

Discern the Body

by G.W. North

The sermon emphasizes the importance of discerning the Lord's body and holding spiritual gifts in the right attitude, with a focus on the person rather than power or performance.

Scripture: Luke 22:19-20, John 6:51, Romans 12:4-5, 1 Corinthians 11:3-12, Ephesians 4:15-16, Colossians 1:18, Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Peter 2:5

Topics: "Spiritual Communion", "Church Relationships"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the importance of understanding the relationships within the Church, particularly the Headship of Christ and the spiritual communion among believers. He highlights the issues faced by the Corinthian church, specifically their improper conduct during the Lord's Supper, which should be a time of remembrance and spiritual nourishment. North urges believers to discern the Lord's Body, recognizing the significance of the bread and wine as symbols of Christ's sacrifice. He calls for self-judgment and spiritual renewal, reminding the church that true spirituality is rooted in personal relationship with Christ rather than merely in spiritual gifts. Ultimately, the focus should be on the person of Christ and the health of the body of believers.

Transcript

Bearing the import of all this in mind, it is most significant that before speaking about these things, the apostle first censures two other grave irregularities which were common features of the general decadence and carnality of the Corinthian church at that time. When understood, it is entirely to be expected that he should do so. In the first of these he applies correction and instruction concerning Headship in the Church, and in the second he tells us about the spiritual communion of the body. Both have to do with relationships; the first that of the Head with the whole body, and the second that of each member with the others. Each is implied in the other, for they are interwoven. In each case he makes his main points quite plainly in verses 3 and 27.

The important subject of Head-covering in the Church has been very fully discussed in a pamphlet entitled *** 'A Sign of Authority', so for this reason it will not be examined here. Therefore we pass on to the second irregularity mentioned in this chapter, namely the Corinthians' wrong behaviour at what is called the Lord's Supper. This description of the meal immediately brings to our minds the ideas of Lordship and finality -- it was a supper.

Dealing with, and hopefully clearing away, the absurd and distasteful practices into which the Corinthians had lapsed, the apostle takes them back in thought to that guest-chamber where the Lord entertained His chosen ones to their final meal in His presence. Their Lord supplied bread and wine, simple twin interdependent elements representing His body and His blood, man's true spiritual food. 'Do this in remembrance of Me', He said. 'Take, eat, this is My Body which is broken for you this cup is the New Testament in My Blood drink it'. Eat and drink it worthily, says the apostle; it is for your health and strength; discern the Lord's Body and keep alive and well, strong and healthy. Come to self-judgement and spiritual renewal; come to discern the Lord's body and to wholeness and health, come to Christ, your food and drink, eat Him, drink Him, live by Him and Him alone.

So saying the apostle prepares us for what he has to say in chapters 12 to 14. By these things we see more plainly still how that God's emphasis is truly upon the man rather than upon his gifts. God grant that, seeing this, we may realise in what attitude the spirituals must be held and used by spiritual men. Truly the word 'spiritual' has first to do with persons and only afterwards with power and performance.

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