

What Really is Holy Communion?

- Text for consdrtn, wrds/St. P: **1 Cor 10:16-17**. What really is HC? That's very imp word in our ch. We use word Com for sacred meal right here in front us on altar – also called LS, Euchrst, Sacr HC. Also use word in Ap Crd: HCC, Com/Snts, where Com means group/bels. Word Com has same root meaning as words like: commnty, commnl, common, even commnsm? At core, these wrds mean: tog-ness, oneness, union, a joining/coming tog. Idea: sep entities come tog as 1 – that's com. All bels in hvn/earth share common faith/Xp; they're 1; they're Com/Saints.
- But what re this Com? What comes tog, what shares unity in this Sacrmnt? What really is this HC? I think there's lot msundrstndngs re Com in ch. Some chs teach: only pr/prst has abilty to perform Com. By virtue/ordntn/min, they bel he has pwr: change, trnsfrm, trnsbstntt brd/wine into diff substnc, bdy/bld of Xp, so that what's on altar actly ceases be brd/wine. Other chs teach: brd/wine nothing more than a symbol, reminder, reprsntn of Xp. Kinda like pic on \$ bill. This is GW. Well, no, not really GW; just pic/GW, not man himself. In simlr way, they teach: HC isn't really bdy/bld of J. Just a pic, symbol, that reprsnts him; not real – thereby also making the forgvns & grace of HC syblc and not real. So on the one extrm: Catholic mysticism; other: Protsnt symbolism.
- But what God say re HC? What really is HC? On this MT (some now: HT), this night J instituted/began this sacred meal, it's imp for us clear up any msundrstngs & false tchns re HC, so that we can have better undrstndng of & apprcn for what J gives us in this gift. So tonight I want explore this simple qstn: What really is HC?
- Paul begins: **vs. 16a, 17a**... what he's doing: asking rhetrl qstns that expects yes answer – like: Doesn't bell choir sound beautfl tonight? Obsly yes. Isn't HW very spl time for us? Obsly yes. Is not cup/thnksvng & bread we break – isn't it this? Obsly yes. But what's the this? **Vs. 16**. KJV: **“Is it not the Com of the bld/Xp? ...Is it not the Com of the body/Xp.”** As matter/fact, this is the psg fr which Com gets its name; there's a diff psg, talks re LS; but this is psg where it's called Com. And if word Com means a coming tog, then what actly comes tog in this sacred meal? Again, **vs. 16**. Here Paul is saying exactly what J did when said: **Take/eat, bdy/bld**. Paul saying: wine/cup and brd/break come tog with, share Com with, very bld/bdy/Xp himself.
- Now just stop & think re that! That's incrdibly profound! Mary's womb carried bdy/bld/Xp; then placed bdy/bld/Xp in manger. When J walked earth, healing ppl & prchng Gos – that: almighty God wrapped in the bdy/bld/Xp. It was bdy/bld/Xp that died on cross; and bdy/bld/Xp that rose fr dead in tomb. It's the real J! What makes HC so deeply profound: J is giving us his real self. Luths say it this way: in/wth/undr brd/wine, there's a union/com/coming tog, of simp food & holy God. J could've said, “Take/eat; this reps me;” no: “is me.” And that's what Paul says here w/this rhetrl qstn: **vs. 16**. Obsly yes.
- Biggest qstn to wrestle with: how? How possbl? Billions/Xians've been taking Com since Last Supper, and that's way more matter than physcl human body/J makes up. And if you've had Com, you know: doesn't taste like human bld or skin. This isn't canniblsm; are aren't eating away at J like gngrbrd man. So how is real presence possbl? Luth answer: mrcl! HC: mrcl. And if there's one thing I've learned re mrcls: you can see, bel, but not explain. For exmpl, how did J walk on water? Did H2O molecules under ft sudnly harden, giving him surface walk on? Or was J actly levitating w/ft just beneath surface? I can't explain it! But we & those discs defntly bel: J walked on water! Or, how did J feed 5k fams w/little boy's lunch? When they broke off piece/brd, grow back in discs or ppl's hands? And how'd they end up w/12 baskets leftvrs? I can't explain it! But we & all those ppl on mntside defntly bel: J performed mrcl!
- In HC J performs mrcl. We must either assume J & Paul: lying. (“Sorry, J, you can't actly mean this is your bdy/bld. There's no way! Paul, you must've misspoken.”) Or, we must truly bel that J & Paul really mean what they say, even if we can't explain it scientfclly. In beautfl Com hymn, “Soul, Adorn Yourself w/Gladness,” which sing later in service, stanza: *Human reason, though it ponders, cannot fathom these great wonders, that Xp's body must be boundls since the souls it feeds are countls, and that he his bld is giving w/the wine we are receiving. These great mysteries unsounded are by God alone expounded* (663:5). IOW, we can't explain; but that's okay, bec: mrcl!

- And if that's true, then there are profound implctns for us when receive HC. Besides the coming tog of brd/wine w/bdy/bld, there are 2 more coming togs, unions/Coms taking place: 1 vert, 1 horizntl.
- Vert Com: btwn us/J. J comes to us in very spel way in HC. In today's Gos: **"This is my bld/cvnt which is poured out for many"** (14:24); and in Mt, adds, **"for frgvns/sins"** (26:28). In this Sacrmnt, J communes w/us to forgive our sins. HC is an actual MoG by which J removes guilt/sins and strngthns faith/Sav. And J wants us receive this gift pretty often, bec pretty often we need frgvns & strngthnd faith. And so J invites us to his table and communes w/us. That's vertcle Com – us & J.
- Horzntl Com: btwn bels, w/oa. Vs. 17. IOW, even though we are seprt indivdls, HC unites us w/the unity of faith & doctrine; we share same Xians beleifs. We all have diff intrsts, occuptns, ages, persnlts, bckgrnds. But when we come tog in Com, we're saying those diffs don't matter – bec what have in common: far more imp than in contrast; we share same faith & doctrine. Horzntl Com.
- But sad reality: many things divide us, drive wedge btwn us, create disunity. Sin creates disunity. When we sin vs God, we drive a wedge btwn us & him. When we sin vs others, or when we are sinned vs by others, result: distrust, anger, grudges, division. Another source of disunity among us is when we're not phycly tog. If there's one thing Covid taught us: imp be tog. There's lot ppl in our ch who don't come wrshp very often; they seem to slip away. And that takes away fr our unity. J desires for us to be tog, wrshp tog, commune tog. But too often we're not tog.
- But beautfl thing re HC: God gave this Sacrmnt to restore that unity. When we sin vs God, in HC he forgives those sins. When we commune w/ppl who've sinned vs us, or who've been sinned vs by us, our Com is an exprssn of our mutual forgvns. And obvsly when we commune tog, we are tog, physcly, at same table, for same meal, as one body. Vs. 17. That's true Com.
- So, what really is HC? It's a unity/union, tog-ness, coming tog, of three things: 1) Scrmntl Com – real presence of very bdy/bld/Xp "in/with/under" brd/wine, in a profound & miraculous but very real way. 2) Vertcl Com, btwn us & God. J touches our lips & feeds our faith as says, "I love/forgive you; gave self for you on cross; now I give myself to you in this meal." And 3) Horzntl Com, amng Xians, who share same faith/meal.
- HC: coming tog. And on this MT/HT, J brings us tog. Brings us tog to: celebrate Pschl Trdm; to witness horror/crcfxn; to marvel at majesty/res; and tonight to share Com. Vs. 16-17. Thank you, J, for this HC.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

¹⁶ Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

