

The Table of the Bread of the Presence

by Henry Law

The sermon emphasizes the importance of Christ as the bread of life and the only food that satisfies the soul, and reminds us of the need to preach Christ and feed on Him.

Scripture: Exodus 25:30, Leviticus 24:6, Psalm 34:8, John 6:35, John 6:51, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Christ's Presence", "Church Unity"

Description

Henry Law preaches about the significance of the special Bread of the Presence, symbolizing Christ as the ultimate source of nourishment for our souls. The Bread represents the pure perfection of Christ's manhood, free from sin, and His sacrificial work on the cross. The Bread of the Presence, placed before God, signifies Christ's eternal presence and acceptance in the Father's eyes, bringing delight and satisfaction to God. The twelve loaves on the table symbolize the unity of the Church in Christ, where believers of all degrees of faith are equally cherished and represented before God.

Transcript

"You must always keep the special Bread of the Presence on the table before me." Exodus 25:30

Reader! have you passed the threshold of the home of grace? Is soul-death behind you? Is soul-life your portion? If so, you daily hunger for divine meal. The proof of life is sure. The new-born craves for food. And no food satisfies, but Christ Himself.

These lines are written to commend such feast. A Table here is spread, of which the whole provision is Christ's person and Christ's work. The saints of old found their abundance here. Yet there is more. The banquet still is rich. The Spirit's call is ever heard, 'Eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.' Our gracious God directs, 'make a table of acacia wood, 3 feet long, 1 1/2 feet wide, and 2 1/4 feet high. Overlay it with pure gold and run a molding of gold around it.' Observe this. The thought and plan are wholly from above. It is no human pattern or design. God loved, God willed, God spoke. As Christ is the offspring of free grace, so grace contrives each image which reveals Him.

In height it is co-equal with the Ark. The measure of its length and breadth is less. Its substance is identically one. The inward frame is that choice wood, of which the virtue could resist all taint. The outside shines in the chaste splendor of pure gold.

Reader! revolve the precious teaching of these chosen signs. Their terms are plain. They show the redemption-wonder. Wood is co-joined with gold. This is poor manhood taken into God. This is the Godhead linked to our lowly flesh. God remains God, and yet is man. Man remains man, and yet is one with God. Such is our Jesus; moving, working, dying, upon earth. Such is our Jesus; sitting, working, reigning, in the heavens.

Reader! let ceaseless praises prove that your gratitude discerns this truth. Cry out and shout--Christ is man; His doings are put down as mine. Christ is God; His doings must suffice.

The Table is well-stored. Christ is the richness of all rich supply. Count all the drops of ocean, and all the grains which form our globe, and all the rays, which pour down from the sun. They are base scantiness compared with Him. View other tables. The dainties of the WORLD are choking dust. The hungry eat, and hunger bites with sharper tooth. SELF is a barren waste. No soul of man can reap refreshment in that blighted field. The mere outside of RELIGIOUS FORMS and RITES is as unsubstantial as the passing cloud. Many, indeed, visit these tables; but disappointment mocks them all. The same is true of every table but Christ. He is the one abundance which abounds forever. He is the one full Table which is ever full.

But what is the food? It is bread. 'You must always keep the special Bread of the Presence on the table before me.' Faith knows this emblem well. It has often sat in rapture at the feet of Jesus, and heard His own lips say, 'I am the bread of life.' It knows, also, the reviving taste. It has found Christ to be its staff of strength, the healthful juice of its exhausted powers.

But bread is formed of grain, which earth brings forth, and labor grinds, and culinary process kneads, and oven's heat completes. Christ is all this. He is bone of our bones, flesh of our flesh. The heavy burden of man's sins bruised Him to powder, crushed Him to the grave. All hell put forth its endeavors to sift Him as the wheat is shaken. And all the flames of God's wrath blazed fiercely round Him. Thus He became the Bread of God--the saving food of souls!

Will any grain avail to make this consecrated bread? What says the Lord? 'You shall take fine flour.' No unclean grain, no refuse husk, no worthless chaff, can taint this holy lump. All its material is pure perfection. Here is Christ's manhood, as free from evil as God's life can be. This truth is precious. The anxious soul will often ask, May I lie down and die, without one fear, on Christ? The Spirit uses sword after sword to slay each doubt. He testifies by frequent word, in frequent type, that sin could no more touch Him, than man's hand can reach God's throne, or soil the sun with stains.

A name distinguishes this food. It is called Show-bread. The term implies Bread of faces, or Bread of the Presence. There is a length of truth wound up in Bible names and titles. As we unfold them, there seems to be no end. We here are taught that this Bread was spread forth before Jehovah's face, laid out in His immediate presence. This is an emblem of our Lord. There never has been moment in which He lived not the darling of the Father's eye. There never can be. He says, 'Before the worlds were framed, I was by Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.' God viewed Him, then, as the one center of His heart's desire. And never can His eye stray from Him. He views Him still with loving gaze, as having executed all His purposes of grace, as having magnified His name beyond all honor, as having vindicated the majesty of truth and justice. All that God is, finds sweet refreshment in this Bread of the Presence.

The number of the loaves is fixed. They must be twelve. 'Place the bread in the Lord's presence on the pure gold table, and arrange the loaves in two rows, with six in each row.' Leviticus 24:6. There is sweet

meaning in this gracious rule. The twelve express the tribes of Israel. Each has allotted place on the presenting table. These classes had their differing marks. In size, in wealth, in promises, in privilege, in heritage, their state was diverse. But here not one is overlooked--not one is put aside. The Table sets all equally in order before God.

The numbered tribes of Israel are a clear picture of the numbered Church. Hence every child of faith is present in the Presence-bread. They all are members of the Lord. In Jesus, they all appear before the Father's eye. Degrees of faith may vary. Some may but touch with trembling hand the very edge of Jesus' garment. Others may live with their enraptured head upon His very breast. But if there is vital faith, there is an oneness with the Lord which never, never can be parted. Christ holds each one within Himself. He shows Himself to be made up of them all. They lived in Him. They died in Him. They rose in Him. They sit together in heavenly places in Him. God's look, which rests upon His Son, sees them. The love which smiles on Jesus smiles on them.

Believer, whatever be your need, your misery, your sense of sin, your loathing of vile self, turn to the Bread of the Presence. Your image there is lovely. Christ lives to represent you. While God delights in Him, He must delight in you. He perpetually sees you wrapped up in His Son.

The Bread received a crown (or rim) upon its summit. The crown was frankincense. Thus constant fragrance shed delight around. Christ is sweet savor. The sin-removing blood, the interceding prayer, the spotless righteousness, the incense of the finished work, are heaven's own myrrh. O my soul, is Christ this frankincense to you? You hear the voice, 'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.' Is there the glad response, This is my beloved Savior--in Him, I am indeed well pleased?

On the return of every Sabbath morn, the priests brought fresh supplies. At no moment was the Table empty. You ministers of Christ, mark well this fact. It is a sign which teaches you how you must teach your flocks. The Sabbath hours are golden time. The pulpit opens to you. Assembled crowds hang on your lips. The hungry press round you to be fed. What bread do you produce? No food can satisfy which is not Christ. This must be gathered in the fair fields of Scripture, where nothing grows but holiest grain. It must be sifted with most anxious search. It must be worked upon the knees. It must be 'mixed' with agonizing prayer. It must be always new, but always one. Its savor must be only Christ.

The Presence-bread was still the same in substance and in form--but newly placed and newly prepared for its sacred use. O Sirs, look well to this. A dwindled and decaying flock might move angelic multitudes to tears. But dwindle and decay they must, if the bread you give them is poison; or if the food is stale. Woe to the preacher who thus sins! There can be no excuse! The Bible is before him. It is a storehouse in which Christ is All--and ever new. Will he not take that he may give? Will he not give that he may save from death? Listen to the moan of many a famished soul--"I starve; this food is Christless. I starve; this food is tasteless."

The Bread afterwards became the priests' meal. Within the holy place they ate the holy food. There is especial care for those who do especial work. And why? They have especial need. Such is the pastor's case. What cares oppress! What toils exhaust! What anxious days and nights beat down! But Jesus calls him to the secret chamber of His presence, and feeds him with the first-fruits of His truth. Thus with new power he runs anew his sun-like course. But woe, indeed, to him who sermonizes a Savior whom he has never seen, and preaches Christ from Christless heart, with Christless lips. O Sirs, there is a voice from Balaam's bed of fire, there is a wail from the low cell of Judas, which warns with an appalling note. Let

none take Christ upon the preaching lip, who do not feed on Him with ravished heart!

But here is food for the whole family of faith. In Gospel day, the lowest servant is a priest of God. 'He has made us his kingdom and his priests who serve before God his Father.' Hence, all are welcomed to the Bread of His Presence. Children of grace, know your high privilege. The table with all its treasures is for you. Look to the Bread of His Presence again. It tells you what is the true act of faith. Is it enough to hear of food? Is it enough to see, to smell, to touch? Oh, no! Hearing and sight remove no hunger and supply no strength. To gain nourishment, the lips must taste, the food must circulate throughout the frame. So Christ must be received in all His grace, in all His truth, into each fiber of the heart and soul. He must be present in the inner man, life of our life, strength of our strength, health of our health, joy of our joy!

Reader! is your soul craving thus for Christ? Is it thus feasting on Him? He is before you. You have not far to seek. Faith can receive Him at any moment and in any place. It cries, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread'--and as it cries, it takes--and as it takes, it rejoices--and as it rejoices, it blesses--and as it blesses, it takes more, and strengthens more, and shows its greater strength in greater labors and in louder praise.

But perhaps you care nothing for this gospel feast, this Bread of His Presence. May God the Spirit in mercy lead you to it! Listen! He cries, 'Come! for all things are now ready.' Will you refuse? Remember Eve. The tempter showed her the forbidden fruit. How easily she yielded; how quickly she took! He now shows you the husks and rubbish of the world. Will you be as easily enticed? Sin touched, sin tasted, sin digested, is hell and all hell's pains. But come to this Feast! Take Christ, love Christ, feed daily, hourly, on Christ--and yours is the fullness of joy now, and all heaven's blessedness forever!

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