

Teaching Orthodoxy...using Bible Verses Lesson 9

Abiding in Christ via Holy Communion (His Holy Body and Blood)

So we are commanded **to cooperate, to synergize, with God**. To use our free will to work with Him...to voluntarily combine our weak energy with His powerful Divine Energy. “**syn**” = “**together**” + “**ergy**” = “**work**”. Christ and the Apostles taught us to SYNERGIZE with God’s Grace.

Work out your own **salvation** with fear and trembling, for it is **God** Who **works in you** both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Phil. 2:12-13

Jesus phrased it this way: telling us to “abide/dwell” IN Him, by using our free will...because if we do not stay IN HIM and if HE does not stay IN US, we have NO ETERNAL LIFE, and therefore cannot be saved.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.
John 15:4

Having been really given **new life IN Christ**, by having Christ **planted** in our heart [in the middle and core of our spiritual existence], we need to **constantly feed** and **nourish** this new growing reality by “feeding on Christ” through Holy Communion/Holy Eucharist.

I am the **living bread** which came down from heaven: if any man **eat of this bread, he shall live for ever**: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. John 6:51

By Communion, we **abide in Christ and He in us**. It is a “common” + “union” of God and us.

He that **eats** My **flesh**, and **drinks** My **blood**, **dwells [abides/stays] in me, and I in him**. John 6:56

Therefore, there is now **no condemnation** for those **who are in Christ Jesus**. Rom. 8:1

Receiving Christ through the Mystery of His Body and Blood is to **access Him** and **abide in Him**.

He **who eats** My flesh and **drinks** My blood **abides** [dwells, remains] in Me, and I in him. John 6:56

We must unite with Christ by Holy Communion, or we will not access Eternal Life...because it is IN Christ. **No Communion = No Life**.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Except ye eat the flesh** of the Son of man, and **drink his blood**, **ye have no life in you**. John 6:53

Whoso **eateth** My flesh, and **drinketh** My blood, **hath eternal life**; and I will raise him up at the last day. John 6:54

This Flesh and Blood is a **REAL THING, real food, real drink**...not a nominalist ["name only"] symbol.

For My flesh is **real food** and My blood is **real drink**. John 6:55

Some rationalistic, nominalistic, skeptical, heretical doubters who think only in a "fleshly" earthly way will not be able to grasp or understand this Mysterious truth of Holy Communion...but only the spiritually-minded ones will be able to get it.

Jesus explained why doubters will not understand the Reality of Holy Communion:

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The **words** that I have spoken to you are **spirit** and **life**." John 6:63

St. Paul and the **Apostles partook of Holy Communion each Sunday**, since Christ had risen from the dead on that day. To partake of Holy Communion was called: "to break bread".

On the first day of the week we came together **to break bread**. Acts 20:7

Years later, Jesus made sure to personally give the Apostle Paul the very same words to use during Eucharistic worship, since St. Paul was not present to hear them for the first time in the Upper Room on Holy Thursday night.

23 For I **received** from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night 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, after supper He took the

cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My Blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” **26** For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.
I Corinthians 11:23-26

NOTE: The words “Remembrance of Me” in Greek meant for the Apostles to “re-member Christ”, to “re-present Him”—in other words, to make Christ **present again**, to manifest Christ’s Resurrected **members** (His Body and Blood) **again**, to present Christ physically tangible and physically among us again, through the Mystery of the Eucharist, (the “ev”=“good” + “charis”=“gift”). [It is not a mere symbol to be cognitively brought to mind (remembered, as in re-thinking)...this mere symbol cognitive concept is the nominalist’s invention in the so-called Eras of Reformation and Reason and Enlightenment. But the Apostles and early Church Fathers never thought that way.]

The REALITY of Christ being **Present** through the Holy Eucharist was not understood by the Apostles in a nominalistic manner [which claims there is “no such thing as REAL Body and REAL Blood]. Rather, the Apostles taught that one should approach the Holy Communion Cup with Faith, fully believing that the Body and Blood are mysteriously truly present in the Cup...because to do otherwise would be a **huge sin** and possibly result in a punishment of sickness or death, unto condemnation, for having approached the Mystery of Communion unworthily, without the required faith, love, and fear of God. St. Paul explains:

27 So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the Body and Blood of the Lord... **30** That is why many among you are **weak and sick**, and a number of you have fallen **asleep [i.e. died]**. **31** But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. I Cor. 11:27,30

In the Early Church era, St. Paul saw some people bringing spiritual punishment and damnation unto themselves because they were approaching Holy Communion **too casually**, as if it were just a symbol, just mere bread and wine. But mere bread and wine does not have the power to chastise the unworthy

careless communicant. Only **real power** can do that...like a person carelessly touching an electrical wire and getting shocked because he could not see the electricity. He should have believed that it was there. He should have taken precautions and put on rubber gloves. Similarly, St. Paul tells that we are to “examine ourselves”—“i.e. put on the rubber gloves of repentance and faith”—so that our touching and partaking of the Holy Things will bring blessings to us...not a divine chastisement.

This is why Orthodox Christians approach Holy Communion with fear and trembling, along with faith and love. “In fear of God, and with faith and love, draw near.” We examine our hearts and confess our sins and repent before taking Holy Communion. St. Paul taught us:

28 Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 29 For those who eat and drink without discerning the Body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. 30 That is why many among you are **weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen **asleep** [i.e. died]. I Cor. 11:28-30**