

What It Means to Examine Yourself

BREAD

1Cor 11:28-29 says, "A man should examine himself; in this way he should eat of the bread and drink the cup. For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself." Wow, that's some heavy stuff. We shouldn't take this examination lightly! So I will examine myself. Let's see, I'm 6' 1", brown hair and blue eyes, I'm in good health today, and my mind is focused on Christ. But, is that what Paul is talking about?

Well, what we are doing right now is eating the bread. And what does this bread represent? The bread is Christ's body and what happened to Jesus' body while on the cross. 1Pet 2:24 says, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree." And Gal 3:13 says, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." Based on these Scriptures, we know that when we examine ourselves at this time, it's not a physical examination. This bread is Christ's body which took our sins. The examination of ourselves is a spiritual one to examine the sins in our lives today. The purpose of eating this bread is to remind us of our sins. We are to look deep down into ourselves to find any spiritual flaws we are still holding on to which are keeping us from being holy like God is holy. This bread is our sexual immorality, it is our hatred towards others, it is our greed, it is our gossip, it is our pride. When we eat the bread, we examine ourselves to find those sins which are keeping us from being everything Christ wants us to be.

I do this each time I eat the bread. So what sins are still in me that I have not given to the Lord in confession? Let me speak for myself for a moment. When I eat the bread, I am haunted by what James 4:17 says, "The person who knows to do good and does not do it, it is a sin." I see uncountable opportunities to do good in my life. I see the person on the side of the road who needs help, and I fail to stop. I sit next to my co-workers every day, yet I don't talk to them about Jesus. There is time to pray or study the Bible, but instead I watch a movie or get on YouTube. When I examine myself as Paul tells me to, I look deep into myself and I see a sinner. My faith is weak because I don't do the things which I know are right. And if you look deep inside yourself in examination when you eat the bread, you will see a sinner too. Jesus took all of our sins upon His Own body as He was hanging on the cross. We just have to give our sins to Him in confession and repentance. What sins are you still hanging on to?

FRUIT of the VINE

We looked at how we should examine ourselves by identifying the sin in our lives. How spiritually healthy would we be if the Lord's Supper just ended there? God, through His Son Jesus, has given the Christian a promise greater than anything the world can give. As the bread is Jesus' body which at only one time housed all of our sins, Jesus' blood represents something far more powerful than all our sin. As the song says, it's "Broader than the scope of my transgressions, greater far than all my sin and shame." Yes, Jesus' blood is the forgiveness of all sins.

Matt 26:28 says, "For this is My blood that establishes the covenant; it is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins." Eph 1:7 says, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." No one here is perfect. When we look deep into ourselves and see sins that we still commit, God gives us Jesus' blood which forgives of all our sin. Though we sin, as long as we are in Christ, we will always have forgiveness. This is possible because God's forgiveness is more powerful than all our sin. God assures us of this fact in James 2:13, "Mercy triumphs over judgment." And that's what I think about as I drink this fruit of the vine. The bread tells me to examine the sin in my life and reminds me to identify it. The fruit of the vine tells me to rely on Jesus' forgiveness and God's power to cure me of my sins as I confess and repent. For mercy triumphs over judgment. Mercy triumphs over judgment!