

The Communion of Saints

by Paris Reidhead

The communion of saints is a sharing, fellowship, and participation in the life of God, where believers come together to share their experiences, ideas, and words.

Duration: 39:27

Scripture: Psalm 10:2-11, Malachi 3:16-17, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 13:14

Topics: "Communion"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the theme of the communion of saints, as mentioned in 2 Corinthians 13:14. He emphasizes that what one shares is a reflection of what one is, as it comes from the abundance of the heart. The preacher then discusses the communion of sinners, highlighting its nature, grounds, and ultimate end. He references Psalm 7 and Psalm 1 to illustrate the consequences of this communion, stating that the ungodly will perish and not stand approved in judgment. The sermon concludes with the idea that nature itself recognizes its own kind, just as believers should recognize and commune with fellow saints.

Transcript

Will you turn please to 2nd Corinthians chapter 13 and verse 14. The last word, the last verse of this second letter will enable us to at least get a hold of the basic idea that's represented by the theme of the morning, the communion of saints. You notice in verse 13 he has said, all the saints salute you.

And in verse 14, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen. The word communion is a word that is much before us these days in another form.

You are acquainted of course with the fact that two thirds, one third of the world are living under what could be called a communion state. Another third are being greatly influenced by this communion of ideas. We have the word in its current expression called communism, but really it's the same basic idea that is underlying the word as is used here.

For the word in the Greek that's most frequently translated communion means koinonia, for participation, sharing, fellowship, and distribution. These are some of the synonyms that are used for this word. Now there is, as you well understand, a communion of sinners.

You're aware of this. The saints aren't the only one that have communion. There's a communion of sinners.

And in order that we can have a frame of reference by which we can measure what we're saying, I would like to acquaint you with something of what the Bible says about this communion of sinners, this sharing that sinners do. Would you turn to Psalm 1? That's a very good place to begin. This portion of scripture holds before us a warning regarding this communion of sinners.

Most of you are familiar with it, but that you might see it, I would bring it to you. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. The ungodly are sharing their axioms, sharing their ideas, their rules by which they live.

What would the counsel of the ungodly be? Well, years ago, I heard a young man say, well, after all, you've got to look out for number one. You take care of yourself. You don't who will.

Here was the counsel of the ungodly being given to another. Get while the getting's good. Many of these axioms, many of these rules are employed constantly by sinners.

And so blessed, happy is the man who walketh not in the shared experience and the rules of conduct of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, doesn't commune with them by his presence. To stand in their way means to share their company, to be where they are, to listen to their conversation and enjoy it. Standing means not simply passing by in route to some other places of vital meaning, but it has reference to a choosing to stand there because one enjoys what's going on around them.

Then it says, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, mocking, laughing, holding up for ridicule, those who do not hold the same philosophy nor share the same interests. This is something of the communion of sinners. Then we would go on elsewhere to find that there's something further to be said about this.

I think if you would turn to Psalm chapter 10, or the 10th Psalm rather, verses 2 to 11, you will find that he has taken pains to acquaint us a little further with the communion, the sharing of the sinners. The wicked in his pride does persecute the poor, and so the wicked will find justification, rationalization in doing this because others do it. Let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined, for the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire.

He's proud of what he's done, and he shares this. Someone has just recently, just this past week, I read that man is a boasting, bragging animal, and that he has to have something to brag about and someone to brag to in order to be happy. Now this was of course the philosophy of a scornful individual, a cynic, who could see nothing in man but the abuse of what his God gave him.

But nonetheless, he was expressing exactly what the scripture says, that the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous whom the Lord abhorred. This is the sharing, this is the communion of the wicked, boasting of their conquests and blessing those as good whom God has held up to be cursed of him. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God, and so because he won't seek after God, he uses every device and means possible to persuade others not to seek after God.

And thus atheism becomes contagious, and since wickedness is endemic in the human heart, it is possible for this contagion to be carried to others. This is their sharing. God is not in all his thoughts.

This does not mean that he isn't there negatively, but he's not there as one whom to be respected. The most religious people I find are the wicked. A few folk that love Christ talked as much about heaven and hell and God and damnation as the unsaved do.

We'd have a witness going out constantly. It's just appalling to me to hear how religious sinners are, always talking about Christ and always talking about God. Strangely enough, it's God damning people and not saving people that engages their thought.

Hell is constantly on their lips. These verities, you see, by frequent usage, they're trying to destroy significance. This is a sharing.

This is the communion of sinners. This is that which God abhors. And then in verse 6 of the 10th Psalm, he said in his heart, I shall not be moved, for I shall never be in adversity.

His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud. Under his tongue is mischief and vanity. He sitteth in the lurking places of the village and the secret places doth he murder the innocent.

His eyes are privily set against the poor. He lieth and waits secretly as a lion in his den. He lieth and waits to catch the poor.

He doth catch the poor when he draw them into his net. He croucheth and humbleth himself that the poor may fall by his strong ones. He has said in his heart, God has forgotten.

He hideth his face, he will never see it. This is the communion of sinners. Blasphemy, uncleanness, bitterness, cursing, deceit, misrepresentation.

Here is that which is shared. We share what we have. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.

And the person that speaks bitterness speaks from a bitter heart. The person that speaks cursing speaks from a heart that's filled with blasphemy. The person that speaks unkindness speaks from an unkind heart.

The hard mouth is but the orifice of the spring of the personality. And what's in flows out. This is the sharing.

This is communion. It's the communion of the wicked. It's the communion of the condemned.

It's the communion of sinners. Now would you see the end of such communion? Because there is an end. And we find it in the first Psalm again, verses four to six.

What's the end of this? Well, we see that the ungodly are like the chaff, which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand to prove in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

And what one shares is an evidence of what one is because he's speaking out of what he has. In Psalm seven, we come to verse 11, and there we find the end of this communion of the sinners. This sharing.

God judges the righteous. God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turned not, he will wet his sword.

He has bent his bow and made it ready. He has also prepared for him the instruments of death. He ordained his arrows against the persecutors.

Behold, he travaileth with iniquity and has conceived mischief and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit and digged it and has fallen into the ditch with Jethmeh. His mischief shall return upon his own head and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own tape.

This is the communion of sinners, its nature, its grounds, its end and consummation. Now we find that there is another. There's the communion or the sharing, the fellowship, the participation of the saints.

I believe that we would turn to Malachi, the third chapter, to be instructed in regard to the matter of the communion of saints, a very lovely scripture here that's known to all of us. We could have quoted it if we had started, but isn't it strange how often we can quote scriptures that we have difficulty in finding. So make a note of this for your reference tomorrow, will you? Malachi 3, 16 to 17.

Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord and that sought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Now this is the communion of saints.

Upon what do they speak? They speak on that that they've experienced. What has happened to them? They've come to fear the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. And here are those that are just as wicked as the sinners we've heard described. They've done everything that's been attributed to these that are under the sentence of death.

The difference is this, that these are awakened sinners. These are convicted sinners. These are repentant sinners.

These are individuals that have come to fear the Lord, to hate evil, to hate iniquity. And consequently in their brokenness they've cast themselves upon God's grace. They've known cleansing and pardon and forgiveness.

And they meet others that fear the Lord. I said this morning in the class that God put into all of nature a recognition of its own kind. It is true out in Africa how strange it was to go along the highway and to see as we did at times vast herds of heart of east.

They would be together. They'd been migrating. They stayed together.

And a little further on during the time of migration you'd see an immense herd of roan antelope and then the gazelle. Each recognized its own kind. Birds of a feather flock together.

There's something that God put in them, an intuition that says this one has had something similar to that which I've had. And they share together. Now is it strange that when men or women have come to fear God and hate sin that they should recognize others that have had the same experience.

And consequently the communion of the saints begins with brokenness, begins with repentance, begins with forsaking of sin, begins with cleansing and pardon. And consequently there's now a new creation. Those that have partaken of divine life and they recognize each other.

It's not some more institution. It's not some organization. It's not some membership.

It's something that's happened in them. They fear they that feared the Lord spake often one to another. They they knew others that feared the Lord.

This is the ground of the communion of saints. Something that's happened. Something that they share.

And out of this experience, out of this that they've received, they share. Now they spake often one to another. When I find those who claim to be Christian but have no willingness to speak of Christ, I do discover something that is rather appalling to me because there is a sense in which life must bubble, a spring must flow.

And not that it has to be ceaseless or continuous, but there should come to us a sense in which we desire. When I was pastor in a church in Minnesota, we had an appalling thing happen. I haven't recovered from it yet.

First Sunday I was there after being in the day I was installed, one of the deacons said to me, Pastor, we're accustomed to have fellowship after the Sunday night service. Won't you come and share with us? Well, I went and when I got there, I was rather amazed. The table looked as though they were having a banquet.

It was filled with all sorts of things which I never should have even looked at, much less eaten, being so inclined as to gain two pounds just looking past the magazine pictures of these things, you see. And so here they were spread out on the table. And I smelled coffee and I said, well, this is all right.

We sat down, they were talking about everything under the sun except him who ought to engage us. And we sat down and said, well, the fellowship is going to begin when we get to the table. We're just all waiting.

And when we got there, we had a word of perfunctory blessing and then went on about so-and-so's hat and their house and their car. And I began to say, when's the fellowship going to begin? Because this wasn't my idea. And finally, I tried, oh, you saw, I thought I'd break in.

You know, I said sort of hurrah for Jesus just to get the subject before us. Just a little word to let the people know that I was there out of love for Christ. And there was a deathly silence.

And after that had passed off, then they went right back to fellowship. And then after a few moments, I said something else about the Lord. You'd think he was an unwelcome guest.

They didn't even want to talk about him. And the next Sunday when they called me, I said, I'm awfully sorry, but I can't go. I had no time for that kind of fellowship.

It wasn't fellowship in Christ. It was fellowship in congeniality and in each other, in their homes and their families, not in him. And those that feared the Lord speak often one to another, not about the inconsequential, but about him.

Because he filled them and he engaged them and they loved him. And they talked about what can control them. Pastor told of going to a home for a week and that his hostess attended the meetings.

And she said, well, you know, I just can't talk to anybody about the Lord. I find it so difficult. I don't know why.

And then one day he looked down and said, what's that? He said, those are my ducks. He said, you're interested in ducks? And then he had the duck. For the next 30 minutes, she told him about ducks.

All there was to be said about them. She'd read books, showed him his library, everything. You see, she was just full of that which was important to her.

And so since this raising of ducks had become consumingly important, that's what the point was. She wanted to share. She wanted to share what was important.

And so do you. You share what's important. You talk about what's important.

You minister in what's important to you. And when the Lord becomes important, you talk about the Lord. They that feared the Lord speak often one to another about the Lord because they feared him.

And this is the place of their communion. This is the place where they were. And the Lord hearkened and heard it.

And a book of remembrance was written before him. And they that feared the Lord and thought upon his name. Do you have communion as a saint with saints? Do you? You share.

That's what communion means. Sharing. Just sharing.

Passing on. If he's real, then you pass on his reality, what he does, what he means. It's sharing.

It's not trying to think up something very obtuse and difficult and complicated. It's what's real to you. They that spake feared the Lord, spake often one to another and the Lord hearkened and heard it.

Don't forget this. The Lord does hear what you're saying. He said, we're going to give an account of every idle word.

Did you know that? Did you know that one day? It's a little bit disturbing to me. Back when I first started preaching, they didn't have wire recorders. Now they have tape recorders.

But it's a little disturbing to go into a community and have someone say, oh, we've heard you. I've never been here before. Well, you remember when you were, say, at Mahaffey and they made a recording of, well, we have those tapes and we played them all around in our homes.

And the missionaries say, you've been out in the Baleem. Well, have I? Yes, we have your tapes from Mahaffey and we played them all up and down the valley. It's a strange thing to know that you can be two places at once, isn't it? And then to go, I remember out in North Dakota, I was driving along and speaking on two radio stations at the same time due to a coincidence of recording.

Turned on this station, I was speaking there. Turned on that station, I was speaking there and I wasn't either place. I was driving between them.

Oh, it's an amazing life we live, you know. Just think, one day the words you've spoken are going to be played back to you, the conversation in the presence of the angels, in the presence of the redeemed. And God will switch the tape recorder and it'll come back to you.

And the words you've spoken are going to come, words of bitterness, words of complaining, words of criticism, words of uncleanness, words of praise, words of worship, words, sharing. They're all going to

come. The Lord hearkened.

He's hearkened and heard. The difference is where our words have been other than pleasing to him, they're being lost. These are words that pleased him and glorified him.

Most of us have not understood that human beings, you know, another definition of a man is he's a writing animal. Well, of course, I don't like the use of the word animal there, but it does point out the characteristic distinction that men write. Men speak and write and communicate their ideas.

More people have been destroyed eternally by the ideas written down by Muhammad in the Quran. Uh, more people have been destroyed economically by people, by that, which has been written down in books, uh, words, ideas, sharing, evil communications, corrupt good manners, and by the same token, that which is good will be to the eternal glory of Christ. Sharing of ideas, sharing of words.

They that spake often one to another did so because they feared the Lord and they fought upon his name. And our Lord says, they shall be mine. And I remember the day when I make up my jewels.

Isn't it strange? We usually associate this making up of jewels with the little children's song when he come in. But in a sense, he said, you're his jewel. When as a saint, you're sharing what he's given, what he means, what he is.

Now let's move on to one other thing. And that should engage us as we come to the close of this meditation, the communion of his church, his body. And if you'll turn to first Corinthians 10, we will see briefly something that ought to hold us there.

Remember how we shared previously as sinners. And then remember what God did to us and breaking us and bringing us to himself, giving us this new heart and new nature, making us new creations. But we not only became saints, recognizing saints, but he also put us into a body.

The body in its universal sense comprises Christ and all the redeemed of the ages that make up this invisible body, invisible to us, but known to him. Those that are in his presence now and those of us that remain here. In that sense, part of this body.

But there's another sense in which he binds us together in local communities. And there again, the word community means a group of people that are sharing, this participating, that having fellowship. Now we have it here in the 16th verse, the cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion? Is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? Is it not participating in the merit and power and working of the blood of Christ? Is it not sharing in all that was accomplished by the shedding of his blood? This is the cup of blessing, which we bless.

The bread which we break, is it not the sharing, the fellowship, the participation of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body are we are, for we are all partakers of that one bread. Now this is the body. This is that group in which we meet.

So we find there are rules here as there have been rules previously in 2nd Corinthians chapter 6. We find just a brief statement that will help us to understand what's expected of us if we're to have fellowship in sharing. Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion, there's our word, hath light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial? What part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God

with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

Wherefore come out from among them and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. This is the ground of fellowship.

This is the ground of sharing, the ground of communion in the church, a forsaking of all that grieves him, a leaving of all that soils or dirties or prevents fellowship, a giving of ourselves up to this to which we've been called, a being of the temple of the living God, that he might dwell in us and walk in us, reveal himself through us. You see, God's great strategy for world evangelism and for local evangelism is this body, the church, not just the individual believer, but the church in its corporate sense. But it's to be made up of people that have come to fear the Lord, that have cleansed themselves in this sense, as we have seen it set forth here in the particular demands that are made and that they've gathered to the Lord Jesus Christ.

They've come to him, the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of Christ and the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? We've come therefore to see that sharing means to share in all that he has done, to share in all that he is, to partake ourselves of all that he has provided, and then to speak often in testimony, in our witness, in edification, exhortation, and comfort concerning the Lord Jesus. Then it's a sharing of our responsibility, that is a supporting of teachers, a sharing in the distress of the needy, a sharing in the sorrow of the afflicted, it's a sharing in life service, recognizing that the end of our being is not the accumulation of wealth, but the provision of opportunity for ourselves and others to have the means whereby they can develop into all that God has purposed for them to be. I believe that there is a great deal for us to see right here at this point, what is the implication of being a Christian member in the body of Christ, a saint, as far as our life is concerned, our social life, our economic life, these are issues with which we propose to deal in days to come.

But at this point, as we come now to the table of the Lord, it's a sharing in worship with a company as large as this, some 250 or more, as gathered here, it's impossible for all to speak. We would be here throughout the 24-hour period. It's impossible for many to speak, and yet as we come together, that which is being said is being said for us, and by us, and to us.

As we sing, we share the testimony of the writer. As we hear the word, we share in the experience of the scripture being presented. As we come to the table of the Lord, what are you saying? You're saying this, once I was a sinner, once I stood with the wicked, once I followed the counsel of the ungodly and walked as they walked, but now I've come to fear him.

I've renounced myself, I've renounced Satan as my God and governor, I've renounced selfishness as the end of my being. I've received Jesus Christ as my sovereign to reign and to rule. I have confessed that I was so hopeless that nothing could meet my need but his shed blood, and I have therefore testified by my presence here in participation that I was utterly undone and needed his shed blood to wash away my stain.

Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to his cross I cling. This is the testimony as you come to the cup, as you come to the bread, you are saying all is in Jesus, it is all upon him, we are sharing in his blood. Everyone that partakes of the bread says if it hadn't been for the fact that Jesus Christ died, I would have perished, I have nothing to offer.

Everyone that lifts the cup says by the lift drinking of it, I too testify by this that I have no grounds whatever for expecting mercy but that God loved me and Christ died for me. So there's a testimony, but there's more than just the testimony of the past, there's the sharing of the testimony of the future. This do as often as you do it, a remembrance of me till I come, until I come.

So as you eat the bread you're saying the Lord Jesus went away but not to stay, he's coming back again and I'm yearning for him to come for when he comes we won't have this supper anymore. I long to see him, I yearn to be with him and you're saying also not only that you're testifying to your expectancy of his coming but you're testifying also to your purpose to please him. I eschew all evil, I renounce all of myself and all attitudes and traits and tendencies, I declare relentless ceaseless war upon everything in me unlike Christ.

For when you take of that bread you're saying I'm not yet all I'm going to be but he made provision for me in his cross, in his shed, his broken body, his poured out blood and so just as you eat and he says do this as often as you do it, you're saying I'm partaking day by day more and more of the finished work of Christ. The cross hasn't done all it's going to do in me, he hasn't been allowed to live in me to the measure that he pleases but I am pressing on. I have not attained but I am pressing on to partake more and still more and ever more of the provisions of his love and grace.

My what a sharing when we come to the table of the Lord. But of course you know that it doesn't stop here, communion doesn't stop here. They continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread and of prayers.

Might it be that this sharing goes on and on and on realizing that if Christ is as real to you as you testify when you come to his table then you must make him known, you must share. It's the expression of your life just as in life you're hungry and in life you breathe. So you have a desire to share more of his word and to share that which you've received of his word and witness.

Let me ask you, are you a saint? Have you been born of God? Are you living in the communion, the koinonia, the sharing, the participation, the fellowship of the saints? Well you are, you're sharing something. Are you sharing Christ? Shall we bow and pray? Our father before us is this spread table, the elements that speak to us of the communion of his body, of his blood. We thank and we praise thee father that there is now this high and holy privilege of saying by our presence and by our participation and by our sharing that once we were sinners, blind, undone, hopeless and helpless but that Jesus Christ by his grace awakened us and drew us to himself and broke us at the foot of his cross.

By his blood he's washed away our stains, by his life he delivers us day by day. We have a testimony, we are sharing but it's so easy to share when we're here of one mind, of one persuasion, of one conviction. We ask thee father that we may be equally free and at liberty released to share him in work, in recreation, in fellowship.

We believe lord that there are many around us that are waiting to find out whether or not our God and we care for them enough to talk to them about the Lord Jesus. And so we pray that something so wonderful may happen as we come now to the table of the Lord. There will be released a real fellowship, real sharing, that the bread will have new meaning, that the cup will have new meaning and that there will be brokenness where we all must break and there will be accepting of cleansing where we all are in need of an advocate and then there will be a committing of all we are and have to him.

Make this a precious time as we come to our Lord's table and share of his life, his body, his blood and thereby learn something of what sharing will be as we go out into the world that knows him not. In his name and for his sake we pray, amen. you

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24835.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/paris-reidhead/the-communion-of-saints/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net