A walk with Mr O (55)

Staying away from communion

I'm sorry, Mr O, I'm not going to be great company today, I feel really down.

Go on, then. Tell me about it.

To be honest, Mr O, my Christian life is in a mess. Over the past few weeks my times with the Lord have been very hit and miss. I'm not reading the Bible as I should. My prayers are shallow. I've been impatient with people at work. I've said some harsh things to a church member. And I could go on and on. The fact is I'm a spiritual wreck and I'm ashamed of it.

Have you been going regularly to church?

Yes, twice on Sunday and once in the week. But of course, I've not been going to communion services.

Why 'of course'?

It's obvious, isn't it, Mr O? As a Christian, I'm a failure. I'm not worthy to go to the Lord's Table, But I promise that I'll go back as soon as I've sorted myself out.

You do realise, don't you that you are talking like someone who doesn't understand the gospel?

What do you mean?

The Lord Jesus Christ is sitting at his Table and he's inviting sinners to join him there 'I'm the friend of sinners,' he says, 'so, whoever you are and whatever you've done, come and have a meal with me.

What's on the menu? Me! As you eat the bread, feed on me. Not physically, of course. But my body was broken as I bore every punishment and sanction that should come to a sinner. Think of that and say "For me! For me!" Do that and bathe in my love and forgiveness. In this way you will feed on me, be strengthened by me, and 'experience my peace.'

That wonderful! No one has ever explained the communion service to me quite like that.

The Lord loves to forgive sinners! He just loves it! But by staying away from the communion service you are telling everybody that you don't believe that. You are telling them that if someone wants to be loved by Christ, they must get their act together first,

You are basically saying that Christ won't have anything to do with us until we improve. And that is not the gospel!

Remember 1 Timothy 1;15 'This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.'

But doesn't 1 Corinthians 11; say that we must be worthy before we come to the Lord's Supper?

No, it does not! If it did, no one would ever come to the Lord's Table! What it says is that we must come to the Table in a worthy manner. Our coming must be in line with its purpose.

It's not a Table for people who think that they're good enough. It's not a Table for people who don't feed on Christ as they eat and drink. It's a Table for needy sinners who come to be welcomed, refreshed, and strengthened by the Saviour. Don't stay away from it!

But what about the people I've been impatient and harsh with? Doesn't the Bible say that I must put things right with them before I go to communion?

No, it does not! It says that I should not engage in any act of worship until I have done my best to sort things out with them. Today is the day to act! Go to your colleagues at work and tell them that you're sorry that you've been impatient with them recently.

Go to the church member you spoke to harshly and apologies. Don't make excuses. Own up. Simply tell them how wrong you were.

Don't wait until you feel strong enough to do it. Just do the right thing – and you'll find that the Lord will wonderfully help you.

Thank you. Mr O. I'll do that. And on Sunday I'll go to the communion service.