

God Dwells With Broken Contrite People

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the significance of the Lord's table, reflecting on Jesus' earnest desire to fellowship with his disciples, particularly focusing on the humility and contrite spirit that God values. It highlights the importance of seeing Jesus in every page of scripture, being broken and humble like a child, and valuing simplicity and genuine brokenness in the church community.

Scripture: Luke 22:14, Isaiah 57:15, Matthew 11:25, 1 Corinthians 1:26, Isaiah 66:2, 2 Corinthians 3:18

Topics: "Fellowship at the Lord's Table", "Humility and Brokenness in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

When we come to the Lord's table, I am reminded today of the first time when Jesus met with his disciples and instituted this table from Luke's gospel chapter 22 and see something beyond the symbolism of the bread and the cup to see the heart of Jesus as he broke bread with them. And that's what we see here in Luke 22 in verse, he was there at the table with them in verse 14. The first word he said to them before he broke bread was, I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you.

It started out as a Passover and finally became the Lord's table. I have earnestly desired. That's what I was thinking of that Jesus could have such an earnest desire to meet with people who were not great in the world.

They were, you know what, those apostles, they were described by the chief priests and all in Acts 4.13 as uneducated, untrained, unlearned men. They knew them well. Today, a lot of people in Bible school study their books and letters as if they were great scholars.

They were not scholars. They were uneducated, untrained, unlearned men. And Jesus longed for fellowship with them.

See, this is a day when in Christendom, education is valued so much in so many places. The great men of God that are known in the world are those who are great scholars, esteemed, who've gone through Bible

schools and got degrees after their name. These guys had nothing.

We need to ask ourselves whether Jesus can say that about you and me. I earnestly desired to have this, to break this bread with you. We read in Luke 24 that after his resurrection, after the resurrection of Jesus, he met with very few people.

And most of his meetings were very brief. We read that he appeared in the upper room and the disciples were meeting after Mary Magdalene had told him that he had been risen. And he appeared and just, he ate a piece of fish and then disappeared again.

And he appeared to James, it says, and he appeared to Peter, and he appeared to 500 people, we read in 1 Corinthians 15. They were all very brief meetings. But there were two people with whom after his resurrection, he met for three hours.

And that you read in Luke 24. You read that on that, they were going that very day to two people. This is on the day of resurrection, remember, the very first day.

We read in Acts Luke 24, 12, that Peter had just gone in and saw the linen wrappings, and he went away to his home. But that very day, it says in verse 13, two people were walking to Emmaus, which is seven miles from Jerusalem. That's why I say, when Jesus walked to them, it must have been a leisurely walk for seven miles takes about three hours.

They were not running. And Jesus spent three hours with them. As far as I know, that was the longest that he spent with anybody after the resurrection.

Why did he select them? You know, all are not the same in closeness to the Lord. The Lord loves everybody. But even when Jesus in his before he went to the cross, there were different circles of people.

One was the big circle of the multitudes he spoke to. Then there was a smaller circle of 70 disciples. You read in Luke 10 verse 1, who were disciples and whom he even sent out for ministry.

But then there was another circle inside that of 12 disciples, another inner circle of 11, because one was a crook. And then inside that was a circle of three. Jesus had these concentric circles.

And that innermost circle where people are very intimate with him. And also after the resurrection, he appeared to different people, but he appeared to these two for three hours. And as far as we know, after his resurrection, these are the only people with whom he broke bread.

He never had the Lord's table with anybody else. But he had it with these two. There must have been something special about that.

There's no partiality with God. And Jesus on the day of his resurrection, goes to walk with these people. He went among them and initiated a conversation and they didn't even know who he was.

And he walked with them and it says here, all that time, you know what he was speaking about? He was speaking about scripture. He started in Genesis and went all the way to Malachi. You read in Luke 24, 27, beginning with Moses, that is Genesis.

And all the prophets, all the prophets means includes Malachi. So all the 39 books of the Old Testament, he opened up to them. What a fantastic three-hour Bible study that must have been.

Explained. What did he explain? Not a doctrine. I don't believe the Lord is so keen on teaching us doctrine.

So many people who study doctrine are such legalists. I'm sick and tired of arguing doctrine with people. He talked about himself.

He said, do you see me here? You see me in Genesis, the seed of the woman that will crush the serpent. You see me there in the serpent lifted up in the wilderness. You see me in the smitten rock.

It was all about Jesus. God has given us the Bible, not to get a doctrine, but to see Jesus. It says in 2 Corinthians 3, 18, we behold as in a mirror, the mirror is God's word, the glory of the Lord.

Many people, when they read the scriptures, they get clever thoughts, nice doctrines, but there are few who see Jesus. When Jesus walks with us, he will open up any page of the Bible like he did here, and he'll show you himself. This has been my own longing for many, many years.

Lord, it doesn't matter to me if I don't understand all about the tribulation and details about Christ's coming and so many even details about New Testament church, if I'm not 100% clear about it, that's fine. We try our best to follow God's word, but more than anything else, I want to see you in the scriptures. I hope all of you will have that passion when you read the scriptures, to see Jesus, because it's only as we see him that we can be like him.

When we see his glory, we can be conformed to that image. And then it says they came near the village and see this, verse 28, Luke 24, 28, he acted as though he would go further. Is it right to act to pretend something? Is it right for a Christian to pretend something? To pretend that he wants to do something which he doesn't want to do? Jesus did it after his resurrection.

If the intention is good, it's okay. In other words, he wanted to see whether these people were really keen on, they didn't know it was Jesus. He was just another man, but a man who seemed to know the scriptures so well, and they'd go so excited.

In fact, they say here that, verse 32, our hearts were burning within us when he spoke to us, explaining the scriptures to us. That is the mark of when Jesus explains the scripture to us, our hearts burn within us. When you read the Bible, and if Jesus is speaking to you through the Bible, your hearts will burn.

If your heart doesn't burn, and you're just, your mind is instructed with some clever thought, okay, maybe the Lord's speaking, I don't know. But when the Lord is speaking, the hearts burn. It's not only my heart that burns.

I've many times, I've prayed it for years. I said, Lord, I want to speak like that. When I speak from scripture, I want people's hearts to burn.

Then I know that you are there, that you're speaking through me. Otherwise, I'm just a college lecturer explaining the Bible. I don't want to be that.

Their hearts burned as he explained. They saw Jesus in every page. They were so excited.

They didn't know it was Jesus. They said, boy, we're so blessed by this. We want to have this man with us.

He wanted to know whether they really wanted to see more of Jesus. They didn't know it was Jesus, remember? But were they so excited that they could see the glory of Jesus in each page of scripture that

they said, boy, we want to see more. Three hours is not enough.

That's a passion. Very few people will sit through a three-hour Bible study, mostly because most Bible studies are so boring and heavy. But these guys wanted to see more of Jesus.

There was no end to it. Think of all these people who say the Bible is boring. I don't get much out of it.

And so I don't read it. I don't study it. I don't know if any of you are like that.

Well, no wonder the Lord doesn't draw near to you. But if you have a passion to know Jesus and to love him and to see him in every page, I tell you, in every page of scripture, he'll show you something of himself. I found even in the genealogies in 1 Chronicles, which I think are useless, I've seen Jesus there.

Yeah. And God will show you, because it's inspired scripture. And so he tested them.

That's why he acted. If your intention is good, it's perfectly all right to act. If your intention is for the glory of God, it's perfectly all right to act.

Sometimes you have to act so that you don't embarrass people. Sometimes you have to act in order to find out if the person is really serious. And he said, no, I'm going away.

And they urged him, I can imagine the conversation. Please, they don't know he's the Lord. Brother, please stay with us.

No, no, no, I have to go. No, no, no. We've been so blessed by your explaining Jesus to us.

Please stay with us. And he stayed. See, I have a feeling that this was a married couple.

When it says two disciples, you don't have to automatically assume they were two men. Men are so proud that whenever you read two disciples, you think it must be two men. No.

I personally feel it was a man and a woman. And please note that when it says in the NASB in verse 25, oh, foolish men, that's not how it is. And you read any other translation, it says foolish ones.

It's not men. And why do I say that? Because they were living in one house. And they invited Jesus for a meal there.

They invited this man, come and stay with us because it's nearly evening. And then when he went inside, they had a meal there. And then he took the bread and broke it.

And then their eyes were opened. And they recognized him when he vanished. So when we break bread, it's good to pray that eyes will be opened to see what type of person is the Lord looking for.

We already heard that. The Lord is looking for those who have a broken and a contrite spirit. And those are the ones who will be most blessed in the breaking of bread because the Lord is looking for that.

What did we see in Isaiah 66? He's talking about the house, the church that we want to build for the Lord. What are you going to build the church with? What type of material? The material are people, Isaiah 66, verse 2, who are humble and contrite of spirit. That's the only type of bricks with which the Lord wants to build his house.

And when we come to the Lord's table, let's ask ourselves whether we are like that. Earlier on in Isaiah 57, we read that God dwells in two places, only two places. Isaiah 57 and verse 15, thus says the high and exalted one who lives forever, whose name is holy.

I dwell in two places. One in the high and holy place, that's in heaven, the third heaven. But then the second place is the contrite and lowly of spirit to revive the spirit of the lowly, to revive the heart of the contrite.

Let me show you a couple of other passages that teach that. Matthew 11, 25, these are the people with whom the Lord dwells, the humble and the contrite and the broken. Jesus said, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, Matthew 11, 25, that you've hidden these amazing truths from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to babes.

The main thing Jesus said about a baby was humility. Unless you humble yourself like this little child, you cannot enter God's kingdom. So we can say that God's word is revealed to the humble and the contrite, not to the clever and intelligent.

That's a mistake that has been made in Christendom. You go to a Bible school and get a PhD, and you think you know the scriptures. God doesn't reveal it to the wise and intelligent.

I want to say to all of you who are listening to me, the cleverer you are in the eyes of the world, the less likely you can get revelation. The more intelligent you are in relation to this world, the less likely you are to get revelation from God. You can get clever thoughts, but to get revelation from God that changes your life and makes you more Christlike, you have to be broken and contrite.

You've got to be humble like a little child. And if unfortunately you have the handicap of being intelligent and clever, okay, you can humble yourself too. It's not only foolish people who can humble themselves, clever people can humble themselves too.

Paul was one of the cleverest people on earth, I believe. He would have been a first-class businessman or a first-class computer scientist if he were living today, but he humbled himself so much he became the greatest apostle. So that's not a handicap, unless you're proud of it.

But if you throw all that human ability and knowledge into the trash can and say, Lord, give me a heart like a little child, the Lord will draw near to you like he drew near to those disciples. And as you read the scriptures, he'll show you Jesus in every page. And he'll earnestly desire to have fellowship with you.

Does the Lord earnestly desire? One of the books in the Old Testament where I see that earnest desire of the Lord is in Song of Solomon. It's one of my favorite books because it speaks of the bride and the bridegroom. I believe it's referring to Christ and this church and believers, Christ and believers.

And you see the earnest desire. You've seen many places in Song of Solomon, the bridegroom earnestly desiring to fellowship with the bride. That same language that we read in the Lord's Table in Luke 22, I've earnestly desired to fellowship with you.

Please remember that when we come to the Lord's Table today. It's not just a ritual. It's not just, oh, we remember he died on the cross.

It's the Lord himself who is earnestly desiring. Those are the words he used at the first breaking of bread. And in Song of Solomon, I read, whom is he drawn to? It's not one of those when the world considers some misuniverse or something like that.

No. Look at this person whom the bride... See what the bride says. Song of Solomon chapter one, I am black, but in Jesus' eyes, I'm lovely.

Praise the Lord. God does not see as man sees. I praise the Lord for that.

Man looks on the outward appearance and sees the color of skin and beauty and all that. God looks at the heart. Is it a broken and a contrite heart? I'm black.

Song of Solomon one verse five, but in Jesus' eyes, I'm lovely. Because she had a broken and a contrite spirit. Not just because she's black.

No. But because she's a broken and a contrite spirit. That's the thing.

I'm not saying the Lord deliberately chooses foolish and unlearned people. No. Because that would be partial.

He cares for the humble and the contrite. And I remember, you know, when I came out to serve the Lord for my job and I said, Lord, I don't know where you're going to send me. But I see in India that... I see the great preachers always go to the big cities where there are learned people, educated people, rich people who can give them a lot of money.

But I never hear these big famous preachers going into the poor villages of India to have any crusades or meetings over there. So I said, Lord, please send me to the villages. Years before CFC started.

And the Lord took me at my word and gave me a wife who had the same desire, who went to work among lepers, poor people. That's one reason I married her. And that's where the Lord sent us.

And today, when I look at all the CFC churches in India and the believers in them, more than 70 to 80 percent of our believers are among the poor, not so educated. I praise God for that. It says in 1 Corinthians in chapter 1 and verse 26, 1 Corinthians 1 26.

Consider your calling, brothers. There are not many wise according to the flesh in your church, not many mighty. There are a few, not many noble.

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong. The base things of the world and the despised God has chosen the things that are nothing in the world's eyes so that he might bring to nothing the things that are so that no man can boast before God.

There's a hidden inward boasting that rich and clever people have. They don't see it themselves. I can speak to a believer.

I mean, because I've been serving the Lord now for more than 50 years, I can now, I have enough experience now that if I speak to a person for five minutes, I can find out if he's a proud, arrogant believer or a humble, broken person. And I'm almost never mistaken. And I'm sorry to say there are proud, unbroken people in every CFC church, including NCCF.

Everyone, there's something you're missing out because you're not willing to be like a little child. You're not willing to be broken and humble before God. God has deliberately chosen to reveal his truths to those who are the spirit of obey.

He dwells in the high and holy place and with the humble, broken, contrite spirit, because that's the very opposite of what made Lucifer into the devil, because that is the spirit with which Jesus came. He came as a washer of feet. So that's the spirit with which we must come to the breaking of bread.

Lord, I want to see your glory. I want my eyes to be opened to see what this bread being broken means. I want to be broken like this.

I want my heart to be like this, that's easily broken, that doesn't think I'm somebody. You know, I told you about it's been a blessing to us to have people like that in our own church who were ordinary people. And I'm glad that my children grew up mingling, not just with clever, intelligent people, but with very simple people as well, that they made no difference between one or the other.

And I believe that's affected their spirit. My children, I would bless them even till today. And I feel sorry for a church that does not have such people, that does not value such people.

And I would ask, why is it such people are not valued? You ask yourself in your church, you, especially those who are wise and intelligent, whom do you go and seek fellowship with? Ask yourself, you don't have to answer to me. Look around and see some of those who are not so smart and clever as you are. Do you seek fellowship with them? Do you value them? Or do you condescendingly say, okay, I'll have some fellowship with them to show how humble you are? Garbage.

Oh, how much we need the spirit of Christ to have genuine brokenness, to recognize that in God's eyes, I'm a zero. It's one of the greatest revelations that we need to see that in God's eyes, you are a zero. And those are the people who can appreciate the breaking of bread the most.

When people are unthankful or despise us, it's a great opportunity to be broken. I want to read a little hymn. I think it was written by Watchman Lee, but it's been a hymn that's really blessed me.

Lord, let me love when people are unthankful. Let me serve thee and seek only thine own praise. And even if I'm unknown, dear Lord, help me be faithful.

Let me suffer in the secret place without anyone knowing about it. Let me break bread to meet the needs of others. And let me pour out wine to quench the other's thirst.

This is the opposite of the world. In the world, we are always trying to make people feel, I'm needy. Will you come and help me? I'm in financial need.

Will you give me some financial help? There are so many subtle ways in which people hint about that and ask for that. That's the spirit of the world. But here it says, Lord, I want to think of the needs of others.

Let me break bread to meet the needs of others and pour out wine to quench the other's thirst. Help me to make life easier for my brothers, to give up everything and put the others first. That's the spirit in which we are to break bread.

Lord, I don't seek man's sympathy or pity. The honor of this world, I do not need. I'll gladly bear my loads myself and share them only with thee.

And in every trial, I shall never retreat. Because when you walked alone in this dark world, my Lord, it was thus you spent your days without protest, patiently bearing suffering and discomfort so that you might bring to the others rest. Lord, I don't know the number of my days here, but this I know, the way I must press on.

So help me to be perfect, O my Savior, ever rejoicing even when I'm treated wrong. The blood of my self-life I to thee now offer. The crown of life eternal my reward.

And so forsaking all that is gain in the eyes of the earth, forsaking it all, I'll choose to suffer. I'll walk the way of sacrifice, O Lord. It's easy to sing it, put a nice tune to it and we can sing and shake our heads, but I pray that we'll be gripped by it.

You know, some of these hymns, it's very good sometimes to take them and read them slowly alone. And see whether we mean them. Then the next time we sing it, it'll be much more meaningful.

So let's come with broken and contrite hearts and say, Lord, I want you to dwell with me. I'm black, but I know I'm precious in your eyes. I know you value me even if earthly people don't.

And I always in my life want to be a broken, contrite person before you. And I testify to that today in the breaking of bread. Amen.

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