

Flee From Idolatry

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- [0 : 00] 1 Corinthians chapter 10, and I'll read the first 22 verses.! And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.
- Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.
- Do not be idolaters, as some of them were. As it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.
- We must not indulge in sexual immorality, as some of them did, and 23,000 fell in a single day.
- We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.
- [1 : 45] Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.
- Therefore, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.
- God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.
- Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to sensible people. Judge for yourselves what I say.
- The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?
- [3 : 03] Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Consider the people of Israel.
- Are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything?
- Or that an idol is anything? No. I imply that pagans sacrifice, they offer, I imply that what's pagans sacrifice, they offer to demons and not to God.
- I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons.
- You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy?
- [4 : 11] Are we stronger than he? We're back in 1 Corinthians this morning. That's a letter that Paul wrote to a church that he had planted.
- But I want to start with words that Paul wrote to another church in another letter. A church that he also had a hand in planting. Ephesians 6 verse 12 says, For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

The physical world, what we can see with our naked eye, is not all there is. Paul made that clear to the Ephesians. We'll see this morning also that Paul makes it clear to those in Corinth as well.

Do you recognize this reality? The spiritual dimension? What the naked eye cannot see? One of the devil's greatest lies has been to convince humanity down through the ages that he doesn't exist.

That his rulers, his authorities, the cosmic powers, they're all just made up in the mind of man. For so many, especially in the Western world that we live in, the spiritual forces of good and of evil are just as real as Little Red Riding Hood or Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

[5 : 50] It's not so much that Satan has worked hard to convince people to side with him. He's simply convinced people to suppress the truth that he and God exist.

He's convinced people to believe the lie. Well, the spiritual realm is all made up. And in doing that, people by default have sided with him.

Man in all of his pride thinks that he's got it all figured out. We're advanced. We know more now than ever before. We've got more information at our fingertips now than at any other time in human history.

We've got facts. We've got the scientific method. We can empirically prove so many things about our physical world. We can look through a telescope and see distant galaxies.

We can look through a microscope and see the smallest of atoms. And here is what sadly so many have wrongly concluded. There is no spiritual realm.

[6 : 54] If we can't test it with the scientific method, if we can't see it with a telescope, well, it's not real. And it's that kind of thinking that God's Word addresses this morning for us and corrects.

Now, most of us gathered here today are not atheists. Most of us are not philosophical materialists who only believe that physical matter exists.

But that doesn't mean that we're immune from being influenced by those very ideas. Figuratively speaking, those ideas are in the water that we drink. And it's not just a drop in the bucket of water that we're talking about here.

We are constantly bombarded with a worldview that denies the spiritual realm, that laughs it away, that writes it off. That's the stuff of fairy tales.

So how careful we must be that we don't subtly begin to believe that lie ourselves. Maybe we won't go denying that God exists, but it's easy to simply live as though He doesn't.

[8 : 01] To live as though what we can see is all there is, and to forget entirely that the spiritual realm is so very real. So you see, that was the problem with the Corinthians.

They were perhaps forgetting the reality of the spiritual realm. If you remember what we've been studying in this letter, they had this zeal to do away with false idols.

They had this zeal to reject false idols. They had also, though, perhaps begun to live, or Paul feared they would begin to live, as though there are no cosmic powers over this present darkness.

That there are no cosmic powers that we wrestle against. So Paul sets out here in our passage to remind the Corinthians, to remind us that those cosmic powers exist, and indeed we must wrestle against them.

So we're here in chapter 10. Chapter 10, though, as we've seen, is a larger section, is a part of a larger section in Paul's letter. He started all the way back in chapter 8.

[9 : 13] Look back at how Paul begins that chapter. Verse 1 of chapter 8. Now concerning food offered to idols.

So the Corinthians likely had written to Paul and they had questions about food offered to idols. That was an issue that they themselves had raised. And specifically, they wanted to know, can we eat the meat?

Can we eat meat that was previously offered to idols? There in Corinth, pagan worship of false gods like Aphrodite involved pagan animal sacrifice.

The meat would then be sold in the market or it would even be used in banquets at the temple itself. So the Corinthians have questions about this meat.

Can we eat it? Now maybe for us, this is a bit of a foreign question. This is something that we aren't dealing with often. We're not going to Meijer or to Walmart and wondering, now where did this meat come from?

[10 : 18] Well, some of us do wonder that, but more for health purposes. But for the Corinthians, this was a question that related to their everyday lives on, I will say, a deeper level than it might for us if we're asking about meat.

Unless they were vegetarian, it was a very practical question. Can we eat that meat? And Paul in chapter 8 says yes, but be mindful of your brother in Christ.

Yes, you can eat that meat, but if your brother in Christ has a weak conscience and he himself thinks it's sinful, then don't eat that meat for the sake of your brother.

And that led Paul to then give a rather lengthy discourse on Christian liberty and the need to often limit our liberty out of love for our brothers and sisters in Christ or the need to limit our liberty for the sake of the advancement of the gospel.

We may be free to do something, but in certain circumstances it's best not to for the sake of others. Well, now Paul here, he's circling back to the original question of eating meat and he's going to qualify his answer yet again.

[11 : 35] Yes, you can eat the meat, but not when it's been eaten in the context of idol worship itself. You can't eat that meat if it means participating in idolatry.

So we're no longer in the gray area of Christian liberty this morning where it's like, well, in certain circumstances we can or can't do something. Now Paul is saying, no, this is black and white.

This is a distinction that we're clearly making between right and wrong. Very bluntly, he is saying, you cannot eat that meat that's been offered to idols if you're doing it as a part of idol worship.

Now that might seem obvious enough to us. Well, of course not. Idolatry, that's a sin. It's a clear sin. So why does Paul even feel a need to say this?

Well, because we have to remember what the Corinthians themselves were saying. They had some slogans that Paul himself would put into this letter. He's already said some of their slogans. He's already agreed to this particular slogan that an idol is nothing.

[12 : 44] Paul agrees with that. He even repeats that in chapter 8. He repeats that thought here again in chapter 10. An idol is not anything. An idol has no real existence.

There are many so-called gods, but only one true God who exists and who rewards those who seek Him. That is all true. So the Corinthians were perhaps thinking, what's the harm then in participating in a pagan feast that's being held for a false god?

It's not a real god anyways. That god has no real existence. I'm just here for the meat. Can't I share in the meat? Can't I share in the meal simply to fill my belly?

Sure, those people, they're worshiping those idols, but that's not what I'm doing. Paul, if I can eat the meat because the idol isn't real, why does it matter if it's at home or if it's in the temple in a worship service of any sort?

And so this is where Paul is drawing our attention back to the spiritual realm. Yes, it's true, idols are not real, but in the worship of those idols, something very real is happening.

[13 : 58] Something very demonic is happening, and this is where then we need to remember the truth of Ephesians 6, 12. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood. We wrestle against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

So this morning, we're looking at 1 Corinthians 10. We're looking at verses 14 to 22, and we're going to break down this passage into three chunks. We're going to see a sobering exhortation.

We're going to see a clear explanation and then we're going to see an unexpected encouragement. So we have the exhortation, we have the explanation, and finally, we'll circle back for the encouragement.

Let's look at this sobering exhortation. It's just there in verse 14. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. So here Paul has given this command, and he gives it to us.

He gives it to the Corinthians and to us as his beloved. He says this out of love. He says this to warn them away from danger. And what is it that he's telling them to do?

[15 : 08] Flee from idolatry. So how did we get to this particular exhortation? Well, we have to look back at the verses just before it. It's why we had those first 13 verses read.

Because in the beginning of chapter 10, Paul has been giving us a history lesson. And we saw a couple weeks ago in the evening that this is a family story about our fathers, as Paul says, in the Old Testament.

And it's a very sad, sobering story itself, showing how the people of Israel failed, how they disobeyed God, how they sinned against God, how they started well when they left Egypt, but how they did not finish well in the wilderness.

And in this family story, what were they tempted toward? Idolatry. Paul, in those opening verses of chapter 10, gives as an example the episode of the golden calf in Exodus 32.

There he says in verse 7, Do not be idolaters, as some of them were. As it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

[16 : 22] So here the Israelites had come out of Egypt. God had delivered them from Egypt. He had brought them to the base of Mount Sinai. And Moses had then gone up the mountain to meet with the Lord and to receive God's commandments.

And in that time that he was gone, the people got antsy. They grew concerned. They were worried. Worried. Where's our leader? They're impatient.

Moses' absence was a problem. And they had what they thought was a genius solution. So Exodus 32 begins by saying this, When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, Up, make us gods who shall go before us.

As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him. Aaron, Moses is gone. So we need a new leader.

We need someone else to go before us. We don't have Moses and presumably we don't have our God either. So we need some new leadership. So you, Aaron, make new gods to go before us.

[17 : 38] And that's what Aaron did. So we read, beginning in verse 2, Aaron said to them, Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.

So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf.

And they said, These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it.

And Aaron made a proclamation and said, Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

That's the idolatry of Israel on full display. And sadly, it's not the only instance in the Old Testament that Paul could have cited in 1 Corinthians. But that is the very one that he chose.

[18 : 42] And Paul is saying to the Corinthians, That could be you too. You're playing with fire if you shrug your shoulders at this issue of eating meat in those pagan temples.

That is toying with the sin of idolatry. You're getting as close to the edge of that cliff as you possibly can. Look at the people of Israel.

So did they. And they fell. So Paul says, Flee from idolatry. He gives that strong exhortation.

It's more than simply saying, Please don't commit idolatry. Paul says, Run from it. As fast as you can. As far away as you can.

Don't get anywhere near the edge of that cliff. Many years ago, before Case and I had kids, we took a road trip in our little Honda Civic.

[19 : 39] It was an adventure enough just getting ourselves on this trip all the way to California. Imagine a 2003 Honda Civic traveling through the Rocky Mountains. We learned a lot about your engine and its power and how quickly other cars with bigger engines were getting past us on that mountain.

Well, on that road trip that we took, we went to the Grand Canyon. And it was an incredible sight. But where we were, the sight wasn't as incredible as it perhaps could have been because there were barriers.

There were handrails that were keeping us from getting closer to the edge of the canyon. Now, for me, I did not need those handrails or those barriers.

I am not an adventurous person. I am not a risk taker. I would have gotten nowhere near to the edge of that cliff even if they had signs saying, please, come, see how close you can get before falling off the edge of this cliff.

I valued my life. I valued my physical life so I was content to stay far back from the edge of the Grand Canyon. Now, other people, and not being so cautious, would want to get close.

[20 : 58] But they're missing the simple calculation that you ought to do. However many years of life God would give me if I stay back is more valuable to me than the 20 or 30 feet of distance closer to get a better view.

I wanted that time in years more than I wanted that distance in feet. But not everybody feels that way. So they have to put up those barriers.

They have to put up those signs. Some of us value our physical life so we're content to stay back from the edge. Do we value our spiritual lives in the same way?

Perhaps we could argue to an even greater degree. Are we content to stay back from the edge because it is so obviously worth it? or like the Corinthians do we want to get as close to the edge of sin as possible without sinning?

Paul is saying be careful. That's foolishness. That's risky business. You're playing with fire all in the name of what? Eating some meat?

[22 : 06] So flee from idolatry. Run as fast and as far as you can from it. And learn from the example of the people of Israel. When they were in the wilderness they became idolaters.

Don't let their story become yours as well. Flee from idolatry. Now again this all might seem very obvious. Of course the Corinthians should not participate in idolatry of any kind.

Of course we too should not participate in idolatry of any kind. But again the Corinthians were likely thinking what's the big deal if idols are nothing?

Can't we just conclude idol worship is nothing as well? And Paul anticipates that. So he moves from that sobering strong exhortation to a very clear explanation beginning in verse 15.

I speak as to sensible people judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?

[23 : 12] The bread that we break. Is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread we who are many are one body for we all partake of the one bread.

Consider the people of Israel. Are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything or that an idol is anything?

No. I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons.

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy?

Are we stronger than He? So we see here that Paul recognizes that these Corinthian Christians might struggle to understand why they can't eat that meat in pagan temples.

[24 : 19] So he makes a comparison. Paul gives a comparison to another meal that these Corinthian Christians would have been familiar with. He compares these meals in pagan temples to the Lord's Supper, that meal that Christ instituted and commanded us to do.

It's a meal that puts into picture form His death for us. As Christians, the Corinthians would have regularly participated in that meal.

Remember, Paul had planted this church. He would have taught them about the Lord's Supper himself. He would have led them in sharing in the Lord's Supper together.

This was a very personal experience that they would have thought of as they were hearing Paul talk about the Lord's Supper. We've shared in that meal with Paul. So he draws on that regularly shared meal to make his point, which is this.

There is more going on at the Lord's Supper than perhaps meets the eye. There are spiritual realities at work.

[25 : 28] Now this isn't to say that there's something strangely mystical happening to the bread and the cup. Some in church history have believed that the wine, or as we drink the grape juice, somehow actually becomes the blood of Christ.

Others believe that the bread we share actually becomes the body of Christ in this supernatural way. They think there's a transformation that takes place.

That's not what Paul's talking about here. he's not talking about transformation, but what? Participation. Very different words here. That word for participation could also be translated as fellowship or as communion, which simply draws our attention to the fact that the Lord's Supper is no ordinary meal.

It's not just another meal or a very light snack that we're eating together. There's something very spiritually good about it. We are communing with Christ.

We call it the Lord's Supper. We call it coming to the Lord's table because the Lord is the host and he's welcomed us to share in this meal with him together.

[26 : 45] This is fellowship with Christ. And as we share in this meal, we're reminded that we share in the benefits of his saving work. He bore our sins in his body.

He shed his blood. For the forgiveness of our sins. That's the very reminder that Christ gave in the upper room on the night that he instituted this meal.

What did he say to the disciples? Well, as he broke the bread and gave thanks, he gave it to his disciples and he said, take, eat, this is my body. As he passed the cup, he said, drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

So every time that we participate in the Lord's Supper, we remember the cross. We remember the saving benefits that have been applied to us.

Every time that we share in the Lord's Supper, we are expressing that fellowship and that communion with our Savior in a very real way. It is more than a meal, it is an act of worship.

[27 : 53] just as the priests in the Old Testament, as they would eat the meals, the meat of the sacrifices that had been offered, they too, they were participating in the very worship, the worship of the one true God.

So this is what Paul means when he says in verse 18, consider the people of Israel. He is now giving a good example from Israel. Consider the people of Israel. Are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar.

They ate the food and in doing that they participated in the worship. So now Paul is saying, by comparison, he is now giving the very negative, dangerous example, he is saying the same is true at these pagan banquets in the temple.

It is more than just a meal, it is an act of worship. Now why is it more than just a meal? Is it because the idols themselves are actually something?

Are they some kind of God? No. Paul says as much in verse 19. He reiterates the point that idols are nothing, but in idol worship there is demonic influence.

[29 : 11] There is demonic activity. That idol is not real, but that worship is very real. It is energized by demons.

Idols may be nothing, but we cannot forget that demons are something. We are not to be casual about demons, about the forces of evil at work in this world.

Paul wasn't. Paul took them very seriously. In Ephesians 6.12 he says, we wrestle against them so we can't be dismissive of them.

Too often though, that is the posture of Christians. We live life without a thought of our enemy. Or we think of Satan and we associate him with a little red man with horns and a pitchfork rather than as the roaring lion seeking someone to devour that the Bible describes him as.

I'm sure he loves that. I am sure he loves how misrepresented he is and his demons as well. Because that's just lulling us to sleep. Just putting us into a spiritual slumber.

[30 : 24] And so like the Corinthians we may think well idols are nothing but then we also might slip into the thinking of demons are nothing too. And that's not the reality that the Bible presents to us.

Now do Satan and his forces of evil stand a chance against God? No. Not at all. Are we safe and secure in Christ?

Yes. Absolutely. Do we need to fear Satan and his demons because somehow God can't protect us? No. Certainly not. But should we pretend like they're nothing?

Like the cosmic powers over this present darkness don't exist at all? We shouldn't do that either. And too often we do. In my office I have three bookshelves for my small library of books.

It's not an overly large library but I've got a good number of books in there. To the point now that the three bookshelves aren't enough. So if you came into my office you would just find stacks of books piled up on the floor slowly but surely encroaching upon my desk.

[31 : 35] Pretty soon I'll just have a kind of a cave of books that I sit in. And a few years ago someone came to me wanting advice on spiritual warfare. And I did what I always do when someone comes to me looking for sound biblical wisdom on any given topic.

I went to my library to find a book to give to them as a resource. But guess what? I didn't have a single book on that specific topic of spiritual warfare.

And that was very telling for me. I really quickly realized my library is something of a reflection of my values, of my priorities, but not a single book that specifically addressed the topic of spiritual warfare.

Do you recognize the reality of the spiritual realm? Do you recognize it for what it is? We are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Satan has a grip on this world. The Bible calls him the God of this world. The Bible calls him the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

[33 : 03] Satan and his demons should not be nothing to us, because they certainly are not nothing to God. to share in the table of the Lord and to share in the table of demons is to do what, according to 1 Corinthians 10?

It is to provoke the Lord. The Lord is deeply concerned for the truth, the truth that he is the only one true God, that Satan and his demons, his forces of evil, that they exist and are, in fact, his enemies.

enemies. And they will be soundly defeated by him. He takes them very seriously. And what's the proof of that? Consider their sure, certain end in hell for all of eternity, experiencing God's wrath.

That is their place that they will end. That is the proof God takes them seriously. Do we? Now, most of us aren't coming into contact with demonically energized pagan feasts.

But that's not to say that Satan and his forces of evil are just absent from our world. The world today is still just as much under the influence of the evil one as it was in Corinth.

[34 : 29] Satan is still just as much the God of this world now as he was then scheming and deceiving and seeking to sway.

Just like the Corinthians then, we need to have our guard up. We need our eyes wide open to the spiritual realities all around us. And we need to ask God to protect us.

You know, this is something of kind of a good indicator of how seriously do I take spiritual realities. If you want to know how aware you are of the spiritual forces of evil, then look at your prayer life.

How frequently do you pray that God would protect you? That God would keep you from the evil one? I was convicted this week even as I considered that question myself.

How little I pray with an awareness, with a recognition that Satan is prowling around looking for someone to devour. God and he might have his sights set on me.

[35 : 35] He might have his sights set on you. You know, Jesus modeled this kind of prayer so very well for us in the Lord's prayer. How did he teach us to pray?

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Or you could say deliver us from the evil one. And in that upper room, on that last night, the night that he instituted the Lord's supper, how did he pray in that high priestly prayer?

He prayed saying, I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. Our prayers should reflect that same kind of awareness of the cosmic forces of evil.

Lord, protect me from the devil and from his demons. Keep me from following into sin because I've become too casual about spiritual realities all around me.

That is exactly where this passage should lead us. Down on our knees in prayer, asking the Lord to be our shield, asking the Lord to be our defender from the evil one, and rejoicing because we know this truth, that he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

[36 : 57] This God who is jealous for his glory, this God who is provoked by evil, this God who is absolutely stronger than us, is the same God who is full of love for us who are in Christ.

And we have a sure defense. We have a safe refuge in him. Well, now we've walked through this passage. We've considered Paul's exhortation, we've considered Paul's explanation, but I want to circle back on Paul's words about the Lord's supper.

And we'll see now briefly an unexpected encouragement. Look at verses 16 to 18 again. Now, Paul's point in these verses isn't really to show us how incredible the Lord's supper supper.

His point is just to show that there are spiritual realities going on when we share in the Lord's supper. Just as there are spiritual realities going on if you were to share in a pagan feast where idol worship is taking place.

But even in making that point, we cannot help but see what a gift the Lord's supper is to us. What a source of joy and strength and refreshment sharing in this meal is.

[38 : 42] Because as we've seen, it's not just a meal, it's an act of worship. Something else we could say about it is that it is a means of grace.

It is a channel designed by God to nourish our faith, to grow us in grace. Like reading your Bible. Like going to the Lord in prayer.

Like sitting under the preaching of the word. Those are ways that God has designed. And I want to really emphasize God designed. Not us.

Not man. It's God. He says here's how you'll grow as a Christian. Here's how you will mature. Here is how you will be formed more and more into the image of Christ.

read your Bible. Pray. Gather with the people of God. Hear the word of God preached. Be baptized.

[39 : 43] And share in the Lord's supper. Sit down regularly at his table. All of these things are not invented by us. They are instituted by God.

Including the Lord's supper. It is a means of grace. Now what it is not I will readily say is a flashy service. It's not even a meal as you might expect.

Hearing the word supper this would not pass as a meal. This would not pass in the home! household as even a snack. There would be an uprising if we tried to give that piece of bread and that cup as a snack and we take a loaf of bread and we break it and we pass it around and as baptized believers we each take a piece of bread and let's be honest usually it's more like crumbs because we cannot figure out how to get a proper piece of bread and we always end up just taking a few crumbs off of that piece of bread and we pass around the grape juice and those little cups someone on the outside looking in who does not have eyes to see would think that is a silly pointless ritual the natural man would say why do you do that you're you're passing those trays you're sometimes missing an aisle as you pass them you're taking those little cups of grape juice like you're trying to sample something from

Costco! the natural man says why would because sadly he doesn't have eyes to see but by the grace of God we do by the grace of God we who are in Christ do see we don't gather for the Lord's supper so that we can taste test grape juice we don't gather for the Lord's supper so that we can get crumbs on the floor for somebody to vacuum we gather for the Lord's supper because Christ commands us to and the Holy Spirit has given us eyes to see to see spiritual realities so we are refreshed spiritually we are nourished spiritually the Lord's supper is a God designed means of grace that draws us closer to him and draws us closer to one another in a very real relational way we're communing with our Lord and we're communing with one another that's what

Paul's getting at in verse 17 because there is one bread we who are many are one body for we all partake of the one bread so we're reminded as we share in the Lord's supper that we're bound together that we're united together because we've been united to Christ so as we consider the nature of the Lord's supper we can't miss this there is more to reality than what the naked eye can see and that's not just true when we think about the nature of the

[42 : 50] Supper think about the very nature of little likely has changed about you physically for most of us before we came to Christ and after we came to Christ our physical appearance didn't change one day it will what a glorious day that will be glorified bodies that we will have but not when we first came to Christ we look the same outwardly as we did on that day but spiritually speaking when you were saved what an incredible change that has taken place transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's beloved son dead in our sins now made alive by God and what did God do having by grace saved us through faith in Jesus Christ what did he do he raised us up with Christ and he seated us with him in the heavenly places in the physical realm perhaps not much changed but in the spiritual realm it is hard to put into words how much has changed it is hard for anyone to conceive of all that has changed seated with

Christ in the heavenly places that is an astounding thought so do we see how important it is that we remember the reality of the spiritual realm!

we live by faith and not by sight if all that we had to go off of was sight well then we pretty quickly begin asking questions like why do we eat those bread crumbs and drink those sample sized cups of grape juice why make that a habit why make that a priority you see if we forget the spiritual realm we will let our guard down when it comes to sin and of our salvation we will begin to think things like no big deal to live like the world and we will begin to think things like no good reason to share in the Lord's supper so God's word is telling us what a massive danger to sit at the table of demons and God's word is telling us what a marvelous reality that we sit at the Lord's table if you're a baptized believer let me encourage you be sure to be with us the next time that we take the

Lord's supper Jesus commands us to do it and also what a privilege it is it is a participation in the body of Christ it is a participation in the blood of Christ we are reminded afresh of the saving work of our Savior and that nourishes our faith it's a God designed way to grow you don't want to miss that spiritual reality and if you are here this morning and you are not a Christian maybe you've been living your life like all there is to life is what your eyes can see turn from going your own way come to Christ he came to save sinners by dying on a cross and rising again and putting your faith in him is the only way to be saved from your sins make that plea from your heart it is as simple as crying out to him have mercy on me a sinner

Jesus Christ loves to save sinners call out to him and he will save you Satan has one ambition to steal! kill and destroy but Jesus says I came that they may have life and have it abundantly turn to him today that abundant life that eternal life is yours and then participate in the means of grace all of them that God has designed for you to grow and to mature as a Christian and for all of us who are in Christ let's press on this week with an ever sharper awareness of the spiritual realities all around us not cowering in fear but not casually moving through this world as though there's no danger this is just the lie that Satan wants us to believe may God keep us from his lies and may God cause us to walk with courage and with boldness in the truth and may

[47 : 30] God help us to remember he disarmed those rulers and those authorities and he put them to open shame by triumphing over them through the cross of Christ indeed as we heard it read this morning through death Christ has broken the power of him who has the power of death that is the devil Hebrews 2 14 says so let's look to Christ this week and let's rejoice that even he rules and he reigns with all power and authority over all spiritual forces let's pray together heavenly father how we do need you to give us that strength that we would run the race that we would persevere in the Christian life keep us walking according to the truth this week we pray keep us from the devil's lies and yet make us to see that we ought not to be casual in how we engage but that we should be living life courageously boldly and in the strength that you give by your spirits help us we pray make us to see

Christ all the more and to rejoice in his sure victory in his name we pray amen