

Sharing in Christ
I Corinthians 10:14-21

Most of the time when we come to the Lord's Table, we focus on the wonderful promises of forgiveness that Jesus offers to those who trust in Him. We rightly remember how Jesus said, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." We rejoice that Christ's blood is sufficient to wash away all the sins of all His people for all eternity. The Lord's Supper is thus about forgiveness.

That's good news, and that's why we rejoice whenever we come to the Lord's Table, just as we rejoice whenever we gather around these tables here at Grand Gulf Park. But Paul points us to the reality that our rejoicing really should be for the same reason.

Why do we look forward to our Grand Gulf outings? I know that the food is spectacular, but we also enjoy having so much time with one another, time to catch up on what's going on, time to see friends and family from out of town, time to be together. Today, we have the special benefit of celebrating our connections with our partner presbytery in Northeast Brazil.

And that's what Paul says is one of the central meanings of the Lord's Supper. He says that because we all partake of one bread and one cup, we are all part of one body. We are connected to each other spiritually, just as much as we are socially.

But the reason that we are connected spiritually isn't just because we are gathered around the same tables, eating the same food. No, we are all one body because as we partake of the Lord's Supper with faith in Christ, we are one with Christ. If we share in His blood, we are one with Him. If we share in His body, we are one with Him. If we are connected to one another it is only because we are first united to Christ.

And now we can see why Paul joins the topic of the Lord's Supper to the topic of avoiding idolatry. We should avoid idols in our lives, we should avoid anything that we put ahead of Christ Himself, precisely because we are already one with Christ. If we are close enough to Him to be part of His body, how can we also push Him away through our rebellious idolatry? If we are one with Christ, we must do nothing against His will.

But what's the big deal? After all, when we are covered with the blood of Christ, we are forgiven of our sins, right? Don't we celebrate such forgiveness when we take the Lord's Supper? If we are forgiven, why should we be so concerned about the sin that remains in our lives? Sure, sin is inconsistent with the Christian life, but is such inconsistency so bad?

Well, yes, it is, and for the same reason that treason is especially bad during wartime. When your country is at war, it's not just poor form or bad taste to help your enemies. No, helping your country's enemies means that your fellow citizens or soldiers could be killed.

That's why treason deserves the death penalty. When you are a traitor, you are conspiring to kill your own friends and relatives. Nothing could be more despicable.

And Paul says that the same thing is true about sin in the Christian life. We all say we love Jesus. We all say we love one another. We enjoy fellowship around the Lord's table just as we enjoy fellowship around these tables, celebrating our unity. But if we leave this place and turn back to lives of impurity and sin, Paul says that's the same thing as sitting down at a table with demons, with the enemies of God.

How can that be true? Think about it. Whenever we sin we are saying that our will is more important than Christ's will. Whenever we sin, we thus put distance between us and Jesus. Whenever we sin, we move away from Christ and His will. And if we move away from Christ, we must therefore move toward the demons, who are at war with Christ.

And that's true even of internal, personal sins. Whenever we are dissatisfied or discouraged, we are denying His love. Whenever we fall into temptation we are denying His power. Whenever we sin, no matter in what particular way, we thus turn away from Christ. We stop doing His will. And that means we are helping the demons.

Why is that? Because there can be no neutrality on a battlefield. If you are not actively in the fight, listening to your commander and carrying out his orders, that means you are helping the enemy. Even if you just sit down in the trench, at best you form an obstacle to those on your side, and at worst you demoralize them.

In a few minutes, we are going to celebrate the Lord's Supper together. We are going to make a physical, visible statement of how our faith unites us to Christ and to one another. In a few more minutes we are going to have lunch together. That will be another physical, visible statement of our oneness and of our love.

But let's not leave that oneness here at Grand Gulf. Let's take our oneness seriously all week. Let's not let anything come between us and Christ. Let's not let anything come between us and others. And let's get about the business of following Christ, wherever He may lead.