

# Communion— Serious Times; Sacrifice Needed!



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In these dangerous and serious times in which we live today, following God's plan of safety and Atonement for sins is more important than it has ever been. The return of Jesus is just up ahead. From the beginning, God required atonement for sins by the shedding of blood.

The apostle wrote 1 Corinthians 2:2 "*For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*" The Bible clearly teaches that the punishment for any sin is death, so there has to be some way to atone for the guilt of the sinner. Romans 3:23 "*For there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*"—a sacrifice has to be offered.

God said Jeremiah 31:30 "*Every one shall die for his own iniquity;*" so He cannot ignore sin and rebellion. His holiness and purity makes any sin a serious offense. Rebellion is as bad as God says it is, and the consequences of sin are as serious as they could be; Romans 6:23 "*For the wages of sin is death.*"

Sin is so serious that God had to deal with it in a serious way—atonement is required; for our soul has to be saved; and Jesus had to die, so eternal life would be free. The death penalty for sin is a serious sentence, but God is merciful and forgiving; that is why He said Jeremiah 31:31 "*Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel.*" The new covenant would be a new sacrifice for sins.

Crucifixion is the worst form of punishment, but someone had to endure that suffering—that is why Jesus Philippians 2:8 "*Humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*" God had to deal radically with sin and rebellion for divine justice to be served. He is holy and righteous, and cannot overlook iniquity and guilt.

God cannot ignore sin—it has to be dealt with—and the requirement is only through the shedding of blood. Our sin crucified our Savior—atonement has a huge price. Leviticus 17:11 "*For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*"

Before God even created the world, the sacrifice of the Son was already part of the plan. The entire history of Israel Genesis—Revelation tells the story of God teaching His people about the seriousness of sin, and of His plan to deal with their rebellion through faith and trust on a blood sacrifice of atonement. Millions and millions of animal sacrifices—year after year—confirm the seriousness of sin and the cost of atonement. Without the offering of blood, there is no forgiveness for sin Hebrews 9:22.

When the New Testament was being written, thousands of animals were sacrificed day after day and week after week. Serious times make us realize that a sacrifice for sin is required. It is a grim reminder of how deadly and lethal sin really is. The seriousness of rebellion, and the endlessness of eternity, is why atonement for our soul has to be made.

1 Corinthians 11:23 "*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: 24 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. 25 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.*" Atonement has a steep price—but it has to be made if our soul is to be saved.

Prior to partaking of the Bread, we ask God to reveal any wrong attitudes in our heart; and that He check the sincerity of our confessions with the plumb line of His Word. Any willful sin or rebellious attitude in us must be dealt with, by confessing, repenting, and forsaking those ways of the past with the help of His Spirit. To partake of the Elements in a worthy manner, we must examine our heart in the light of God's Word—and the Word says Luke 6:37 "*Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.*"

God commands and He requires that we consider our own heart attitude, and that we deal with any sin, resentment, or rebellion toward His Word—by confessing and forsaking those sins. 1 Corinthians 11:28-29 "*Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*"

We must respond to the Holy Spirit's conviction of any resentful attitudes, questionable activities, or un-Christlike treatment of others, because not to do it, would be rebelling against God's will. 1 Samuel 15:23 "*Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.*"

Jesus said Luke 10:16 "*He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.*" It is always a choice to accept or to reject the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 10:32 "*Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.*" Revelation 3:8

*“You have kept my word and have not denied my name.”*

Rebellion and unbelief are serious sins and must be repented of before God. When He makes His will clear to us, we should not delay in following through by making *corrections* or any *changes* He shows. It is our *duty* and our *obligation* to deal with sins. 1 John 1:9 *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

To be in the will of God we must confess our sins to Him. It is vitally important, because 1 John 3:4 *“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”* To ignore the Word of God is to live by our own standard of conduct. A *defiant* nature is in opposition to the *divine* nature.

Israel was reminded 1 Peter 2:10-11 *“In time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. 11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”*

Rebellion against the *Word* means there is an *idol* in our *heart*. If someone has *first place*, then God has *second place*—we are in rebellion to the Commandment: Exodus 20:3 *“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”* Only God has the right to be in *first place*, and only *He* has the right to say how we are to *live* our life.

Our *life* is a product of the *choices* we make—and nothing is more important than *choosing* to read God’s Word and being enlightened by His Spirit. Hebrews 3:12-13 *“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”* Serious *times* compel a *sacrifice* to be made—sin is *that* deadly, deceitful, and fatal.

The scene is vividly portrayed in our mind—Jesus and the disciples share a dinner; His words still fresh in their minds. He takes the bread, saying 1 Corinthians 11:24-25, *“Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.”* He then promises Atonement; *“This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.”*

They linger over the words of their Master—Matthew 26:28 *“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins”*—they did *not* want the moment to end. They prayed, sang a hymn, and went out into the night—walking in silence; thinking; and recalling the words—*“My blood, new testament, shed for you.”* What did it all mean!

They cross a stream running red from so many sacrifices—*reminding* them, and everyone ever *after*, that the seriousness of sin has a *serious price*—sin is a *serious offense* against God. Jesus knew all about the *suffering* He would endure, but His *love* for us compelled Him to *take our place*, *suffer* the pain, and *pay* the price. Hebrews 3:15 *“To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.”*

***Atonement for Believers***—they cross the stream and follow the path, with the scene permanently etched in their memory—ominous shadows of the trees and the silence of the moment, all adds to the chill of impending gloom—Jesus will face the destroyer of human souls *alone!*

A battle of this intensity and seriousness has never been waged before, and never will be again. The *destiny* of every human *soul* hangs in the balance. The destroyer of souls tries to ruin God’s plan of salvation through faith in His Blood.

The *forces of evil* come against the *Savior of souls*. Jesus defends with the weapon of prayer. In this moment of anguish and with the sins of the world pressing on Him, the Son of God pours out His soul to the Father.

John 12:27-28 *“Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.”* So *deadly* and so *destructive* is sin that a *sacrifice* must be made.

Satan is prowling to oppress, deceive, and destroy—we must always be on guard! *Anyone* can be tempted and *anyone* can fall. Matthew 26:42 Jesus *“Went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.”*

Atonement *had* to be made, so the cup would *not* pass. John 8:29 *“He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.”*

Within the shadow of the cross, Jesus warns of the danger; Matthew 26:41 *“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”* Atonement has a *price*, and Jesus was willing to *pay* it—confession and forgiveness are still *free*.

The warning is so *urgent* that it echoes through the centuries—is anyone *listening!* Is anyone *heeding* the warning—*“Watch and pray!”* The danger is *real*; the enemy is *evil*; and our soul *eternal!*



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