

Communion in Its Fullest - Part 2

by Derek Prince

Communion is not just a symbolic act, but a real participation in the body and blood of Christ, guaranteeing resurrection and unity among believers.

Duration: 36:13

Scripture: Ezra 4:1

Topics: "Body Of Christ", "Spiritual Discernment"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of recognition, participation, and sharing in the context of the body of Christ. He refers to 1 Corinthians 11:29, highlighting the need to discern the body rightly and warns against eating and drinking judgment to oneself. The preacher also shares personal experiences of discerning spirits and the significance of inner spiritual conditions. He then discusses the rebuilding of the temple in Ezra chapter 4, emphasizing the separation between God's people and those who are not. Lastly, he reflects on the hope and comfort that believers have in the face of death and the resurrection.

Transcript

and the three words that I have chosen to sum them up, are recognition, participation and sharing. I'll say those once more, recognition, participation and sharing. Going to first Corinthians 11 29, for he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks, judgment to himself, if he does not recognize or discern the body rightly.

Now I believe that has two applications. I believe perhaps the word discern, brings out the meaning best. Because in the ministry of deliverance from time to time, the Lord gives me discerning of spirits.

And when this gift operates, I see below the surface. I see something in the inner spiritual condition which is not revealed to the senses. I see in a sense the inner reality.

Many, many times I've discerned in people the spirit of death. I can't exactly tell you how, but I know when I'm looking at it. And I'm looking below the surface.

And I believe that's how we should see the body. First of all, we look at the brain. And it is just plain brain.

Some people like to take Passover matzah, I do. Other people in certain traditions take wafers. I remember in the Anglican Church, we used to partake of wafers.

But whether it's a wafer, or a piece of matzah, unleavened bread. Which is obviously what Jesus and his disciples partook of. Because it was the Passover and they were not allowed to eat anything with leaven.

Or whether it's just a piece of ordinary baked bread. When we discern it, we see below the surface. And what do we see? We see the body of the Lord.

Now I personally believe, that when I partake, having met God's conditions, of that piece of bread. I am feeding on the body of the Lord. I'm not doing something symbolic, I'm doing something real.

It is not just a symbol, it is the Lord's body. That's discerning. However, Paul says, and we look at this a little later on.

Because it's one loaf, we are one body. So not merely, does the loaf represent and become for me, the body of the Lord. That I partake of and feed upon.

But it represents to me, the collective body of the Lord. The church which is his body. And once again friends, we need discernment.

My friend Bob Mumford says, the Lord has got a lot of strange kids. You could look at a person next to you in a communion service in the natural and say, I don't see much to get excited about. You could look in the mirror and perhaps say the same about yourself.

But in this communion service, we see below the surface. And when I look at my brother or my sister on the pew beside me or in front of me. I don't see just a person.

I see a member of the body of Christ. Someone for whom Jesus died and shed his blood. And I have to realize that if I don't appreciate and honor that person.

I am grieving the heart of the Lord. Because the Lord loved that person next to you, enough to die for that person. And it cannot but grieve the Lord bitterly, if you have a wrong depreciatory attitude towards a member of his body.

I believe that was really the problem of the Corinthians. There were many wrong relationships between them. They didn't discern the Lord's body in one another.

And Paul said for this reason a lot of you are sick. And some of you have even died. And I suppose this could well be the major cause of sickness amongst Christians today.

I'm not making an assertion, but I could easily believe it. Because I have to say with deep regret, many Christians do not treat one another the least bit like members of Christ's body. Sometimes I've had to say, I don't think I've had to say, maybe I shouldn't have said.

But I felt like saying, in the light of some of the things that have happened to me from my fellow believers. With friends like that, we don't need enemies. And I don't think that I've suffered worse than others.

In fact on the whole, I think many others have suffered worse than I have. So, we're talking about recognition, about discerning, about looking below the outward and seeing the inner reality, the permanent, the spiritual, the eternal. First of all, in that little piece of bread, is the very body of the Lord.

If you partake right. Secondly, in the people round about you, who partake of the same bread, is the living body of the Lord. The members of his body.

Let's pray tonight that we discern one another a right. Paul says in this connection, let a man examine himself. So led him into that brain, drink of that cup.

I'm so glad I don't have to examine other people. And I'll tell you one thing, I have a full-time job examining myself. As a young preacher, I used to be pretty confident.

I knew who was going to heaven and who was going to hell. The longer I lived, the less sure I am. I couldn't conceive years ago, that Roman Catholics would go to heaven.

I'm sorry, I mean that's the way it was. Now I have some difficulties about Protestants. The second aspect in relationship to Christ's body, is participation.

Now we'll turn back to 1st Corinthians 10 verse 17. 1st Corinthians 10 17. Since there is one bread, we who are many, are one body.

For we all partake of the one bread. Partake, verb, participation, the noun. We are partakers.

In that connection, I always like to read from the sixth chapter of John's Gospel. John 6 verses 53 through 58. Jesus therefore said to them, truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves.

There's only one source of life. It's in the flesh and the blood of the Lord. At one time I lived in an Arab community, in what was then Palestine, what is now Israel.

The town that's known as Ramallah. And I discovered that in Arabic, when they take the Lord's Supper. They say actually, Bidna nishrib dam yasua.

We want to drink the blood of Jesus. That's actually the phrase that they use. I think it's, it's right.

There's always something in every human being, I think, that recoils. From the thought of feeding upon the flesh and drinking the blood of the Lord. There was with the disciples.

At this point some of his disciples left him. And we can't take that kind of talk. But I have always sought for years, to humble myself before the Word of God.

Not to argue with it. Jesus said, unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life. That's true.

That's it. When Jesus said it, he said the last word. Let's go on reading.

Verse 54, he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has eternal life. And I will raise him up on the last day. Now I don't know whether you can receive this.

But I've spent a lot of time meditating on the resurrection of the body. In fact I have a book called the resurrection of the dead. And like I think all Orthodox Christians of all ages.

I believe in the resurrection of the body. It's part of the creed isn't it. I don't believe God's going to give us a different body.

Or one that's another body. He's going to give us back the same body, glorified. Do you believe that? If you don't, I think you need to read your Bible.

Now, how is the Lord going to gather together, all the scattered remnants of a body that's been dead for 19 centuries. Well I think you'll have to direct that question to the Lord. But I do believe he's going to do it.

And it seems to me what the Lord is saying, if I'm right, is when you partake of the bread and of the cup, in faith meeting the conditions. Something happens to your physical body which guarantees that I'll resurrect it. And your body is different from then on, from the body of a person who's never partaken of the body and blood of the Lord.

And when the Lord causes the Archangel Gabriel to sound the trumpet. And he gives the shout that will arouse the dead in Christ. All those little parts of your body, no matter where they've been scattered.

Will jump together and form themselves into one. And you'll come forth with a new glorified body. New in the sense of glorified, but the same in the sense of having the same constituent parts that it had when it was buried.

And the guarantee of resurrection, as I see it, is partaking of the body and blood of the Lord. Let's read that verse again. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.

Not will have dear friends, but has. And I will raise him up in the last day. There spoke a man who never told a lie.

That's the guarantee. When my first wife Lydia was called home by the Lord, five years ago. It was the hardest and bitterest thing that's ever happened in my Christian experience.

And I want to tell you dear brothers and sisters, death is very real. It is not pretty, it is cruel. And any religion that doesn't have an answer to death, does not meet the needs of humanity.

The only religion that has such an answer, is this religion. And I had preached for 30 years probably. But when my wife was called home, I had to sit down and say to myself, do I believe what I've been preaching.

I've preached that there will be a resurrection, that there will be a reunion. Do I believe it. And I thought it over somberly and carefully.

And I said to myself, yes I believe it. And if I didn't believe it, I would ultimately be a hopeless person. When those who are near and dear to us, believers in Christ die.

We sorrow, but not as the world sorrows. Because the world sorrows without hope. But we have hope.

The righteous have hope in his death. Losing a mate is different from anything else. It's like having your own flesh and blood, torn from you.

There's nothing that can take us through that experience. But this message, the more often we partake of this communion, the deeper our peace will be, when life's crises come. Going on in verse 55, for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink.

He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. That could be translated, a continuous present. He who goes on eating my flesh and drinking my blood, goes on abiding in me and I

in him.

As the Living Father sent me and I live because of the Father. So he who eats me, he also shall live because of me. The King James Version, which I'm sure many of you familiar with, says as the Living Father sent me and I live by the Father.

In a way I prefer that. Jesus lived a life of total dependence on the life of the Father. The Father was his life source.

And incidentally when because of his being identified with our sin. He was cut off from that life source, he died. And just as God the Father is the life source of Jesus the Son.

Jesus is the life source of every true believer. As Jesus lived by the Father, so we live by him. Our life is dependent on him.

It's dependent on our continuing relationship with him. And so he says, as the Living Father sent me and I live by the Father. So he who eats me, he also shall live by me.

When we partake of these emblems, we are partaking of the life source. Verse 58, this is the bread which came down out of heaven. Not as the fathers ate and died.

He who eats this bread, shall live forever. You know the most exciting part about those words. They're true.

What always blesses me about the Bible, is most of the really important things are said in words of one syllable. He who eats this bread shall live forever. There, that's it, it's true.

Let's go back to the third aspect in relationship to Christ's body. Sharing or communion. Going to 1st Corinthians chapter 10 verses 16 and 17.

Or just verse 16 really. Is not the cup of blessing which we bless, a sharing in the blood of Christ. Is not the bread which we break, a sharing in the body of Christ.

So when we partake of the loaf, the bread. When we partake of the cup, we're sharing in the body of Christ. We're sharing with all our fellow believers.

We are reminded that we are part of a vast company. We may be just a tiny little group, insignificant in our own eyes, in a given situation. But when we do this with the recognition of spiritual reality.

We see we're part of a continuing group of people, who started in the New Testament. And have gone on ever since, and are still going on. It's a strange thing, how since I've been here these last two nights.

I've been reminded of my Anglican heritage. But I remember that in the Anglican Church, we used to celebrate something which was called All Saints Day. And when I became a Pentecostal.

I forgot all about All Saints Day. I'm sorry to say. And then when the Lord called my wife home.

For the first time, except one occasion right here. When I was not able to preach, because I was sick. That's the only other occasion, in which I've ever reneged on a preaching commitment.

For a two or three weeks after Lydia's death. I just told people, I'm sorry but I'm not ready to preach. And then I thought, that wouldn't please her the least bit.

So why should I sit at home. If she were here, she'd want me out. So the next commitment I had, I went to.

And it was the Southeast Charismatic Catholic Fellowship. Which was held in Augusta. And of course, it was primarily a Catholic gathering.

And you know what I discovered, it was All Saints Day. And you know what I found they were celebrating, communion with the whole body of Christ. Not just with those on earth, but with those who had gone before.

And that was the first public meeting that I participated in, after Lydia's death. Nothing could have been more appropriate. And I suddenly got a glimpse of something, which I would have known all along.

What I saw was this. The real heavy veil, that separates, is not between this world and the next. That's a very fine gauzy veil.

The dark heavy veil, is in this world, between those who believe, and those who don't. I'll tell you something else that happened, because it's really relevant. Quite a number of you here, undoubtedly knew Lydia personally.

I'd have to say, she is, I will say is, not was, is the bravest person I have ever met in my life. But she was a very forthright person. She never said anything she didn't mean.

In all the years we lived together, I never heard her say something she didn't mean. She was Danish. If you know European culture, the most outspoken race in Europe, are the Danes.

And the most outspoken Dane, was Lydia. And I tell you it took some adjusting, getting used to living with a person so outspoken. She used to say to me, you British, you're a nation of diplomats.

Nobody ever knows when you really mean what you say. I took a little while to digest that, but it was all right. Now I have to be careful how I say this, but Lydia came out of the Lutheran Church in Denmark.

She was one of the pioneers of the Pentecostal movement. She came into the baptism of the Holy Spirit, without knowing what had happened to her. And then accepted the challenge of being baptized as a believer, by immersion.

And literally scandalized the whole Danish nation, which is not a large nation. The story incidentally, is in that book about her appointment in Jerusalem. Her case literally went before the Danish Parliament.

As to whether she could remain as a teacher in the Danish state school, after doing something so heretical, as being baptized as a believer. Americans can hardly understand that culture, but it's very real in Europe. And so for about 50 years, Lydia had a running war with the Lutheran Church.

To introduce her to a Lutheran pastor, was like dangling a red rag in front of a bull. About two years before she died, a dear brother in the Lord, who's known to many of you, Tom Hodgkin, phoned me and said he wanted to come and meet me. He wanted some counsel.

So he came and we spoke together for a while. And at that time Lydia was having real deep spiritual problems. She was even doubting her own salvation.

I'd read about this happening to men and women of God. But I didn't know it could happen to someone so close to me. And so I said to Tom Hodgkin, well let me say this, he has a particular ministry, which is the word of knowledge.

And when he's counseling and praying with people, he gets a very vivid mental picture of the person's particular need or problem or situation. And I've known this happen in various cases, which I will not seek to relate. So I said to him, before you leave, I'd like you just talk with Lydia.

And see if you can help her find the source of her problem. And I said, don't be frightened. If God shows you anything, come out and say it.

Don't be too respectful. So the three of us prayed together for a while in our living room. And I said to Tom, do you see anything? And he said, well yes, he said I do.

He said I see a large church building. It's rather empty, it's got stained glass windows, it's got a choir stall. So he said to Lydia, would that have anything to do with you? She said, absolutely nothing.

So I said, wait a minute. I said to Tom, do you think it could be a Lutheran church? And he said, yes that's the kind of church. So I said to Lydia, what do you think about the Lutheran church? She said, I hate them.

I said, you cannot hate anybody. That's not permitted. You have to repent.

And repent she did. And that was the turning point. After that, she came out of the darkness, into the light.

God arranged that, because within two years, he'd taken her home. Let me say today, if you're in darkness, check on your attitudes, your relationships. Is there anybody you hate? Anybody you've not forgiven? Well after she died, about one year, I was invited to speak at the Lutheran charismatic conference, that is held every summer in Minneapolis.

And we had a glorious time. I had the privilege of giving Bible classes to about 9,000 persons for three days in succession. And then they closed with a Eucharist.

The whole congregation, maybe 14,000 persons, celebrated the Eucharist. And I was no longer on the platform. I was very, very happy to take my place in the body of the auditorium, just in a pew with the other people.

As a matter of fact, I said to Jim Jackson, I'm willing to lead the Eucharist or the communion tonight. But if you give me my choice, I'd rather just be a member of the congregation. I like to kind of fade away and get lost.

And have my communion with the Lord and his body in a very intimate and private way. But anyhow this was the situation. Now I don't know whether this will disturb your theology or not.

But as I sat there partaking of the communion in a Lutheran Eucharist. The first time I'd ever done so. In a way that I had never in my life experienced before.

I knew that I was partaking of the body and blood of the Lord. I didn't just believe it, I knew it. And, and now this is what I have to say and I hope you'll receive it.

While I was sitting there in that Lutheran congregation partaking of a Lutheran Eucharist. I had a communication from Lydia in glory. I don't know whether you believe in it or not.

If you don't, you better check your Bible. And this is what was communicated to me. I won't say she spoke to me.

She said I'm glad you're here for my sake. And I saw how tremendously appropriate it was. That representing both her and me.

I took that act of love, communion and reconciliation with my Lutheran brothers and sisters. Not merely on my behalf, but on her behalf. And so for me, sharing in the body of Christ has become very real.

When we partake tonight, in my spirit, I'm going to see all the saints that have gone before. Sharing together with us in this commemoration of the Lord's death. The one thing that unites all believers from all ages and races and denominations and backgrounds.

The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. So those are the three aspects in relationship to Christ's body. Recognition or discernment, participation and sharing or communion.

Now to close, to wrap it up. Let me just speak about one aspect of this communion in relationship to the world, to the unbelievers. The word I would use here is separation.

And I'll read one passage in 1st Corinthians chapter 10 verses 20 and 21. No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice. They sacrifice to demons and not to God.

And I do not want you to become sharers in demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

To me that means that in partaking of the communion. We are drawing a line of separation between us and everything that satanic in any shape or form. Every kind of occult involvement.

Every kind of entertainment that is not Christ honoring. We cannot have a foot in both camps. I endeavor in my home to make sure that we never retain any publication that dishonors Jesus Christ.

Moses said to the children of Israel at the end of the 7th chapter of Deuteronomy. If you take a cursed thing into your home. You'll become a cursed like the thing.

Brothers and sisters I suggest to some of you that when you go home after partaking in this Eucharist or communion here tonight. That you have a house cleaning. Don't retain any little images of Buddha.

Don't retain any signs of the horoscope, of the zodiac. All right, because those things are demonic and you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. You cannot share the things of Satan and the things of the Lord.

Just to kind of bring this to a conclusion. I want to read a passage from the book of Ezra. Particularly to emphasize this last point.

Ezra chapter 4. This describes the rebuilding of the temple by the exiles who returned from Babylon. Now I'm only going to read the first three verses. Because it brings out to me so clearly this issue of separation.

Between those who are God's people and those who are not God's people. Ezra chapter 4 verses 1 through 3. Now when the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the people of the exile were building a temple to the Lord God of Israel. Please note it was a temple to the one true God.

It was his temple. They approached the rabble and the heads of the father's households and said to them. Let us build with you, for we like you seek your God.

And we have been sacrificing to him since the days of Esauhad and king of Assyria. Who brought us up here. But if you know the historical background.

They had a very mixed worship. They had elements of the Mosaic law and covenant and they had elements of heathenism and demonism. It was a mixed form of worship.

But when they saw God's people building God's house. They said come and let us join you. We'd like to be in on this thing.

And this is the answer that the leaders of the Jews gave them. But the rabble and Yeshua and the rest of the heads of the father's households of Israel said to them. You have nothing in common with us in building a house to our God.

Don't you try to cross that line of separation. Your God and our God are not the same. Even if you use some of the same language that we use.

But we ourselves will together build to the Lord God of Israel. Now I just want to take three words then. We ourselves together.

To me that sums up this message. We speaks of plurality. All of God's people together.

Ourselves speaks of separation. Only us and not you. And together speaks of unity.

That's where we are. Plurality, a body made up of many, many members. Separation, no compromise with satanic elements.

And unity we'll do it together. Let me just briefly recapitulate these seven aspects of this communion service. First in relation to Christ.

Three aspects, proclamation, remembrance, anticipation. Second in relation to Christ's body. Three aspects, recognition or discerning, participation and sharing or communion.

And finally in relation to the Christ rejecting world, separation. You have no part. We ourselves together will build.

Amen. For further information and a resource guide containing all audio and video cassettes and books, please contact Derrick Prince Ministries, Box 19501, Department T, Charlotte, NC 28219. Telephone 704-357-3556.

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