

Bite Size Bible Study

Communion #226

By Lee Logue

We receive communion once a month. Except for the few minutes it takes, do we consider it more often? I would like to take a different approach to the meaning and what it implies as we participate in this ceremony. This is not for the squeamish, but I believe there is a lesson here.

First let's look at what Matthew records for this ceremony. (Mark essentially says the same thing.)

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Matthew 26:26-28 NIV

We understand this to be figurative language but if you were a devout Jew, attempting to follow the Torah, these statements would be repulsive. For the Jew these are some of the scriptures that would likely come to mind.

¹⁶ *But you must not eat the blood; pour it out on the ground like water.*

²³ *But be sure you do not eat the blood, because the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat. Deuteronomy 12:16, 23 NIV*

There was a curse (consequence) if Israel did not keep the covenant with Yahweh. They repeatedly didn't keep the covenant and so suffered the consequences.

Because of the suffering your enemy will inflict on you during the siege, you will eat the fruit of the womb, the flesh of the sons and daughters the LORD your God has given you. Even the most gentle and sensitive man among you will have no compassion on his own brother or the wife he loves or his surviving children, and he will not give to one of them any of the flesh of his children that he is eating. It will be all he has left because of the suffering your enemy will inflict on you during the siege of all your cities. The most gentle and sensitive woman among you—so sensitive and gentle that she would not venture to touch the ground with the sole of her foot—will begrudge the husband she loves and her own son or daughter the afterbirth from her womb and the children she bears. For in her dire need she intends to eat them secretly because of the suffering your enemy will inflict on you during the siege of your cities. Deuteronomy 28:53-57 NIV

But then the king asked her, "What is your complaint?" She answered, "This woman said to me, "Give up your son; we will eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow." So, we cooked my son and ate him. The next day I said to her, "Give up your son and we will eat him." But she has hidden her son.' 2 Kings 6:28-29 NRSV

One occurrence of this was during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem in 588-586 B.C. Remember cannibalism was prohibited in the law of Moses and was denounced by prophets. This is the whole point though. This isn't what God wanted for His people. They broke their covenant with God and resorted to unimaginable evil.

Siege warfare was often used to reduce the enemy resistance. Sieges may last for years where all the stores of food and water were eventually consumed, and the people were reduced to eating each other or dying. At this point the resistance of the enemy is minimal and victory is much easier for the aggressor.

But sense we understand Jesus' teaching as a figurative language, allow me to look at it in a totally different way.

Jesus took the bread and compared it to His body (meat), which the Torah says we are not to eat. But what if we consider His body our spiritual sustenance just as bread is our physical sustenance?

Bread (and other foods) provides the nutrients that our bodies need to function properly. Without it we will die in a short amount of time.

Jesus' body is His essence – who He is, what He represents, and that is the spiritual sustenance we need to nourish our spiritual body. But we need different "nutrients in various parts of our spiritual bodies.

What distributes the nutrients in our physical bodies? Blood. The blood in our bodies connects with every cell in our body. It brings food (nutrients) to each and every cell. It also takes away the waste that the cell creates in doing the work it was designed to do.

Without the circulation of the blood, the cells die quickly. This is easily seen if a portion of our body is removed – within minutes it is dead and cannot be resuscitated.

The spiritual food we receive from Jesus spirit body needs His spiritual blood to feed each part (cell) in our spiritual body. We need the sustenance and the circulation of that sustenance to keep our spiritual bodies healthy.

Communion represents that function, but once a week, month, year, will not keep us spiritually alive. Prayer and our communication with Him provide our daily (even hourly) way to keep our spirit alive and functioning, doing the things that He has purposed for us.

Does this mean that we need to take communion daily? Figuratively, Yes. But that communion can be in the form of prayer. Actually, the Jews had a way of always being in continual prayer by praising God for everything they saw, did or received.

(Hebrew: "*Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu, Melekh ha-olam*")
Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe,...",

There can be an infinite number of ways to end this blessing – some examples might be:

- ...who brings sleep to my eyes.
- ...who gives and takes away.
- ...who creates our food or sustenance.
- ...who grants us mercy when we fail to hit the mark.
- ...who gives us life.
- ...who created the forest and meadows.

You get the point! And the practice doesn't have to be verbal; it can be in the mind.

If you are successful in getting to work on time – thank (bless) Him.

If you receive your paycheck – thank (bless) Him.

You see the point.

Another way could be by studying His teachings. The Bible not only has the do's-and-don'ts, but it also has real life scenarios that show us how to act in various situations.

Some are positive and show how we should act, others are negative and show us the folly of acting in ways that not only hurt others but hurt ourselves as well.

We can add to our communication by listening to the Holy Spirit. He is always around us and often speaks to us in quiet tones. It may be a nudge to change our attitude or a specific action. But it may, just as often, be a "kudo", "you did that well – I am please with you".

He loves us like a good father and always wants the best for us. But we must remember the "best" may not be the easy way. The right amount of stress, strengthens steel, and so it is with our lives.

There are many ways to stay constantly in communication with God. Some ways will work better for some people, but other people will have other ways. He is completely flexible and can understand any language or thought pattern.

After all He created us – He understands.

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