

The Dual Meaning of the Breaking of Bread

by Zac Poonen

The breaking of bread has a dual meaning: it represents Jesus' body being broken for us, and it also represents our relationship with God and with fellow believers.

Duration: 16:13

Scripture: Psalm 139:16, John 6:38, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 10:16, 1 Corinthians 11:24, Ephesians 2:8-10, Hebrews 10:5-7, 1 John 3:16

Topics: "The Cross", "Sacrificial Love"

Description

This sermon delves into the profound meaning behind the breaking of bread and partaking of the cup, emphasizing the importance of understanding God's mind through His word for life transformation. It explores the significance of Jesus' body being broken for us, symbolizing His complete surrender to God's will, and challenges believers to follow His example by denying their own will and embracing God's plan for their lives. The sermon also highlights the vertical aspect of the cross, surrendering to God's will, and the horizontal aspect, emphasizing unity and sacrificial love among believers in the body of Christ.

Transcript

Like many other things in scripture, there is a lot more meaning to the breaking of bread and partaking of the cup than we have realized. God has given us his word so that we can know his mind and if you don't study it carefully you're going to be the loser. You won't know the mind of God as you can know it and as you should know it because the more we know the mind of God the more our life can be transformed.

It says by the renewing of our mind we are transformed, Romans 12. So that can only come as we understand God's mind. The whole purpose of the Holy Spirit and God's word is to bring our mind in line with God's mind.

So we need to understand what did Jesus mean by breaking this bread and passing it around to others. He said this is my body broken for you. We read in 1 Corinthians 11.

When he had given thanks he broke it and said this is my body which is broken for you. Do it in remembrance of me. Well when I meditate on that I see that Jesus' body was never broken.

His hands were pierced and his nails were pierced but his body was never broken and certainly when he broke that bread he was saying about something past tense. This is my body broken for you already. So I thought about that.

I believe Jesus was very exact in what he said and as I meditate on it I don't believe he was referring to just I he could have said I'm going to be pierced tomorrow morning on the cross. No, this is my body which is already broken for you. So as I start to meditate on it I compare that with what I read in Hebrews 10.

In Hebrews and chapter 10 see in the Old Testament also they had sacrifice. They had a Passover which was symbolized the lamb being sacrificed and it was on that night that Jesus abolished the Passover and instituted the breaking of bread. So in Hebrews 10 5 it says sacrifice and verse 5 when Jesus comes into the world he says God doesn't want a sacrifice but instead a body have you prepared for me.

So Jesus when he comes into the world Hebrews 10 5 says it's not sacrifice it's not burnt offerings and sacrifices where six you don't take any pleasure in all that. Those are all pictures and symbols but a body you have prepared for me and in that body my will must be broken. Verse 7 so that I do your will oh God.

So that is what was broken in Jesus' body for 33 years. Never in his entire life did he do his own will. It's always broken.

So that's what he made for himself. This is my body broken for you. Lo I come in this body to do thy will oh God and if you turn to John 6 verse 38 he said I have come from heaven and how did he come from heaven? He never had a body in heaven.

John 6 38 I have come from heaven with a body and in that body never to do my own will. That's the broken body. My will is broken never never never but every single day to do the will of God.

So what Jesus showed throughout his whole life was here I am a body you have prepared for me and why did you prepare a body for me Hebrews 10 5? That I might never do anything that I want to do in this body. I only want to do what God's will is. That is the symbolism of the breaking of bread.

Death to one's own will and when we take part in it what I'm saying is I'm not just admiring the death of Jesus. Oh what a wonderful life he lived. He never did his own will.

Romans 15 verse 4 says he never pleased himself even once in his life. Boy what a wonderful life. He always pleased the father.

If that's all there is to it then when the bread comes to me I must just admire it and say wow wonderful Lord and Basidon I can't take part in it but when I'm breaking it or taking part in it myself and eating it I'm saying whether you knew it or not till today at least you know it today I'm saying Lord I want to go that way myself. You have prepared a body for me as well and why did you prepare a body for me? That I might never do my own will in this body but do the will of God. That's why he made a body for me and that's the best way to live.

If you can believe that God's plan for your life can never be inferior to any plan you make. God's plan you make for your life is the best possible plan. There's nothing better you can do in your body than to do the will of God in your body.

It's one of the things I discovered soon after I got baptized. I was baptized in 1961 when I was 21 years old and one of the first things I discovered after that was I don't know somehow I got from scripture God has got a plan for my life. He's got a plan for my life.

You read that in Psalm 139. Psalm 139 verse 16. Your eyes have seen my unformed substance.

He's talking about in my mother's womb in the previous verse. He made me secretly in my mother's womb. Verse 13, 14, 15.

And in your book that is in God's mind all the days that were ordained for me were written down while I was not yet one of them. So when God was forming my body. He's talking about the body being formed you know.

Hello a body you have prepared for me and here's that body which the Lord has formed for us. And the purpose is that when I come out of the womb that God has already determined the number of days and what I should do in those number of days on earth. He has determined the exact day when I am to leave this earth and from the time I'm born to the time I'm raptured or when Christ comes again or depart through God calling me.

There is a plan every single day it's been ordained for me. And the same thing is written in Ephesians in chapter 2. We all know this well-known verse by grace are you saved through faith. Verse 8, not of works because all our works are like filthy rags.

A million good works you do can never get forgiveness of your sins. No works. Zero.

We proclaim salvation is by faith not of works. But that's talking about the foundation. In the foundation of the Christian life zero works.

It's all that Christ did on the cross. That's how I'm saved. But after we have laid the foundation when we build the superstructure there are plenty of works.

That's what it says in the next verse. We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do lots and lots of good works. No works.

Verse 9 in the foundation. Plenty of good works in the superstructure. That's like saying when you build a building you don't put any doors or windows in the foundation.

Zero doors and windows in the foundation but plenty of doors and windows in the superstructure. No works in the foundation of the Christian life but plenty of works. What works? Works which God prepared beforehand.

Verse 10 that we should walk in them. Specific plan and if I am to fulfill God's plan for my life I have to say no to my own will. Something in this body must be broken.

That is my will. That's not easy. Our will is so strong but when you break the bread you know it's so soft.

It's not like rock. I'm saying Lord this is the way I want my will to be broken in this body. I'm eating this to show not just that I admire the way you allowed your will to be broken in your body.

Then I'd be only admiring this bread but I'm breaking it and taking part of it to say I want to go this way myself. That's the vertical arm of the cross my relationship with my heavenly father where I say not my will but thine. That's what I mean by breaking your bread taking part of it but the cross has got a horizontal arm as well.

There's no cross without a horizontal arm. The vertical is longer always bigger. My relationship with God is primary but then there's a horizontal relationship also and that's referred to in 1 Corinthians 10.

In 1 Corinthians 10 when we break bread what are we testifying? The last part of verse 16 1 Corinthians 10 16 the bread which we break is a sharing a sharing not an admiring a sharing in the body of Christ which was broken for us and not only that physical body in which Jesus did the will of the father there is another body that Christ has the spiritual body which is the church and so since there is one bread you know what we partake is one bread that's broken up into small pieces. We are one body so there's another testimony in the breaking of bread which is the horizontal testimony the horizontal on the cross that we who break bread together here are one body just like that it was that one loaf of bread from which we partake symbolizing not only our relationship with Christ but our relationship with one another. Some often we don't think about that you know a lot of people say well I can come and break bread and I speak of my testimony with my relationship to Christ but it's more than that are you in a relationship with people here with whom you're breaking bread or is it only a ritual you say Lord I want to be one body with the folks here I recognize these folks as members of Christ's body and I'm breaking bread with them they are my brothers and sisters so it's a wonderful testimony we who are many are one bread we are not individual pieces to just break bread and go our separate ways we love one another we care for one another it's not just my vertical relationship with the Lord and just like in my vertical relationship with the Lord I have to die to my own will in order to do the will of God in my relationship with my fellow believers as well we have to lay down our own life John 3 16 is a well-known verse 1 John 3 16 is not so well known let me read 1 John 3 16 we know love by this that he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our fellow believers that's the breaking of bread we who are many are one bread we ought to lay down our lives for our fellow believers so that's the only way I can have a relationship with my fellow believers in the body of Christ that I decide that in my fellowship with you I'm going to die I don't demand that you die I'm going to die in my relationship with you that means I'm going to do my part just like vertically I'm going to die to my own will to do the will of God horizontally as well I'm just going to die to myself and any rights of mine which I feel you've trodden over or any feelings of mine that you've heard I'm just going to die I won't I won't hold that against anyone it's a wonderful testimony the breaking of bread if we go into it meaningfully so many years of my life I broke bread without understanding its meaning it says in understanding we must be mature and so when we break bread we must recognize the body of Christ in which he never did his own will and horizontally the body of Christ which made me break bread today

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