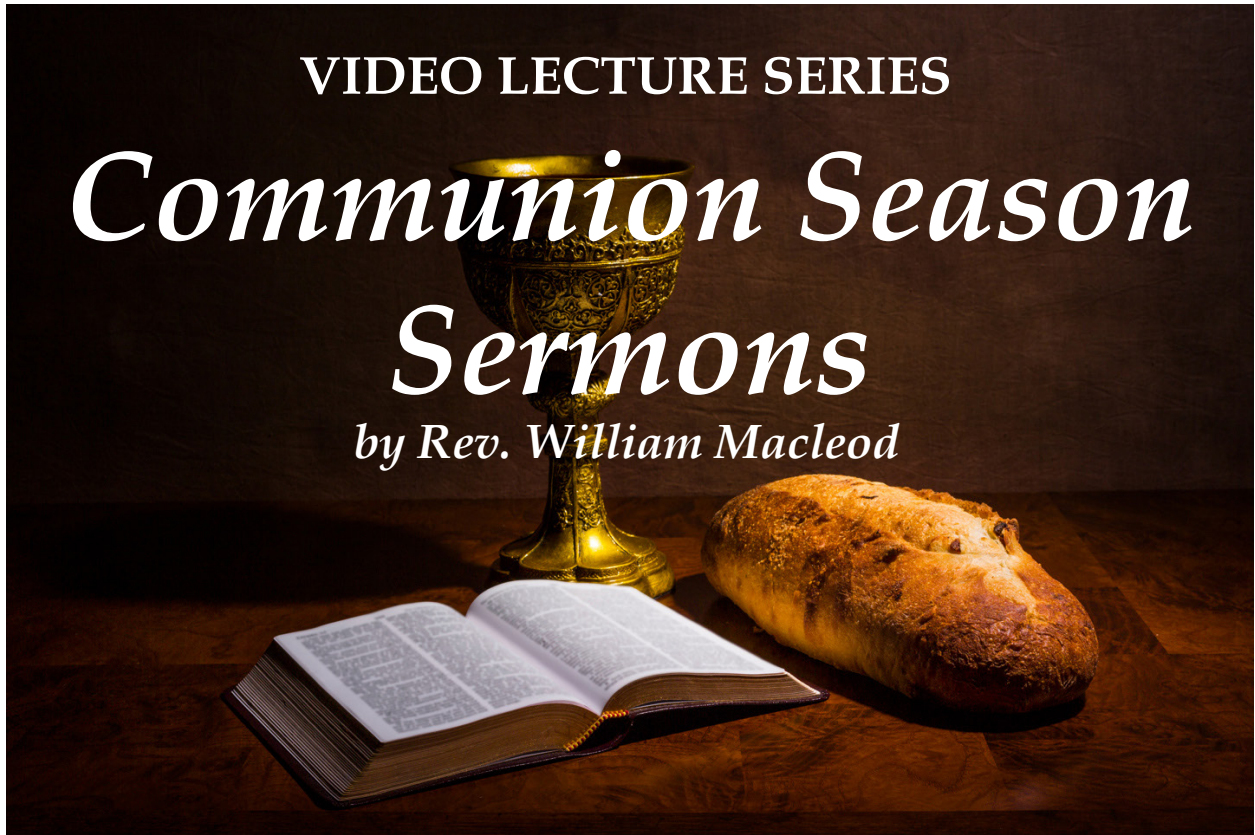


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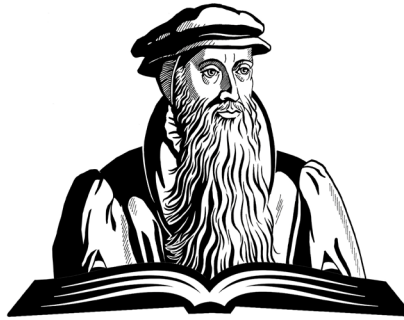
Communion Season *Sermons*

by Rev. William Macleod



Sermon #3

Examine Yourself *1 Corinthians 11:28*



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Rev. William Macleod recently retired, after serving as minister of the gospel for 45 years at Knightswood Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), in Glasgow, Scotland. In addition, he was for many years the editor of the denominational magazine, *The Free Church Witness*. He was also Professor of Systematic Theology and Principal of the Free Church (Continuing) Seminary, in Inverness, Scotland. He is married and has three adult children and six grandchildren.

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Communion Season Sermons

*An Introduction and 7 Sermons
by Rev. William Macleod*

Introduction (Luke 22:14–20)

Sermon #1: Pardon My Sins (Psalm 51:9–10)

Sermon #2: Prepare Me for Thy Presence (Psalm 24:3–4)

Sermon #3: Examine Yourself (1 Corinthians 11:28)

Sermon #4: Mary's Great Love (Mark 14:3)

Sermon #5: The Awful Cup (Luke 22:42) / Communion Address

Sermon #6: Salvation for Pharisees and Prodigals
(Luke 15:29–30)

Sermon #7: Christ is Coming Again (Revelation 22:20–21)

Communion Season Sermons

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Sermon #3

Examine Yourself (1 Corinthians 11:28)

I'd like today to address you from 1 Corinthians 11, and verse 28. But we could read from verse 17:

“Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.” Amen.

Now, particularly, I'd like to draw your attention to 1 Corinthians 11:28, “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” Traditionally, in the Scottish Communion, Thursday was a day for humiliation, confession of sin, repentance. And Friday was a day for questioning and examining ourselves—examining ourselves whether we be in the faith, proving our own selves; and then Saturday, a day of preparation. On the Sabbath morning, the Word would be preached concerning the atonement and the suffering of Christ; the gospel preached in the evening, and then a thanksgiving service on a Monday, that would tend to look forward to the second coming of Christ.

So today, our subject is *Examination*. The church in Corinth is a fascinating church. It was a big and busy congregation. It was very successful. There were lots of spiritually-gifted people

among them—prophets, tongue-speakers, interpreters of tongues, healers, etc. But it had also got serious problems. Verse 30 here tells us, “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” There were many who were sick, unwell, weak, and indeed, some who had died. The chastening of the Lord had come upon the church. And why was that? It was because they were eating unworthily. How were they doing that?

Well, verse 18, tells us that there were divisions among them: “I am of Paul...I am of Apollos;” I am of Cephas; I am of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:4). Communion is meant to be a time of coming together, of unity, of harmony, of love. And there were these divisions, and that’s not right. And then, each one, verse 21, was eating his own supper. Some were coming with lots of food, and others were hungry. And that can’t be right. The Lord’s Supper is eating the Lord’s Supper, not our own supper. And it’s very wrong if some have nothing and others, others even were drunk at the Lord’s Table, which is hard for us to understand how they could be so far gone from what they should be at the Lord’s Table. And then verse 33 tells another problem. They were not waiting for one another. They were coming together, and one would have communion, and then later on, somebody else would come in, and they would have communion. And that can’t be right. It should be done together, the whole congregation together. But the worst thing of all is, in verse 29, they weren’t discerning the Lord’s body. They were callous, cold, lifeless, and spiritually dead. Paul says, “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.” Question yourself. Question, and see what’s wrong. Put it right, and so come and eat. It’s not, it doesn’t say here, “Let a man examine himself, and so let him not eat of that bread;” but examine himself, and having put right was is wrong, and having repented of what’s amiss, so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

So today, I would like us to examine ourselves, and particularly, to ask the question, Who should come to the Lord’s Table? For whom is the Lord’s Supper? In one sense, none of us are worthy. But then, our worthiness is in Christ. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain” (Revelation 5:12). But yet, the Lord’s Table is not for everyone. It’s not for the heathen. It’s not for the ungodly. It’s not for the immoral. It’s for Christians. It’s for those who love the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in him. And yet, it’s not for Christians under discipline. It’s not for just those who are strong in faith. No, it’s for Christians who are weak in faith as well. And indeed, it’s a means of grace, and a strengthening to us. So I would like us to ask, Who are those who should come to the Lord’s Table? And I would hope to get a number of marks of the Christian, so that we can ask ourselves, “Are these things true of me? And if they are, then I can come to the Table.”

So first of all, coming to the Table, *We’ve got to be Believers*. “What must I do to be saved?... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 16:30). The Lord’s Table is for those who look to the Lord, who trust in the Lord Jesus, who want to remember the Lord’s death, who delight in the sacrifice of Christ offered on Calvary’s cross. We’ve got to have faith in the broken body and the shed blood. And all who truly look to Jesus, delight in him, and in the work that he has done. And these are the ones who are to this in remembrance of him; for whom Christ is their bread and their drink. So the first great mark is *Faith—are you a believer in Christ?* Are you trusting in your own good works, or trusting in Christ alone for salvation?—Believers.

The second mark is *Penitence, Repentance*, and we must stress this. Some people think you can believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, but not have him as your Lord; you can believe in Jesus as Savior, and do what you like. But that won’t do. No, we must believe in Jesus, yes, and follow him. We must have him as our Master. We must not continue in sin that grace may abound. “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?...Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. As you at one time

yielded your members “as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin,” even so now, yield your members, your bodies, “as instruments of righteousness unto God.” (Romans 6:2, 11, 13). You’ve got to stress the importance of repentance, and the importance of keeping God’s law.

Some people think that it’s legalism to stress God’s law. But legalism is to trust in the law of God for salvation. But when we are saved, we want to keep his commandments. We want to live for him. And you’ll remember that the whole context of the Ten Commandments is God having saved his people. The preface to the Ten Commandments is, “I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” Therefore, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image” (Exodus 20:2–4). So, we are to be penitent, repenting of sin. That’s another mark of the Christian.

A third mark is *Love for Jesus*. And this is very important, loving the Lord. In a sense, Christianity is love. It’s a relationship. It’s not mere beliefs. It’s not mere ritual. There are beliefs, there are things we are to do, but first and foremost, a Christian is somebody who’s in love with Christ. And we love him because he first loved us. “Do this in remembrance of me. If you love me, if you delight in me, you will want to remember me. If you appreciate what I did on the cross of Calvary, you show your love for me by coming to my Table; and at my Table, remembering that I am your food and drink; remembering that it’s through me that you have everlasting life.” So we love Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us. And Communion, the Lord’s Supper, is, in a very real sense, a love feast. And we are celebrating his love for us, and we are expressing our love for him. Do you love Christ? Such an important question. “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema” (1 Corinthians 16:22). Let him be accursed—Maranatha. The Lord is coming. We must love the Lord.

And then, too, it’s *Loving the Father*; loving the Father who planned our salvation; loving the Father who sent his Son to be our Savior; who sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts; loving the Father who called us with an effectual calling; loving the Father who adopted us; loving God, the God who cares for us every day of our lives. “The lions young may hungry be, and they may lack their food: But they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good” (Psalm 34:10, SMV¹). “My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). He protects us; he provides for us. We love God. And those who love God are to come to his Table.

And then, fifthly, *Loving the Holy Spirit*. How amazing to think that the third Person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit, should come and live in our hearts, should make our bodies his temple, dwelling in us. He applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ. He empowers us in prayer and praise and worship. He helps us to pray. “We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26). The Holy Spirit helps us to pray, helps us to praise. The Spirit sanctifies us. We love the Spirit, and his presence fills us with joy, and peace, and delight. He enlightens our minds in the knowledge of the truth. He assures us of salvation. We are sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ, assured by the Holy Spirit. So there, another mark, a recognition of the Spirit, and a love for the Spirit.

A sixth mark is *Loving the worship of God*. We love to sing his praises, to sing those Psalms that he has given us, those hundred-and-fifty inspired songs, perfect and inerrant. We love to sing them, to honor him, to glorify him, to edify ourselves, to teach one another as we sing these Psalms. We love to pray, to pray to God, it’s so important to us. We cannot go through our day

without prayer—prayer in secret, in our closets, alone on our own; prayer in our families—family worship; prayer in public with the Lord’s people; the prayer meeting, and in the church services. We love to worship God. We delight in the services. “I joyed when to the house of God, Go up, they said to me” (Psalm 122:1, SMV). Do you love to worship God? That’s a mark of the Christian.

And do you *Love your fellow Christians*? That’s another mark of those who should come to the Table. We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). So love for one another is a great mark of a Christian. Who do you love most? Whose company to love most? Do you delight in the fellowship of the Lord’s people? That’s a good mark. Do you care for the Lord’s people? Do you help them in their needs? Do you bear one another’s burdens. “Charity shall cover a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8)—love. How does love cover a multitude of sins? Is it that love atones for sin?—no, of course not. The only thing that atones for sin is the blood of Christ. How does love cover a multitude of sins then?—because love excuses our fellow Christians when we sin. We cover up their sins and their faults in love, and so, we love our fellow Christians.

And eighth mark is *Loving the Bible*. It’s God’s Word. We read it, we think about it, we meditate upon it, we apply it to ourselves. We ask, “What is God saying to me here? What can I learn from this? How can I practice this? What promises are here? What exhortations are here? What things am I to avoid? What direction is God giving me in life?” We love the Bible. We love books that expound the Bible, that help us to understand it. We love sermons that teach us about the Bible. Do you love the Bible, love God’s Word? That’s another mark of the Christian.

A ninth mark is, *Love for God’s Day*. It’s strange sometimes today now Christians can sometimes not value the Lord’s Day as they should. They think it’s perhaps legalistic to keep the Sabbath. They think it’s something Old Testament. But the Sabbath was there before the Old Testament. The Sabbath was there in the garden of Eden. And actually, God himself kept the first Sabbath. He created the world in six days, and then he rested on the seventh day. And he was setting down a pattern for us; a pattern for Adam and Eve. They needed it. In the garden of Eden, when they were perfect, they still needed a day for special worship, and for thinking about God, and leaving aside the cares of the work that they generally did, and focusing upon God.

We certainly, in our fallen world, need a Lord’s Day—a day to come apart from all the cares of the world, and the pleasures of the world, the things that rightly take up our time on other days. There’s nothing wrong with so many of these things that we do; it’s right, and it’s good, and we have to earn our daily bread. But yet, to be able to come aside, and to give to God that special place in our lives, and to think about him, and to read his Word, and to worship him, and to spend it in public and private exercises of worship. The Lord’s people love the Lord’s Day. They love the Sabbath, and they see it as a foretaste of heaven.

A tenth mark is that God’s people *Love the law of God*, all of the commandments of God. Jesus said, If you love me, you’ll keep my commandments (John 14:15). Our desire is to please God. And how can we please God? Well, the Ten Commandments describe for us the character of God. And we want to keep his commandments. We long to keep them, to keep them better than we’ve done in the past. We love the Lord, we love his law, we love his ways, we love everything that belongs to him. We grieve that we sin, and we ask God to help us to keep these commandments. “If you love me, keep my commandments.” And if we’re not keeping his commandments, is that not a sign that we don’t love him, and should not be at his Table?

An eleventh mark is that we *Love the unconverted*, seeking their help. And Jesus taught us even to love our enemies. Be like your Father in heaven, who causes the rain to fall upon the just and the unjust, the sun to shine upon the righteous and the wicked (Matthew 5:45). Love your enemies. But we love the unconverted in the sense that we want to see them saved. We don't want to see them lost, ending up in hell. We want to see them converted, born again. We're concerned for them. We think of Jesus. We remember him on the Mount of Olives, weeping over Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37). You will not come to me that you might have life. Jesus wept because he could see the judgment coming upon Jerusalem, because they had rejected him. As Christians, we long to see people converted. We try to witness to them. And when we see somebody converted, it gives us great joy. We delight in people being brought into the kingdom, being saved, and everyone that is added to the church. So we love the lost.

And then, and I add, the twelfth mark is that *We love the cause of God and the church of God*, and we want to see the church grow. We long for revival, to see the church alive and on fire, preaching with power, the power of God's Holy Spirit. We want to see the kingdom of God extended on earth, to see the conversion of the Jews, and life from the dead reaching to the Gentile world. We pray, "Thy kingdom come, Lord," because we love to see people being added to the church, and the church growing, and Christ glorified on the earth. So that's another mark of the Christian.

And the final mark is *A love for heaven, and a hope of heaven*, and a delight that God has prepared this place for us, looking forward to being with Christ; not from any sensual kind of idea. The Muslims have a very sensual heaven, with feasting, and sexual immorality, and so on. But that's not the idea that we have. Our idea of heaven is being with Christ, worshipping him, praising him, glorifying him, delighting in him, listening to him: "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation 7:17).

So here today, we've looked at some of the marks of God's people. Examine yourself in the light of these. Are these marks to be seen in you? Some will be more clearly in you than others, but we must have something of these marks in us, in order to qualify as those who should come to the Lord's Table. The Lord's Table is for the Lord's people, those whom the Lord has saved—saved from a life of sin and wickedness, and brought into a life of salvation that we might serve him.

Let's pray.

O Lord our God, we thank thee that thou hast given to us the Scriptures, and in the Scriptures, so many marks of God's people. We thank thee, Lord, for these marks. Help us to examine ourselves, and to see that these marks of grace are there. And if they are not there, to repent, and turn from our sin, and believe in Jesus, and seek the saving power of Christ to transform us and make us into the people of God. Grant then thy blessing, Lord, to be upon us. Help us, and as we discern these marks in us, grant Lord, that more and more we would seek to be thy people, to be devoted to thee and dedicated to thee, and living out our lives to the glory of God. Forgive all our sins, for Jesus' sake. Amen.