

# Recognizing Jesus While Breaking Bread

by Zac Poonen

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*The breaking of bread can be a meaningful way to see Jesus, but it requires a different spirit and a hunger for Him.*

**Duration:** 24:54

**Scripture:** Psalm 16:11, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 5:8, Luke 24:30-31, John 20:29, Acts 2:38, Acts 2:42

**Topics:** "Spiritual Communion", "Repentance"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the significance of the breaking of bread as seen in Acts chapter 2, highlighting the importance of repentance, baptism, devotion to God's word, fellowship, and prayer. It delves into the deeper meaning behind rituals like baptism and breaking of bread, stressing the need for genuine repentance and a hunger to see Jesus in spiritual communion. The message encourages a heartfelt pursuit of Christ's presence and a pure heart to truly encounter Him during the breaking of bread.

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## Transcript

You know, we may wonder how important is the breaking of bread. I want you to turn with me to Acts chapter 2. After the day of Pentecost, on the day of Pentecost rather, when people heard the word of God, it says they were convicted and said, what shall we do? And Peter told them, repent, verse 38, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. For the forgiveness of sins, you'll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And then, he didn't stop there. Verse 40, with many other words, he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, be saved, let me paraphrase it, from this crooked world. He kept on exhorting them, now you're baptized, be saved from this crooked world, from this perverse generation that's going in another direction.

Then those who received the word were baptized. And then, what did they do after that? Every day, they were continually devoting themselves, verse 42, to the apostles' teaching, which is preaching of God's word, which we had just now, to fellowship. Fellowship means, you know, coming together and sharing things about the Lord, and how the Lord's been leading us and speaking to us.

Not gossip, that's not fellowship. That's the fellowship of darkness. Fellowship, and to the breaking of bread.

They did that so regularly, because they remembered the death of Jesus, and to prayer. That means, when they came together, they prayed together. And I remember, in the early days, we used to have a lot more times of prayer.

And even young brothers would sometimes, not organized, but unorganized. Because people would come together, and then, after they had some time of fellowship, before they parted, even the young people would say, let's spend a little time talking to Jesus now. We have spoken to each other for a half an hour, before we part, let's all spend a little time talking to Jesus.

Isn't that a good thing to do? That's prayer, really. And, breaking of bread was also an important part of that, and again, it says a second time in verse 46, day by day, they continued with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread. It's quite amazing.

Breaking of bread is mentioned twice in Acts chapter 2, after the day of Pentecost. But, like everything else, it has become a ritual to most Christians. They think, if I take part in it, I'll get some special blessing.

It's not true. It's like baptism. Baptism is a very important testimony but you can take part in it in a meaningless way.

You know, you can go into the water and come out and nothing happens. There are many people that we have baptized, particularly in the early days when we started CFC. I don't know where they are today.

I wouldn't be surprised if some of them are in hell. Maybe already. Because, first of all, I believe that a person can accept the Lord and backslide and go lose his salvation.

Number one. And secondly, because I believe that some people haven't really repented of their sin. It says, repent and be baptized.

How can we determine whether somebody has repented? We read in Acts chapter 8 that there was a magician called Simon. And when Philip preached the gospel, he apparently repented. He was a Jewish person.

He apparently repented and Philip baptized him. But a little later, Peter and John came along and had more discernment. And they said, hey, you're not born again.

You're in the bondage of iniquity. And you will perish. So, even in the days of the apostles, they made mistakes in baptizing people.

Because, we don't know people's hearts. And I believe with all my heart that a lot of people who are baptized as adults are not born again. They went through the ritual and they never turned from sin.

They did not repent and get baptized. They just said, Lord Jesus, come into my heart and got baptized. But, baptism was a symbol that here I am, Lord.

I have lived for myself all my life. But that old man that lived for himself is now dead. And I'm submitting to that death.

I'm publicly testifying that my old man is dead. When this brother puts me into the water, I'm symbolically saying that man is finished. And when I come out of the water, I submit to go down.

I submit to the man when he lifts me up. Picture of God lifting me up and giving me a new life, a resurrected life. And I come out of the water saying, this is the way I want to live.

But do you think everybody understands that? I know a lot of young people here in the past who got baptized because people of their same age were also getting baptized at that time. Well, it's called peer pressure. Oh, my friend is getting baptized, I better get baptized too.

Or, parental pressure. Come on, get baptized. Otherwise, my name will get bad that I didn't bring you up properly.

All these crazy reasons why people get baptized. But baptism is a real testimony when it's done meaningfully. I know in my life, I was baptized one and a half years after I was converted.

I took time to think about it, understand it from Scripture. The result was, when I did get baptized at the age of 21, it was a radical change in my life. The same way with breaking a bread.

Breaking a bread can be a ritual for you. Or, it can be very meaningful. You read of one, I think they were a married couple, in Luke 24.

You know, for many years I used to think when it says in Luke 24, 13 that two people were going to Emmaus. And it only says they were disciples. And most men are arrogant to think that disciples means it must be men.

Right? When you read that, what do you think? You think of two men. I used to think like that. Because we men are a bit arrogant even when we read Scripture.

Or, feminists will say, no, they were two women. I now believe they were a husband and a wife. Walking to Emmaus, and I'll tell you why.

Because when you get to Emmaus, they're living in the same house. That's why I say they're a husband and wife. So, it was very rare in those days for two men to live together in one house.

If they were unmarried, like in India, they'd stay with their parents until they get married. That's how it was in Israel. When they get married, they move to their own house.

So it says two of them were going to Emmaus. I used to have a picture of two men walking with Jesus. Now I have a picture of a husband and wife walking with Jesus in my home.

That's what I believe. But when they went, they had such a love for Jesus. That's what I see here, first of all.

That's what I want you to see. They were so sorrowful because of all the things they thought that they were... He says, what are you talking about? And Jesus came. They didn't know it was Jesus.

What are these words you're exchanging? Verse 17, Luke 24, 17. And their mind was taken up with the cross. One of them, named Cleopas, said, Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem? You don't know what all is happening here? Things about Jesus was a prophet.

How he died and crucified. We thought, we were hoped, verse 23, that he would redeem Israel. Their mind is still not clear.

They think it's related to Israel, Israel, Israel. It's not. Even later on, the disciples said, Lord, now you're risen, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel? And they said, this is three days now, and we heard today that some women said his body has disappeared.

They saw some angels. And they did not see him. And Jesus said to them, O foolish men, I love Jesus for one reason.

He rebukes so strongly. Better is open rebuke than secret love, it says. Listen to the rebukes of a wise man and not to the flattering song of foolish people.

The flatteries of foolish people will not help you. How Jesus loved these people to turn around and say, you foolish men. You foolish people.

Thick-headed, slow-hearted. To all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary for Christ to suffer and to enter into his glory? I still believe it was a husband and wife when he was speaking to them as men in the generic sense of foolish people.

And beginning with Moses and the prophets, this is the one place where we read of a long Bible study that Jesus took starting from Genesis ending in Malachi. He explained to them the things concerning himself in all the scriptures. He took a Bible study and it took 7 miles we read in verse 13.

7 miles means about 11, more than 11 kilometers and that would have taken him maybe 2-3 hours. Imagine walking with Jesus and getting a Bible study for 3 hours from Genesis to Malachi. And in every scripture he was saying, this refers to Jesus, this refers to the Messiah, the Messiah, Messiah.

And later on when they talked about it they said, our hearts, verse 32, were burning when he was speaking to us. That's a wonderful way to have Jesus explain the scriptures to us. We talked earlier about Jesus speaking and our hearts will burn if it is Jesus speaking to us.

That's one way I know that Jesus is speaking. Our hearts burn within us. If I read the Bible and I'm not as sleepy and drowsy, you can be pretty sure Jesus is not speaking at all.

I've been to a lot of meetings where I felt, well, the Lord never spoke to me there. I mean, they preached from the Bible but my heart didn't burn within me. I got some information.

He might as well have got up there and said 2 plus 2 is 4 and 3 plus 3 is 6 and 4 plus 4 is 8 information. There's a lot of difference when Jesus speaks opening the scriptures. Whenever you read the scriptures, my brothers and sisters, long that your heart will burn as Jesus opens the scriptures.

Imagine him opening what books like Leviticus, which a lot of people think are boring, and showing them Jesus in Leviticus or books like Habakkuk and Nahum which most people don't even read and showing him Jesus in it. Wow! That's really something to see Jesus in Obadiah and Zephaniah. Wonderful! That verse teaches me that I can find Jesus in all the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation.

I've got to get to Jesus. He'll explain it to me. He'll show me Jesus.

And then, when they came to the village, Jesus acted as though he were going further. That means he pretended. Now the question is, is it right to pretend? Now there's a wrong type of pretending where we're bluffing people.

That's sinful. But there's a good type of pretending when you come late to a house and it's past dinner time and you pretend as if you've already had dinner because you don't want to trouble them. That's a good type of pretending.

I would recommend that to everybody. Don't act as if you're hungry. That's a good type of acting also.

And you don't know whether it's convenient for them to have you in the house. You pretend as if I'm in a hurry to go. That's exactly what Jesus did.

There's no sin there. He did it after his resurrection. And they urged him, which means when they said, no, no, no, you stay.

No, no, no, I've got to go. No, please stay. No, I have to go.

Great. I love that. And then they said, stay with us because it's towards the evening.

And he went in to stay. He wanted to stay with them to bless them. But he never stayed until he saw that they were really eager. See, this is the preparation which finally comes with the breaking of bread.

That's what I'm coming to. When you've opened your heart to the scriptures and heard the Lord speaking to you and you're eager at any cost to have the Lord with you, you want him. And he's eager too.

But he'll test you to see whether you desperately want him or if he says, well, let me go. Okay, Lord, see you later. If he sees that attitude, you'll miss him.

But if you're desperate like these people, he'll come to stay with you. And when he sat at the table, he took the bread and blessed it and broke it. And suddenly their eyes were opened.

And they recognized him. They saw Jesus clearly. And he vanished from their sight.

And immediately they got up, even though it was late. Verse 33 and walked all the three hours back to Jerusalem, to the middle of the night and told 11, said, Jesus has risen. They were saying that and they told them how we've seen him too.

And we recognized him, verse 35, in the breaking of the bread. That's a great verse. It's a prayer I prayed many times at the breaking of bread.

Lord, help me to see you in the breaking of bread. For many people it's a ritual. For these people it was not.

But for some time their eyes were blinded. And I think there are many people who come to the breaking of bread whose eyes are blinded. They just break the bread, drink the cup and go.

But there are some others who have a hunger for Jesus in the breaking of bread. Their eyes are opened. And they see something which 75% of the other people sitting around don't see.

That's really amazing. That they see him. Because the Lord, you know, it says their eyes were prevented, verse 16, from recognizing him.

That's one verse. Their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. And that can happen even today.

We break bread and our eyes are prevented from seeing Jesus. But then, later on we read, verse 31, their eyes were opened and they recognized him. And that happens to some people.

It doesn't happen to everybody. I'm absolutely convinced that the vast majority of Christians around the world who break bread on Sunday, their eyes are prevented from seeing him. And that is also true of many people who break bread in CFC.

Because I know there are some people, at least in the olden days, who used to definitely come when they were breaking a bread. But would not be so keen on other Sundays. What did they get out of it? Like the prasadam in the temple, a little bit of they fooled themselves that they pleased God.

I don't want to be in that category. I don't want my eyes to be blinded to Jesus when I'm breaking bread. I don't want to see just the bread and the cup.

I didn't come here to eat bread and drink a little grape juice. I came here to see Jesus. So it all depends on what the hunger of your heart is.

Like these people said, Lord, you're not going to go away. We want you. We want you.

We've been so blessed, our hearts burned as we heard you. And we want you to be with us. That's great.

Imagine if you're a couple like that, husband and wife are eager to have Jesus stay with you in your home. May it be like that in our home. May it be like that for many of us as we break bread and it will lead us to be more fervent witnesses for Christ thereafter.

Because it says here after that they were stirred. I mean, they were tired and sleepy when they reached Emmaus. And they said, it's getting toward evening.

You shouldn't be traveling now, they told Jesus. But when they broke bread and their eyes were opened, they all got revived and said, hey, we've got to go and tell other people about this. And that's what happens when we really see Jesus in our spirit.

Make that the longing of your heart that in your Christian life you will see Jesus in your spirit more. You know, the Lord told Thomas, because you saw me and put your finger into my hand and hand into my side, you believe. Blessed are those who have not seen me physically, yet have believed.

There's a greater blessing than physically seeing Jesus. Many people don't understand that. The Lord said that to Thomas.

So there's a seeing of Jesus in our spirit which is greater than seeing him physically. I mean, think if Jesus were physically here and we saw him, we'd say, wow! What's greater than that? I'll tell you what's greater than that according to John chapter 20, the last verses, seeing him in our spirit. According to Jesus himself, that's greater.

And it says that happened to these people when they broke bread because they came to it with a different spirit than the way most Christians come to the breaking of bread. So you can have break bread and the person next to you sees Jesus and you see nothing. It was like that, it says, when Paul and the Saul of Tarsus were going to Damascus Road with so many others, they all heard a voice.

They saw nothing. But they couldn't hear what Jesus spoke to Saul. The others couldn't hear.

They heard some thunder type of thing. It can be like that. Some noise.

You don't know what it is. But Saul heard Jesus clearly. I am Jesus.

And he saw him. So God reveals, it says, blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. And those who are not pure in heart will just hear a message.

Yeah, I remember the days when I used to just hear a message. And I read the Bible and yeah, I remembered the verse. But it's different now.

As your heart gets purer, you see Jesus more and more. Blessed are the pure in heart, they will see God. And that brings rest in our heart.

Because in his presence there is fullness of joy. So the breaking of bread can be very meaningful to one person and to the person sitting next to the person. Absolutely nothing.

A husband can be blessed and a wife get nothing. Or a wife can be blessed and a husband get nothing. It all depends on the hunger.

You shall seek me and find me, the Lord says when you search for me with all your heart. When I am number one in your longing and desire. When everything else is unimportant to you compared to me then you will find me.

Brothers and sisters, let us see him this morning. Let us pray.

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