

# The Breaking of Bread

by Stephen Kaung

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*The breaking of bread is an expression of church life, a symbol of oneness and fellowship with Christ, and a remembrance of Christ's death and a looking forward to his return.*

**Duration:** 1:14:00

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 16:16, Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:42, 1 Corinthians 14:40

**Topics:** "Breaking Of Bread"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of announcing and remembering the death of the Lord Jesus. The act of breaking bread and drinking the cup is a testimony to the world and even the unseen world of what the death of the Lord has done for believers. The speaker highlights the simplicity of the breaking of bread, cautioning against making it elaborate with rituals and rules. Additionally, the sermon references Deuteronomy, where the children of Israel were commanded to bring offerings when they went to the feasts, suggesting that believers should not come empty-handed to the Lord's table.

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 14, verse 40. 1 Corinthians chapter 14, verse 40. But let all things be done calmly and with order.

Let all things be done calmly. In some version is said properly, fittingly, decently, harmoniously and with an orderly manner. Shall we pray? Dear Lord, as we continue in thy presence, we bow ourselves before thee, opening our hearts, our whole being towards thyself, towards thy word.

And may thy word register in the very depths of our being, doing that work of transforming us and conforming us to thy own image. Lord, we trust thy Holy Spirit to do this work that he alone can do. We ask in thy precious name.

Amen. We have been considering together on this first letter to the Corinthians. Basically, this letter is focused on one thing, and that is, we are called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

That's where we are today. We all have been called by the grace of God through the finished work of Christ. We have been called into that fellowship that our Lord Jesus had with his Father, and that fellowship that has been extended to us, that today we may be in the good of that fellowship, sharing with God, sharing with Christ, and sharing with one another.

And what a privilege that is. When you read for Corinthians, you find that church is full of problems. And basically, all these problems are due to the fact that they do not really know what is the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Or put it in another way, all these problems are problems concerning the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. And in the past, we have mentioned a number of them. This matter of division, this matter of corruption, moral corruption, this matter of socially not according to God.

In other words, even though these Corinthian believers have been saved, as the Bible said, they are sanctified, they are justified. And yet, we find that somehow, they do not live up to that fellowship. Oftentimes, we find they fall back to their old ways, living by their old natural life.

And because of this, all these problems come into their midst. Now this morning, we would like to start on 1 Corinthians chapter 11 through chapter 16. Because in these chapters, we find there is one common subject, and that is church life, assembly life, body life.

We are called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. And what is it? You remember when our Lord Jesus was on earth? In view of Calvary, he told his disciples, on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Now, we know that the very word church, in the Greek original, is ecclesia.

And ecclesia means, call out ones gathered together. So you find that church, church life, is a gathering together life. And in Hebrews chapter 10, verse 25, we are exhorted that we should not forsake the assembling of the saints, especially in view of the day drawing nigh.

So we find that in our calling, this church life, assembling life, body life, occupies a very important part. Now, we mentioned before that life is multi-dimensional. In other words, we live our life in many different areas.

There is the personal life that we live. There is the family life that we live. There is the social life that we live.

And we as believers, we have a church life, an assembling life, a body of Christ life to live. And as a matter of fact, this area is the most important area. Why? Because when you look at the eternal purpose of God, that is what he is after.

He is after a body. He is after a collective, a corporate body. He is after a bride that is a collective entity.

So you find that the Corinthian believers, after they believe in the Lord Jesus, they did gather together. But their problem was, in gathering together, they found many problems. And as a matter of fact, if you read these last six chapters, you know they asked Apostle Paul in their letter concerning some questions.

For instance, in chapter 12, verse 1, they asked Paul concerning this matter of spirituals. How to be really spiritual? How to exercise their spiritual gifts? And then again in chapter 16, you find they asked Paul about this matter of collection. How about giving? Now these are questions that relate to church life, assembly life, body life.

And Paul, he realized the importance of church life. Therefore, you find he enlarged it. Instead of just answering their two questions, he began to include in his reply questions they have not asked.

But to Paul, he realized these are very, very important questions, things that need to be adjusted. So on the whole, you find the last six chapters of 1 Corinthians are devoted to this area of church life, assembling life, body life. Now before we go into it, can we find some ruling principle, governing principle concerning this matter of church life? I think what we read at the beginning of this time probably is that governing principle.

Let all things be done calmly and with order. In other words, church life is the expression of the life of Christ. Now we can express the life of Christ personally.

We should express the life of Christ in our family life. And we should let the life of Christ regulate our social life. And most of all, in church life, it is nothing but the corporate expression of the life of Christ.

Or put it another way, it is the life of Christ expressed, manifested among those who are his. So church life is the life of Christ in a corporate expression. And when you look at the life of Christ, what is the ruling principle behind his life? You remember in John chapter 1 verse 14, the world became flesh, tabernacle among man? How? Full of grace and truth.

In other words, his life is full of grace and truth. His life is so gracious. His life is so beautiful.

His life is so harmonious, so wonderful. And his life is so truthful, so orderly. There is no confusion.

There is no mixture. It's pure. It's clean.

It's heavenly. It's spiritual. Now that is the life of Christ that we see lived in his person.

And now the same life that is in you and me, in us together, must be lived in the same way. So the ruling principle of church life is calmly and orderly. Full of grace and truth.

It is expression of Christ himself. God is not a God of disorder. He is a God of order.

Our God is a God of beauty. Everything is so harmonious. Nothing mixed.

Nothing confused. And that is the way that the church life is to be. Paul, realizing the importance of church life, he used six chapters to give instruction to the Corinthian believers.

If you start with chapter 11, you will find the first thing is on head covering. There is a divine order. God is the head of Christ.

Christ is the head of every man. And man is the head of the woman. It's a divine order.

And then you read on, you find it's concerning the matter of the breaking of bread. And after that you come to this matter of spiritual gifts. And after that you come to this matter of how to exercise spiritual gifts in a meeting.

And then after that you have this matter of collection, giving. How should believers give? And after that you have this matter of obedience, submission. All these problems are related to church life.

Now this morning we will like to share together on this matter of breaking of bread. Now you know breaking of bread is a most important expression of corporate life. Because when you read the book of Acts, when the Holy Spirit described the church life, that these people began to live.

You know at first you have 120 believers. Then on the day of Pentecost, 3,000 joined them. And later on you'll find it's increased and increased and increased.

And how do they live together? What kind of church life they have? How do they assemble? How does the body of Christ exercise itself? If you want to find it in a simple sentence, that is in Acts chapter 2 verse 42. They all continued in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles in breaking of bread and prayers. That can include all in that fellowship life.

They continued, persevered in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles. Now we all know that apostles do not have their own teachings. The teachings of the apostles are one.

It is the teaching of Christ. They never teach anything that they have not received from the Lord. It is what they see, they hear, they learn from the Lord that they pass on to us.

Paul doesn't have his own teaching. Peter does not have his own teaching. James does not have his own teaching.

It is true that when they teach, they seem to have different emphasis, touching different areas. But whatever they teach is what they have received from the Lord. It is the teaching of the Lord Jesus.

And then the fellowship of the apostles. Now the apostles do not have their own fellowships. You know, when the Corinthian believers tried to create Pauline fellowship, Paul said, Who am I? Did I die for you? Are you baptized in my name? No such thing as Pauline fellowship.

No such thing as Petrine fellowship. No such thing as C.J. Apollo fellowship. No such thing.

Even though there are many apostles, there were fellowships. As we find in 1 John 1, the apostle John said, Our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son. And now we pass on our fellowship.

We report it, pass it on to you, that you too may have fellowship with us. So, in other words, there is only one fellowship. It is fellowshiping on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And how do they express that they continue in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles? Especially in two things. The breaking of bread and prayer. So, brothers and sisters, you see how important is the breaking of bread? How important is the prayers? It's not private prayer, personal prayer.

It's corporate prayer. The church comes together to break bread. The church comes together to pray.

You cannot break the bread alone. You need at least a plurality of two, because it's a corporate thing. So, brothers and sisters, in the early church, how they emphasize on this matter of breaking of bread? As a matter of fact, you'll find that in Acts chapter 2. They break bread every day, every meal, from house to house.

Why? Because this is the noblest, fullest expression of church life. So, you'll find throughout the church history, this has been continued on. Even though we find later on it becomes a tradition, it has lost its real meaning.

Nevertheless, it is something that is continued even unto this day, because on the night of his betrayal, before his crucifixion, our Lord Jesus gathered his own disciples in that upper room. They ate the Passover feast, and during that supper, our Lord Jesus, he took the bread, he blessed it, he broke it, and

gave to his disciples and said, This loaf is my body. Do this in remembrance of me.

Then after the supper, he took up the cup, he blessed it, and he gave to his disciples and said, This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood. Do this in remembrance of me. Since that night, the church, instead of celebrating Passover, the church has been celebrating the breaking of bread.

It is not a ritual. It is not a tradition. It is something real, living, spiritual, heavenly.

Now, the Corinthian believers, they did gather together to break the bread, but what did Paul say? He said, In this matter, I do not praise you. Why? Because when you gather together, it is not for better, but for worse. Now, can you gather together for worse instead of for better? Why? Because Paul said, I understand that there are divisions in your midst.

I understand there are sects in your midst. Sect simply means different schools of opinions. In other words, this breaking of bread is a symbol of oneness, but you come together with divisions, with different opinions, different hearts.

You are not in one. So, when you gather together, it is not for better, it is for worse. And it is expressed in such a way that when they come together, you know, because the breaking of bread happens at the Last Supper.

So, in the early days, the church combined these two things together, meal and breaking of bread. You know, in Acts chapter 2, they break bread at every meal, and then later on you find it is once on the Lord's Day, as you find in Acts. But still they put these two things together.

So, the Corinthian believers, because of their divisions, they have different opinions, they are not one in their spirit. So, even this is expressed in their eating. People who are rich, they will have a rich meal before the brothers and sisters.

And people who are poor have nothing to eat, starving. And some are drink to drunk, and others are starving. And Paul said, you gather for worse, not for better.

So, we know that later on they separate these two things. Love feast and breaking of bread become two different things, instead of doing together. But anyway, so if you find here, the Corinthian believers, they still keep the tradition.

But they keep it in the wrong way. And it is serious. Why? Because Paul said, there are many who are weak.

Even some who died. In other words, somehow, the judgment of God is upon them. So, brothers and sisters, the important thing is, we need to know what the breaking of bread really is.

So that we won't take it lightly. And drink and eat our own sin. And on the other hand, we need to know what to do when we come together to break the bread.

As you read 1 Corinthians chapter 11, from verse 17 to 33, you will find Paul actually is trying to tell them. They have made the breaking of bread so elaborate. More than what it really is.

In other words, we human beings tend to make simple things complicated. God's truth is very simple. There is the simplicity which is of Christ.

That the enemy tries to entice us away from it. So if you look at the so-called breaking of bread today, whether you call it in whatever name, it may be a mass, as the Catholic would call it, sacrament, or holy communion, whatever you call it, you find it becomes a very elaborate thing. Lots of rituals, lots of rules, instead of it is the expression of the life of Christ.

Free, but orderly, beautifully. Brothers and sisters, so Paul is trying to tell them what the breaking of bread really is. It is very simple.

All we are commanded to do is just this. The loaf and the cup. And we need to know what the loaf represents, and what the cup represents.

We need to know what we are doing. Our Lord Jesus, on the night of his betrayal, he takes that loaf, bless it, broke it, delivers it to us, and says, this is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

Now, throughout the church history, there are so many theories about this loaf. Some take this loaf as the literal body of Christ. After the priest bless it, this loaf made of meal becomes the literal body of Christ.

And they sacrifice the body of Christ once more, crucify him again and again and again. Other people take it as a symbol. It is a loaf, nothing but a loaf.

It is only representing the body of Christ, not the real body of Christ. So when you take a bit, you don't need to be too serious about it. It is just a loaf, that's all.

Brothers and sisters, what is it? What it really is. The Lord said, this is my body. Do you take it literally, or do you take it symbolically? How do you take it? Remember, this breaking of bread is a spiritual thing.

And because it is spiritual, you cannot look at it either literally or symbolically. You have to look at it spiritually. In other words, the loaf is still a loaf, but in our spirit we remember him, his body broken for us.

So in other words, we have to take it spiritually. And when you remember, when you look at this loaf, and you remember how this holy body of our Lord Jesus, he lived thirty-three and a half years in such holiness, sanctified, setting apart, totally for God. Never a sin.

He does not even know what sin is. Please, it is his Father in that body. And that pure body broke for us.

What love is behind it. Can you take this loaf and not be melted by his love? Take it spiritually. It means a great deal.

Much more than we think. More than that. It is not just a remembrance.

You know, you remember what you have seen and heard and experienced in the past. You cannot remember something that you have no experience of. So that's the reason why only those who are really redeemed of the Lord can partake in this loaf and in this cup.

Because it's a remembrance. If you do not remember, if you have no experience of how Christ died for you, even for your sins, and you are saved, redeemed, you know him as your Saviour and Lord. Now if you don't have that experience, how can you remember? You have nothing to remember.

So to remember, you need to really know him. That he, that body, is broken for you. And not only that.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 11, it tells us, verse 26. For as often as he shall eat this bread and drink the cup, he announced the death of the Lord. Remember is looking back.

You have something to remember. You look back to the time when the Lord opened your eyes and see how he, the sinless one, died for your sins. You remember.

But not only remember. When we come together to break the bread and drink the cup, you announce the death of Christ. You exhibit the death of the Lord.

When you look at the table, you see the bread on one side, the cup on the other side. What does it mean? It means that when the blood is separated from the body, that is death. So you exhibit before the world, even before the unseen world, the death of the Lord.

That is our testimony. We are here today because of the death of the Lord. We proclaim what the death of the Lord has done.

And this is our testimony to the world. And even to the unseen world. To the angels and even to the demons.

A testimony that is present, announced. Every time we come to remember the Lord, we announce this is our testimony. We are what we are today.

We gather together today. It is because what the death of the Lord has done for us. We are not ashamed to declare it.

Let the whole world know that our Lord Jesus has died for us. And then furthermore, he said, until I come. That is looking to the future.

We are here, breaking this bread, drinking this cup, to remember what the Lord has done for us. And to exhibit, announce his finished work to the whole world. And furthermore, we are here to break until the day when he shall come.

Our Lord Jesus told his disciples on that night, I will not drink this fruit of the wine again until the kingdom. So brothers and sisters, there is something we are looking forward to. We are looking forward to his return.

He has risen. He has ascended. He is at the right hand of his Father.

And he is coming back to receive us. We will have this Lord's Supper until he comes. And then we will have the marriage feast of the Lamb.

Think of that. This is what the Lord's Supper really means. And more than that, if you turn back to 1 Corinthians 10, from verse 16 to verse 22, and there you will find something different.

You know, in chapter 11, the breaking of bread is called the Lord's Supper. Because supper is the time when the whole family gather together. But when you go to chapter 10, you find it is called the Lord's Table.

Now what does table represent? Every time the Bible talks about table, it means fellowship, sharing together. That's the table, you know. So it is the Lord's Table.

And then you find even the order is different. In chapter 11, you find our Lord Jesus, he is the one who blessed the loaf and blessed the cup. But when you come to chapter 10, we blessed the cup.

We blessed the loaf. In chapter 11, the bread comes first, the cup comes next. In chapter 10, the cup comes first, the bread comes next.

Now do you see the distinction there? It speaks of the same thing, but it gives us a different angle. In chapter 11, it is the Lord who gives this to us. In chapter 10, it is we who respond to him.

So, so far as our experience goes, the blood is before the bread. So far as God's purpose is concerned, the bread comes before the blood. Because if there's no body, where is the blood? But our experience, experience his life, his blood, the redeeming, the atoning first, and then we experience his life.

So that's why in chapter 10, you'll find it is called the Lord's Table. The cup of blessing, which we blessed. It is the communion of the blood of Christ.

Communion is the same word as fellowship. But because, you know, in our mind, you know, when we talk about communion with God, fellowship with God, it seems to be a little bit not too pious. Actually, it's the same word.

So here you'll find the emphasis is on communion, sharing together, experiencing. Brothers and sisters, every time you drink the cup, you share. The same with Christ.

You experience, as it were, once more, the wonderfulness of the cleansing, forgiving of your sins. It refreshes you, reinvigorates you, enables you to go in your pilgrimage. Brothers and sisters, every time you come to the Lord's Table, it strengthens you.

It is real, living. And the body. When you take that loaf, you experience once more the supply, the abundant supply.

Of his life. From now on you can live by his life. You have the strength to go on your pilgrimage.

Brothers and sisters, there is a spiritual experience going on. It is not a ritual. It is not something you can take lightly.

Something real, spiritual, living is going on. And do you really receive that benefit of it? Oh, brothers and sisters, if only we can break the bread as God has ordained it, what difference it will make to us. Now, because of this, we are exhorted, we should not come in an unworthy manner.

We say the Lord is worthy. What does it mean? If you say the Lord is worthy, do you come to him in a worthy manner? Worthy of his worthiness. If the President of the United States invited you to a dinner, how do you go? Do you prepare yourself for that occasion? Do you take a bath? Do you put on your best clothes and act in your best manner? Why? Oh, because he is the President.

He is a worthy man. And you can only come to him in a worthy manner. You cannot go there barefooted.

You cannot go there naked. That's quite a cringe, isn't it? They went to the Lord's table in an unworthy manner. Unworthy of the Lord.

Totally unworthy. Oh, we better. Brothers and sisters, this is very real.

It broke the heart of our Lord. When you think of the way that we come to the Lord's table. You know, in some places, they have a special time.

Whenever they have the Communion, they have a special time for people to come together and get ready for it. Now, I do not advocate that, because we should be ready every moment, any moment. But brothers and sisters, do we come prepared? If the President of the United States invited you for a dinner at 8 o'clock, will you show up at 9 o'clock? Is that a worthy manner? In one sense, we are never worthy.

We are like Mephibosheth, enemy of David. And David, in the love of God, because of his covenant with Jonathan, received Mephibosheth, his enemy, as his own son. And when Mephibosheth was at the table of David, under the table were these crippled legs.

But he's under the table. That's what we are. When we come to the Lord's table, thank God, we are treated as sons and daughters.

We are having a little feast with our Lord Jesus himself. He invites us to drink of him and eat of him. But under the table is always the crippled legs.

We are sinners saved by grace. Brothers and sisters, we are never worthy. But thank God, he makes us worthy.

It is all grace. But not because of this. We abuse that grace.

We still need to come in a worthy manner. And here you'll find in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. What is worthy manner? So that whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty in respect of the body and of the blood of the Lord.

But let a man prove himself, and thus eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For the eater and drinker eats and drinks judgment to himself, not distinguishing the body. So first of all, to come in a worthy manner is distinguishing the body.

In other words, you know what you are doing. You know what this body represents. You are not just coming to an ordinary meal.

No. You're coming to the Lord's table. You're coming to the Lord's supper.

He invites you to come. And the first thing you need to do is you have to distinguish the body. Now what does it mean? We have already said, this loaf represents the body.

In two ways. Before it is broken, it represents the personal body of Christ. That body which he had taken upon himself in his incarnation.

The word became flesh. And in that body he lived 33 and a half years. And with that body, he gave up to us.

So, whenever you come to the Lord's table, distinguish the body. This is the body of Christ. It is not something common.

Spiritually, you have to distinguish that. Now that will give you a kind of seriousness. You cannot come lightly when you think it represents the body of Christ.

Number two. After the bread is broken, now you take a piece, I take a piece. Then you find on the table that loaf is gone.

Disappeared. But it is not disappeared. It reappeared among all those who have taken a piece.

In other words, that body represents the church. So in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 he said, We, being many, are one loaf, one body. When God looked down from heaven, he sees that one body in us.

One loaf in us. We are many, but we are one. That's the body.

That's the reason whenever you break the bread, you need to remember this. Does this bread stand for the body of Christ? Personally and corporately. This loaf not only represents the body of Christ, body of Christ personally, but also corporately.

It does not just represent the few of us here. Whenever we break the bread, we are not only in fellowship with Christ, because it is his body, we are also in fellowship with all the believers in the world. They may not be here, but our fellowship includes them.

This bread is never exclusive. It is all inclusive. That broadens our heart, distinguishing the body.

Number two. Prove yourself. Now what does it mean? It means examining yourself.

Scrutinize yourself. Put yourself in the light of God's word. Whether when you come to take the loaf and take the cup, there is anything, any controversy between you and the Lord that has not been settled.

You know it. Is there any hatred, any enmity between you and any brother and sisters before you come to the Lord's table? All these need to be settled before you take the loaf and the cup. Prove yourself.

That's why we need to come prepared, not just casually. I remember a story, a true story. One man killed another man's father.

And that man determined that he would revenge for his father. After certain years, this man got saved. He traveled to a place and there was a gathering of the saints.

So he went there on the Lord's day to the Lord's table. He came in, sat down and looked and he saw his enemy sitting there. The one that he determined to kill.

He struggled. He met his enemy. He wanted to kill him.

So he got up and walked out. He didn't know what to do. Now this man is a brother in the Lord.

I still want to kill him. That's my vow. What should I do? I couldn't break the bread with him.

So he walked out. After he walked out, he prayed to the Lord. What should I do? He couldn't go back with unforgiving spirit and break bread with his enemy.

Then he remembered how he was the enemy of God and God forgave him. So in his heart he forgave that man. He walked back, sat down and broke the bread with that brother.

Brothers and sisters, that's what it is. How can you break bread? If you still have that unforgiving spirit towards your brother or your sister. How can you break bread if there is something unsettled between you

and the Lord? You cannot come with an evil conscience to yourself.

Then this breaking of bread will really be meaningful, powerful, exalting, building up. And then thirdly, in Deuteronomy chapter 16, verse 16, the children of Israel were commanded to go to Jerusalem to the feast three times a year. Passover, Pentecost and Feast of Tabernacles.

And God said, whenever you go to a feast you should not go empty handed. If you turn to Deuteronomy 26, it says, bring all the produce of the first fruit, put them in a basket and bring to the Lord. Lay that basket by the altar.

In other words, when we come to the Lord's table, can we come empty handed? No. We shall come with our basket full. But if we do not till the ground, during that time we have nothing to offer.

So in our daily life, how we need to cultivate our life with the Lord. In our daily life we experience His mercy. We experience His forgiveness.

We experience His love. We experience His long suffering. We experience His faithfulness.

We experience His supply, protecting, keeping. Brothers and sisters, if we live a life with Him through the week, our basket will be full. We cannot come empty handed.

We have to offer the sacrifice of praise to Him. It is not a law, a rule, legalistic. But brothers and sisters, you have been at the Lord's table for years.

You never open a mouth to say thank you. Can you do that? Is that a worthy manner? Why do you hold back? Is it because you have nothing to offer? Or is it because you cannot pray, and pray as beautiful, as logical, as some brothers and sisters? What pleases the Lord is the heart. Just a word.

Do not hide yourself under hymns, choruses, to substitute it. But have your personal offering to the Lord. The breaking of bread should be a time that the Lord will be so honoured, so worshipped, so praised, that when He looks upon us, as Isaiah says, and His heart shall be satisfied.

Brothers and sisters, I wonder how satisfied is the heart of our Lord at our Lord's table. Are we gathering together for worse? Are we gathering together for better? May the Lord have mercy on us. I speak to myself, and I want to share it with you, brothers and sisters.

The breaking of bread is the holiest time of the church life. Never miss it. It is so important.

It is our very life. The more you know it, the more you realise how much it means, not only to you, but to your Lord. God bless us.

Dear Lord, speak to our heart. Draw us that we may run after Thee. Because Thou art worthy.

Amen.

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