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^B Acts 20:27, 2:41-42; Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46

^C 1 Corinthians 7:19

^D 2 Timothy 3:16-17

^E Philippians 3:6

^F Matthew 16:24

A. Introduction

1. Union and Communion

- a. there is in the poetical section of the OT a book which is a love poem, celebrating the marriage relationship
- b. it is a book from which preachers are drawn to give messages, but it takes a special calling and burden to preach from that book
- c. the most common Christian understanding of the book is that it gives in marriage – its joys and its agonies – an allegory of the relationship between Christ and His church, which is His bride
- d. in that vein its words have found their ways into such spiritual songs as “His Banner over Me Is Love” and “Everybody Ought to Know”
- e. and J. Hudson Taylor has written a commentary on the book from that perspective, called “Union and Communion”-^{2}.
 - (A) “Union” takes place at the inception of marriage, a relationship for a lifetime, being “until death us do part”
 - (B) “Communion” is the ongoing enjoyment of that relationship
 - (C) this second is not necessarily constant as it should be
 - (D) A man trying to win a woman will do anything for her. She’ll call him and say, “I know it’s late, you’re tired and it’s raining, but could you come over and change my flat tyre?” “Sure, I’ll be right over,” he says. And over he comes with a smile. Now, fast forward. They’ve been married 10 years; he’s in the same house with the same woman he courted and won. She asks him to get up off the couch and do something for her. She has to say it three or four times, and you’d think she’d asked him to cut off his leg the way he moans and groans. Then she gets upset. What’s happening? -^{3}.
- f. when through faith a person comes to Christ, an eternal life union is established whereby he becomes a child of God
 - (A) but as every believer is well aware, his communion with the Father God is not necessarily constant, but can be interrupted
 - (B) last week we looked at how sin can interrupt that communion and what the Christian needs to do to deal with sin
 - (C) that was the first test of being a Christian
 - (D) today we shall look at the second test, obedience

2. The Importance of Communion

- a. C. S. Lewis has said, "Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important." —{4}.
- b. now Christianity is founded first and foremost on the fact
 - (A) that the Almighty Creator God
 - (B) stooped down in the Person of God the Son
 - (C) to reconcile God with mankind; that we have peace with God
 - (D) permitting a person to have communion with God
- c. so, if Christianity be true, then the reconciliation brought about by the infinite price of the death of God the Son on the cross of Calvary must be of infinite importance
- d. we can discern the importance God gives to it
 - (A) by what He has done to restore this fellowship
 - (B) by the reconciliation price paid by God – the sacrifice of His Son
- e. But, how important do we consider this right of communion to be?
 - (A) communion is the assurance of union
 - (B) obedience is the second item in John's checklist whereby we test if our Christianity is real
 - (C) because obedience is the proof of our communion with God

B. Our Text

1. An Extended Paraphrase

- a. because this is a paraphrase, you should follow along in your own Bibles, so that you can see where the verse has been expanded
- b. 3 The way that we can tell that we have known and still know Him (that is, God through the Advocacy of Jesus Christ) is just this, that we continue to obey His commands. 4 Anyone who would keep on saying, 'I have come to know Him', and yet does not keep on obeying His commands, such a one is a liar in whom the truth has no place in his life; 5 yet whoever should continue to keep His word, truly in such a one love for God has been brought to fulfilment. So this is how we know that we are in (or, perhaps: fellowship, communion, or union with) Him: 6 the one professing thus to abide in Him, must also conduct his own life according even as Jesus conducted His.

2. Some Emphases to Note

- a. this book, and these words are written to Christians

- b. they are not teaching how to become a Christian, for we are “not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 2:16)
- c. they are not even speaking out how to preserve our Christianity – that is God’s work for you, “who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:5)
- d. but are talking about what the writer of Hebrews (6:9) describes as “things that accompany salvation”

3. Outline: So, lets look at this passage under three topics:

- a. Obeying His Commands – (Living as His Servants)
- b. Obeying His Words – (Living as His Disciples)
- c. Obeying His Example – (Living as His Followers)

C. Obeying His Commands – (Living as His Servants). 1 John 2:3-4

- 1. “And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;”
- 2. God’s Whole Counsel
 - a. Paul, in speaking to the Ephesian elders, reminded them that he “did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God” Acts 20:27
 - (A) there is a danger in proclaiming the gospel of not doing that
 - (B) of doling it out in bite-size chunks just as you feed a baby
 - (1) Jesus as the friend who can solve your problems
 - (2) your need to be sorry for your sin
 - (3) your need to turn from sin
 - (4) then about baptism, church membership, surrender, service
 - b. the Bible does not present the gospel in this piece-meal fashion
 - (A) On Pentecost we find that salvation, baptism (which is a sign of repentance and conversion), addition to the church and changed life priorities all coincided, “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” (Acts 2:41-42)
 - (B) nor is there any suggest of accepting Jesus first as Saviour and then at some later date and convenience

as Lord; Paul writes, "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." (Romans 10:9-10)

- (C) so, if Jesus Christ is the Lord Jesus Christ, then He is to be obeyed; Jesus made this quite clear in the sermon on the mount when He told His audience
 - (1) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21)
 - (2) and as we pointed out last Sunday, "And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46)
- (D) hence, the commands of God are not optional

3. God's Commands

- a. what are these commands of God?
- b. whole sections of the books of Moses are introduced
 - (A) "Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, 'When you enter the land ... then you shall ...'" or in similar fashion
 - (B) there are three things to note about these commands
 - (1) they were given to a specific people, Israel
 - (2) they were given for a specific time, once they were in the land
 - (3) they were given for a specific place, the land of Canaan
 - (C) as well as such national laws, the NT, as in Hebrews, distinguishes the ceremonial laws as but a foreshadowing of the reality which we now find in Christ
 - (D) Paul clarifies this even further: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God." (1 Corinthians 7:19)
- c. and, as we proceed in this epistle of John, it will become clear what these commands are that we are to keep, in order that we may do the will of our heavenly Father. Let us look at ...

D. Obeying His Words – (Living as His Disciples)..... 1 John 2:5a

1. "but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected." (1 John 2:5a NAS)

2. God's Inspired Words

- a. sadly there are orthodox and fundamental Christian teachers
 - (A) who stand up strong to counter false teachers who say that
 - (1) the prophets wrote after the things happened they foretold
 - (2) not all of the Bible is inspired
 - (3) or even that the writers used older sources for their writing
 - (B) but then turn around and teach such things as that
 - (1) the Old Testament doesn't apply to Christians and the church
 - (2) the ten commandments have no present-day application
 - (3) even Jesus' words as being spoken under the law, especially such passages as the Sermon on the mount
 - (C) because, by taking this position, they throw out of God's word, not just a chapter here and there, but some 80% of the Holy Scriptures
 - (D) so, is it any wonder that so few Christians read through their Bible when they are told things such as these?

3. The NT Position

- a. of the writers of the New Testament is quite different
- b. Hundreds of times the New Testament quotes the Old to demonstrate the unity of the revelation of God
- c. every one of the ten commandments, except that of the Sabbath, is reaffirmed in the epistles written to instruct the church
- d. Paul does not say 'some of the scriptures' or 'a few verses of scripture from here and there', but rather, "[All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.](#)" (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- e. in this verse the emphasis turns from the actual commandments, to the effect of God's love in the believer:
 - (A) the husband, knowing the wife's love, does that which pleases her
 - (B) the believer, in the morality and ethics of daily living, desires to please God and so obeys Him

4. The 613 Mitzvot of Judaism

- a. who first enumerated these is unknown
- b. the Pharisees and lawyers of Jesus' day had a part in listing them
- c. 613 rules that, along with liberal interpretation, a pious Jew could do
- d. but I know that they left some out, like "to love mercy"
- e. Paul could say that in accordance with this delineation of the Law, he was faultless (Philippians 3:6), but he also knew that claim had no value, it was but rubbish, and that in fact he was the chief of sinners

f. Jesus in the sermon on the mount showed the Pharisees missed the real meaning of God's commands by showing their implications and explaining what God's will was

5. so, our love for God is really fulfilled, our communion with Him is truly demonstrated, when living in the Spirit of God we act in accordance with God's pure and holy will

E. Obeying His Example – (Living as His Followers) 1 John 2:5b-6

1. "By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked."

2. WWJD – in the late 1980's, a youth minister in a church in western Michigan named Janie Tinkleberg, wanted her kids to realize the importance of not only possessing faith in their hearts but also wearing it on their sleeves ... so to speak. So in 1989 she asked a friend in the advertising business to help her develop a gimmick that would remind her youth group to first ask themselves "What Would Jesus Do?" before every life decision. Well, friendship bracelets were popular at the time so she had bracelets made with the WWJD logo on them and it took off from there. A company made 200 for her that first year and within 10 years sales reached 15 million. ^{-{5}}.

3. Loud Professors

- a. but for many, at that time and since, those inscribed bracelets, or T-shirts or hats, are just a fashion statement, a part of current culture
- b. same as there are with those who say they are born-again Christians, it is just part of being a member of a group, of belonging
- c. they are professors, but not possessors
- d. for if the apostles turned the world upside-down, what should be the result of all these claiming Christianity – and we just do not see it

4. Imitating Jesus

- a. it is relatively easy to say that you believe that Jesus was a good man, a great example
- b. but when it comes to following Him on a day by day basis, that's a different story
- c. it was true in Jesus life time:
 - (A) in the beginning of His ministry, the crowds flocked to Him, to see the miracles, to hear his marvellous

teaching, to check Him out

- (B) at one point 70 disciples were sent through the land to preach the gospel of the kingdom, working miracles
 - (C) but then following the Teacher and His teaching became harder
 - (D) "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'" (Matthew 16:24)
 - (E) and they turned away so that only a scattered few remained straggling around the cross
- d. but the perseverance of the saints is demonstrated by those who continue faithfully, day in and day out, by the sufficiency that comes from God, seeking to live in accordance with how the Bible answers that question, "What would Jesus do?"

F. Conclusion

1. you who name the name of Christ as your Saviour, have the opportunity to make a difference in your world this week:
 - a. Live as His Servants, Obey His Commands
 - b. Live as His Disciples, Obey His Words
 - c. Live as His Followers, Obey His Example

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AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

An earlier version of this message is found on the Kerux database, KeruxID 25851

2. *'Union and Communion: thoughts on the Song of Solomon,'* by J. Hudson Taylor, published by Moody Press, Chicago, ca 1955
3. Found on <http://www.thevine.co.nz>
4. Kerux illustration #17254
5. From message by Rev. Mark Adams, “What Happens When We Do What Jesus Would DO?” – Kerux sermon #13499