

LESSON SIXTEEN
THE BREAD BREAKING MEETING

(1)

1)“We gathered together to break bread...” (Acts 20:7).

2)“You come together...to eat the Lord’s supper” (1 Cor. 11:20).

3)“You...partake of the table of the Lord...” (1 Cor. 10:21).

These three verses show us that the bread breaking meeting is a meeting in which the believers come together to eat the Lord’s supper and attend the Lord’s table. This meeting is divided into two parts, the first part for remembering the Lord and the latter part for worshipping the Father.

I. REMEMBERING THE LORD— WITH THE LORD AS THE CENTER

1)“And having taken a loaf...He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is My body which is given for you; do this unto the remembrance of Me. And similarly the cup after they had dined” (Luke 22:19-20).

The bread breaking meeting is not for anything other than remembering the Lord with the remembrance of the Lord as its center for the Lord’s enjoyment. Everything in this meeting, whether hymn singing, prayer, Bible reading, or words of inspiration, should take the Lord as the center, speaking either concerning His person and work, His love and virtues, His living or suffering on the earth, or His honor or glory in heaven, that others may consider or realize these things in order to remember the Lord Himself. In such a meeting, we should think of the Lord in our hearts and behold the Lord in our spirit that we would be inspired concerning the Lord. Then we will express our inspiration through songs, prayers, reading of the Bible, or words, that the feeling of the entire meeting would be directed to the Lord and that all would remember the Lord.

A. Eating the Lord’s Supper

The three verses quoted in the beginning of this lesson show us that the breaking of bread is to eat the Lord’s supper and to attend the Lord’s table. Eating the Lord’s supper is for us to remember the Lord; attending the Lord’s table is for us to have fellowship together in the Lord’s accomplishments for us. In the aspect of eating the Lord’s supper, we should mainly do the following three things:

1. Remember the Lord

1)“The Lord Jesus...took bread...broke it and said, This is My body, which is for you; this do unto the remembrance of Me” (1 Cor. 11:23-24).

According to what the Lord has established, whenever we break bread, there is not only a loaf of bread prepared for us to break and eat, but next to the bread there is also a cup prepared for us to receive and drink. By eating the Lord’s bread and drinking the Lord’s cup, we eat the Lord’s supper in remembrance of the Lord. The bread and the cup are both symbols. According to what the Lord said, the bread signifies His body that He gave for us and the cup signifies the blood that He shed for us. His body was given for us on the cross and His blood was shed for us also on the cross. He gave Himself for us in order to impart life into us that we may partake of Him. He shed His blood for us in order to redeem us that our sins may be forgiven.

When we see or receive the bread that we break, we should consider how the Lord became flesh for us, how He died for us in the flesh, and how His body was broken for us and given to us that we may have

His life. In the Bible, bread refers to life. The Lord said that He is the bread of life which gives life to the world (John 6:33-35). Whenever bread is mentioned, we must think of life. The Lord's body being broken to be given as bread to us means that He gave His body for us that we may have His life. We partake of His life when we receive His broken body. All of this is signified by our breaking of bread and by the bread which we break.

2)“Similarly also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood; this do, as often as you drink it, unto the remembrance of Me” (1 Cor. 11:25).

In the bread breaking meeting, we should consider the Lord and what He did for us not only when we see or receive the bread which we break but also when we see or receive the cup which we drink. This cup signifies the new covenant, which the Lord enacted for us by shedding His blood. Whenever we see or receive this cup which we drink, we should consider how the Lord partook of flesh and blood for us (Heb. 2:14), how He not only gave His body for us that we may have His life, but how He also shed His blood for us that we may have the topmost blessing, that is, to be delivered from sin and obtain God and all that is of Him. By this symbol, we should consider how the Lord bore our sins, was made sin for us, and was judged and cursed for us, shedding His blood, which constitutes our cup of blessing, our eternal blessed portion. We should also consider how we are redeemed, forgiven, sanctified, justified, reconciled, and accepted by God through the Lord's blood; how it cleanses us from our sins and washes our conscience that we may come to God with boldness; how it speaks better things before God; and how it resists the attacks from the evil spirits for us that we may overcome the Devil who accuses us.

In the Bible, the bread denotes life and the cup signifies “portion,” such as “Jehovah is the portion of...my cup” (Psa. 16:5). Originally we were sinful and evil, and the portion we deserved from God should have been the cup of God's wrath, that is, to go into the lake of fire to suffer the torment of eternal perdition (Rev. 14:10; 21:8). However, God made the Lord Jesus drink the cup of wrath for us on the cross (John 18:11). He received God's righteous judgment for us and fully tasted the torment of perdition in the lake of fire; He shed His blood to fully redeem us from our sins and enacted the new covenant for us, giving us instead the cup of salvation (Psa. 116:13) and becoming our cup (of blessing) (Psa. 23:5). In this blessed cup of salvation, God Himself and all that He has has become our portion, our eternal blessed portion, and the portion of our cup.

2. Enjoy the Lord

1)“Jesus took the bread...broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat” (Matt. 26:26); “This is My body which is given for you; do this unto the remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19); “And taking the cup...He gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant” (Matt. 26:27-28); “...which is being poured out for you” (Luke 22:20); “This do, as often as you drink it, unto the remembrance of Me” (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

Although the center of the breaking of bread is to remember the Lord, such remembrance is not merely to reflect on the Lord and all that He has done for us, but even more to enjoy the Lord and all that He has accomplished for us. The Lord said that our eating His bread and drinking His cup is our remembrance of Him. His bread and His cup signify His body and His blood. Thus, to eat His bread and drink His cup are to eat His body and drink His blood. The Lord's body and His blood are He Himself given for us and the means by which He accomplished all things for us. Furthermore, to eat and to drink are not only to receive but also to enjoy. When we eat the Lord's body and drink His blood, we not only receive but also enjoy the Lord Himself and all that He has accomplished for us by giving His body and shedding His blood. To receive and enjoy the Lord in this way is to remember Him. It is when we thus eat, drink, and enjoy the Lord that we truly remember Him. This is the profound meaning of eating the Lord's supper.

Our eating, drinking, and enjoying the Lord at His supper are also our declaration and testimony. Our declaration is that we are joined to the Lord and are mingled with Him, just as the bread becomes mingled with us after being received into our body. Our testimony is that we live by eating, drinking, and enjoying the Lord, taking Him as our life every day. When we break bread to eat and drink the Lord, we declare that the Lord, by giving His body and shedding His blood, has come into us to be joined to us. We also testify that, by receiving the body the Lord gave for us and the blood He shed for us, we have partaken of Him and all that He has accomplished for us, we have been joined to Him, and we live by Him as our life and our life supply. This is our declaration as well as our testimony when we break bread.

3. Display the Lord's Death

1)“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you declare the Lord’s death until He comes” (1 Cor. 11:26).

The word “declare” in this verse has the meaning of showing and displaying. Whenever we eat the Lord’s bread and drink His cup, we simultaneously remember the Lord and display His death. We remember the Lord, not His death. But while we are remembering the Lord, we display the Lord’s death for ourselves, the angels, and all things to see. When we remember the Lord, the bread and the cup are displayed separately on the table. The bread refers to the Lord’s body and the cup to His blood. Since the separation of the body and the blood signifies death, death is thus displayed. This is how we display the Lord’s death when we break bread to remember Him.

The Scripture quoted here says that we should remember the Lord and display His death until He comes. This implies that when we break bread to remember the Lord and to display His death, at the same time we are waiting for His coming. This shows that we should display the Lord’s death and thus remember Him in the spirit and atmosphere of waiting for His coming.

LESSON SEVENTEEN

THE BREAD BREAKING MEETING

(2)

B. Attending the Lord's Table

1)“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a fellowship of the body of Christ? Seeing that we who are many are one bread, one Body; for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor. 10:16-17).

First Corinthians 11:23-25 shows us that the emphasis in eating the Lord’s supper is the remembrance of the Lord, whereas 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 and 21 tell us that the stress in attending the Lord’s table is the fellowship with the saints.

In the bread breaking meeting, we are eating the one bread, which signifies the body of Christ, and drinking the one cup, which signifies the blood of Christ. Our eating and partaking of one bread and our drinking and sharing in one cup imply mutual fellowship. We have this fellowship because of the Lord’s body and the Lord’s blood. Hence, such fellowship becomes the fellowship of the blood of Christ and the fellowship of the body of Christ. In this way, when we eat and drink together, sharing in the Lord’s bread and the Lord’s cup, we “partake of the table of the Lord” (1 Cor. 10:21). At this table, we share in the Lord’s body and the Lord’s blood with all the saints and have fellowship one with another. The blood of Christ, which we enjoy together, removes all the barriers between the saints. The bread, which we share and which symbolizes the individual body of Christ, comes into us to make us one bread, signifying the one corporate Body of Christ. In the aspect of eating the Lord’s supper, the bread refers to the Lord’s individual body, which He gave for us on the cross, while in the

aspect of attending the Lord's table, the bread points to the Lord's corporate Body, which He constituted with all the regenerated saints through His resurrection from the dead. The former is physical and was put to death and given for us; the latter is mystical and is constituted with all the saints in the Lord's resurrection. Therefore, each time that we break the bread, on the one hand we remember the Lord and enjoy Him by receiving the body which He gave for us on the cross; on the other hand, we enjoy the mystical Body which He produced through His resurrection from the dead, fellowshiping with all the saints in this mystical Body and testifying the oneness of this mystical Body. There is not only a relationship between us and the Lord, but a relationship between us and all the saints.

II. WORSHIPPING THE FATHER— WITH THE FATHER AS THE CENTER

The meeting for the breaking of bread is a meeting for the believers' worship. According to the procedure in God's salvation, we first receive the Lord and then draw near to the Father. Thus, in this meeting for worship, we should first remember the Lord and then worship the Father. The center of the section of remembering the Lord is the remembrance of the Lord, and the center of the section of worshipping the Father is the worship of the Father, where all the prayers, hymns, and words should be directed toward the Father.

1)“Jesus took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And taking the cup...He gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant...and having sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives” (Matt. 26:26-30).

On that day, after the Lord Jesus broke bread and sang a hymn with the disciples, He led them to the Mount of Olives to meet with the Father. A principle is implied and established here, that is, after we have broken the bread to remember the Lord, we ought to be led by Him to worship the Father together.

2)“I [the resurrected Christ] will declare Your [the Father's] name to My brothers; in the midst of the church [the meeting with the disciples after resurrection] I will sing hymns of praise unto You” (Heb. 2:12).

Here is mentioned what the Lord did when He appeared to and met with His disciples after His resurrection, that is, He considered them as brothers and declared to them the Father's name. He also considered them as the church and sang hymns of praise to the Father among them. Although the Lord is the only begotten Son of God, through death and resurrection, He regenerated us who believed in Him (1 Pet. 1:3) that we might become the many sons of God. He then became the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:29), leading us, who are the many sons, with Him to the Father. After He was resurrected, He came among the disciples (John 20:19-29) and declared the Father's name to His brothers. Then in the status of the firstborn Son of God, He led His many brothers, who are God's many sons, to sing praises to the Father together, that is, to worship the Father together. According to this fact, after we have broken the bread in remembrance of the Lord, we should be led by the Lord to worship the Father. In this section of the meeting, we take the Father as the center, and, as depicted in Hymns, #52, all our singing of praises to the Father is the Lord in us leading us to sing praises to the Father.

III. THE PERSONS WHO BREAK BREAD

1)“Jesus took the bread...and gave it to the disciples” (Matt. 26:26).

When the Lord established the breaking of bread, He gave the bread and the cup to His disciples, that is, to those who have believed into Him, have His life, and belong to Him. Of course, only those who have such a relationship with the Lord and who know the Lord as their personal Savior can remember the Lord by eating His bread and drinking His cup and can display the Lord's death by His bread and His cup.

2)“And all those who believed...breaking bread” (Acts 2:44-46).

Those who break bread must be “those who believed,” that is, those who have believed and received the Lord’s salvation, who have the Lord’s life, and who belong to the Lord. Only such believing persons can and may break bread. Therefore, only those who are saved, who are joined unto the Lord, and who do not live in sin are qualified to eat the bread and drink the cup. No one else can have a share in the Lord’s bread and the Lord’s cup.

IV. THE TIME FOR THE BREAKING OF BREAD

1)“And they were continuing steadfastly...in the breaking of bread” (Acts 2:42).

Here it says that the early believers continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread; that is, they continued without ceasing to break bread all the time. We should follow such a pattern.

2)“And day by day...breaking bread” (Acts 2:46).

The early believers continued so steadfastly in the breaking of bread that they did it on a daily basis. At the time, because they were fervent toward the Lord and loved Him deeply, they spontaneously broke bread every day. This tells us that, if possible, the more often we break bread to remember the Lord the better.

3)“And on the first day of the week, when we gathered together to break bread” (Acts 20:7).

The early believers began by breaking bread daily. Later on, they gradually acquired the habit of doing it once a week on the first day. The first day of the week, which is the Lord’s Day, is the day of the Lord’s resurrection and the beginning of a new week, signifying that the old things are passed away and a new life has begun. Therefore, it is most appropriate to break bread to remember the Lord on this day. Furthermore, although we display the Lord’s death when we break bread, we are actually remembering Him in resurrection.

4)“Eat the Lord’s supper” (1 Cor. 11:20).

Since the breaking of bread is to eat the Lord’s supper, it is best to conduct it in the evening. Furthermore, in the evening, having finished all our work and having discharged all our burdens, we are lightened in heart and refreshed in spirit. It is a proper time in which we can remember the Lord without anxiety, and it is easy to sense the Lord’s presence then. This, however, is not a legal matter. If it is difficult or inconvenient to conduct it in the evening, we may evaluate the situation and change the time to the morning or the afternoon.

V. THE PLACE FOR THE BREAKING OF BREAD

1)“Breaking bread from house to house” (Acts 2:46).

The early believers broke bread from house to house in every home. It is clear that the place for the breaking of bread was their homes.

2)“When therefore you come together in the same place...to eat the Lord’s supper” (1 Cor. 11:20).

According to this word, the early believers also came together in one place to eat the Lord’s supper. This must have occurred in a larger place. There is the sweet and intimate flavor of a small meeting when we gather to break bread in the homes. There is also the rich and uplifted atmosphere of a large meeting when we gather together in one place. The believers may break bread in separate homes or in one place, and this should be decided on by the church according to the need and the situation.

VI. AFTER THE BREAKING OF BREAD

1)“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you declare the Lord’s death until He comes” (1 Cor. 11:26).

Those who break bread to remember the Lord should be those who long for the Lord, wait for His coming, and love His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8). Therefore, after we break bread, we ought to live a life of waiting for the Lord’s coming.

2)“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons” (1 Cor. 10:21).

Here it says that if we partake of the Lord’s table, we cannot partake of the table of demons, and if we drink the Lord’s cup, we cannot drink the cup of demons. According to the text preceding this verse, the table of demons and the cup of demons are the idol sacrifices. Thus, after we break bread, we cannot eat the idol sacrifices.

3)“Let us therefore keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and evil, but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor. 5:8).

Here, leaven refers to all evil and all that corrupts us. In the Old Testament, immediately after they kept the Passover, the Israelites observed the feast of unleavened bread, removing all leaven from their living (Deut. 16:1-4). The breaking of bread in the New Testament replaces the Passover in the Old Testament. Thus, after the breaking of bread, we should keep the feast of unleavened bread as the Israelites did, removing from our life all evil and all that corrupts us. We would only live a holy life free from sin by the Lord’s holy and sinless life, which is the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, to be those who truly keep the feast of unleavened bread.