

If I were asked for internal proofs of the infallibility of the Bible, the Word of God, certainly one of them is God's testimony concerning the human condition. The Scriptures comprehensively examine and disclose the contents of the human heart. In fact God's Word identifies at least 6 deadly enemies of man's eternal soul: *the world, the flesh, the devil, sin, death and hell*. Human pride says, "No sweat, I will stare down all of these adversaries and ultimately escape eternal judgment." My friends do not deceive yourselves, the Person of Christ and His work on behalf of sinners disprove such hubris and arrogance.

Christ is 'friend of sinners' because He came to earth to bear the guilt of His people. His bloody death and victorious resurrection prove that He satisfied the just claims of God against us. Consider for a moment our dilemma: each of us by nature is a habitual breaker of God's righteous commands. Our transgressions have alienated us from our Creator. But, the good news of the gospel is that Christ, the Chief Shepherd has laid down His life that we might have life in Him—it is certain quality of life, "abundant life." Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly" (Jn 10:10).

Abundant life is composed of love relationships that shall never end. That's the heritage of people who belong to God's 'forever family'. Christ, the Good Shepherd has guaranteed by His resurrection that this endless abundant life (which begins now) belongs to His people. The unbeliever has no such hope—he has to have it all now—for him, death is the great spoiler.

By contrast, the follower of Christ is brought home all the way to God through Christ. Our Savior, like a mighty prince takes the believing sinner by hand—and we, like traitors are led to the King, the Prince of Peace having secured: forgiveness, cleansing, acceptance, restoration, even adoption for us guilty sinners. This is the promise Christ makes to those who believe upon Him and repent of their sin. "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10). "Lost" means not having a normal love relationship with God. Christ came to repair and remedy that awful predicament—but you must come to Him in faith and repentance if He is to deliver you.

The renewal of this relationship with your Creator through Christ is the basis for close fellowship and communion with all other true believers. My friends I am not talking about a philosophy of life, and not even about a religious commitment. The gospel is about coming to the living God who is drawing people to Himself through Christ. Followers of Christ know their God! That was not the case before they tasted His forgiving love. Those who make up this great company of sinners who have received mercy, they have life in Christ in common with each other.

The bond that they have with the Lord and one another will never end. Death cannot touch that bond. Christ ate and drank with His disciples after His resurrection. His victory over the grave was won for His people—His rising is the warranty of future life together with Him. That means uncontainable joy is in store for His people—it is a joy which has begun now (1 Pet 1:8).

This is why AJ and Lori are taking communion today—because the ultimate bond holding them together is the fact that they share life in Christ in common. This wedding ceremony is 'sanctified' or hallowed by a very serious covenant—and the vows, rings, legal document, and public witness—

are statements of the preciousness and gravity of this bond which endures until death. But, the ultimate bond holding this couple together is Christ Himself.

Life in Christ in common excels all other areas of commonality for this couple—whether companionship, romance, marital affection, communication skills, love of family, common interests, etc. Their identity in Christ and their glorious destiny in their beloved Savior is the most defining thing about them. For they understand that the Father's love that sacrificed the Son of God on their behalf is the foundation of their love for each other. They know that their daily walk with Christ in adoration, obedience and worship encompasses the highest potential for their own closeness and intimacy in this marriage.

So out of their devotion to Christ and their overflowing gratitude to Him, there first few moments as a married couple will be spent taking communion. This is not a formal rite, nor is it a source of saving grace. The elements of communion, the bread and the wine are meant to show forth the death of Christ as the cause of new life in God. Partaking of these elements is designed by Christ Himself to bring to our remembrance the source of the believer's salvation. “. . . and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls” (1 Pet 2:24).

AJ and Lori have fellowship with God and Christian fellowship with each other because of what Christ has done for them in carrying their sin up to His cross so that He could blot it out. So in honoring their Savior by remembering His death, this dear couple is acknowledging that Christ will have first place in their marriage. There is no formula superior to Christ's centrality for intimacy, forgiveness, acceptance and sacrificial love in a marriage.

Consuming the bread and the wine is a picture or symbol of the life force of Christ's work going into our very being—making alive and transforming our dead, darkened, guilty, polluted souls. Now if a person did not eat or drink for weeks on end, he would certainly die. Our hearts break over the fact that countless souls around us are starving, perishing because they have dismissed the Word of Grace in Christ—having rejected the words of life. Jesus said, “. . . and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life” (Jn 5:40). It does not have to be that way. The greatest longing this couple has is that every friend, relative, and neighbor of theirs would come into the household of faith by coming to Christ who is life.

And now AJ and Lori, “. . . the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 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.’ 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.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.”