

Fellowship with Christ in His Death

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the significance of partaking in the breaking of bread as a symbol of fellowship with Christ's sacrifice, not as a mere ritual. It highlights the importance of daily dying to self to follow Jesus, contrasting it with the once-for-all experience of being born again. The message stresses the need for genuine desire and self-examination when participating in the Lord's table, proclaiming Jesus' death through one's life.

Scripture: Luke 22:14, 1 Corinthians 11:26, 2 Corinthians 8:12, Acts 20:7, Matthew 16:24, Romans 6:6, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 3:10, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Fellowship with Christ", "Self-Examination in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

Let's turn to Luke's gospel chapter 22. Many times when I've come to the Lord's table I've thought of this verse when Jesus spoke the very first time he instituted the table. Luke 22 14.

When the hour had come he sat at the table. This is one verse which I often use to say we must come in time for the meetings. Jesus is always on time.

When the hour had come he was there. That's not my point right now. And he said to them, this is what I'm trying to stress, I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

And you know that was the Lord's table there. It wasn't a lamb. They were not eating a lamb there.

They were breaking bread and drinking the cup. But this thing, I have earnestly desired to have this fellowship with you in this bread which is a symbol of my body being broken. And I was thinking of how eager am I to be with him at this table.

Is it just a ritual? First Sunday of the month, of course, we had to break bread. Has it become a ritual? I'll tell you my testimony. For many, many years after I was born again, breaking of bread was a ritual for me.

I knew I was born again and break bread. And the assemblies I used to go, they used to break bread every week. And the worst they had for it was Acts 20 verse 7, the disciples broke bread on the first day of the week.

Now in our church in Bangalore, we don't break bread on the first day of the week because we don't get our doctrines from the historical sections of scripture. Acts of the Apostles is history. Tells us what the apostles did.

We get our doctrines from the teaching sections of scripture, the epistles, or what Jesus taught. So many doctrines have come out of the Acts of the Apostles which have confused people. Everybody must speak in tongues.

The same chapter says everybody must sell all that they have and give to the poor. They don't preach that because that's inconvenient. Or we must break bread on the first day of the week.

It's all history. Never get your doctrine from history. Jesus healed everybody.

See the amount of confusion there is in Christendom today by people who believe that. That's history, not a doctrine. If you want doctrine, go to the teaching sections of scripture, the epistles, and the teaching of Jesus, not the historical section.

So we break bread, like Jesus said, as often as you do it, do it in remembrance of me. We do it like that. Whenever we do it, we do it in remembrance of him.

And we say, as earnestly as you desire, Lord, to fellowship with me in this broken body. What does that broken body symbolize? He's giving his body on the cross for me. This is my body, verse 19, given for you.

And when you eat it, listen to verse 19, do it in remembrance of me. Do it in remembrance of what I did for you with my body. I say, Lord, for so many years I never took part in the breaking of bread, remembering how you gave your body for me.

I just took it so casually. But that all changed some years ago when I understood that fellowship, that this was a fellowship in the dying of Christ. I wasn't admiring the bread when it came to me.

I was partaking of it. Many people admire the cross. Oh, how much he loved me, how much he sacrificed for me.

You only do that, then you must only admire the bread. Oh, what wonderful bread. Here, brother, I won't touch it.

That's not what we are doing. We are partaking of it. Lord, I don't want to just admire that you died for me on the cross.

I want to partake of that dying in my own life every day. Like Paul said, always bearing in my body the dying of Jesus, which means every single day of my life I want to die to self, otherwise I cannot follow Jesus. Do you know that you cannot follow Jesus if you don't die to self? And that's not a once-for-all experience like being born again.

To be born is a once-for-all experience. You're not born every day, and you're not born again every day. But following Jesus is a daily thing, every day.

Pick up your cross every day, he said, and follow me. In the breaking of bread, I'm saying, Lord, that's what I want to do. Many people think when I break bread, I'm testifying I was born again so many years ago.

No. That you testify in baptism once. You don't get baptized every day.

So you testify to that once-for-all experience of being born again by being baptized once, not 25 times. But when you break bread, you're not saying I was born again 25 years ago, but that's what many people teach. Were you born again? Okay, break bread.

No, sir. Are you willing to take up the cross every day? Come and take break bread. If you're not, please don't take part.

Like we tell people, if you're not born again, don't get baptized. If you don't want to take up the cross, if you don't want to enter into the dying of Jesus every day, please, when the bread comes, pass it on. I thank God that God opened my eyes to understand that.

1 Corinthians 11, verse 26. 1 Corinthians 11, 26. As often as you eat the bread, drink the cup.

You can break bread every day if you like. Nothing wrong. You can break bread once a week, once a month, once in three months, depending on the type of people who are with.

You're proclaiming the Lord's death, not verbally. By your life, you're proclaiming Jesus died and I died with him until the day he comes again. Now, if you don't want to proclaim the Lord's death in your life, and you eat this bread and drink the cup, you're drinking it in an unworthy manner, then you are as guilty as those who crucified Christ.

I never realized that, that I can break bread in a wrong way and become as guilty as the people who nailed Jesus to the cross. That's what it says there. And therefore, a man must examine himself, not the others.

There's no need to look around and say, is he taking up the cross? I'm not interested. I don't even know whether he's taking up the cross, because I'm not watching him every day. The only person, I don't even know whether my wife is taking up the cross every day, or my children.

I know about myself, whether I have a desire to take. I'm not talking about perfection. The Lord always looks at desire.

If you have a desire, it is accepted. I love that verse. If you have a desire, it is accepted.

Lord, I have a desire to take up the cross every day. And therefore, break bread. Let me emphasize, you may slip up, but you have the desire.

I'll tell you where that verse is. 2 Corinthians chapter 8, verse 12. The readiness is there.

It's accepted according to what a person has, not what he doesn't have. Paraphrase of that would be, if the desire is there, God accepts it as if done. He who calls a seed a tree.

Not a tree, but the tree is in that seed. He who could call Abraham father of nations when he was one son. Seed was there.

That's what I mean. If you have a desire, it's like a seed. Lord, I want to take up the cross every day.

It'll grow into reality. That's what we testify to as we take this bread. Let's take it reverently, the bread and the cup.

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