

Breaking Bread As One Family

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the significance of partaking in the breaking of bread as a way to share in Jesus' death daily, expressing gratitude by surrendering our self-life. It highlights the importance of taking the breaking of bread seriously, akin to signing a crucial document, and stresses the need for humility, gentleness, and patience in dealing with others' faults out of love. The message also underscores the unity in Christ and the importance of living in peace, pursuing kindness, and guarding our words and actions.

Scripture: Luke 22:14, Ephesians 4:2, Hebrews 5:2, 1 Peter 3:8, Proverbs 15:1

Topics: "Communion", "Unity in Christ"

Description

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Transcript

This is the verse that I'm always reminded of about going in as far as possible, going in time for a meeting. Luke 22 14. When the hour had come, Jesus was there at the table and the apostles with him and he said to them, I really look forward to eat this with you before I suffer.

I believe he's the same yesterday, today and forever and whether you look forward to it or not, I don't know. But I know that Jesus in our midst looks forward to this celebration where we are celebrating his death and his resurrection and his coming back because it says as often you break bread, you show the Lord's death until he comes. So we show the Lord's death by proclaiming that Jesus died for our sins and by taking part in it, we're saying I want to share in that death to myself.

That is the best way we can show our gratitude to Jesus, not just with words of thanksgiving which is easy, costs us nothing, but by saying Lord, I want to share in your death to my self-life every day of this year and here I'm testifying to it in this way. It's like a, to me for so many years I never understood the seriousness of this. It was much later after God filled me with the Holy Spirit and I began to see and after that time every time I break bread it's very meaningful and I hope it will be to you.

See if you want to take an example, it's like if you go to a court of law or a registrar's office or somewhere and you're signing a document which involves transactions and a lot of money, would you just casually sign it or glance through it and say okay I look through it? No, you will want to read every word. What am I signing here? Am I going to lose some money by what I've signed here? Every one of you, even some of you who are not very clever, you'll be very careful when you are signing a document in a court. I want to ask you a straight question.

Do you take the breaking of bread as seriously as that? If not, you mean our coming together in the presence of Jesus is not more serious than sitting before some sub-registrar in some court? How lightly we have taken it? Because there it involves money. These are the times or situations where we discover whether the Lord is more important or money is more important. Take it seriously, that's all I say.

The Lord says I'm very eager to eat this with you and it also speaks of our relationship with each other because symbolically we're eating one bread and we take part in it. It's not just like the cross has got two arms. The vertical relationship with Christ first and then the horizontal with one another.

We're testifying to both here and it says in our relationship with each other. I want to read Ephesians in chapter 4 and verse 2 and the Living Bible paraphrase of this is really excellent. Ephesians 4.2 with humility and gentleness, with patience, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.

That is a Living Bible paraphrase of verse 2. I need humility and I need gentleness to make allowance for the faults of other people with whom I have to live and work and fellowship only for one reason, because of my love. Not because he's going to be better tomorrow. He may not be better tomorrow.

He may be just as bad tomorrow as he is today. It's fine. But I have got a love in my heart which makes allowance for his faults because of my love.

That's all. Nothing to do with him. Love is entirely with me.

So it says I must make allowance for his faults because of my love. And like it says about leaders in Hebrews in chapter 5, it applies to all of us. It says a leader in Hebrews 5.2 must deal gently with ignorant and misguided people because the leader himself is beset with weakness.

I like that word, beset with weakness. Not that I've got one or two weaknesses. I mean, I think all of us will admit that we've got a hundred weaknesses.

Beset means wherever I turn there are weaknesses. Beset. The leader is beset with weakness and therefore I deal gently with that person who's ignorant.

And sometimes he's misguided. He was brought up in a religious system which is not Christian. So he didn't understand these things from childhood that we understand.

Or he was brought up in some other denomination that did not teach things so strictly as we have taught here from the beginning. So bear with that person. He's got some crazy ideas.

That's what he was taught. So he's misguided. There are people around us who are ignorant.

There are people around us who are misguided. What shall we do with them? We got to be patient because it may take time for them to get over their wrong guidance. Some of them are so stuck in their mind that they think they're absolutely right.

But when they're defeated by sin that shows them they're wrong. But that doesn't seem to wake up most people. We are misguided.

We must be patient. And the others are just plain ignorant. They haven't read the Bible.

They've got a Bible with them for 25 years but they haven't read it carefully. So there are ignorant and misguided. So we must deal gently with them.

And if God has been merciful to us, has given us light on so many areas in our life, well praise the Lord for that. It means we must be more gentle with other people and look upon them as ignorant and misguided. For example, you know in our church we, I'll give you one example.

We believe the sisters must wail their heads. But if I see a sister sitting here without wailing the head, you know what I say to myself? She's ignorant, not rebellious. Now a person who's not gentle says, look at that stubborn sister, won't wail her head.

No, no, no, no, no, no. She does not. She hasn't read that scripture.

She's ignorant. She was brought up in some western church where they don't practice these things. Forget it.

And if I see her like that for the next one year, every Sunday, ignorant. Always say ignorant, misguided. Don't say stubborn, rebellious.

Hang on, hang on. That is gentleness. Allow for the possibility that that person is doing something to ignorance or being misguided.

Don't judge them. We have convictions on certain areas to be merciful to others. And we break bread, we break bread on the fact that we are united through the death of Christ.

Not with everyone who calls himself a Christian. My own conviction, you don't have to agree with me. 95% of people who call themselves Christians are not Christians.

That's my firm conviction because I've seen enough of them. And lots of people who say they are born again are not born again. And 95% of people who say they are filled with the Holy Spirit are not filled with the Holy Spirit.

95% of people who say they speak in tongues, it is fake. Because I know what is genuine, what is fake. So they're misguided.

I don't judge them and look down on them. I say they're misguided. Somebody told them to babble something and call it tongues and the guy is doing it.

I know it's not genuine because I know what genuine is. And if you have experienced genuine speaking in tongues, you don't look down on somebody. But there are people like that, ignorant, misguided in other ways.

I just mentioned one or two examples. But you see somebody ignorant, misguided, be patient with them. Remember that you may have some other weakness, some other area.

It's like that. And so there's a beautiful verse in 1 Peter chapter 5 in again the Living Bible. I want to read this to you.

1 Peter 5, sorry, 1 Peter 3, you know after it speaks about husbands and wives, how they should be with each other. And then he speaks to the whole church in verse 8. And now this word, this final word to all of you. You, all of you in the church should be like one big happy family.

Great word. 1 Peter 3, 8 in the Living Bible. You should be like one big happy family, full of sympathy towards each other, full of sympathy towards each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.

Great. Loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds, never repaying evil for evil. Sometimes people have a word of saying something to sting you.

Ignore it. Say something kind. The Bible says in Proverbs, I think it's chapter 15 verse 1, which says a gentle answer turns away anger.

I learned something from that. When somebody's angry with me, to keep quiet is easy. But when I keep quiet, I may be a bit proud, looking down on him.

Oh, you are a guy who gets angry. I don't get angry. But when I give a gentle answer, that's even more difficult than keeping quiet.

Try it. What everybody does, get angry with the person who gets angry. You may be a little better than that and you keep quiet.

But come to the highest level, a gentle answer that shows that God has worked in you. So loving one another with tender hearts, humble minds, never repay evil for evil. Don't snap back at those who say unkind things about you.

Snapping back is immediately replying with some rude words that you've stored up in your mind since a long time or which you've practiced. No. Instead, pray for God's help for them.

Verse 9, because God wants us to be kind to others. And if we are like that, God will bless us for it. And if you want a happy good life, verse 10, keep control of your tongue.

Guard your lips from telling lies. If you want a happy good life this year, keep your tongue from any type of evil. Keep control of your tongue and guard your lips from telling lies.

Always turn away from evil and do good. You may not be able to live at peace with everyone, but try, verse 11, to live in peace. And I like this translation.

Try to live in peace, even if you have to run after it to catch it and hold it. Isn't that a... I always, when I read that verse, I always think of a picture of bus, the last bus going to my home, late at night. And I'm a little behind and they close.

The buses started moving. I run after it. In western countries, the doors are closed.

You can't get into the bus. Thank God in India, the buses remain, the doors are open. We can run after it and get into it, even when it started moving.

I've done that many times in my younger days. So run after it to try and catch it and hold it. Peace.

So think of peace like a bus with somebody. You try it, but it's moving off. Run after it.

If the guy says, I don't want it, let it go. But we must try our best, because the Lord is watching his children. Do you know that? The Lord is watching us right now.

He's here in our midst. He's watching us, heart attitudes, listening to their prayers. But here is a strong word, but the Lord's face is hard against those who do evil.

The Lord's face is hard against anyone who's got evil in his heart and mind. Usually no one will hurt you, verse 13, if you want to do good. But even if people do hurt you, verse 14, you must be envied.

You're blessed because God will reward you for it. And quietly trust yourself to Christ, verse 15. What beautiful words.

I like the Living Bible paraphrase, because the man who wrote it is a very godly, humble man. I met him, and the first impression I had of Ken Taylor was such a humble, God-fearing man, even though he was world famous, who had written, paraphrased a Bible with 40 million copies that blessed people all over the world. And yet such a gracious, humble man as if he was just a nobody.

So what a beautiful paraphrase that is. As we break bread, dear brothers and sisters, let's keep those words we just heard in mind. So let's bow our heads and give thanks for the bread.

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