

Strength Healing and Life at the Lord's Table

Dr. John Carmichael

[1Co 11:23-32 NASB95] 23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same way [He took] the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink [it,] in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. 27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. 28 But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. 31 But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

- Communion is more than a memorial. It's an encounter. Paul shocks the Corinthian church with the reality that the Lord's Table is so holy, so charged with God's presence, that receiving it improperly produced weakness, sickness, and even death (1 Cor 11:30).
- If the Table carries power in judgment when dishonored, then it carries greater power in blessing when honored. Many early Fathers, including Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Cyril of Jerusalem, believed that the Eucharist conveyed real spiritual life. Luther and Calvin affirmed a Spirit-empowered presence that strengthens, nourishes, and even mediates the benefits of Christ's atonement. (from Lessons for Today's Church from Luther's and Calvin's Teachings about the Eucharist by Dr. John Carmichael)
- And as we gather near Thanksgiving, remember: Eucharist literally means "thanksgiving."
- When we come with reverence, gratitude, and faith, communion becomes a time-release miracle: strength, healing, and life.

What do we need to know about the miraculous power available with communion?

Here are three areas of the supernatural that are accessible through communion.

I. PROPER DISCERNMENT RELEASES STRENGTH

- a. [1Co 11:29 NASB95] 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.
- b. Paul doesn't say we must be "worthy," but we must receive in a worthy manner, seeing Christ's body as holy, powerful, and present by the Spirit.
- c. Luther taught that Christ is "really present in, with, and under the bread and wine," offering concrete grace to believers. Calvin emphasized the Spirit "lifting the believer into communion with Christ" in the Supper.
- d. [Psa 105:4 NASB95] 4 Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face continually.
- e. [Isa 40:31 NASB95] 31 Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up [with] wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.
- f. Before receiving, pause and discern His body, meditate on the crucified and risen Christ. Reject a casual approach. The Table is holy ground.
- g. Expect supernatural renewal: physical, emotional, and spiritual.

II. PROPER GRATITUDE RELEASES HEALING

- a. [1Co 11:30 NASB95] 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.

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- b. If irreverence produces sickness, then reverence releases healing.
- c. Communion is not magic, but it mediates grace, as Luther and Calvin argued. Christ is not re-sacrificed; His once-for-all sacrifice is applied by the Spirit.
- d. And every Gospel account says Jesus gave thanks. The Eucharist is literally the Thanksgiving meal. Gratitude opens the believer to God's healing presence.
- e. [Isa 53:4-5 NASB95] 4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being [fell] upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.
- f. [Psa 103:2-3 NASB95] 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; 3 Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases;
- g. As you take the bread, thank Him for His broken body. As you take the cup, thank Him for the new covenant.
- h. Release faith that healing may manifest immediately, or as a time-release miracle working in your body.

III. PROPER REPENTANCE RELEASES LIFE

- a. [1Co 11:30 NASB95] 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.
- b. ("Sleep" = death)
- c. Paul teaches that the Table confronts the believer with life or death.
- d. Early Church Fathers called it "the medicine of immortality." Calvin taught that unrepentant participation turns the Supper into "deadly poison," but for believers it becomes assurance of eternal life and deliverance from sin.
- e. [Jhn 6:54 NASB95] 54 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.
- f. [Rom 8:11 NASB95] 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.
- g. Use the Table as a moment of Spirit-led self-examination. Renounce hidden sin, bitterness, division, or unbelief.
- h. Receive communion as a life-giving covenant meal: renewing strength, extending days, restoring spiritual vitality.

- **When we receive the Lord's Supper with discernment, thanksgiving, and faith, the Holy Spirit releases Christ's life into our bodies, our souls, and our future.**
- **Communion is not a ritual to rush. It is a Spirit-charged meeting place with the living Christ. Paul teaches it can bring:**
 - **Strength where there was weakness**
 - **Healing where there was sickness**
 - **Life where death was operating**
- **This is not superstition; it is covenant.**
- **This is not symbolism only; it is participation by the Spirit.**
- **This is not tradition; it is encounter.**
- **As we receive with thanksgiving, the Lord's Table becomes a wellspring of miraculous grace.**