

The center of our worship time is our communion with the Lord in memory of His broken and bleeding body, which He gave for us. I try to think deeply about the cross as I partake of the Lord's supper, but I certainly do not do it like I should. I remember that once when I was drinking of the fruit of the vine, it went down the wrong way and burned my throat. I was annoyed by this at first, but then I thought that this was very little to complain about in comparison to the great pain that the Son of God endured for me. Then I began to appreciate that I was in a very small way sharing in his pain. The thought struck me that it would be interesting to see how many people would come weekly to partake of the communion if it were really a painful experience. Let us say that it was in the form of a set of electrodes that we must take hold of to receive an electric shock. How many of us would eagerly grab hold so that we might share in the sufferings of Christ?

Of course, this is just an idea to provoke us into deeper thought about the subject. God did not set it up His memorial in this way, and He certainly knows best. This shock treatment is the kind of approach that we use on dumb cattle that we want to stay within the fence. All of us are capable of thinking at a level much higher than that if we will just apply ourselves. God chose something mental, reflective; we should be able to consider the magnitude of the sacrifice of Christ without being prodded in such a way. The problem is that we just do not think that much about it. There have been too many times in the past that I just mechanically took part in the communion service without really doing my part.

In 1 Corinthians 11:27-29, we read, "Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself." We must examine ourselves and think about the body to be acceptable in God's sight. We cannot take this segment of our worship lightly, for Christ certainly did not take his crucifixion lightly!

Take a look for a minute at the dictionary's definition of the word communion, which really comes from the two words 'with' and 'union'. Webster defines it as: 'A sharing; a possession in common. A sharing of one's thoughts and emotions. An intimate spiritual relationship'. Communion should be a point of regeneration, for in that activity we should touch the body of Christ weekly. We must think of our relationship with Christ in more than just a general sense: it must always be related to the cross. The communion must be a continual consciousness of Christ's sacrifice. As someone once said, 'The bread and blood are to see the reality of the cross. It is not just a fairy tale, like 'Once upon a time in a far away land...'. The communion should be within us a very real re-living of the sacrificial experience of Christ.

The crucifixion is really the focus, or the critical point of all of history. The Old Testament points to it, and we all look back on it now. In remembering the death of Christ we are linked to his whole life, his whole ministry, his whole reason for being here on earth. Watchman Nee once said that the greatest negative in the universe is the cross...the greatest positive is the resurrection. This represents a huge swing in only three days. The Bible distinguishes itself from other realms of religious literature in that it not only tells us to love our fellow man, but it shows us in a tragic, intimately personal example just what that love really means. This suffering of Christ's is the focus of our attraction to him, as we see what he endured because of his love for us. We should no longer ask 'Why does God allow suffering?' He alone has the right to ask that question, for he watched his Son die in agony. And He did that because He loved us and wanted to save us from our sin.

The communion is also to be a critical point in our own lives. We are the closest to Christ each time we partake of it, or at least we should be. We must make crucial decisions of dedication each time we partake of it. We should not have to be jolted by an electric-like shock whenever we stray a little bit off course. We should embrace our part in the true fellowship of believers, remembering the way Christ loved us and died for us, and committing ourselves constantly to the relationship that we have with Him.

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