

FISHERS OF MEN

"And he said unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." - Matthew 4:19

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Fishers of Men Prison Ministries
Jesus Loves You!

A Newsletter For and By Saints of Christ in Prison

Communion and its Significance



Lord's Supper, Eucharist, Holy Communion: each name we use brings out a different dimension. Lord's Supper, because it commemorates the Passover Meal Jesus ate with His disciples, Eucharist, (Gk. eucharistia, means thanksgiving), because in it we thank God for Christ's work for us. Holy Communion, because through it we commune with God and with other believers.

The Lord's Supper (communion) is described in four passages: Mt. 26:26-29; Mk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:15-20; and 1 Cor. 11:23-25. "My Body ... My Blood," these words refer to Christ's body given in death and His blood shed sacrificially on the cross. When Christ said of the bread, "This is my body", He meant that it represented His body. The "cup" represented the blood of Christ shed for ratification of the new covenant. To eat the bread and drink the cup means to proclaim and accept the benefits of Christ's sacrificial death (1 Cor. 11:26). *Its significance relates to the past, the present and the future.*

The last significance - Holy Communion is a remembrance (Gk. anamnesis; Lk. 22: 19; Cor. 1:24-26) of Christ's death for the believer's redemption from sin and condemnation. Holy Communion is also a thanksgiving for the blessings and salvation of God made available by Christ's sacrifice (Mt. 26:27; Mk.14:23; Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24). **The present significance** - Holy Communion is a fellowship with Christ and a participation in the benefits of His sacrificial death, as well as a fellowship with the other members of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16-17). Holy Communion is also a recognition and proclamation of the new covenant (Gk, kaine diatheke) by which believers reaffirm the lordship of Christ and our commitment to do His will, to remain loyal, to resist sin and to identify ourselves with His Mission (Mt. '26:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). **The future significance** - Holy Communion is a foretaste of the future kingdom of God and the future Messianic banquet when all believers will be with the Lord (Mt. 8:11; 22:1-24; Mk. 14:25; Lk. 13:29; 22:17-18,30). It also looks forward to Christ's imminent return for His people (1 Cor. 11: 26) and dramatizes the prayer, "Your Kingdom come" (Mt. 6: 10; Rev. 22: 20).

Now that we are fully equipped with the biblical knowledge and importance of communion; lets examine why we should be careful with whom we partake communion. The two Scriptures I would like to examine first are 1 John 1:6 and 1 John 2:4. -- 1 John 1:6-7 "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth;" Here John confronts the claim of false teachers that we can have fellowship with God and still walk in darkness. To "walk in darkness" means to live in sin and immoral pleasure. To walk in light means to believe God's truth as revealed in His Word and to make a sincere and sustained effort by His grace to follow it in word and deed. 1 John 2:4 says: "The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar; and the truth is not in him." Here, the Apostle John was contending against a misunderstanding of the doctrine of grace and salvation. He opposed antinomian teachers, (teachers who deny the validity of moral laws) who taught that forsaking a sinful life was optional for the believer. These teachers declare that one can legitimately claim to "know" God in a saving relationship and at the same time be indifferent to God's will and His commands, and disobey them.

The Apostle Paul, at the end of his letter to the church at Rome gives a strong warning to "be alert" (watch out; keep away), to all those who do damage to the church by corrupting the "teaching" of Paul and the other apostles. (Rom. 16:17). Paul, in 2 Thess. 3:6 says, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away (withdraw) from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us." Command is an authoritative word with a military ring. Withdraw not from all contact, but withholding close fellowship. 1 Cor. 5:11 provides the same instructions: not to associate with any so-called brother if he is living sinfully-- "not even to eat with such a one".

Why are we do distance ourselves, and what, does this have to do with communion? We are to distance ourselves from people who claim to be Christian, yet indulge in sin explicitly forbidden in Scripture because such a lifestyle gives a false testimony of Christ. If the true Christian has intimate association (fellowship) with someone who does this, the non-Christian world may assume that the Church approves such immoral, ungodly living and thus the name of Christ would be dishonored. Also, if the true Christian has intimate fellowship with someone who does this, a weaker or less mature believer may misunderstand his actions or example and may be caused to sin (their conscience being weak) 1 Cor. 8:9-13. Matthew 18:7 teaches that we are to help new believers avoid anything or anyone that could cause them to stumble in their faith and lead them to sin.

2 John 10-11 says: "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds." Here the Apostle John was warning against providing food and shelter, since this would be an investment in "evil deeds" of false teachers and would give the appearance of public approval. Believers are to do nothing that would encourage the heretics in their propagation of falsehoods.

Finally, 1 Cor. 11:27 says; "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." Eats ... Drinks ... Unworthy manners-- *To eat* in an unworthy

manner is to participate at the Lord's table with an indifferent, self-centered and irreverent spirit, without any intention or desire of departing from known sins and of accepting the covenant of grace with all its promises and obligations. Those who participate in such an unworthy manner sin terribly against the Lord. They are guilty of re-crucifying Christ and immediately come under special judgment and retribution (1 Cor. 11: 29-32). To "be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord" means being held responsible for His death. *Drinks the cup of the Lord.* The cup of the Lord represents the blood of Christ shed for our sins. The blood of Jesus purifies us from all sins. This is the ongoing work of sanctification within the believer and the continual cleansing through Christ's blood for our inadvertent sins. This continual purifying allows us to have intimate fellowship with God. This is not talking about deliberate sin/living a sinful life style, because this type of living would be "walking in darkness 1 John 1:6-7 tells us if we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin.

In conclusion, I state that every believer must be lead by his conscience and his responsibility to fellow believers. My conscience tells me that if I know factually that someone-or some group is preaching false teachings I will not partake with them in communion, because I feel it would dishonor the image of Christ and what He has done for me.

It's Christ I Serve, Edward

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Yesterday Is History -- Tomorrow is Mystery -- Today is a Gift

THE U IN JESUS

Before U were thought of or time had begun,
God stuck U in the name of His Son.

And each time U pray, you'll see it's true,
You can't spell out JesUs and not include U.

You're a pretty big part of His wonderful name,
For U, He was born; that's why He came.

And His great love for U is the reason He died.
It even takes U to spell crUcified.

Isn't it thrilling and splendidly grand
He rose from the dead, with U in His plan?

The stones split away, the gold trUmpet blew,
and this word resUrrection is spelled with a U.

When JesUs left earth at His upward ascension,
He felt there was one thing He just had to mention.

"Go into the world and tell them it's true
That I love them all - Just like I love U."

So many great people are spelled with a U,
Don't they have a right to know JesUs too?

It all depends now on what U will do,
He'd like them to know,
But it all starts with U.

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A Message from Momm

Fishers of Men Prison Ministries is all about Jesus. It's all about Jesus using inmates to minister to other inmates. There are many ways you can help Jesus do that. If you can write a sermon, tell a Christian fiction story, or write a poem, you can contribute to this ministry. Also, if you wish to share your testimony with others, please send it to me and it could be used as an article and added to the testimony page of the website. Please be patient as you wait for your article appear in the newsletter. The newsletter currently is reaching hundreds (550+ on our mailing list) of inmates by mail and thousands of ministries and families via email and through various internet sources.



If the newsletter has been given to you by someone else, write Fishers of Men Prison Ministries, c/o Bethany Church, 5403 North Second Street, Loves Park, IL 61111. Include your name, number and address, and you will be added to the FOM mailing list. Our request is that when you finish reading your newsletter, please pass it on to a friend. Tell your family about the website: www.fishersofmenprisonministries.com for more information about the ministry.

It's Not About Us, It's About Jesus!



When we say that my trust is on Jesus or my focus is on Jesus, do we as Christians really understand what we are saying. Let me explain. By focusing on Jesus it is not merely saying words, it is the action of a Christian keeping our whole self trusting in Jesus and not viewing anything else. Proverbs 3: 5-6 Amplified Version puts it this way, "Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding. In all your ways know, recognize, and acknowledge Him, and He will direct and make straight and plain your paths".

In the process of learning how to focus on Jesus, the Apostle Peter's life demonstrates this process in action. Jesus simply said to Peter, "Follow me, and I will make you Fishers of Men." (Matthew 4: 19) Peter was a mess after Jesus called him. His focus was on himself and not on Jesus. Here are a few facts concerning Peter's process with keeping the focus on Jesus:

1. Peter rebuked Jesus for talking about his suffering and death. (Matthew 16:21-23)
2. At the transfiguration Peter wanted to build an altar. (Matthew 17: 1-13)
3. When Jesus went to pray the last night before the Crucifixion, Jesus took Peter, James and John and they all fell asleep. (Matthew 26:36-44)
4. Peter didn't want Jesus to wash his feet. (John 13 :4-9)
5. Peter lashed out with his sword cutting a man's ear off (Matthew 26:47-54)
6. Peter denied Jesus three times. (Luke 22:31-34)

Was Peter the wrong man that Jesus called to ministry? Of course not! Jesus knew exactly who Peter was. In Matthew 16: 13-20, Jesus asked the disciples a question, verse 15, " ... But whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus went on to tell the disciples including Peter that He was going to give them the Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven." However, Peter still had some growing to do. His focus was still on himself and not Jesus.

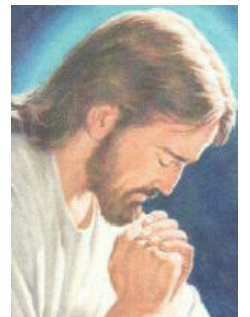
What are you focusing on? Jesus told Peter in Luke 22:31-32, that Satan was going to sift him as wheat. The Amplified Bible says in verse 32, "But I have prayed especially for you [Peter], that your [own] faith may not fail; and when you yourself have turned again, strengthen and establish your brethren." Peter, after being in the upper room with the other disciples awaiting the Holy Spirit, he finally begin to practice focusing on Jesus. He gave the first sermon at Pentecost, and 3,000 souls were saved. (Acts 2:14-41) Peter also healed many people by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 3: 1-10) Peter was used of God to open the doors of the Kingdom of God to the Gentiles. (Acts 10:9-48) After all of this, Peter still had trouble keeping focus to the point where Paul had to rebuke him. (Galatians 2:11-14) This shows that Peter was still in the process of learning to focus. Focusing on Jesus is a lifetime process!

So, how are you doing in keeping your focus on Jesus? We as Christians must become like the first century Saints. They were learning to put aside self for the betterment of the whole, by keeping their focus on Jesus. Please read Acts 2:43-47 and 4:31-37. Lastly, Matthew 14:22-33 explains something very important concerning Peter's focus. Stop now and read the story. When Peter stepped into the water, and walked on it, his focus at first was only on Jesus. But, he began to look around and saw the storm, and he had another thought. Likewise, we do the same thing. We allow circumstances and situations to be our focus instead of Jesus. Our paths can be straight and plain if we learn to focus on Jesus. Read Proverbs 3:5-6 again and put it into memory.

*Keeping the Focus on Jesus,
Brother Willie*

PRAYER by Nathaniel

Holy Spirit do thy will, Holy Spirit do thy will, Holy Spirit do thy will; enter into each and everyone of us and remove anything that keeps us from seeing you. We ask, O Lord, that you would allow us all to decrease, so that Your Word may increase and go forth, and not return void. Hide us all behind the empty cross so that Jesus, may be the center of all attraction. We give You thanks and praise at this moment and at this hour for what You are about to do, and we ask O Lord that You would allow me to decrease so that Your Word may increase, that You would turn every stumbling block into a stepping stone, that we might rise a little higher. We thank You, O Lord, for this moment and this opportunity, we know will never come again and give us a new set of eyes to see and new ears to hear that we might praise You with passion and with power. This may be the last time that we have this opportunity to praise You with passion and with power, so we ask O God that You would rain down fresh here in this place, that Your footprint would be in this house O Lord and lift the weights off our shoulders and give us a glimpse of Your Glory. We thank You, we thank You, we thank You for what You've already done, we thank You for what You are currently doing but we have the audacity to give You premature praise for what You are about to do in our lives. Holy Spirit do thy will, do thy will Holy Spirit and if there is anyone here who has ever been down, but found out we serve a Savior who can reach down and pick you up and plant your feet on solid ground say Amen, Amen, Amen.



WHAT DOES IT TAKES TO FOLLOW GOD?

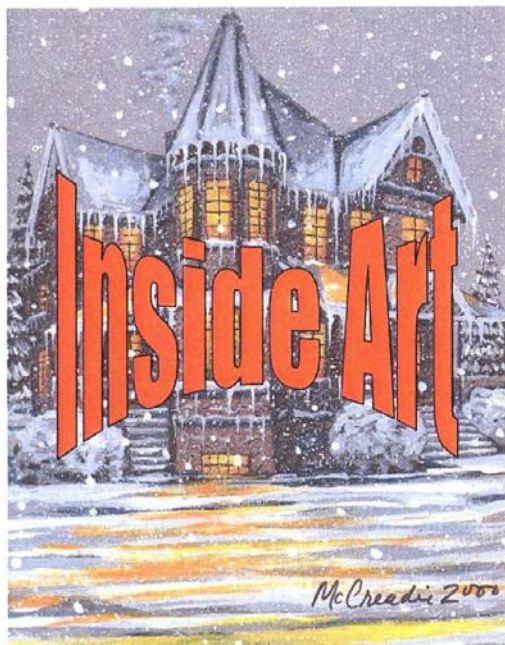


Our love for God makes us want to follow God's guidance. John 5:3 - "For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous." However, Paul pointed to something else that we need when he said, "We walketh by faith, not by sight." (2 Cor 5:7). Why is faith so important to the Christian? Well, God leads us in "the tracks of righteousness". But those tracks of life do not lead to wealth or privilege in this world. For that reason our eyes of faith need to be fixed on the incomparable spiritual rewards that come from serving God. When we look at 2 Corinthians 4, Paul tells us ... "For our affliction is just for a moment, but works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things that are not seen are eternal.

And Faith helps us to be content with modest material provisions. (1 Tim 6:8) Jesus indicated that true worship involves self-sacrifice, which also takes Faith. (Luke 9:23,24) Some faithful worshippers have made great sacrifices, enduring poverty, oppression, prejudice, and even severe persecution. (2 Cor 11:23,27; Rev 3:8,10) Only strong faith will enable us to go through these things with joy. Jas 1:2,3) Strong Faith makes us absolutely confident that following God's guidance is always best, and it is always for our ultimate good. We as Christians should have no doubt whatsoever that the reward for those who loyally endure is far greater than any temporary suffering. (Heb 11:6).

Consider, also the role of humility in following God's guidance. Take the example of Hagar, Sarah's maidservant. When Sarah continued childless, she gave Hagar to Abraham, and Hagar became pregnant with Abraham's child. Then, Hagar became arrogant towards her barren mistress. As a result, Sarah began to humiliate her, and Hagar ran away. An angel of God met Hagar and told her, "Return to your mistress and humble yourself under her hand." (Gen 16:2,6,8,9). Even though Hagar no longer wanted to be there under the rule of her mistress, she nevertheless humbly did as the angel said, and her son was born in the security of his Father's encampment. Following God's guidance means that we also have to humble ourselves. We will no doubt see others enjoying forms of recreation that are displeasing to God, We need to humble ourselves and know that God has greater things in store for us. The words of Proverbs 29:23 say, "The very haughtiness of earthly man will humble him, but he that is humble in spirit will take hold of glory."

*Your Brother in Christ,
Larry*



"INSIDE ART" ~~ Fishers of Men Prison Ministries is seeking inmate-artists to donate drawings or paintings that will be sold to raise funds to keep this ministry moving ahead for God's glory! If you are an inmate artist and would like to donate one of your original works of art, you can mail me at: Fishers of Men Prison Ministries, c/o Bethany Church, 5403 N. Second Street, Loves Park, IL 61111, for more information. We will be send you a release form to sign and include when you send your art.

