

Meats and Idols, Knowledge and Love – Part 6

The Two Tables – *1 Corinthians 10:14-22*

Introduction – There has always been an antithesis in the world between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent (Gen 3:15). As Paul zeros in on the root issue of this whole discussion (8:1), he gives this directive with a sense of urgency and even extreme imminent danger (“*Flee from idolatry*” – v14). He was not kidding when he recalled the great judgments of God, “*these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition*” (v11). In Chapter 6, he said to “*flee sexual immorality*” because there is no such thing as casual sex (6:15-20). In the same way, he makes the case that there is no casual worship. It is never *whether* someone worships; it is always and only *who* is being worshipped. There are only two tables in the world – God’s and that of the demons.

Therefore... (vv14-15) – Warning them to “*take heed, lest they fall,*” (v12), Paul reveals that all temptations boil down to a common denominator (pride/idolatry) and that God will provide a way of escape. What is that way? “*Flee! Get out of there! Don’t mess with or dabble in idolatry!*” (v14). Flee where, we might ask. To the Lord’s Table. The Holy Spirit uses the Word and the sacraments, along with the fellowship of the saints, as a place and a power in our battle against the flesh.

The Communion of Communion (vv16-18) – The cup of blessing and the broken bread refer to the elements of our Lord’s Supper established by Christ for His people. The word translated “*communion*” is *koinonia* and it means a participation, partaking, even an intimate sharing. This is far more than simply remembering. This *koinonia* is with Christ Himself, who is present in the ritual and not in the elements. We partake by faith and this is the work of the Holy Spirit. But that *koinonia* is also with all of the participants as we join together, for “*we, though many, are one bread and one body...*” (v17). This is a deep pattern that God loves. One loaf is broken into many fragments and partaken by the many who are united and renewed in that one loaf. This is what God did with Adam, breaking him in two so that He might take those two and unite them together as one (Gen 2:21-24).

This can sound really weird, but we already saw the same thing happened in Christ in the wilderness with Israel (vv1-4). Verse 18 ties this together. OT Israel would offer up a substitutionary animal, sacrificed on their behalf, and would join with the offering up into the presence of and peace with God. When they ate of that sacrifice, they were “*partakers (koinonos) of the altar.*” He is our life and our sustenance at the Table, just as He is through the Word (1 Pet 1:23, 2:2). Summing it all up, this is the language of Jesus (John 6:48-59). This is one of the reasons we have weekly communion as a part of our covenant renewal worship service. We come at His summons, responding to His Word, we get cleaned up through confession, we get cut up and then built up through consecration, and then we get *koinonia* through the communion.

The Communion in All Communions (vv19-21) – So why the big warning to “*flee from idolatry*”? Paul reiterates that it is not that the idols are anything or that the meat offered to them is anything (v19). But just like the Lord’s Table and the sacrificial meals of Israel, there is a fellowship (*koinonos*) with demons in the ritual (v20). He is quoting from Deut 32 (see vv 15-18) for proof of that idolatry and its demonic connections. And so here is the antithesis, the table of the seed of the woman and the table of the seed of the serpent. God says it must be one way or the other; you may not eat at both tables. There is no casual worship. And we are all worshippers. People are religious and the world is sacramental. Therefore, everything we do is devoted to someone or something. If you are not serving God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit, it is not the case that you are not serving someone or something. And worse, you are serving something that will devour you. Flee from idolatry.

Do not Provoke a Jealous God (v22) – Paul returns to the warnings and judgments of vv7-10. If you participate in demon meals, you test Christ. You provoke Him to jealousy like a husband who finds his wife with another man. You belong to Him (6:19-20). His name is Jealous (Ex 34:14) and His strength is unlimited. It's not a good idea to pick a fight with God.

All In! – Fundamental allegiances are at stake in the way we order our lives. Are you self-consciously aware of your fundamental allegiance? We cannot serve God and mammon, or demons, whatever the form of the idol is in our world, culture, or in our hearts and minds. There are two dangers. The idols have more power to reshape us than we suppose, and we are courting the judgment of God. Flee from idolatry and flee to koinonia with Christ, with His worship, with His Word, and at His Table.

Dave Hatcher, February 3, 2019