

PARTICIPATING IN

THE HOLY COMMUNION

This is the Cup, this is My Blood!

Paul, our beloved apostle who gave us all the necessary knowledge about Jesus Christ, our precious Lord and Saviour, instructs the Corinthians that we have fellowship with Jesus through our participation in the Holy Communion, signifying the crucifixion of our Lord (1 Cor. 11).

What is, however, noteworthy is that Paul who literally, day by day, walked with Jesus, His Master, also brought to our attention the gravity of participation in Holy Communion and that is that if we should partake thereof *in an unworthy way*, we are trespassing. We are, in other words, treading on dangerous ground. The reason of course being that we must KNOW that God demands of us full surrender to Christ and whose suffering was surely not in vain.

It is then not just taking of the cup and the bread but it is to CONFORM to the standard raised in the Word of God for true Christian living that confronts us when participating in Holy Communion. We must, in other words, see to it that our attitude is right, that we are repentant *at heart*, and that, like Jesus our Master who instituted the Holy Communion (Paul, 1 Cor. 11), we must *walk* the way of *humility* at heart. Not an outward humility though, but that inner *holiness*, the framework of humility. Fact is, Jesus's greatness lay in His humble walk with His God and Father. Jesus was, in a nutshell, then never puffed up with pride.

Therefore you and I, when participating in Holy Communion, must add to our knowledge of and love for the sacrament, also our regular participation therein, the *necessary* quality of walking not in spiritual pride but in reverence and nobility of heart (“I am taking the Holy Communion on a daily basis and therefore I am more privileged, also more righteous than those who don't do it”).

We, in other words, have to lay off our *spiritual pride* for the sign of a true Christian is to follow Jesus along the Calvary Road, the road the blood of Jesus, our Lord, has paved for us. Should we then really be *in Christ* our conscience would have been awakened by God's Spirit and we will then be judged by our own sanctified conscience should we harbour a wrong attitude especially to our fellows in Christ – be they of our own or some other denomination.

Fact is, participation in the Holy Communion demands confession of sin FIRST AND FOREMOST before we ever participate in Holy Communion! We are human and therefore acknowledgment of our trespasses should be salient in our daily walk with Christ for sin separates us from Jesus, pushing us towards the Cross where Jesus suffered for Jesus came with this sole purpose to earth, and that is to save sinners (1 Tim. 1.15; Jn. 3.16; Lu. 1.3). His whole work of salvation on the Cross then hinges on

this whole vantage point.

We can therefore not participate in the “cup of thanksgiving” unless we also acknowledge our faults and our failures *to one another* (Ja. 5), and this can also only happen once we are really and truly reborn for only those whose minds are renewed by Christ's shed blood will be able to acknowledge AND confess – to bring something hidden to transparency, in the open in other words. Spiritual pride will surely go once we realize our own inability to gain victory over sin for spiritual pride is perhaps the greatest sin separating us from Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

As Jesus walked in transparency, likewise we, His disciples, must too. By walking “in the Light”, we will naturally move away from the works of Darkness. We will in other words grow spiritually as we are opening ourselves up to especially mind cleansing (Rom. 12) for Jesus will work within us, through His Holy Spirit, complete renewal of our minds. Spiritual pride will begin to flee once we come to Jesus via the Cross. If we have never been at Calvary, tearing our hearts and cleansing our minds the proper way before God (shedding tears of repentance because of our sinful deeds and attitude of enmity against God and our fellows), our participation in Holy Communion will be all but effective.

Those who participate in the Holy Communion then without screening themselves and their own conscience for any hidden, unconfessed sin, need to gain an *understanding* of the Christian path – requiring of us to follow Christ *the right and proper way* else all our efforts, especially participating on a regular basis in the Holy Communion, will be of little avail. We must cultivate the right attitude in order to gain the proper spiritual result!

It is a scriptural truth that walking the Christian road, a road that always will go *through* Calvary, speaks of true fellowship with God (not man), and participating in Holy Communion this way, implies a fellowship with our Saviour that will immediately rub off on those we are meeting day by day, for it will not be phoney and spiritually flattened. Let's therefore begin to raise the curve of *holiness* when we want to boast in participation of Holy Communion! Let's stop condemning others whilst condoning our own stowed-away faults and failures. Fact is, God knows us inside out!

Many well-meaning believers are taking the Holy Communion for self-gain and especially to ensure *their safety and protection from God* yet we can never deny the standard that God the Father raised when the Source of Holy Communion, our precious one and only Saviour who died on Calvary's cross, was sacrificed for the sins and healing of the nations (Isa. 53).

First and foremost then the spiritual cleansing and healing from inside, and then the rest will follow – our physical healing and well-being shall follow. Many yearn for healing, yet not cleansing themselves *inwardly*! Should we cultivate the right attitude, walking in humility before God and man, we will also reap the rewards thereof, giving us quickly our often much desired (postponed) physical healing.

There is of course also the salient *requirement* of God namely to walk in the path of truth (Gospel truth) for this, once again, is embedded in the New Testament apostolic letters. Paul makes it clear that walking the true gospel way is a *necessity* for Christians (see his *Letter to the Philippians*. See also 1 Cor. 15).

Now that we are bringing Paul's *Letter to the Philippians* to remembrance, let's refresh our minds simultaneously with how *to remain in Christ*, knowing that we must remain *in Christ* and His Gospel Truth should we want to walk the Calvary Road *properly*. And this will always bring us face to face with rejection by many, that is especially coming from those who so willingly and blindly follow in the path of so-called “erroneous” teachings. Something any sincere Christian, wanting to serve Jesus properly, will naturally always want to avoid yet, which are so ensconced within our psyche (through spiritual/theological imprinting brought throughout the ages) that we can hardly discern what God, not man, desires of us today!

Fact is, God's plan for us reflects especially in Paul's teachings, namely that we must preserve the original gospel truth, upholding Gospel truth to the letter. And isn't this always about going that extra mile with Jesus, walking the *Calvary Road*, and so that He can be glorified just as He was glorified by those who had lain the foundation of faith in Jesus Christ for us? (see Jude v3).

Let us therefore open ourselves, whilst participating in the Holy Communion, up to the broader picture of Christ's “Gospel Truth”! And so that we can grow spiritually, moving ever closer to Jesus our one and only Saviour, Son of God eternally! (A thorough reading of the Apostle John's first pastoral letter will prepare us to walk the true way of Gospel Truth). Note that the apostle especially stresses “brotherly love” surpassing glib teachings, and which is something that is often the *result* of a superficial, high-minded walk with Jesus (“I follow the majority and therefore I am always right!”) - a thought that of course contradicts the very Word of God!

We, for reasons stated before, therefore need to cut erroneous teachings we so eagerly claim are not part and parcel of our thinking for we might just have become so used to bringing the message as it was passed on by the majority to us, that we hardly ever want to dig a little deeper, and naturally fearing that we may lose our popularity here below! Let us therefore ensure that we are standing in *Biblical Truth* should we want to embark on the road of “proper” cleansing from wrong ideas about Christ and His Gospel Truth.

The truth of the practice of Holy Communion hinges on a right standing with God (=righteousness and holiness). Those who strive for these prized qualities in their Christian walk, are the ones who are truly in Christ!

In summary:

- 1 We must conform to God's prescriptions should we want to gain spiritually or physically from our daily participation in Holy Communion.
- 2 We must first and foremost examine our own *hearts* before God, that is before participation in Holy Communion, especially done on a daily basis (or otherwise) or else we may bring God's judgements upon ourselves (we must in other words participate in this holy rite *the right and proper* (apostolic) way (see 1 Cor. 11).
- 3 We must strive for brotherly love at all cost – especially extending our sincere love for our fellows at the table of Holy Communion to those who do not agree dogmatically with us, full knowing that God can save the unsaved and He can open the eyes of the blind continually, that is for deeper depths in Scripture.

4 We must lay off the sin of spiritual pride (“I am better than you because I know what to do!”).

The fourth idea on the list is perhaps the most important for participation in Holy Communion for it will bring us nowhere unless we are doing so with the spirit of the Cross in mind! And there is no “perfect” pastor or teacher or spiritual person on earth. We all need Jesus to tie us over to “glory land”! Only He was without sin (Heb. 4/5).

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For more on the writer of this article: see Ester's Profile on this website (the Christian Jewish tag) on www.housealtarnetwork.com

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