

We Are One Body

Communion Service

#0630

Study given by W.D. Frazee—July 13, 1968

I invite your attention to 1 Corinthians, the 10th chapter, verses 15-17. Here is a wonderful text for this communion service:

“I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” 1 Corinthians 10:15-17.

The message of this text is the communion message, and I would like to lift from that 17th verse three words, We are one—we are one. First, we are united among ourselves as those who participate in this service this afternoon. We are one body. Second, we are united with the church universal—we are one body—elect, in every nation, yet one ‘oer all the earth. We are one body.

And when I say this, I do not mean that we are part of the great ecumenical movement. The book of Revelation presents in the final view of the final conflict two churches under the symbol of two women. The first is pictured in Revelation 12; the second in Revelation 17. Each is universal. Can you identify these two?

Where is your communion? With Babylon or with the remnant? With whom do you feel the bond of fellowship? Into this true church will eventually come all the true sheep that are now scattered in many folds:

“...and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” John 10:16.

And from this true church will eventually be separated all the goats. There will only be sheep in the sheep fold when the Great Shepherd appears.

So we are one—one body—here this afternoon and with the church universal—the remnant church pictured in Revelation 12:17, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Third, we are united with the church above. We are one body. Paul, you remember, in Ephesians 3, speaks of the whole family in heaven and earth. In *Volume 6*, 366, I read:

“The church of God below is one with the church of God above. Believers on the earth and the beings in heaven who

have never fallen constitute one church” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 6*, page 366.

In another parallel statement, the Lord's messenger says:

“In His [Christ's] estimation, the church in heaven and the church on earth are identical” *The Paulson Collection*, page 400.

Isn't this a thrilling thought, dear friends? The church, then, is not just what we see here this afternoon, and if we could gather together all the members of the remnant church—the hundreds of thousands—that would be only a small portion of the total church of God.

The beings in heaven who have never fallen and those from this earth, like Enoch and Moses and Elijah and the others—they with us and we with them—constitute one church. In the words of our text, We are one body, and it is this union, this communion, which we have come to celebrate this afternoon. We shall receive its blessings fully only as we understand this communion.

Christ sought to teach us today by teaching His disciples nearly 2,000 years ago in that upper room and in the garden. He taught them this wonderful lesson in the supper that He gave them, in the service that preceded the supper, and in the prayer that succeeded the supper.

I want to study with you those three this afternoon—the supper, the service that preceded it, and the prayer that followed after. Thus, we shall learn this wonderful lesson of love and unity which shall mean to us the true understanding of this communion.

First, the service—the feet washing. Why was it given, dear friends? Why did Jesus wash the feet of the disciples? Because they were *not* one. They came into that upper room 12 distinct individuals, not one of whom was willing to concede to another the highest place. There were not two of them that stood together. Each one was for himself.

The Bible says:

“And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest” Luke 22:24.

But His act of loving ministry made them one. As Jesus washed their feet, He could look upon them and say of them all except Judas, Ye are all clean. It was in that setting that He told them to love one another as He had loved them, and they accepted it, thank God.

And in that upper room, they had a grand foretaste of heaven, as they sat together around that supper table and partook of the bread and the wine. The preparatory service accomplished for them the washing away of every difference, and so it may be with us, my friends.

This afternoon, is there ought that separates you from your brethren here assembled? If so, may it be washed away in the preparatory service. Is there anything that separates you from your brethren of the remnant church near or afar off, from the lowliest member to the president of the general conference—is there anything that is separating you in heart, in feeling, from God's true church today? If there is, oh, I pray that in this preparatory service that may all be washed away.

And is there anything that separates you from the church in heaven? Is there any lust in your hearts that would never be satisfied in the New Jerusalem? Does your heart beat in sympathy with those glorious views above? Do you love what they love and hate what they hate? If there is ought that separates you from the church above, I pray that it may all be washed away this evening hour.

And thus, my dear friends, this preparatory service can mean to us what it did to the disciples back there—it can mean union, communion—we are one—we are one body.

Another supper—turn to 1 Corinthians 11:23-25, just the next page from where you were reading:

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me” 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

Picture Jesus as He's there at the table. He breaks the bread and says, Now, I want all of you to eat of it. He pours the wine, and He says, Now, I want all of you to drink of it. Note the precious lesson which the apostle brings out in 1 Corinthians 10:16 and 17. We read it in our opening text. Now, let us study it:

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” 1 Corinthians 10:16-17.

Even in the little details of the service, there is much to teach us this precious lesson of communion, joint participation, another translation gives it—that is, sharing together. You note, he says that we all eat together of one bread, which shows our common fellowship. We all drink together of one cup, which shows our common fellowship.

And we do not receive it—mark the detail—one by one, as if it were simply an individual matter, for it is written in 1 Corinthians, the 11th chapter, verse 33:

“...when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another” 1
Corinthians 11:33.

We wait till all are served that all may eat together. We wait till the wine is passed that all may drink together. Why? Because, while this is indeed a very individual matter between the soul and God, it is equally vital that we understand that it is a united fellowship. It is a service in which we share with the church—the local church, the church universal, the church in heaven. As members of *one* body, we eat together *one* bread, we drink together of *one* cup.

You know, those who are students of physiology, and I hope you all are, recognize that the bread we eat becomes a part of *us*, that which we drink becomes a part of *us*. We are built up from our food and drink.

I'd like to suggest a few thoughts for your meditation on that particular point. You know, when we eat bread, we get that which builds up the body. There in that good bread, made of the entire grain, are proteins which build up the muscle, there are minerals that build up the bone, there are materials for the sinews that hold the bones and muscles together. Is that true? Is that in that bread? Oh, yes. From this bread, the body receives that which provides strength of structure.

Now, when we drink the wine, we're getting that sweet glucose sugar, the very sugar of the blood, that provides energy of action.

Jesus, as He took the bread and gave it to the disciples, said:

“...Take, eat; this is my body” Matthew 26:26.

In other words, I am giving you myself, and in giving you myself, I am giving you that which will build up your body, individually and as my church. This is that which will provide strength of structure, close-knit organization, if you please, a body fitly framed together—not a mob, but an army, not some bones scattered here and there, but a body.

What was our text here that we are reading—1 Corinthians 10:17—say?

“For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” 1 Corinthians 10:17.

Let us eat it in that understanding today. What do you say?

And then, this precious wine that represents the blood of Jesus. This is what gives us the energy to do things. And what is that? It's love. *Desire of Ages*, page 417, says:

“As our lifeblood, so is the love of Christ diffused through every part of His mystical body” *Desire of Ages*, page 417.

As the blood circulates in the arteries and capillaries and veins, so the love of Christ circulates through all parts of His church. It is that which gives us life, energy,

the ability to *do* things. Oh, I'm thankful for the body, I'm thankful for the blood. What do you say?

And both the bread and the wine, both the body and the blood, represent love—love that builds us up and holds us together, that edifies, and love that vivifies, that moves us together—impels, propels, constrains us.

“For the love of Christ constraineth us...” 2 Corinthians 5:14.

And both of these, my friends, are from Him—the love that builds up and the love that moves us. For concerning each, He says, This is mine.

“...this is my body” Matthew 26:26.

“...this is my blood...” Matthew 26:28.

Love is from Him, love is through Him, and love is in Him. That is, we can never, my dear friends, build up the church without the love that comes from Christ. We can never build up the church without the love that comes through Him. And it is only in Him that we can receive this love. It is not something that He gives apart from Himself.

“...Take, eat: this is *my* body...” 1 Corinthians 11:24.

“...Drink ye all of it; For this is *my* blood...” 1 Corinthians 11:25-26.

The very life of Jesus is to be received by us this evening hour, and thus, we shall indeed become one body, sharing that one bread, that one cup.

Now, retiring from the supper table, Jesus leads His disciples down the steps, through the streets, over the brook, into the side of the mount of Olives, and there He pauses in the shadow of Gethsemane, and gathering His little band about Him, He pours out His soul to the Father in that wonderful intercessory prayer of John 17.

Will you turn to that, please. I want you to see that this same lesson that He taught in the foot washing, that He taught in the supper, was so on His heart that it formed the great focal point of this prayer. John 17, the 11th verse:

“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are” John 17:11.

Then, the 20th verse:

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be *one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be *one* in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be *one*, even as we are one: I in them, and

thou in me, that they may be made perfect in *one*...” John 17:20-23.

See how he repeats it again and again. This is the burden on His heart.

Oh, friends, wouldn't it be wonderful if we could help answer the prayer of Jesus. He prayed this in the garden. He gave it at the supper. He showed it in the feet washing—this wonderful lesson of love and unity. In petition, in symbol, in action, the message is *one*—that they all may be *one*.

Now, there's just three things to keep you and me from answering this prayer and entering into this experience. Would you like to know what those three things are? The first is self. As long as I am number one, I can never know this union, this communion. Self must be laid down.

Jesus, when He came from heaven to earth to reveal the Father's love, thought it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. This is what He said when He laid aside His outer garment in the upper room and took a towel and girded Himself and acted the part of a servant.

Yes, friends, putting self aside makes room for this spirit of love so that we can enter into communion with God, with our brethren. Oh, friends, let's put self aside. What do you say?

The second thing that would hinder us from entering into this experience is sin. All around us is a wicked world, a selfish world. It calls, it allures, it pressures, but if I listen, friends, if I respond, I can never know this union that we're studying this evening.

The world has its appeals of pleasure. It offers to us a cup, sparkling with the wine of Babylon, but the scripture says:

“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils...”
1 Corinthians 10:21.

You cannot know the communion of the Lord's table and the table of this world. It is not alone through the appeal of pleasure that the world seeks to prevent us from entering into this experience. It is through the pressure of the mob, as it seeks to draw us into its violent and vicious schemes.

And here there is a two-edged sword, for the world says, Come with us and join us and you may be king. If you can learn faster than anybody else, if you can fight harder than anybody else, we may crown you, but if you do not join with us, if you do not respond to this appeal of ambition, then we will kill you. You must either get in with us or we will see that you're out of the way. And thus, through fear or favor, we may yield.

But God is going to have a remnant, friends, and ears will be deaf to all the allurements of the world, and whose hearts will be steeled against all the pressures of the world. Won't it be wonderful? How the church in heaven, looking down on the

church on earth, will be filled with joy as the 144,000 stand without flinching against all the pressures of sin.

What was that first thing I said might keep us from entering into this communion? Self. And what's the second? Sin. The third is Satan, the Devil himself. He has taken personal charge of this final battle.

I want to read you something very interesting from the book *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 409. Listen carefully. Don't miss this:

"Satan has made his boast of what he can do. He thinks to dissolve the unity which Christ prayed might exist in His church" *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 409.

Oh, think of it. The Devil has vowed that he will break the unity for which Christ prayed—that he will dissolve this union. Oh, God forbid that we shall go through a form of eating of this bread and drinking of this cup without understanding, friends, what it's all about. Satan is seeking to dissolve the unity for which Christ prayed. He says—Satan does:

"I will go forth and be a lying spirit to deceive those that I can, to criticize, and condemn, and falsify" *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 409.

There never has been an hour when the church had so many enemies, without and within, seeking to undermine confidence, destroy this unity, dissolve this union, and back of all those attempts is Satan, the great adversary.

What will you do about it, friends? Will you lend your ear to reports that weaken confidence in the church and its leadership? If so, you do not know the mystery of this communion service. Will you lend your tongue to pass on those reports that weaken confidence in the church and its leadership? Then you do not know the mystery of this communion service. It is the great enemy who inspires those.

You know, in the pioneer days, as men crossed the plains, saw those great herds of buffalo, they observed at times a very interesting sight. When some enemy, like a wolf or some other enemy, would come around where the buffalo were, the mother cows of the buffaloes would gather their young in an inner circle, and there those cows and calves would be surrounded with a great circle of horned bulls, each one with its face out to the enemy. And as long as they kept rank, there was no way for any wolf or mountain lion or any other enemy, to get in there.

Friend, that's the picture that we want to present to the enemy. Isn't it? We are one. We are one body. Thank God, Satan is going to be defeated. In the closing moments of history, he will stand viewing the remnant church as an incomprehensible mystery, for selfishness can never understand love. Selfishness can never understand love.

So, this evening, will you give up self? Will you turn from sin, close your eyes to its allurements, close your ears to its appeals? Will you say, No, to Satan, resist him as the enemy, endure the wrath of the dragon?

Where is the power to do all this? I'll tell you where it is, friends. The power to deny self, the power to resist sin, and the power to defy Satan—the answer is Jesus.

“...Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” 1
Corinthians 1:24.

Let us listen as He prayed in the shadow of Gethsemane that we all may be one. Let us watch as He washes the feet. And let us receive as He stretches out His hand and says:

“...Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you...” 1
Corinthians 11:24.

Let us receive the cup, as He says, All of you drink of it:

“For this is my blood of the new testament...”Matthew 26:28.

May we pray. Precious Lord, unite us in this union, for which our Lord poured out His heart in prayer, poured out His life upon the cross. We choose to yield all that would hinder. We choose to give up all that would retard. We choose to be Thine, Thine alone. We thank Thee, in that dear name, amen.

Now, as we separate for this preparatory service, I trust, dear ones, that we shall be very practical. If there's ought that stands between us and another, let us, if they're present, go to that person and get that out of the way, before we enter into the feet washing. Shall we do that?

If we think of something that needs to be made right with someone who is not here, let us vow to do that, and do it at our earliest opportunity, and God will accept our choice and we can enter on into this service.

If there's anything that would mar our spirit and feeling of unity with the church as a whole, let's put that away, and ask God to take it out of our hearts. Let's be very practical in this preparatory service.

And then—watch this next point—then we come back to the service of communion—the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine. Let all that preparatory work be out of the way. Let us not come back here to think about our failures, our difficulties, our problems. Let's have that all done in the preparatory service.

The Master has told us that He does not want us to bring to the supper table thoughts about our past, good or bad. He has told us exactly what He wants us to be thinking about when we take the bread and drink the wine is Him, not us. Do this, He says:

“...in remembrance of Me” 1 Corinthians 11:24.

So, if we'll have clear in our minds the preparatory service is to get every difficulty out of the way, then when we come back to the supper table with hearts cleansed by His blood, with faith, trusting in His merits, we can all receive together of the bread, we can all drink together of the cup, and thus make Him happy.

God bless you all as we separate.

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