

**Grace Bible Church
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Dispensation of Promise.
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Lord's Supper Special: Be careful how you treat the spiritual Temple of God.

I believe that one of the most misunderstood subjects in the New Testament for believers in the Church-age under the principle of mystery doctrine is found in the use of the word Temple in the Word of God. But also I believe that one of the other most misunderstood subjects is understanding the importance of what the Bible says about the principle or the doctrine of fellowship.

Not only are we vessels or Temples that the living God indwells as a Temple of God but we are also the spiritual body, known as the Royal family, the church of Jesus Christ, as a temple for God to indwell. And as a people gathered we are the temple of his Holy Spirit.

Now, it is for this reason that when it came to the Lord's supper which was based upon fellowship that the apostle Paul gives us a few verses upon the spiritual meaning of the Lord's supper when he said "I speak as to wise men; you judge or discern what I say."

1Co 10:16, Is not the cup of blessing [that is the wine at the Lord's Supper] which we bless [or ask God's blessing upon] a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?

In drinking the wine we participate in and share a fellowship or communion in the blood of Christ (the Messiah). The bread which we break means that in eating it we participate in and share a fellowship a communion in the body of Christ.

Now, then the apostle Paul also makes a very vital statement concerning us as members of His church, when He says in **1Co 10:17, Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.**

No matter how numerous we are or where we are, we are spiritually a part of the spiritual body of Christ because we all partake of the one Bread which represents the Lord Jesus Christ. For as the apostle Paul says in COL 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

This is why we are told to be careful concerning the celebration of the Lord's supper because it not only represents our fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

For in **Mat 25:45, our Lord said, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me."**

In fact, in Act 9:1, when Saul who later on who became the apostle Paul was threatening and murdering the disciples of the Lord, both men and women, and would bring them bound to Jerusalem to have them killed.

That we read in Act 9:3-5, And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground, and

heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” And Paul said, “Who art Thou, Lord?” And He said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,

Now, who was Paul persecuting Jesus or the Christians? Well, it couldn't have been Jesus because He was in heaven seated at the right hand of God. Therefore, it had to be the people of God or the Lord's people. And so the principle is that to persecute the Lord's people is to persecute the Lord, or the Lord's temple where He indwells corporately. By corporately I mean as a community of believers who make up any local assembly as a Temple of God. The point being is that the way we treat others is how we treat the Lord Jesus Christ.

In fact, look 1Co 6:19, a passage that most of you are familiar with has a main interpretation but also a spiritual application where the apostle Paul said: **do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?**

It is true that your physical body is a temple of the Holy Spirit but so is your spiritual body which you are a part of temple of the Holy Spirit. And then Paul goes on with a warning and a command when he says in **1Co 6:20, For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.**

Therefore, in 2Co 6:16 we read, **For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.**

Notice here the temple is called “we” not “you” referring to the church that you are a part of. This is why I like what the apostle Paul wrote in **Eph 2:19-21, So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;**

Notice once again notice that the Church, the body of Christ, is referred to as a temple.

And with that in mind go back to 1Co 3, where the apostle Paul gives us a very serious warning concerning not only our communion and fellowship with the Lord but how the church should have communion and fellowship with one another and not judge one another.

1Co 3:16-17, Do you not know that you [Second person plural = believers] are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you [second person plural = ya'll] If any man destroys the temple of God that is the church of God, --- [notice the temple of God is called the Church of God.]

What does Paul say that God will do? God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you [Second person plural = you all] are.

1Co 3:18-19, Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become foolish that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, “He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness”;

The point that the apostle Paul makes in this passage is that do you operate in the Temple of God, your local assembly, with your spiritual gift for in **Rom 12:6, And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly:**

Or in 1Ti 4:14, the apostle Paul says, **Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you.**

Or as the apostle Peter states in **1Pe 4:10, As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**

Notice the three main words I mentioned, exercise, neglect, serve. The operation of your spiritual gift has been given to serve others in the Temple of God or the Church of Jesus Christ.

Do You? Have I? Or have I become your enemy because I am telling you the truth?

Perhaps this is another reason why in 1Co 11:31, the apostle writes, **But if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged.**

And how do you judge yourselves rightly??

PSD#1 - Rebound or confession of sin or rebound and recovery, if needed.

Now, with all that we noted last week concerning the importance of Christian fellowship I want to speak on the second half of my message this morning with the balance of The Divine Perspective on Christian Fellowship.

First of all, we must never assume that loving God the Father, loving God the Son under occupation with Christ, and fellowship with the Holy Spirit be set aside for a lot of nonsense called “Christian fellowship” or social life with Christians? Too many believers assume this erroneous concept because there is no organization of their life and thinking around Bible doctrine. Therefore, they have no focus on invisible God. All their focus is on turning churches into Christian country clubs, what I have called for years, the dog and pony show, for those of you who are old enough I would say Lassie or Mr. Ed.

Christian fellowship is nice, but it is not the Christian way of life. Therefore we need to learn to distinguish between fellowship with God and so-called Christian fellowship with people, which is nothing more than having social life with Christians. Christian fellowship is no substitute for fellowship with God. The reason there are so many problems today and sins among Christians is simply because of wrong priorities. You never put fellowship with visible people above your relationship or fellowship with God.

However, you cannot fulfill the #1 priority of fellowship with God simply by resolving to make God #1; it comes through the daily perception of Bible doctrine. Christian fellowship is no substitute for learning Bible doctrine from whomever is your right pastor. Spiritual growth and the execution of the PPOG and subsequent glorification of God only occurs through perception of doctrine, not through Christian fellowship.

Assembling together for a private Bible study and other forms of worship must never be confused with Christian fellowship. For example, look at what the writer of book of Hebrews says in that popular passage found in Heb 10.

Heb 10:23-26, Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the

more, as you see the day drawing near. For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

Therefore, if you forsake assembling yourself together with the people or the Temple of God you are living in sin. There's nothing you can do or sacrifice to get back into fellowship with God except rebound and recover.

Heb 10:25, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another;

The word encouraging is the present active participle of the Greek verb PARAKALEO which means to be encouraged. But this is a participle used as a noun in the Greek, and so it should be translated "encouragement."

Furthermore, this is known as a telic participle which indicates the purpose of the action of "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together " which is to gather together to receive encouragement not from fellowship with one another but from the communication of Bible doctrine.

So we are to assemble for the purpose of encouragement. What is encouragement in the assembly, the church, the temple, the body of Christ? It is perception of Bible doctrine, not Christian fellowship.

Bible doctrine must have #1 priority in your life. Without that you will never have fellowship with invisible God. That's why Peter says **1Pe 1:8, and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,**

The manifestation of invisible God is Bible doctrine. The only way you can have fellowship with invisible God is to learn Bible doctrine. And the only way you can learn Bible doctrine is to expose yourself to doctrine every time the doors of the church are open.

Why?

Because of what the apostle Paul says in **Eph 4:11-16, And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,**

Eph 4:12-16, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

So in Heb 10:25 Encouragement comes from Bible doctrine, not from Christian fellowship. Someone may inspire you to come to Bible class once, but that will not keep you there. What keeps you coming to Bible class is your own motivation from your own understanding and perception of doctrine, and

making it the #1 priority in your life. Assembling with other believers in a local church or its equivalent is for the purpose of encouragement through the perception of Bible doctrine.

In other words, Heb 10:25 is talking about learning Bible doctrine in the company of other believers not assembling together just for Christian fellowship. Your Christian fellowship with other believers is inconsequential! It is your fellowship with God that counts! The purpose of assembly worship is the function of post-salvation epistemological rehabilitation, and through the momentum from metabolized doctrine. This is so you can execute and fulfill the PPOG for your life.

Now, many believers cannot assemble for Bible doctrine and encouragement from the Word of God.

They are isolated because of Geographic's, handicaps, illness, lack of transportation or many other reasons. However, they are not violating this verse. Bible doctrine is the purpose of assembly, and they can learn Bible doctrine alone or with others. And as the apostle Paul said that although they are not with us face to face, they are with us in spirit.

For he said to the believers at Corinth when he was not with them face-to-face, **1Co 5:3-4, For I, on my part, though I am absent from you in my body I am present with you in spirit, In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I am with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus,**

So since they are getting doctrine, they are in effect “assembling themselves.” The priority is to get doctrine to have fellowship with God. While some believers are isolated from Christian fellowship, they are not isolated from the communication of Bible doctrine. God always supplies a right pastor with doctrine for positive believers. In other words, positive volition will not be denied by God.

For those who live in geographical locations where pastors are not doing their job the Lord says to them.

Jer 23:4, “I shall also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the Lord.”

For some positive believers, doctrine is provided through face-to-face teaching in a local church. For others, doctrine is communicated through the internet, tapes, audio, video, books, radio, etc. But God always supplies a right pastor-teacher with doctrine for the positive believer: 1) Through the local church under face-to-face teaching. 2) In an isolated situation where no assembly with orthodox teaching is possibly. Isolation can be caused by illness, handicap, or lack of accurate teaching in a town.

And while the isolated Christian cannot assemble himself with other believers, he still fulfills the concept of Heb 10:25 through his daily perception of doctrine on the internet through video, audio, books or wherever he is. And remember not everyone's right pastor is located in the same geographical location.