

Communion And Fellowship

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the concept of fellowship in the New Testament, particularly focusing on the fellowship with Christ in His sufferings and death as a prerequisite for true fellowship with one another. It delves into the symbolism of the bread and cup in 1 Corinthians 10, highlighting the unity and oneness that comes from partaking in Christ's sacrifice. The message draws attention to Isaiah 53, portraying the depth of Christ's sacrifice for humanity and the call for believers to reflect on His selfless act when partaking in communion.

Scripture: 1 John 1:3, Philippians 3:10, 1 Corinthians 10:16, Isaiah 53:3, 1 Corinthians 11:28, Philippians 2:5, Hebrews 12:2, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Matthew 26:26

Topics: "Fellowship in Christ", "Unity through Sacrifice"

Description

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Transcript

One of the great words in the New Testament, New Covenant, is fellowship. It's a word that's almost unknown in the Old Covenant. And John, in his letter, 1 John, he says that we may have fellowship with one another and our fellowship is with the Father.

The Apostle Paul speaks about knowing the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. So I want you to turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 10, where we have talked about the bread and the cup that we partake of, symbolizing the body and blood of Christ that was shed on the cross. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 16 and 17.

The cup of blessing which we bless, it's a fellowship in the blood of Christ, a fellowship we are having in the blood of Christ, in his death. And the bread we break is a fellowship in the body of Christ, the body that was broken throughout his life. He denied his own will.

That's one way the body was broken and finally pierced on the cross. And there is one bread, verse 17, signifying that we who are many are one body in this fellowship. So we can't fellowship with each other

really without individually coming into this fellowship with Christ in his death.

That must precede or come before our fellowship with one another. And the reason why so many believers have a very shallow fellowship with one another, husbands and wives who have a very shallow fellowship with one another is because they have no fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, in his death, being conformed to his death. So it says here, we who are many are one bread and we are partaking of one bread.

You know, when we are together, we partake from one bread that is broken up and we all partake of it, showing that, verse 17 here, we are one body in Christ. But that body was formed through the suffering of Christ when he went through that. So it's good for us to just spend a few moments to think about what Christ went through in Isaiah chapter 53.

Isaiah 53 is that Old Testament chapter, which describes the sufferings of Christ. And remember, as you read it, it's all for us. And that's what we are remembering when we partake of the Lord's table.

So let me read it to you in a paraphrase from the verse two. Jesus, the servant of the Father, grew up as a scrubby plant in a parched field. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing to cause people to take a second look, very ordinary.

He was looked down upon by people and passed over by people. This is a paraphrase of verse three. A man who suffered and who knew what pain was firsthand.

One look at him and people turned away. We also looked down on him once. We thought he was scum.

But the fact is, he's talking about when he was hanging on the cross, all this. It was our pains that he was carrying. It was our disfigurements, all the things wrong with us that he was carrying.

We thought that he brought it on himself, that God was punishing him for his own failure. No, it was our sins that did that to him on the cross. It was our sins that ripped and tore and crushed him.

He took the punishment and made us whole. And through the bruises he got, we got healed. We're all like sheep who have gone wandered off and gotten lost.

What is the meaning of getting lost? We've all done our own thing. That's what it means to get lost. We've all gone our own way.

And God has piled all our sins, everything we ever did wrong on him. Verse seven, he was beaten, he was tortured, but he didn't say a word. Like a lamb being taken to be slaughtered and like a sheep being sheared of all its wool, he took it all silently.

Justice was miscarried. That means he never got justice. And he was led off.

And do you think anyone really knew what was happening? Verse eight. And this is the phrase that sticks with me, stuck with me for many years, the middle of verse eight. Jesus died without a single thought for his own welfare.

Let that sink into your heart, my brother, sister. Jesus died without taking a single thought for his own welfare. And here I am taking part in this bread and cup to say I'm in fellowship with him who died without having a single thought for his own welfare.

He was only concerned about the glory of his father, that him who takes part in this bread and cup, judge himself to see whether he's taking part worthily, whether he's meaning what he's saying, I'm in fellowship with Christ in his death and burial and resurrection. He died without a single thought for his own welfare, beaten bloody for the sins of my people. They buried him with the wicked, even though he had never hurt a single soul in his whole life, even though he had never said one single word that wasn't true, totally innocent.

Still, that is what God had in mind all along, to crush him with pain. The plan was that he gave himself as an offering for our sin and that he would see life come from that, life and more life, and God's plan will prosper immensely through him. And out of that terrible travail and struggle of his soul, he will see that it's worth it all.

Think of that, that he's getting us as his brothers. He sees it's worth it all. That really humbles me, Lord, that you thought it's worth it all to get me and he was glad he did it because he got me.

Through what Jesus experienced, he will make many people righteous. Verse 11, because he carried the burden of our sin. Therefore the Lord, the Father will reward him extravagantly, give him the best of everything, the highest honors, because he looked death in the face and he did not flinch, he did not hesitate.

He embraced the company of the lowest people on earth, criminals. He took on his shoulders the sin of many. He took up the cause of all of the black sheep in the world.

You and I were among that number. He took up our cause. I hope we understand a little bit thereby of what it means to break bread today, to say I want the fellowship of his sufferings.

It says, before you eat and drink, let every man judge himself and so let him take part in the bread of the cup. Amen. Let's pray.

Our Father, thank you for what you've provided for us, Lord Jesus. We think of what you went through on the cross without a single thought for your own welfare. We want to be gripped by that example for this is what we are fellowshiping with as we break bread and drink the cup, saying this is the way we want to live in fellowship with you every single day of our lives.

Thank you, Lord. Amen.

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