

# **“Do We Provoke the Lord to Jealousy?”**

## **1 Corinthians 10:14-22**

C.I. Scofield entitles this portion of the text this way: “Fellowship at the Lord’s table demands separation.” That is an aptly worded title. All of our service to the Lord is to be mandated by our separation from the world. If we are not, then our service will be of little value.

The believers in Corinth were struggling with the issue of the past idolatrous worship and it was something that the Apostle Paul both took notice of while he was with them as well as having the issue addressed in the letter that he received from the church (of which the greater portion of three chapters deals with). He brings the issue back to the front in this portion and uses the illustration of the New Testament church “communion service” as a means of teaching the importance of maintaining a testimony for Christ in all that we do, and that He will require of us to account for that testimony while here on earth.

The next chapter in this book of First Corinthians give the details of the “Lord’s Supper,” and the details given in this portion before us give an indication or description of what is meant, within the context of the one right interpretation, when the Apostle Paul tells them to not eat or drink of the Lord’s supper “unworthily” (1 Cor. 11:29).

Many people that claim to be born-again Christians are merely playing at church. When our service to the Lord (and that service is represented through the local church) takes second place to anything else in life then we truly don’t understand what it means

to be a "living sacrifice." I know family is important, but too often we use "family" as an excuse for our laziness in serving Christ. I know work is important, but too often we use "work" as an excuse for our laziness in serving Christ. This text will help us see, once again, the importance of service to Christ, and then service to others as "ambassadors for Christ."

Are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Or, as the Geneva Bible puts it, are we provoking Him to "anger?" To avoid doing just that, there are a few things to consider from this text:

## **I. SENSIBILITY IN OUR ACTIONS – VS. 14-15**

***A. Our actions need to be based on Scripture – "wherefore" – points to the previous several verses dealing with the escape made possible by our Lord when it comes to the trials and temptations we face in life.***

***B. Our actions need to be decidedly different than they used to be – "flee from idolatry."***

1. As pointed out, this text, going back to chapter eight, and carried through chapter eleven, have as their basis the question asked by the Corinthian believers in the letter they sent to the Apostle Paul about idols – "Now as touching things offered unto idols..." (8:1).
2. The reason this was so critically important is because this is the one area that their old friends, and their families, and their neighbors, would be able to see a change in them through Christ. It had everything

to do with their testimony for Christ. So, based upon verse 13, God made a way for them to escape the temptation to go back to that old life in order to maintain their testimony and the name of Christ be not blamed.

***C. Our actions need to be carried out by wisdom and prudence and a proper understanding of who we are now, in Christ – vs. 15.***

1. “As to wise men” – “Prudent, sensible, practically wise in relationships with others” (Zodhiates). From the word for “mind” (φρήν) and deals with having the right mindset for something. “No sarcasm [as some suggest] but plea that they make proper use of the mind given them” (Robertson).

**Romans 12:1-2**

<sup>1</sup> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

<sup>2</sup> And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

2. “Judge ye what I say”
  - a) “Judge” – to discern between good and evil, between right and wrong, and choose the right and the good.
  - b) “Ye” (ὕμεις) – Dr. Alford points out that this “is emphatic – be YE the judges of what I am saying.”

- c) "What I say" (as well as the λέγω – "I speak" at the beginning of the verse) – is not pointing to what he said before but what follows in regard to the Lord's supper

Appeal to their own powers of judgment to weigh the force of the argument that follows: namely, that as the partaking of the Lord's Supper involves a partaking of the Lord Himself, and the partaking of the Jewish sacrificial meats involved a partaking of the altar of God, and, as the heathens sacrifice to devils, to partake of an idol feast is to have fellowship with devils. We cannot divest ourselves of the responsibility of "judging" for ourselves. The weakness of private judgment is not an argument against its use, but its abuse. We should the more take pains in searching the infallible word, with every aid within our reach, and above all with humble prayer for the Spirit's teaching (Act\_17:11). If Paul, an inspired apostle, not only permits, but urges, men to judge his sayings by Scripture, much more should the fallible ministers of the present visible Church do so. (J-F-B)

## **II. SHARING IN OUR SERVICE TO CHRIST – VS. 16-18**

### ***A. Fellowship with Christ is possible and necessary because of the work He performed for our redemption – the "body" and "blood" – vs. 16.***

1. "The cup of blessing which we bless" – the juice used in the communion service is what's in view here – it is that which represents the greatest blessing mankind has ever received – redemption through

His blood; and it is that with which we both are blessed ourselves and by which we can bless others. The whole of this text shows how important it is that we understand the Lord's supper and the necessity of living a godly, consecrated life to Him because of what it represents.

#### Ephesians 1:7

<sup>7</sup> In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

#### Colossians 1:14

<sup>14</sup> In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

#### Hebrews 9:12

<sup>12</sup> Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

2. "Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"
  - a) The word for "communion" is a familiar Greek word to some – κοινωνία – and is most often translated "fellowship." It carries the idea of participating with someone in something. Here, participating with others in the household of faith in remembering the work of Christ for our redemption.
  - b) As the word is used it emphasizes the value of the juice and bread as we partake of them in demonstrating the cleansing power of the blood of Christ.
  - c) The juice ("wine") we drink is to be done

with those in the local body of believers, as a fellowship together with Christ.

3. "The bread which we break..." – the second element (order is not particularly important) is that of the bread (word literally means "loaves") and is spoken of the shewbread of the Temple service, among other things. Sometimes it referred to unleavened bread, sometimes it did not.
4. The whole of this verse speaks to simply being thankful (the word for "blessing" is used interchangeably with that of thanksgiving) for what Jesus did for us.

***B. Fellowship with and for others is possible and necessary because of the same – vs. 17.***

***This speaks of the unity of the believer – both in our local church (first), and then with all believers everywhere – part of the family of God. This is part of the reason I believe in open communion as opposed to closed to just church members.***

Romans 12:5

<sup>5</sup> So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Ephesians 4:12–13

<sup>12</sup> For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

<sup>13</sup> Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of

the fulness of Christ:

Ephesians 4:25

<sup>25</sup> Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Colossians 3:11

<sup>11</sup> Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

Colossians 3:15

<sup>15</sup> And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

***C. Fellowship has a pattern to follow found in the Old Testament with Israel and their worship of God in the Tabernacle and the Temple – vs. 18.***

***When Israel defiled themselves with the gods of the Gentile, heathen nations around them and caused God to be angry with them (and eventually destroy them), it gave us an illustration of what can happen with us today, in how we live our lives.***

Leviticus 7:11-17

<sup>11</sup> And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he shall offer unto the LORD.

<sup>12</sup> If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried.

<sup>13</sup> Besides the cakes, he shall offer for his

offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings.

<sup>14</sup> And of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation for an heave offering unto the LORD, and it shall be the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the peace offerings.

<sup>15</sup> And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning.

<sup>16</sup> But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten:

<sup>17</sup> But the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burnt with fire.

### **III. SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD IN BOTH (OUR ACTIONS AND SERVICE) – vs. 19-22**

***A. Separation can only be possible if we understand who the enemy actually is (not who or what we perceive him/it to be) – vs. 19-20***

***B. The need for separation should be obvious – vs. 21***

Exodus 11:7

<sup>7</sup> But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.

Matthew 6:24

<sup>24</sup> No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye

cannot serve God and mammon.

Joshua 24:15

<sup>15</sup> And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

1 Kings 18:21

<sup>21</sup> And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

***C. The outcome if we don't practice continual separation from the world (as Israel was commanded to do) will be a demonstration of the power of God in our chastening – vs. 22 ("are we stronger than he?").***

Hebrews 12:6–11

<sup>6</sup> For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

<sup>7</sup> If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

<sup>8</sup> But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

<sup>9</sup> Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

<sup>10</sup> For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit,

that we might be partakers of his holiness.

<sup>11</sup> Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Conclusion: What is our life like, as a believer in Christ? Are we more connected to this world than we are to heaven? Do we say, by our actions, that we are stronger than He? Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy, to anger by our very actions? That's the point of this text, and really, that's the point of this letter to the Corinthians – to get God's people, the church (local and universal) to live like Christians.

Dual Citizenship in the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness?

Try to imagine this. It is the year 1944 and Germany is at war with England.

Now suppose you have dual citizenship in both Germany and England and you are living in Germany. How will you be treated?

Conversely, suppose you have dual citizenship in both Germany and England and you are living in England during the Blitz; how would you be treated?

In either case, you would be forced to renounce your citizenship in the opposing country and declare your loyalty to the country in which you found yourself in that dreadful time. There would be no middle ground.

They would have never allowed dual citizenship in Germany

and England during WWII and we cannot have dual citizenship in this world. We cannot belong to the Kingdom of God by living in Christ AND live in the kingdom of darkness at the same time. They are diametrically and violently opposed to one another!

The spiritual war going on for the hearts of men and women in this world is no less intense than the war that took place between the Axis and the Allies in WWII!

The only difference would be the tactics.

The evil one has us by the throat because of sin. He wishes to destroy us not only in this life but in Hell forever where we will find ourselves with him and the rest of his horde.

God, on the other hand, loves us so much that He sent His ... only [begotten] Son to die on the cross of Calvary to make a way for our sins to be forgiven, to adopt us into His family and to give us eternal life.

By Stephen Belokur, copied from Sermon Central