

1Corinthians 18-07-15a

Well, good morning. Welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It is a privilege to be here and to see everyone, everyone except Ken.

Maybe he will join us shortly. But we are going to continue this morning our study in 1 Corinthians, picking up in chapter 10. We've been looking at the 13th and surrounding verses in that chapter, 10-13, that says, No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man.

But God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape. And we saw that was the Greek word *ekbasis*, the other occurrence being in Hebrews 13-7, talking about those who have taught us the Word of God and we are to look at the outcome of their way of life and follow their faith. And you can't really say look at the way of escape of their life, that doesn't make sense.

So instead of coming out by way of an exit or way of escape, we switch those two words and say outcome. Look at the outcome of their way of life. And so God with the testing provides an outcome so that we can bear it.

And we look in faith, we may not know what that outcome is, we may not know if it is temporal or eternal, but we trust as Abraham did when he dwelt in tents waiting for a city whose founder and builder is God, that enabled him to persist and to endure and to continue his journey of faith. And so we try to do the same thing. Well, this is the 15th of July 2018 and we'll take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer, dedicate our time, our fellowship and our study to the glory of the Lord Jesus and then we'll begin.

Father, we thank you for your grace bestowed on us in so many different ways, physical sustenance and provision, the spiritual opportunities that we have because you have placed us in relation to yourself through the Lord Jesus. We comprise His body on this earth, we represent Him and through Him we represent you. We thank you for that awesome privilege and recognize the responsibility that goes with it.

We thank you that you've not only given us that assignment but also the means of accomplishing it through the presence and power of your Holy Spirit and the energizing and living truth in your Word. We pray this morning that both of those will be in evidence in each of our hearts and collectively in our fellowship as we look at this portion of your Word together and that each one will be blessed and motivated and that all of us will have our perspective enhanced and our understanding furthered so that as we live what remains to us of this life, we can do it in a way that is pleasing in your sight and honoring to the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray it in His name.

Amen. Well, we are going to look at this notion of idolatry because that's in the next verse. First Corinthians chapter 10 verse 14, having just been given the example of the Israelites in the

wilderness, baptized into Moses under the cloud and passing through the sea, the same, eating the same spiritual food, drinking the same spiritual drink.

Eating the same spiritual food, drinking the same spiritual drink. The food and the drink that represent their baptism into Moses, all of this is immaterial. They were not actually baptized with water.

They passed across the sea on dry ground. But it is a picture. It is a representative type, Paul says here, a tupos.

But with most of them God was not well-pleased, or actually not with most of them was God well-pleased. And their bodies were strewn in the wilderness. These became our types, our examples, with the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

So the purpose of providing us this example, especially Paul here in chapter 10, is what? There is a saying that says curb your enthusiasm. And this is Paul's goal. Our natural desires, our natural bent and inclination is toward evil.

That is what we are made of. And to avoid that and to transcend it and to rise above it, we need God's power. So that is what Paul is pointing us to here.

These things are examples to the intent that we do not follow bad desires. It is a hard thing to not follow a bad desire. Ask anybody who has had a bad habit that they tried to break, especially when it leads to sort of an addictive pattern.

Try to quit smoking. Try to quit drinking. Try to get off drugs.

Try to be different in some area of pattern failure is extremely difficult. So, Paul says that the intent expands. It is not just to not follow these desires, or not to have the desires, but not to follow them.

Do not become idolaters. Do not commit sexual immorality. Do not tempt Christ.

Do not complain as some of them also complained. One of the things that impresses me about this particular section is Paul probably did not have an Exodus scroll in his possession at the time that he wrote this, but he knows the details of the judgment. If I said there was Israel at the Meribah, what exactly happened? We tend to remember the golden calf.

Moses grinds it to powder and mixes it with water and chemists will tell you that it is not possible, but Moses apparently knew something they don't because he pulverized that thing and then made them drink it. Of course, being a calf overlaid with gold, that makes it significantly easier to pulverize and then make everybody eat the thing. If you think about that, because we are talking about eating and drinking, what is Moses teaching the people when he does that? Is he just angry and thinking up some random judgment? Why does he feed the idol to the people, do you think? Because they have chosen to eat a different spiritual food and so

he says, well, here is the type that you are fulfilling.

If you are going to make that decision, then here is a physical representation of what you are doing. You are imbibing the old idolatry of Egypt and if you are going to do it spiritually, let's just play it out physically and see how you like it because it is going to give you a bellyache. But notice he says, when they committed sexual immorality as some of them did and in one day 23,000 and we saw that 24,000 fell in one day.

This is not a detail I carry around in my mind. I remembered that there was the whole incident there, but I didn't remember the death toll of that. Then he says, nor let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted and were destroyed by serpents.

I remember Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness, but I am kind of fuzzy on the details of why they were being bitten by serpents. Why did God send that particular judgment? But if you think about the golden calf and its symbolism, then you think about the serpent and its symbolism and go back and study these episodes, you see that there is a physicality that is representative of the spiritual issue that is at stake. Why serpents? Well, because they are falling for the oldest lie.

Why drink the pulverized bull? Because they are falling for a spiritual apostasy that they have just been delivered out of and it is like a dog returning to its vomit. And you know what dogs do with the vomit that they return to. Anybody that has a dog, it is disgusting.

Then in verse 10, complain as some of them complained and were destroyed by the destroyer. The destroyer is only mentioned twice in the Old Testament. Do you remember the other time besides this destroying by the destroyer? They are murmuring and complaining and the destroyer comes.

But the previous time is the blood on the doorposts on the original Passover and we think well God went in and slew the people that were inside, the first born that were inside if there was no blood on the doorposts. But actually as God passes through, He is stopping the destroyer from entering. It is the destroyer who is going in but when God sees the blood, God stands at the door and tells the destroyer not this one.

It is kind of like the ink horn angel marking and preventing destruction. But those are the two occasions where the destroyer shows up. All these things happen to them as examples and they were written for our warning, our admonition, our instruction upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

All of that was prelude and preview. We are in the consummating age. The Lord Jesus has come.

His representative people, His body is now here functioning on His behalf and in His place. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. This sort of confidence that we know what we are doing, that we are on the right track, we ought to regularly question.

Just about the time we think we have it figured out, that is the time to look the hardest at our assumptions and at our practices because the people in Corinth are overconfident. They are too sure of their position. This is dividing the church.

It is disrespecting the Lord Jesus Christ and it is allowing them to rationalize going to the temples of Greek gods and Roman gods and socializing and saying it is okay. I am not actually worshipping. I am just in the church.

He says sure there is going to be pressure for you to conform and to socialize and to be one of the hail fellows well met, but God has an outcome. There is a reason why you are going to have to bear this test. It may be ostracism.

It may be rejection. It may be a loss of economic gain from your business when you do not go to your biggest client's celebration and he says well are you holier than thou? You are looking down on me. There is a breach and there is a loss and there are consequences.

There are always consequences to us for doing what we are supposed to do, but there is an outcome. There is an ekbasis that should motivate us to endure. It does not make any sense for God to provide a way of escape so that we can endure.

We talked about that. Knowing that there is an open door, does that make it easier to bear? You could possibly see that in this passage. Many people have, but I think based on 13.7 in Hebrews there is an outcome and we have confidence that God has a purpose in challenging us and testing us and forging us in the fire, heating up the pot so that the dross will come to the surface and the gold or the silver can be refined.

Therefore, verse 14, we pick up here this morning. We are going to read a few verses here. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

I speak as to wise men. Judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body, for we all partake of that one bread.

Observe Israel after the flesh. Then he starts talking about those who bring a sacrifice, partaking of it. But I want to stop here with just these four verses, 14, 15, 16, and 17.

Now, there is a great principle of hermeneutics. You're going to get hermeneutics, actually this is probably 102, it's probably second semester hermeneutics, but it is really important to figure out when you have language like this, are we in the literal realm or are we in the symbolic realm? And if you read Dwight J. Pentecost book, Things to Come, in the beginning chapters he talks about how to interpret prophecy. And one of the guiding principles of interpretation for prophecy in particular, but for scripture in general is, if you enter the realm of symbolism, then everything is symbolic.

If you're talking about something literal, everything is literal. The Bible does not mix symbolic and literal without giving you a clue, without changing language or saying, as Paul does here, the re were literal Israelites who literally passed through a sea, there was a cloud, but then he says they ate spiritual food, they drank a spiritual drink, and the rock that followed them, and as soon as he starts labeling things spiritual, the rock is not a literal rock, it's not the Lord Jesus Christ rolling along as a big boulder and cracking open and providing water, as some of the rabbis actually thought. But of course they had a phylactery tied to their hand and had the Ten Commandments nailed to their doorpost because they over-literalized.

We have such a tendency to try to make things literal. Well, there will be a clue in the context to figure out what is symbolic and what is literal. And why is this important? Because we're coming up on chapter 11 and he's going to be talking about what we know as communion, from this verse right here, is it not the communion of the Lord's body and so on? And then the notion that you have this ritual and that there is physical bread and a physical cup.

Well, just bear in mind, literal things will be contextually associated with other literal things. Spiritual things will be contextually associated with other spiritual things. So in the first few verses of this chapter, our fathers, who are literal ancestors, were under the cloud, literal cloud, they passed through the sea, a real sea, they were baptized into Moses.

Now, baptized into Moses, nobody is literally becoming a part of Moses. So baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, eating the same spiritual food and drinking the same spiritual drink, drinking of the spiritual rock that follows them, the rock being Christ, all of that is in the spiritual realm. They had no physical interaction with Moses, they were not literally baptized.

As soon as you have verse 2 and verse 3 and verse 4, all of that is spiritual. It makes a chunk. Same thing here.

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. Flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men, judge for yourselves what I say.

Why does he include that? Could this passage do just as well without that verse? When he says, I'm speaking as though you are wise, I'm speaking in terms that if you are wise, you're going to understand it. He's not being simple. If he was being simple, he wouldn't say, now, you've got to put your thinking cap on here.

I'm using some terms that you've got to be wise to understand. I am phrasing this in a way that you've got to employ your wisdom. There's a reason why verse 15 is here.

Why? You can't just blow through here taking everything away. You can't do anything literal. It's not literal.

These things are not literal, but you've got to be wise to see it. You've got to judge for yourself. He's not saying judge whether it's right or wrong.

He's saying, you've got to discern. Discern what I'm saying. I would bring my dad the paper or something when I was a little tyke.

I never did really understand until I was older what he was saying. He would look at me and say, you're a gentleman and a scholar and a fine judge of cheap whiskey. He usually left that last part out.

If you judge whiskey, what are you doing? You're not pronouncing sentence on it and saying this bottle is going to be smashed and this bottle is going to be served. When you judge whiskey, you discriminate. You discern.

You say this is better than that. This is fine and this is cheap. I can tell you, don't ask me how I know this, but Japanese Suntory whiskey is just awful.

It is a last resort for guys that are stuck in a hurricane situation and the base is battened down and all you can do is sneak out the gate to a little Japanese store and all they've got is Suntory. You could eat the finish off your car with that stuff. So I am a fairly good judge of cheap whiskey and I'm telling you, that stuff is just last resort when there's nothing better to do and you're not really in your spiritual mode.

But to judge, when he says judge for yourself, he's not saying decide if I'm telling the truth. He's saying these things I'm giving you require discernment, require thought. Spend some time and mull this over if you're going to get what Paul is saying.

Okay? It's not simple. It's not basic. It's not a quick read.

You don't do your Evelyn Wood speed reading on this section and he warns them. He says, look, I'm speaking as though you've got all of your wisdom to apply here. So apply it and discern.

And that warning is here because in verse 16 he's going to talk in spiritual terms. The cup, it doesn't say the cup of wine. It doesn't say the cup of Kool-Aid.

It doesn't say the cup of grape juice. It doesn't say the cup of the Passover meal. What kind of a cup is this? Why couldn't he say the cup which we bless? Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? Why does he say cup of blessing? Can you drink blessing? Can you pour it? Can you pass a cup around and say have a little sip of blessing here? It's a cup of blessing, right? The cup of blessing which we bless.

And this is Eulogia. Eulogia means good. Eulogia means to speak.

To speak well. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Speak well of the Lord, O my soul.

Eulogia. The cup of well-speaking. Blessing is a fine translation, but it is a cup of blessing.

I've got a jazz saxophone album and one of the songs on it is called Sack of Woe. Sack of Woe.

Now you can't put your woes in a sack.

It's like the old World War II thing. Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile. You can't literally put your troubles in a kit bag, right? It's an expression talking about intangible things, right? So why would it be a cup of blessing? Why wouldn't it be a sack of blessing? Why wouldn't it be a stack of blessing? Why wouldn't it be a table full of blessing? Why wouldn't it be a bucket of blessing? Why is it a cup? Why is it a cup? What is the unique thing about the cup that we first really learned about in the upper room meal? Leaving aside the symbolism that Jesus is going to assign, what do you know about that cup? Or let me put it this way.

How many cups were there? You go get dishes, you get married or whatever. If you're single, you get a set of two or maybe a set of four if you think maybe somebody will visit. When you're married, especially if you're going to have kids or have other people over, you usually get a set of eight.

It's nice to have eight plates, eight knives, eight forks, eight spoons, and eight glasses. You get eight tumblers, you get eight little juice glasses, right? Why do we do that? I'm not going to drink out of your glass and you're not going to drink out of my glass. If you want to drink, get your own glass, right? Everybody has their own glass.

Not so in the ancient world. In the ancient world, everybody drank out of the pitcher. You set the pitcher on the table.

Hey, I need a gulp here. I need to clear my esophagus for the next big bite. There is not a cup for each person.

If you've seen the Last Supper fresco and all of these, you often see depictions and there's cups all over the table. It's just completely historically inaccurate. At that table, in that room, for 13 people, and then it soon goes down to 12 people, there's one cup.

There's only one cup. Somebody has come in, they've got the big jugs of wine. You remember the wedding feast at Cana? You take a dipper and you fill a cup, and there's a cup for a whole table full of people.

Get a dipper. The table for the head of the feast, the master of the feast, there's a big cup there. Somebody came with a big dipper or a big jug with a handle and filled up that cup, and the master of the feast tasted it and said, well, you've saved the best stuff until last.

But there's just one. We're not used to this communal thing, but remember, there was alcohol content in this, and it's sort of self-disinfecting. Not that they knew anything about bacteria or infection or anything else.

They didn't see anything wrong with drinking after one another. You draw water from the well, and the woman at the well gives water to the Lord Jesus. He'll drink some, she'll drink some, the

disciples will drink some.

They're all drinking out of the same bucket. So, why am I belaboring this? The cup of blessing, which we, plural, bless. The wonderful things that God has done for us that we celebrate.

The celebratory shared blessings that we bless. We talk to one another. You know how this is when you're around other believers and you say, boy, you know, the Lord was so good, I thought I was going to be in big trouble, but there was provision.

I thought it was going to be a dark day, but there was a blessing. We talk to each other about what God does and how God works and the wonderful benefits of being a believer, and it's a cup of blessing because we share it. What we have, we share.

What you have, you share. The cup represents the shared fellowship. In those days, a cup was a great symbol of sharing.

So, he says here, the cup of blessing which we bless is it not, it's not just a sharing of blessing. He says it is a koinonia. It is a fellowship of the blood of Christ.

Any idolaters can get together at the temple of Athena or the temple of Demeter or the temple of Isis, and they can share a cup, but what's unique about the cup of blessing? It is in the blood of Jesus Christ. We are united in His body, and it is the new covenant. He said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, and it's one cup that everybody partook of.

It unites. The disciples have been a band for over three years. Can they be united by faith or by friendship or by experience or by, you know, shared heart times or whatever it may be? Jesus says, no.

My blood shed for you for the remission of sins is what unites you. You are all forgiven. You are all cleansed.

You are all now united in this unique spiritual entity. It's fellowship in His blood. It is a cup in His blood.

So, Paul says, this cup of blessing which we bless. Now, you can't go up the hill to the idol-worshipping temple and talk about the blessings of the Lord Jesus and the blessings that God the Father has bestowed and what the Holy Spirit has done for you and in your midst and in your family. Nobody up there is going to understand that.

The cup of blessing that we bless and bless is in the sense of speak well of and talk about. Just think, bless the Lord, oh my soul. It's not a cup of benefits, benefit the Lord, oh my soul.

That doesn't work. It is eulogia, speak well. So, the cup of things that we can talk about that are wonderful, that we talk about with each other, this is the fellowship that we enjoy uniquely because we are all blood-bought, because we are all entered into the Lord Jesus Christ.

That cup is unique, it's special. Nobody else in the world except believers in the Lord Jesus Christ drink that cup and share that cup and pass it around and enjoy it together. It's a single thing.

It's a shared experience. It is a fellowship, a koinonia. The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Now, what is the bread? Are we going to switch now from a spiritual cup and a spiritual communion to actual bread? If I take one piece of unleavened bread, it looks kind of like pita bread, it looks like a pizza crust with no ingredients.

If I take that and pass it around here and we all take a piece, has that spiritually united us in any way? We can say, well, it's a symbol. Exactly, it's a symbol. You can talk about shared bread and in those days, you didn't have wonder bread in slices and you would hand everybody their own slice and it came to the table separately.

There was one piece and the Lord Jesus took bread, He took one piece of bread and He tore it and gave pieces of that one bread in their sight right there and then. It's like the cup. It is a shared piece of bread.

The shared idea is very much inevitable. It's not biscuits, it's not dinner rolls, it's a piece of bread that has been broken, has been torn, has been put in pieces and everybody has a piece, right? The bread which we break, what bread do we break in spiritual terms? We have a wonderful song, they typically play it at formal communion ritual services, but the hymn is break thou the bread of life O Lord to me as thou didst break the loaves at Galilee. But if you look and listen to the rest of the lyrics of that song, He's talking about the Word of God.

The bread of life is the truth of God. So the cup of communion that unites us in Christ is His effectual atoning work on the cross and we are all saved sinners. We are all forgiven and cleansed believers.

The bread that we share is the name of the Lord Jesus, the work of God the Father, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, all of the truth that comes from the Word of God. You could say, well, we all carry a Bible and that unites us. It's not the Bible that unites us, it's not the paper and ink, it's the truth that it conveys, right? It is a spiritual entity.

So, here's the punchline now. The cup of blessing is not an actual cup, in the same way that the baptism he talked about earlier was not a literal baptism, but it is suggestive. What is Paul saying here? When you all come together for a church meal, as opposed to the meal you keep getting invited to at the idol temple, what's his theme here? Flee from idolatry.

And this is temple idolatry. This isn't, don't have a little set of teraphim in your house and go in there and bow down to it. He's not worried about that.

He's saying you need to separate yourself, fugo, flee. Flee idolatry, run away from it. And he means don't associate.

Now, you've got to be wise. You've got to be thinking. Think about the cup.

Well, what is this, if there were a literal cup and literal bread, what is it? What is he contrasting here? If you go up there on the temple hill for one of these, you know, Diana or any of these other goddesses, you're, what are you going to do up there? You're going to drink a cup and you're going to share bread and other food with idolaters. Now, that's physical food. But what does your presence say? What does your toleration and your smiles and your back slapping and your ingratiation and your fellowship say? It says that you are on board, that you're not offended, you're not put off, you're cool with the whole thing, as they would say.

It's perfectly fine. Paul says, we've got meals in the church and they're full meals. But he says there is a spiritual bond here and those with whom you break bread, you know, breaking bread was a symbol of hospitality and of mutual respect and consideration and acceptance.

Remember when Paul says, if somebody won't work, somebody in the church won't work, don't even eat with them. That's distance. That's separation.

That's non-acceptance. If somebody is going to do certain things in the church, you are not to eat with them. But what does that really mean? It means you're not in harmony.

You are not of like mind. You are not united spiritually. They need to be set aside so that they can be dealt with and hopefully returned.

But you need to let them know that what they're doing is not okay. And the way you let them know is you do not condone. You do not accept.

You do not tolerate. You don't turn a blind eye. You don't pretend like it's not happening.

You establish distance. And you communicate. You don't just suddenly go cold.

If this is something a church is going to do, you say, look, sorry, but we can't continue fellowship so long as you make these decisions and follow this pattern. And unless you're willing to repent and to partake of the spiritual truth and the spiritual covenant that the rest of us dedicate ourselves to, sorry, but you're going to need to find somebody else to hang out with because we are united by the blood of Christ and we are united by the truth of God's Word. And somebody that's not on board with that, if you're not sitting at our spiritual table, you shouldn't come to our physical table.

If you're not on board with idolatry and their spiritual fellowship or lack thereof, then don't sit at their physical table. It's a symbol. I'm not okay with you.

I don't accept your idolatrous priorities. It sends a message. So the cup of blessing that we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? Those with whom you fellowship and sit down to eat, that means something.

That communicates something. It is a visible symbol of an invisible truth. Same thing with the

bread.

The bread we break, it is the fellowship of the body of Christ. We, many, are one bread and one body. Now, we're not cannibals.

We don't sit down and eat each other. We are one bread. Remember the rule? If you're in the spiritual realm, you keep to the spiritual realm.

And Paul says the bread is spiritual. And we are one spiritual bread. Remember the passage, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all.

We are one. The unity of faith, the bond of peace, and the one truth is what unites us. We are, in fact, one bread.

We are one bread. We don't turn to flour and eggs and whatever else is in bread. Right? We are the bread.

The bread is spiritual. And the bread that we break together unites us and you are what you eat. And so the truth that you internalize shines outward.

When Jesus was talking about the light of the body is the eye, and you need to be consistent. What is inside ought to shine through and be visible outside. If your eye is dark, your whole body is dark.

If you're not seeing and taking in the truth, you've got no light to shine forth. So we take in the spiritual bread of God's truth and we become that truth. We live that truth.

We act in the way that the Lord Jesus would act if He were here. It's the true sense of what would Jesus do. That's what the body of Christ ought to be doing.

We eat the spiritual bread, we drink the spiritual drink, and we reflect the body and blood of the Lord. And we memorialize Him and we show forth His work until He comes back and takes over that job again for Himself. So, just bear in mind, keep spiritual with spiritual, keep physical with physical.

We though many are one bread and one body, for we all partake of that one bread. You do not become one body with the church or with fellow believers by eating a piece of bread, do you? What kind of bread is it? He says we are one bread and one body because we partake of that one bread. Physical or spiritual? What makes us one body in Christ? What unites us together? First and foremost, it is the truth of God's Word.

It is the reality of the Lord Jesus Christ and His work on our behalf and the mission that we have been assigned as His body on this earth. We partake of that bread, that spiritual food, and it unites us. We are of like mind.

We fellowship with believers of like mind. That's why we have that little saying. Observe Israel

after the flesh.

Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? He says in the fellowship offering, especially, the offeror would partake of the sacrifice. And there was a lot of regulations about it. A lot of specificity if you are going to partake of a ritual meal.

It is only the fellowship offering as far as I can tell. Dr. Criswell likes to say that all of the sacrifices were shared meals, but I think he is stretching. The only one that was a shared meal is the fellowship offering.

All the food had to be eaten within a certain period of time or it had to be destroyed. The partakers of the sacrifices were more often the priests. There was a portion set aside to the priest portion that went to God, and a portion is consumed on the altar for most of them.

Notice he is going to switch back now. Remember I told you there would be a clue in context? If you are in the spiritual realm and you are going to switch back to literal, he is going to give you a clue. Observe Israel after the flesh.

Why doesn't he just say observe Israel? He says I am coming back down to earth here. I have been talking about a spiritual truth, spiritual bread, spiritual unity. Now I am going to talk about the flesh.

Observe Israel after the flesh. Those who eat of the sacrifices are partakers of the altar. What are they doing? They are sharing a meal with God.

God's portion is on the altar, right? And it symbolically goes up in smoke as a sweet smelling savor, as an aroma, something pleasing to God. God essentially consumes his portion with fire. The offeror would consume his portion, so what is he doing? Spiritually speaking, identified by this fleshly ritual, he is sharing a meal with God.

God is at one end of the table, he is at the other. He is partaking of the altar. He is actually eating some of the food that is on God's table.

What am I saying then? Good question. That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Is it just the physical food and as long as it is kosher, or as long as it hasn't actually laid in front of an image or something, is it okay? Rather, that the things the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. It is not the physical meal that you are eating.

And the way you are justifying is saying, well it is just food, and images are just rocks and pieces of metal, and I am up there eating a good meal. He says, no. The spiritual reality behind it is that idolatry partakes of demonology.

And you are fellowshiping with people who are actively cultivating association with demons. Idolatrous practice, especially at this time in the Roman Empire, was heavily infested with demons. And you are cultivating you are saying, I am okay with that and I am going to come

right up next to it.

I am not saying an idol is anything, or what is offered to the idol is anything. And by extension, the flip side of that coin, I am not saying that what is offered to God is anything, or what is eaten in God's presence is anything. It is not transubstantiation like the Catholics believe.

If he is not saying that the idol is anything, or the food is anything, he is also, on the flip side of that coin, saying it is not the food you eat in our fellowship. It is not the literal food. Put your thinking cap on.

I speak as to wise men. Discern for yourselves what I am saying. You are spiritually associating with demons when you go up the hill to the temple of Artemis.

You are entering the turf of the demons, and people who worship those demons and cultivate belief and association with them. Things with the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have koinonia with demons. That is a spiritual issue, right? So, critically important to parse this.

You can color code it. Spiritual is one color, physical is another, and you will see that it is in blocks, and you have a clue to change each time. Critically important.

This is the reason that 1 Corinthians chapter 11 is so widely misunderstood. People do not study chapter 10 and get Paul's gist. We are going to pause here and take our break, but the upshot of this, the point of application thus far is we want to be wise.

We want to be phronimos. We want to be those who think their way through and recognize the spiritual issues at stake in the associations that we maintain, the contacts that we cultivate, whether it is online, whether it is in person, who you associate with, and what you say and don't say in that association matters. We represent the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the Lord Jesus went and ate with publicans and sinners, did He just say, you know, being a sinner is fine, hey you prostitutes, glad to see you are having a banner month here. He made the issue clear, and people who came to Him were seeking a way out, looking for a better outcome for their lives. They said, I don't want to stay in this sorry condition.

Here is a man who has the answers. They were drawn to Him, and He healed all that came. He taught all that would come to Him.

Anybody that would listen, He that has an ear to hear, let him hear. The Lord Jesus turned no one away who was coming and seeking, but He didn't just go to their lewd, lascivious parties and sit around as though nothing was wrong. What we tolerate and what we bless, what we say is okay, matters.

It is something for us to think about and to analyze and to be sure that we are heeding Paul's exhortation here, and through him, the Holy Spirit, and God our Heavenly Father, to pay

attention to what we bless, and what we end up being identified with by way of koinonia. Well let's pause here and take our break.