

## Dokimos

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1 Corinthians 11:23-34

Bunkertown COB

Sermon begins with Video *That Life No More*

Guys like this absolutely amaze me. In spite of his tough-guy attitude, this fellow bends before God with brokenness and humility. He admits his sin.

This is what it means to be a Christian. It means a person stands before God and admits they are guilty. They know their life has offended God. They know they are a sinner. They know they deserve punishment. And they stand before God broken and humble. This is a painful process. However, this refining fire is necessary, for it is only in this posture of humbleness and brokenness that Jesus can reach down, place His hand upon their aching heart, and tell them that He has already paid the penalty. This is the promise we read from John the Apostle. <sup>9</sup> *But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.* <sup>1</sup> (1 John 1:9). This is salvation, where a person allows Jesus to remove their filthy rags and dress them in His righteousness.

I am amazed at the power, depth, and magnitude found in the sacrificial death of Jesus. No matter what sin we may have committed, no matter how hideous our crime, in the eyes of God the broken body and shed blood of Christ are sufficient to pay our penalty. This is what we have been promised when we come to God broken and humble. And I think it's important for us to remember this. These words remind us of a day when we came to God broken and humble; when we admitted our sin, and allowed Jesus to pay the penalty. However, even though most of us might remember the day, I think a lot of us sometimes forget the posture.

Somehow it seems we Christians have a tendency to forget who we are. We are people dressed in the righteousness of Christ, not in our own. It is His spotless robe that is wrapped around us. He drapes it across shoulders that are bent, heads that are bowed, and knees that are humble before Him (*For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness.* <sup>2</sup> - Isaiah 61:10). But if we forget that it was God who has clothed us in righteousness, we

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<sup>1</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>2</sup>*New American Standard Bible : 1995 update*. 1995 (Is 61:10). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

might just lose our posture before God. Instead of a head bowed before God in humility, it begins to rise as pride takes over. Instead of a back bent to do His will, it begins to straighten; shoulders are thrown back as arrogance asserts its own will. And instead of kneeling before God in brokenness, a Christian finds themselves standing tall; feeling that somehow they deserved all of God's blessings because they truly are such a wonderful individual.

This, I believe is what happened to the Christians in Corinth. Some of them forgot their posture. Some forgot that it was God who made them saints. Some forgot that it was through God they received grace. This incorrect posture was destroying the Church, making a farce of their Love Feast, and making a mockery of Christ's work upon the cross. (Read **1 Corinthians 11:23-34**)

In order to fully understand what Paul has said here, we must first understand what was going on in the church. And what we see here is that some within the church had an incorrect posture toward God and an incorrect posture toward one another. Now remember, Paul is talking to Christians here. These are people who at one time did bow before God in repentance and humility. They were once broken. But pride and arrogance had worked its way into the fellowship. I imagine it had been quite some time since these people humbled themselves before God. Thinking that that had fully matured, these Christians apparently did not take the time to examine themselves. Consequently, they were not approved, says Paul. One merely needed to watch their conduct during the Lord's Supper; this Love Feast, to see the attitudes of their heart.

The word examine in verse 28 is the Greek word *Dokimos*. It means something that has been tested, proven, or scrutinized. It's similar to what a silversmith would do as he is refining silver over a fire. So what Paul is insisting is that they examine themselves; that they take a long, hard look at their posture before God.

May I remind you once again that this is a lesson Paul is teaching the church? He's not telling them to search their heart and decide if they are a believer or not. He's telling these Christians to allow God to refine them; to examine them so that they might be approved (*Dokimos*). Based upon what he's been told, it's obvious

these Christians have attitudes that do not belong or sins that have not been forgiven. And either they did not know or they had forgotten that to be a Christian means that you are in a constant state of humbleness and brokenness before God. In this life, the refining process never ends.

Just like these Corinthian believers, we too have a tendency to lose that proper attitude; that proper posture before God and before one another. And so we must examine ourselves. We must look within us for what does not belong. In a time of prayer, we must ask the Lord to search us, refine us; to give us that posture once again so that we stand before God approved; *Dokimos*.

Please don't misunderstand what Paul is saying here. He's not saying that we must be perfect. No one can come to God perfect. But we can come to God with the right attitude. Remember that passage from 1 John we read earlier? Well John goes on to say that "*If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.*"<sup>3</sup> (1 John 1:10). Apparently even John needed to address the problem we Christians have with our posture before God; our attitude.

Truthfully, this *Dokimos* is something that should happen all the time, not just on select days of the year. And maybe this whole process of breaking bread and sharing a cup has become more of a ritual or routine rather than a time to examine ourselves. But truthfully, that's what it is for. It is a time when we each allow God to search our hearts and reveal the things that do not belong; things that we have done, words that we have spoken, places we have gone, and attitudes that are not Christ-like at all. And I'll be frank; it's not a whole lot of fun to allow God to do this, this refining fire. But it is what God desires. And from what Paul says here, one way or another God is going to correct our posture.

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<sup>3</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.