*

Jesus began by asking, *"Know ye what I have done to you?"* He wanted His disciples to understand the significance of His actions. They had witnessed the physical washing, but He was directing their attention towards the humility and service His conduct demonstrated.

Jesus acknowledged that He was their Master and Lord, yet He willingly performed an act of humble service. His example challenged pride, the desire for recognition and the unwillingness to serve others. Those who belong to Jesus Christ must not consider themselves too important to perform even the humblest tasks.

Jesus then declared, *"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet."* These words are a genuine instruction and must be understood

through the explanation He gave. He immediately connected the washing with His example and the relationship between a servant and his lord.

Jesus demonstrated that His followers must serve one another with humility and love. The spiritual principle reaches beyond repeating one physical action because the servant life He revealed must govern every aspect of their relationships.

A person may participate in a feet-washing ceremony while remaining proud, selfish or unwilling to assist another person in genuine need. The outward action can be performed without the humility and love it represents. Ceremonial participation cannot produce the inward servant life of Jesus Christ.

A born-again believer may also care for someone who is suffering, assist with difficult responsibilities or willingly undertake an unnoticed task without participating in ceremonial feet washing. Such actions express the humility and love Jesus Christ demonstrated. The form of service may differ, but the governing spiritual life remains the same.

Jesus demonstrated the life of a servant. Repeating the physical demonstration cannot produce that life.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Jesus' example of feet washing teach humble service?

Personal Reflection

What does the difference between a demonstration and the life it reveals clarify for you? What does this reveal about an assumption you have held?

Action Step

How could you respond to His example through genuine service in your own circumstances? Identify someone you could serve or treat more kindly. What will you do as an expression of Christ's life within?

Feet Washing Was Also an Act of Hospitality

Scripture shows that washing feet was associated with hospitality and the practical needs of travellers. Understanding this ordinary practice helps explain why Jesus chose that action to demonstrate His servant life.

Abraham said in **Genesis 18:4**:

> *"Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:"*

Providing water for washing was an expression of hospitality. It offered practical care to visitors and met a natural need. The action did not establish spiritual standing through a religious ceremony.

Jesus referred to the same practice when speaking to Simon the Pharisee.

Luke recorded in **Luke 7:44**:

> *"And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head."*

Jesus contrasted Simon's failure to provide ordinary hospitality with the woman's expression of love. Her actions revealed devotion and humility that were absent from Simon's conduct. The significance was found in the love expressed rather than spiritual power within the water or the physical washing.

These Scriptures establish that washing feet was a familiar act of practical care. Jesus used that action to demonstrate the humility and willingness to serve that must characterise those who belong to Him.

Paul also referred to washing feet when describing the good works of a widow.

He wrote in **1 Timothy 5:9-10**:

> *"Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work."*

Paul places washing the saints' feet alongside bringing up children, lodging strangers, relieving the afflicted and diligently following every good work. These activities demonstrate practical responsibility, hospitality and care for others.

The reference to *"lodged strangers"* is especially important. Washing the saints' feet belongs naturally within that setting of hospitality and humble service. Paul identifies these actions as good works through which a widow's character and willingness to serve were demonstrated.

Paul does not separate feet washing from the other good works and establish it as a sacred ceremony required of every believer. His instruction concerns the recognised conduct of a widow rather than the institution of another Gospel ordinance.

Scripture recognises humble service and hospitality. It does not establish ceremonial feet washing as a continuing requirement for the New Covenant Church.

There is nothing wrong with physically washing another person's feet when genuine assistance is needed. Such an action may express kindness, just as providing food, clothing or other practical help demonstrates care. The problem arises when an ordinary act of service is transformed into a continuing religious ordinance and treated as an essential requirement of obedience to Jesus Christ.

Literal washing cannot produce humility, spiritual cleansing or the indwelling life of Jesus Christ. Neither can participation in a ceremony make someone more complete in Him or establish membership in His spiritual body. These spiritual realities come through the new birth and the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

The outward action may demonstrate love, but it cannot produce the life from which genuine love comes.

The Servant Life of Christ Is the Spiritual Reality

Jesus concluded His instruction with the words recorded in **John 13:17**:

> *"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."*

Jesus connected the blessing with understanding and doing what He had taught. His example revealed the humility and willingness to serve that must be expressed towards others. Knowing that Jesus willingly served His disciples while refusing to serve others would contradict the truth He demonstrated.

This does not mean that believers must manufacture the servant life of Jesus Christ through independent human effort. Under the New Covenant, His Spirit dwells within every born-again believer. His indwelling life produces the love, humility and willingness to serve that His example revealed.

The blessing is not produced by ceremonial washing. The spiritual reality is found in Jesus Christ and expressed through genuine love and service.

Jesus also gave His disciples the command that identifies the enduring principle.

He declared in **John 13:34-35**:

> *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

Notice how Jesus identified His disciples: *"if ye have love one to another."* He did not establish ceremonial feet washing as the identifying mark of His people. He directed attention towards the love that must be expressed between those who belong to Him.

His washing of the disciples' feet demonstrated that love through humble service. The example and the command belong together because the outward action revealed the character of the love Jesus was teaching.

Under the New Covenant, Jesus Christ personally dwells within His people as Spirit. His indwelling life is the source of the love, humility and service that His disciples are called to express. The believer does not need to reproduce a ceremony to obtain that life because the Person already dwells within.

The enduring command is to love one another through the life of Jesus Christ within.

Jesus further explained the character of His own ministry.

He declared in **Luke 22:26-27**:

> *"But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth."*

Jesus identified His own character with the words *"I am among you as he that serveth."* His servant life was not confined to washing His disciples' feet. That action was one expression of the humility, love and willingness to serve that governed His entire ministry.

The same Jesus Christ now dwells within every born-again believer. His servant life is not limited to a religious meeting, an appointed ceremony or one particular form of physical assistance. It is expressed throughout the believer's daily relationships and responsibilities.

Christ's life may be expressed through caring for someone who is ill, helping a family experiencing hardship, welcoming visitors, assisting an elderly person or undertaking necessary work without seeking recognition. These actions are not attempts to obtain spiritual life. They are expressions of the life already received through Jesus Christ.

The form of service may differ according to the circumstances, but its source remains the same. Jesus Christ expresses His servant life through His people.

This brings us to the central distinction concerning feet washing. Jesus genuinely washed His disciples' feet and gave them an example of humble service. His instruction must be understood through the spiritual principle He demonstrated and the greater New Covenant reality now found in Him.

We therefore reject the continuation of ceremonial feet washing as a Gospel ordinance. We do not reject humble service, hospitality or practical care for those in need. These remain expressions of the life of Jesus Christ within His people.

To give the outward demonstration continuing authority as a religious ordinance is to preserve the representation after the spiritual reality has come. The believer already possesses Jesus Christ, whose indwelling life provides the humility and love that ceremonial washing cannot produce.

The Church is not identified by ceremonial feet washing. It is the born-again body of Jesus Christ, whose members possess His Spirit and express His love towards one another.

The outward washing demonstrated humble service, but the living reality is the Person who performed that service. Through the new birth, Jesus Christ now dwells within His people, and His servant life is expressed through them.

We do not repeat the shadow to obtain the life it represented. We possess Jesus Christ Himself.

The Person is greater than the ordinance, and His servant life within is the fulfilment.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do hospitality and Christ's servant life help explain washing one another's feet?

Personal Reflection

What has this helped you understand about humility beyond a repeated ceremony? Which part of your own understanding does it challenge?

Action Step

What opportunity for hospitality or practical care could you consider as a personal response to Christ's servant life? Examine your motive in one relationship, and describe a particular act of humility or care that should follow.

CONCLUSION: TRUE COMMUNION IS FOUND IN THE LIVING CHRIST

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The Lord's Supper and feet washing must be understood through the completed work and indwelling life of Jesus Christ. These outward representations pointed towards spiritual realities that physical actions could never produce. Jesus Christ has fulfilled their appointed purpose, and every born-again believer now possesses the Person Himself.

Representation is not production. An ordinance may represent a spiritual reality, but it cannot produce that reality.

Jesus Christ Is Our True Communion

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 10:16-17**:

> *"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."*

The Church is one spiritual body because its members possess the same indwelling Spirit of Jesus Christ. That unity is established through the new birth, not through eating bread or drinking wine or juice. True communion is fellowship in the living Person whose sacrifice accomplished redemption.

Paul's warnings in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 must be taken seriously. He addressed division, selfishness, disregard for fellow believers and the importance of discerning the Lord's body. These responsibilities concern the spiritual life and conduct of those who profess to belong to Jesus Christ.

Ordinary bread and drink cannot impart spiritual life or acquire supernatural power to condemn someone through their consumption. The believer's spiritual condition must be examined according to God's Word, not measured by participation in a ceremony.

We have not abandoned communion. We recognise its fulfilment in the living Jesus Christ.

The Servant Life of Jesus Christ Is the Fulfilment

Jesus genuinely washed His disciples' feet, demonstrating humility, love and service. His example revealed the servant life that must govern those who belong to Him. The physical action illustrated that life, but it could not produce the inward spiritual reality.

Jesus declared in **John 13:34-35**:

> *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

Jesus identified His disciples through their love for one another. Literal feet washing cannot produce that love, spiritual cleansing or the indwelling life of Christ. The spiritual reality is greater than the outward demonstration.

We therefore do not continue ceremonial feet washing as a Gospel ordinance. We fully preserve the responsibility to demonstrate humility, hospitality, practical care and loving service towards others. These are expressions of Jesus Christ dwelling within His born-again people.

True service is not an outward imitation produced through human effort. It is the servant life of Jesus Christ expressed through the believer.

The Shadow Has Fulfilled Its Purpose

Many sincere Christians continue these ordinances because they have been preserved through generations of religious teaching. Their sincerity must be recognised, but longstanding tradition cannot establish continuing New Covenant authority for an outward representation.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:16-17**:

> *"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."*

The shadow pointed towards the substance found in Jesus Christ. He accomplished redemption through His sacrifice, established the New Covenant and returned at Pentecost in A.D. 31 as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people.

The born-again believer now possesses the living Person rather than depending upon an outward representation. This is the greater spiritual reality that the former shadows could never produce.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:9-10**:

> *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

The believer is complete in Jesus Christ. No ceremony can add another portion of His life, obtain greater acceptance before God or complete the salvation already received. The Person provides everything necessary for spiritual life and fellowship.

The New Covenant has not left believers with less than the former shadows represented. It has brought them into the greater reality of possessing Jesus Christ Himself. His completed work and indwelling life fulfil what those outward representations could only illustrate.

We do not continue literal communion because Jesus Christ is our Passover, our living bread and our true communion.

We do not continue ceremonial feet washing because His servant life now dwells within His people.

The Church possesses the living Christ, whose Spirit unites every born-again believer into one spiritual body. His life is expressed through true fellowship, love, humility and service.

The believer possesses the Person. The Person is greater than the ordinance. Complete means complete.

The shadows have fulfilled their purpose. The reality has come. That reality is Jesus Christ Himself.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do true communion and humble service meet in the living Christ?

Personal Reflection

Which connection between fellowship with Him and love for His body has become clearer to you? What difference should this make to your own response?

Action Step

What response do you want to make to Christ as the reality of communion and service? Explain anything you still want to understand. What attitude must change in you, and how should Christ's love within be expressed towards someone else?

SUBMISSION TO COGMA FOR APPRAISAL

Instructions

Complete this section after you have finished the Study Guide. It must be completed online.

The link is located at the bottom of the online Study Guide — https://cogma.com.au/study-guides/

Your answers should reflect your understanding, your personal response, and how you intend to live by the truth you have studied. Answer honestly and be specific.

1. Main Truth

How does sharing the life of the one living Christ make believers one bread and one body? Use 1 Corinthians 10 to explain why true communion is more than sharing physical food.

2. Understanding

How do the Lord's table and the table of devils show the importance of spiritual allegiance? Explain how Paul's teaching about ordinary food and another person's conscience fits with this distinction.

3. Personal Reflection

What have the Corinthians' divisions and selfishness helped you consider about your own understanding of fellowship? Explain how recognising Christ's body challenges or strengthens that understanding.

4. Response to Truth

What does proclaiming the Lord's death 'till he come' mean in relation to Pentecost and the continuing Gospel? Explain what this calls you to consider about your own response to the living Christ.

5. Action Step

Consider responding to Christ's servant life through humble care for another person. What could this mean in your own circumstances? Explain any response you want to make without treating an outward ceremony as the source of humility.

6. Early Response

Have you already responded to Christ's servant life through humble care for another person? If yes, explain what you did or now understand more clearly. If not, explain what you are still considering or what has made it difficult to begin.

7. Ongoing Practice

How could receiving Christ through His Word continue to guide your fellowship with believers? Explain how the apostles' ministry and the accounts of breaking bread help you distinguish spiritual nourishment from a shared meal.

8. Doctrinal Clarity

How do self-examination, discerning the Lord's body and Paul's warning about being weak, sickly and asleep relate to spiritual conduct? Use a verse to explain why religious participation cannot replace obedience to God's Word.

9. Living the Truth

Someone treats a feet-washing ceremony with great reverence but refuses an everyday opportunity to serve. How would Jesus' example, His words to Peter and the cleansing He provides guide your response to that person?

10. Final Response

How do one body, true communion and Christ's servant life fit together? Explain what has become clearer about possessing Him, including your own response to His Word and to other people.