

The Ultimate Communion

Romans 6:20-23 (NRSVue)



THIS MORNING WE GATHER around this table with shiny plates and plastic cups. But we aren't alone. In huts and cathedrals, in storefronts and houses, Christians raise bread on rough woven mats or lift pewter cups together.

World Communion Sunday reminds us we belong to a table without borders. It isn't only bread and wine. It's *union*—our union with Christ, union with each other, and a union that stretches into eternity.

The apostle Paul, in Romans 6, sets before us a choice between two very different communions: One with sin, and one with God.

Communion with Sin

Paul begins with a memory: “When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. So what fruit did you then gain from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death” (Rom. 6:20-21).

To commune with sin is to sit at a table that always leaves you hungry. Tasting the food of anger leaves you with heartburn, estranged from those you love. Greed offers its own menu. Greedy people pile so much on their plates they can't eat it. Folks eat the feasts of pride, of resentment, of secret sin. Yet they remain dissatisfied, and Paul says such banquets produce only shame.

Communion with sin is not true freedom. It's a false fellowship that leads to emptiness and separation, even death.

But there's a very different communion table—set not with death's wages, but with gifts. You can't earn your place at this table, but you will receive it in Jesus Christ.

Communion with God

Paul turns the page: “...now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life” (Rom. 6:22-23a).

Here’s the genuine communion. No longer slaves to sin, but children of God. Not shame, but holiness—becoming like Christ, patient where we were angry, generous where we were greedy. Not the wages of death, but a gift of life.

Every time you come to the Lord’s Table, you choose this communion again. You break the bread and say: “I belong to Christ, not sin.” You lift the cup and say: “I’m joined to a new family stretching across every continent.”

This meal is not only a memory. It’s fellowship—real connection with the living Christ. Here we find forgiveness when we’ve failed, strength when we’re weak, and hope when we’re discouraged.

Communion with God and his people. How wonderful!

The Ultimate Communion

Paul gives us the choice in stark terms: “...the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23b).

The Table is not only for today—it points forward. Today we take a crumb of bread; one day we’ll sit at the wedding feast of the Lamb. Today we drink a sip of juice; one day we’ll drink the new wine in his kingdom. Today we gather in one sanctuary; one day we’ll sit with Abraham, Mary Magdalene, Paul, and believers from every tribe and tongue.

This is the *ultimate communion*—eternal life in Christ.

Imagine a banquet table stretching out of sight, through centuries and continents—laden with food that satisfies, wine that brings perfect joy. You find a seat set with your nametag.

Here’s the promise Paul lays before us, the promise Jesus made to each of his followers.

WORLD COMMUNION is a rehearsal for eternity. We
renounce slavery to sin and embrace freedom in Christ.
We trade shame for holiness, and taste not death, but life.

The invitation is open. Come, smell the bread, drink the
cup, and share in the ultimate communion, eternal life in
Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Amen

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