

Communion

A Practical Essay



I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world. So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other.

If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.

And when I come, I will give further directions.

1 Corinthians 11:23-34

I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you...

This passage is unique for a couple of important reasons. First, it is most likely the “primary” communion text in the New Testament:

“Most conservative scholars agree that 1 Corinthians probably was written before any of the gospels. If that is true, Paul’s account here is the first biblical record of the institution of the Lord’s Supper,”

First Corinthians, MacArthur Digital Commentary, Moody, Chicago

The second surprising insight we receive is that Paul’s doctrine of Communion did not derive from the church or the apostles; rather, he received it by direct revelation from the Lord Himself. This is truly remarkable, but it is also perfectly consistent with the pattern of revelation in the life of the “thirteenth” apostle:

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:11-12, New International Version

We know very little of what the risen Christ may have spoken to Paul about, but we do know that he spoke to him about communion, which underscores the fact that communion is a matter of great importance to the Lord, and to his church.

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The “night he was betrayed” was the first evening of the Passover; the first communion was a Passover meal (Luke 22:15-18). Like the Passover, communion is a feast of *perpetual remembrance* for the people of God (Exodus 12:14). Every element is calculated to awaken and stir the sanctified memory. The bread, the wine, and the words we speak all tell the story of the Lamb who died to purchase our deliverance from the power of the enemy. Remembrance is the heart and soul of the Eucharist.

Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Communion recalls the past, but it also anticipates the future. The Eucharist has a prophetic function. The Greek word *kataggello* (proclaim) means to make known, to preach, to teach, or to advocate. The Lord's Supper has rightly been called "a sermon without words". Every time we partake, we bear witness to the atonement, and to our anticipation of the Lord's return.

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. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

Scripture insists that God's judgment is present and active at the communion table. Paul tells the Corinthians God has *already* judged some of them with sickness and even with death. The potential is real that this could happen again (34), so Paul warns them to be careful of the manner in which they come, and urges serious self-examination.

It is important to understand that the "unworthy manner" referred to in verse 27 does not refer to our ultimate "worthiness" per se, as it is self evident that none of us is "worthy" of the body and blood of the Lord. It is the worthiness of our "manner" that Paul has in mind, the spirit and attitude with which we approach the Lord's Table.

Some of the Corinthians had turned the agape-meal into an orgy of self-indulgence. Can there be any greater insult to grace than to commemorate the most unselfish act in the history of the world with reckless acts of wanton selfishness, and is it any wonder that this would arouse the ire of God?

Though we are clearly warned to consider the consequences, it is never inferred that we should fear or avoid the Lord's Table. To shun the table is to shun the symbol of the cross. Only His body and blood can set us free from the burden the unworthiness we rightly feel. We can eat and drink in faith because Christ died for the unworthy.

This seems easy enough to understand; yet, it is hard to imagine a passage of scripture that has occasioned more confusion or engendered more eccentricity than this one, which is too often poorly interpreted and wrongly applied. A response to some of the most common concerns follows.

How often should we take communion?

The practice of the church throughout Christian history has always been the weekly observance of communion in public worship. The Apostolic church took communion weekly, on the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7), and the earliest known record of a post-apostolic Christian worship service (Justin Martyr, AD 150), makes it clear that Sunday communion was central to the worship of the early church as well. Those who were the closest to the writing of the New Testament and to the apostles themselves are in perfect agreement on this point.

It is erroneous to negatively associate the weekly observance of communion with Roman Catholicism, as some Evangelicals do. The practice is biblical, and predates the church of Rome by nearly 400 years. Following the break with Rome in the Reformation, it was faithfully carried on by our forefathers, the Protestants. As William Maxwell writes:

“The Reformers, including Calvin himself, were not all successful in restoring communion to its central place in the worship of the church. Nevertheless, they were steadfast in their teaching and purpose, as their writings clearly show, it was the repeatedly declared aim to restore communion as the principal act of Christian worship on the Lord's day.”

Wm. D. Maxwell, *Concerning Worship*, London: Oxford University Press, 1948, p. 25

Reductio ad absurdum?

Since the Reformation, the Evangelical church has witnessed a widespread reduction of weekly communion to a monthly observance or in some cases, even less. The Pentecostal church of my youth observed communion just once a year – on New Year's Eve – that high, Christian holy day! Of course, this is reduction to the point of absurdity.

The most common explanation given for this abstinence is the fear that frequent observance might breed familiarity, and familiarity might breed contempt, or at least a lack of appreciation. But is it really logical to suggest that something beautiful will lose its meaning if we do it often? Robert Rayburn addresses the irony implicit in this question:

“A young minister was suggesting a more frequent observance of the Lord's Supper. The response of one of his members was, “Well, just be careful not to have it too often!” This suggests the belief that something might be lost with frequent performance; yet, I have never heard a Christian say, “Let's be careful not to have our pastor preach the Word too often!”

Robert Rayburn, *O Come Let Us Worship*: Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980 258-259

The kind of logic generally used to justify infrequent observance of the Eucharist cannot be consistently applied. In this case, at least, we would do far better to heed the voices of scripture and tradition than those of our peers.

Fencing the Lord's Table

The practice of “fencing” the Lord’s Table is based on the assumption that it is the duty of church officers to forbid and if necessary, to prevent, unworthy persons from participating in communion. Though fencing in some form is practiced by a variety of churches, it is most often associated with reformed, Calvinistic churches. The following explanation, from the website of a Presbyterian church, is typical:

The elders of our church are charged to fence (protect) the Table. We do so to the honor of our Lord as well as for the protection of those who may partake.

<http://www.solideogloria.org/beliefs/supper.htm>

Is fencing the Lord’s Table an appropriate practice? What is the text actually saying? The explicit emphasis here is upon self-examination. Paul counsels us all to take care how we approach the Eucharist. If we come with repentance and confession of sin, we will find blessing and grace (28). However, if we come, as some of the Corinthians apparently did, wanton and brazen, blind to our sin and heedless of others, we effectively disdain the sacrifice of Christ, and we are likely to run head on into Divine discipline. However, the only preventative Paul prescribes is honest self-examination. There is no commission for others to serve as guardians of the Lord’s Table.

There are exceptions to this rule, and they are important. For example, If a person who is known to be under the discipline or censure of the church* attempts to join the Eucharist, its leaders may justly intervene to bar that person from the Lord’s Table. This intervention would rightly have the honor of the Lord and the church in view, but the question of the “protection” of the errant saint is debatable.

In verse 32, Paul tells us that, “*When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world*”. This means God’s judgment is redemptive. It is neither wrath or judgment to damnation, but the faithful discipline of a loving heavenly father (32). Painful as it is, it is positive proof that we are his children (Hebrews 12:4-8). Nothing in this passage suggests there is any bearing upon one’s salvation in this discipline.

What about the judgment to death, referred to in verse 30? Is this not something we should want to protect people from? If we reflect calmly on the nature of God as it is revealed in scripture we will recall that He is not a God who takes pleasure in the death of the wicked – much less that of his own children (Ezekiel 33:11). If God was judging certain Corinthians with death, we can safely assume these were cases of the greatest extremity. Apart from this one reference, nothing in scripture or the shared history of the church suggests this has ever been a common occurrence. Could such a thing happen again? Yes. However, if the apostle Paul could not prevent this from happening in Corinth, what makes us think we could? Even in such a case, we can be comforted in knowing that this would not be a judgment to condemnation (32).

*Matthew 18:17, 1 Cor. 5:5, 2 Cor. 3:14, 1 Tim. 1:20

The accidental communicant

How much should we be concerned to ensure that only known believers are allowed to participate in the Lord's Supper? This passage does not address that question directly, but it is a valid concern.

Church historians are divided on the question of whether or not the worship of the early church was "closed", but it is quite possible that it was. A "closed" worship service is one in which only members are generally allowed, the "members" being baptized believers. Paul regards the presence of an unbeliever in the church as a possibility, but may also be inferring that this is not the norm (1 Cor. 14:23-25). Part of the difficulty for us is that the contemporary situation is so much different from that of the primitive church. The Apostles and Puritans may have had "closed" worship services, but our churches rarely do. The presence of unbelievers among us is common and generally seen as something good and desirable. What should happen at communion time, when unbelievers are present?

Evangelicals are generally agreed that there ought to be some process of discrimination, so that we are not encouraging meaningless participation in the Eucharist. Various solutions to this dilemma have been employed in different churches, from a simple announcement that this is an invitation to believers only, to a printed statement in the order of worship announcing that the sacrament is open to all baptized members of a Christian church. In practice, most would agree the challenge lies in finding the balance between saying too much, and saying too little. Like everything else, it will be something we do imperfectly and the process may change and evolve over time as we seek to find "the most excellent way".

No matter what we do, if we are regularly hosting unbelievers during the Eucharist, it is likely that persons who do not meet our criteria will find themselves holding the bread and the wine. What should we do? Is there a danger to the unbeliever who partakes?

I am of the opinion that if we have made reasonable effort to construct a "low fence" by appraising the congregation of the terms of participation, we can leave the matter to God without fear or regret. The weight of this passage bears heavily on personal accountability, not ecclesiastical oversight. Is there any danger to the unbeliever who partakes? The spirit of this passage suggests it depends on the attitude of the heart. Everyone who partakes risks having an encounter with God, and it is always possible that the visitation will come in the form of a strong rebuke. How concerned should we be about this? Not too much, I think. We can trust God to be God. The entire revelation of His heart in scripture and especially in the gospel is that he is perpetually interested in the redemption of sinners, not their destruction.

Eucharistic aristocracy?

Who may legitimately serve communion to others? Can anyone do it, or is this function reserved only for a specially ordained ministry?

There are countless people of good faith who believe that there is a legitimate priestly caste in the New Testament church, though many who hold this belief would never use the term “priest” to describe their ministers. I am among those who, for various reasons, reject this belief.

It seems to me the Biblical evidence suggests a practical egalitarianism; in other words, that any believer can institute and enjoy communion if the occasion suits. This is hardly an original notion. For centuries, the predominant opinion of New Testament scholars has been that the "breaking of bread" in Acts 2:42, and 46, is referring to communion. This suggests that the saints took communion very often indeed, as they met together in their homes throughout the week. By apostolic standards, weekly communion may be unnecessarily conservative. As Spurgeon observed,

The Supper of the Lord is oftentimes to be repeated. We find that the early Christians very frequently broke bread together; I think they did so almost every day. It is recorded, by some of the early fathers, that the first Christians seldom met together, on any day of the week, without commemorating the death of Christ.

C.H. Spurgeon, Fencing The Table, <http://www.biblebb.com/files/spurgeon/2865.htm>

This is true, and there is nothing to suggest this only happened when an “ordained” minister was present, and it is highly doubtful whether at this time there were enough of them to go around anyway. One looks in vain to find any suggestion in scripture that communion can only be administered by those with special religious authority. The assumption that communion is not valid unless it passes through the hands of a specially authorized person is a distinctly “priestly” view of ministry, whether we use the term or not. With respect for those who differ, this is an assumption we do not all share, and it does not appear that scripture requires us to.

This is not to suggest a lack of respect or appreciation for the unique role of the ordained ministry. For example, egalitarianism would not be the rule in public worship or any meeting where the leaders of the church are directing the proceedings. At such a time, decency and order would dictate that they preside over the Lord’s Table. However, there is no warrant for the assumption that their services are required to legitimize the Eucharist in our homes, or that the average believer is forbidden to break the bread with his friends and family.

Minor Issues

What About the Bread?

Does it matter what type of bread we use in communion? We have already noted that the Eucharist was instituted in the context a Passover meal, and some believe the bread Jesus broke on that fateful night must have been unleavened bread.

Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were held in immediate sequence. These are distinctly different holidays falling on different days; however, due to their closeness they are usually treated as one festival. (The scriptures seem to teach that these are two names for the same festival. See Exodus 13:3-8.)

http://biblicaltholidays.com/unleavened_bread.htm

Unleavened bread is a biblical symbol rich with meaning and of course, Communion is a symbolic meal. If we are persuaded our Lord used unleavened bread and wish to maximize our identification with the original symbolism, we may prefer to use unleavened bread in the Eucharist.

However, we cannot be dogmatic about the use of unleavened bread. In the first place, faith and orthodoxy do not require it. Christian history shows Roman Catholics using only unleavened bread, leavened bread favored by the churches of the east, and Protestants regularly using both. Obviously, there has never been a clear consensus!

Further, we cannot be certain Jesus even used unleavened bread at the last supper. The Coptic Church is one of the most ancient and venerable Christian traditions, and like most Orthodox churches, possesses a unique grasp of the historic roots of our faith. They argue convincingly that Jesus would have used *leavened* bread at the Last Supper:

The bread should be leavened because the sacrament was instituted at a time when all Jews were using leavened bread. The law ordered that Israel should feast on the evening of the 14th day of the month, and begin to eat unleavened bread at the time of the eating the Passover (See Exodus 12:6, 18, 19). The 14th day was called the Passover, and the unleavened seven days were to begin at the evening of this 14th day. Jesus instituted on the 13th day of the month "before the feast of the Passover." (John 13:1). In addition, the Bible states that our Lord "took bread and blessed it." (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:23, etc.). Whenever the word "bread" is used, it means leavened bread, i.e. ordinary bread.

<http://www.stathanasius.miss.on.coptorthodox.ca/Menu/YouthCorner/Dogma/Communion.htm>

Clearly, a diversity of opinion abounds, calling to mind the ancient credo, "In essentials, unity – in non-essentials, liberty – in all things, charity".

We are inclined to agree with Nigel B. Mitchell, who writes,

At the last supper, Jesus probably used unleavened bread and fermented wine...If we are to follow Jesus' instructions to 'do this in remembrance of me...' as accurately as possible, then we too should use unleavened bread and fermented wine. ...Many modern churches use grape juice and leavened bread for communion. They are still following the Lord's command, and the essential nature of what they are using (Bread, 'wine') is the same. Few people would suggest that communion with leavened bread and unfermented grape juice is not communion, although we may wish to argue about which is ideal.

<http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/8995.htm>

In the final analysis, one of the great beauties of the Eucharist is its universal nature. The first Communion was celebrated with things at hand, things that were a part of the ordinary household at the time. Ultimately, the essence of communion is not found in the composition of the earthly elements, but in the heavenly grace we experience by taking them in faith.

And What About the Wine?

Though some would dispute it, there is general agreement among New Testament Scholars that Christ and the apostles celebrated the first Communion with real, fermented wine. This has been the operating assumption, and the prevailing practice, throughout most of Christian history. Today some prefer, for reasons of conscience, to celebrate the Eucharist with unfermented wine, or grape juice. Out of respect for others, the church I worship with makes both wine and juice available at communion time.

Our preference in this should not be a cause of division among Christians, and we ought to be free to debate the matter without conflict. In promoting our preference however, we must be careful to use the scriptures in a respectful and coherent manner.

Whatever our views on abstinence or prohibition, it is simply not credible to suggest that the “wine” of the New Testament was not really wine. It should be evident that Christ was not called a drunkard for drinking grape juice (Luke 7:34). Church elders are not warned about addiction to grape juice (I Timothy 3:3), and as the text we have been considering clearly shows, the Corinthians actually got drunk at a communion service (I Corinthians 11:20-21), something that is impossible to do without alcohol!

We should note, for what its worth, that the current doctrine of prohibition is a recent development in the history of the church, which owes most of its energy to the Wesleyan revivals. Wherever we stand, we must be careful to maintain balance. It is easy to prove that scripture condemns the drunkard, but much harder to show that all drinking is condemned. Christ himself provided more than one hundred and twenty gallons of high quality wine for his merry-making friends (John 2:6,cf: 2:10).

My aim is not to promote drinking, but honesty. There are credible reasons for choosing to abstain from alcohol, but the case is not served by manipulating scripture, or by lending biblical credibility to obscure Talmudic references.

For the fullest and best treatment of this subject in print, see “The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages, a Biblical Perspective”, Kenneth I. Gentry, (Baker Books)

SUMMARY NOTES, Abbreviated

What is “communion”?

Communion, which is also referred to as the Lord’s Supper, is the sharing of a symbolic meal, consisting of bread and wine, which is partaken of in remembrance of the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ for us (I Corinthians 10:16, 11: 26).

Why should we take communion?

Because the Lord said so! Communion was given to the church by Christ himself, and it is He who instructed us to carry it on. If we believe the Bible, this is reason enough for us to hold its observance in high regard. The institution of the Lord’s Supper is well attested to in scripture, being recorded in three of the Gospels (Matt. 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-20) and in one of the Epistles (I Cor. 11:23-34).

Who should take communion?

Communion is for all believers, and every one should partake of the Lord’s Supper. Children should participate, at their parents’ discretion.

When should we take communion?

The New Testament church took communion weekly, on the Lord’s day (Acts 20:7). This has clearly been the practice of the church throughout most of Christian history. However, since the Reformation, some, but not all, churches have adopted the practice of allowing longer intervals between the observance of the Lord’s Supper. While we sincerely respect those who differ with us on this point, we believe that those who oppose weekly communion do so wrongly for the following reasons:

- **Scripture bears witness to the practice of weekly communion.¹**
- **The early church practiced weekly communion.²**
- **The Protestant reformers advocated weekly communion.³**
- **Most arguments against weekly communion derive from human reasoning, and not from scripture.⁴**

The Bread and the Wine and...

Originally, the Lord’s Supper consisted of literal bread and wine. Accordingly, we set the table with fresh bread and wine. We are aware however, that the presence of fermented wine, though consistent with scripture,⁵ is a delicate point of conscience to some of our brothers and sisters in Christ. For this reason, we offer the choice of unfermented juice to those who prefer it, so as not to cause offense. The drink is served in real cups to allow families and/or friends to share in the preferred biblical symbolism of the common cup (Lk. 22:17).

Biblical Symbolism

We encourage the head of each household to break the bread to his/her family. We also provide a sufficient number of cups so that others may partake individually. Our desire is to

faithfully preserve the proper scriptural symbolism of the Lord's table while honoring, as much as possible, the convictions of other Christians.

Come to the table!

The scriptures make it clear that the Lord's table is a sacred place. In communion, God meets His people in a special way. The bread we break, and the cup we take, have an awesome and holy significance as we partake of them with reverence and faith (I Cor. 10:16-17). When we eat the Lord's Supper, we proclaim the power of the Lord's death, and we express our profound gratitude for the body and blood of Christ. Communion is for all believers, at all times.⁶ It is for *you*. Come to the table, and be blessed!

*“Come to the table of mercy, prepared with the wine and the bread,
All who are hungry and thirsty, Come and your souls will be fed.
Come at the Lord's invitation, Receive from His nail-scarred hand.
Eat of the bread of salvation, Drink of the blood of the Lamb.”**

*Claire Cloninger & Martin Nystrom C 1991,



End Notes

1. See Acts 20:7, I Cor. 11:17-20, cf: 16:2.
2. The earliest known record of a post-apostolic Christian worship service (**Justin Martyr, AD 150**), makes it clear that Sunday communion was central to the worship of the early church. This and other similar examples show that those who were the closest to the New Testament and to the apostles themselves were in agreement on this point. Throughout the history of the church, from the earliest times, the predominant practice has been weekly communion.
3. “The Reformers, including Calvin himself, were unsuccessful in restoring communion to its central place in the worship of the church. Nevertheless, they were steadfast in their teaching and purpose, as their writings clearly show..it was the repeatedly declared aim to restore communion as the principal act of Christian worship on the Lord's day.”
[Wm. D. Maxwell, Concerning Worship, London: Oxford University. Press, 1948, p. 25]
4. For example, the argument that communion becomes meaningless with weekly observance. It is a logical absurdity to suggest that something beautiful loses its beauty through frequent experience. If this is true at all, then we ought to severely limit the number of times we gather for worship, lest it too should become meaningless! Of course, this is ridiculous. As Robert Rayburn fitly observes, “*Not long ago, a young minister...was suggesting to his congregation a more frequent observance of the Lord's Supper. The response of one of his members was, “Well, just be careful not to have it too often!” This suggests the belief that there is something in the act itself which produces certain*

consequences which might be lost with frequent performance. Yet I have never heard a Christian say, "Let's be careful not to have our pastor preach the Word too often." Of course not. Such "logic" cannot be consistently applied.

[O Come Let Us Worship: Corporate Worship in the Evangelical Church, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980, pps. 258-259]

5. The current inclination to Christian prohibition does not derive from the historic faith. For the most part, our Christians forebears were rarely "tea-tollers". Even the notoriously upright (some might say "up-tight") Puritans were fond of brewing, wine-making, and distilling; evidence of this abounds in their writings. The notion of prohibition owes everything to Wesley and the Pietists. Though this position has been championed in the (baptistic) west, and widely exported through missionary activity, it has never been the predominant view of believers worldwide. Love compels us to honor the scruples of others, but we must never make abstinence an article of the faith. Whatever our view on the matter, there is no warrant in the desperate argument that the "wine" of the New Testament was not really *wine*. Christ was not called a drunkard for drinking grape juice (Luke 7:34). Does anyone really believe that our elders are being warned about addiction to *grape juice* (I Timothy 3:3)? The Corinthians actually got *drunk* at a communion service (I Corinthians 11:20-21). Of course, such behavior is rightly condemned; but we must take care remember it is drunkenness, not wine, which is condemned. A balanced view is important to Christian liberty; and there are liturgical and symbolic implications to consider as well. The communion elements are symbolic, and as Dr. Gary North suggests, we may wish to reconsider whether grape juice is an adequate symbol, being (as it were) wine with no "spirit" – a harmless, "neutered" drink, which begs the question; is this an adequate symbol of the blood of Christ? It is worth thinking about. It is also true grape juice does not split wine-skins. Only fermenting (potent) wine can do that. Our position is that wine should always be offered, and grape juice made available for the weaker brother (Romans 14:1-2, 15:1). In any case, we should be aware that the modern (baptistic) position of absolute prohibition from alcohol is an new development in the history of Christianity, and even a casual student can readily confirm this for himself. We believe this is an issue which Christians should debate, but not divide over. For the fullest and best treatment of this subject in print, see **"The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages, a Biblical Perspective"**, Kenneth I. Gentry, (Baker Books)

6. Christians who can lightly pass on the observance of communion during a worship service, or who have the audacity to actually *leave* at the time of its administration, show themselves to be unlearned at least, and apallingly irreverent at most. A casual disregard for the portent of this sacred moment is one of the more blatant symptoms of the theological dysfunction which afflicts modern Christians, especially Americans. **SP**

End-Note:

*For a more in-depth look at the biblical teaching about the Lord's supper, see my essay, "The Spiritual Benefits of Communion: A look at First Corinthians 11:23-34." **SP***