

# I. The Symbol of the Lord's Table

## 1. Bread

### *Scripture Reading*

*Matthew 26:26* While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat, this is my body."

*1 Cor 11:23-24* For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed took bread, and after he had given thanks he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the Lord Jesus instituted the breaking of bread that day, first He broke the bread and gave it to the disciples, bidding them take and eat. He said that it was His body given for them. Therefore, whenever we break bread, a loaf is set before us to be broken and eaten by all. According to the Lord's word, the bread is a symbol signifying His body, which was given for us on the cross. By dying on the cross, He broke His body and distributed it for us to partake. Every time we break the bread and eat it, we signify and proclaim that the Lord's body has been broken for us, and through His death on the cross, has become our portion.

### *Scripture Reading*

*John 6:30-33* So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

In the Scriptures, bread denotes life. The Lord said He is the Bread of Life, the One who gives life to the world (John 6:30–33). Thus whenever we speak of “bread”, we ought to think of “life”. When the Lord broke His body and gave it to us as bread, it means He gave up His body for us that we might receive His life. When we receive His broken body, we partake of His life. His life is distributed to us through the breaking of His body. Hence He gives us His broken body as the Bread of Life for our enjoyment, to be our portion of life. This is what our breaking of bread, and the broken loaf itself, signifies each time we gather.

The Scriptures reveal that God’s eternal purpose is to dispense His life to mankind in His Son, our Lord Jesus. God placed His life within the Lord Jesus, sending Him into the world that men might receive this divine life (John 1:4, 10:10). For the Lord Jesus to impart God’s life within Him to men, He must die, that His body might be broken and release the divine life contained in Him. It is through the death of His flesh that He imparts God’s life to us. This is the primary purpose of His giving up His body and dying on the cross. Therefore, when He instituted the breaking of bread, He first broke the bread and gave it to us, to signify how He gave His body for us, making the divine life within Him our portion.

For this reason, whenever we break bread, as we see, receive, touch, and break the loaf, we ought to ponder in our hearts, and by faith declare and proclaim, that the body of the Lord Jesus has been broken for us, enabling us to partake of God’s life in Him. This is what the broken bread should speak to us each time, and what our breaking of bread should declare to the universe and all things therein.

## **2. Cup**

### ***Scripture Reading***

*Matthew 26:27-28 And after taking the cup and giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

*1 Cor 11:25 In the same way, he also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, every time you drink it, in remembrance of me."*

When the Lord instituted the breaking of bread, He not only broke the bread and gave it to the disciples for them to take and eat, but He also took the cup, gave it to them, and told them to receive and drink from it. He said that it was the blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, whenever we break bread, there is not only a loaf set before us to be broken and eaten by all, but also a cup placed beside the loaf for all to receive and drink. As the Lord has spoken, the bread is a symbol, and the cup is likewise a symbol. The bread signifies His body given for us, and the cup signifies His blood shed for us. His body was given up for us on the cross, and His blood was also poured out for us on the cross. On the cross, He not only gave His body for us but also shed His blood for us. By giving His body for us, He imparts life to us that we may partake of Him; by shedding His blood for us, He atones for our sins that we may receive forgiveness.

Though the primary purpose of the Lord Jesus dying on the cross was to release the divine life within Him and dispense it to us, His death on the cross accomplished more than releasing God's life—it also redeemed and cleansed us from our sins. For while God's eternal intention is to bestow His life upon us in the Lord Jesus, our fall has rendered us guilty before Him. Hence, if we are to receive God's life in Christ, our sin problem must also be dealt with. Therefore, on the cross, the Lord Jesus both gave His body that we might receive the divine life within Him and shed His blood that our sins might be forgiven. For this reason, when the Lord commands us to break bread, He requires not only a loaf to signify His body given for us and the life bestowed through His surrender of Himself, but also a cup to signify His blood shed for us and the redemption accomplished through His bloodshed.

### ***Scripture Reading***

***Psalm 16:5 The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.***

***Psalm 116:13** I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.*

***Psalm 23:5** You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

***Revelation 14:10 & 21:8** He also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.*

*But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur.*

***John 18:11** Jesus said to him, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"*

In the Scriptures, the cup signifies one's portion. David declared, The Lord is my portion and my cup. By nature, because of our sins and wickedness, the portion we deserve before God is the cup of God's wrath, the eternal torment of perishing in the lake of fire. Yet God caused the Lord Jesus to drink this cup of wrath on our behalf, enduring God's righteous judgment, tasting the full agony of perdition, shedding His blood to atone for our sins, establishing the New Covenant for us, and obtaining for us the cup of salvation as our blessed portion. Within this blessed cup of salvation, God Himself and all that is His become our portion, our eternal inheritance. Because the Lord Jesus shed His blood to accomplish redemption, God and all His riches have become the portion of our cup in divine salvation.

Our sins not only rendered us guilty children of wrath before God but also estranged us from Him, causing us to forfeit God and all that belongs to Him. Now that the Lord Jesus has borne our sins, endured the full weight of God's wrath in our place, and shed His blood, His blood both cleanses us from sin, grants us forgiveness, and delivers us from divine wrath, and also redeems us to possess God and all His riches. It is by this blood that the Lord Jesus established the New Covenant before God on our behalf. This New Covenant is the portion we are entitled to receive from

God through the blood of the Lord Jesus, and for this reason it is depicted as a cup. This cup, the portion of the New Covenant, was accomplished for us by the Lord through His blood. Thus He said, This cup is the New Covenant established in My blood.

The Lord's words reveal that what His blood achieved for us is far more than a mere blessing or an ordinary portion; it is the New Covenant, an unchangeable portion ordained by the covenant. The cup secured by His blood is none other than the New Covenant ratified by His blood. In this New Covenant, on account of the Lord Jesus' blood, God is bound to forgive our sins and bestow Himself and all His riches upon us. Therefore, receiving forgiveness of sins and possessing God with all that He has is our portion in the New Covenant—a portion accomplished for us by the Lord's blood. His blood removes our sin on one hand and brings us God and all His riches on the other. This is what the cup we drink at the breaking of bread signifies each time we partake of it.

We know that the cup is filled with wine, which symbolizes the Lord's blood. Thus the cup signifies not only the New Covenant established by the Lord's blood but also the blood He shed for us. The cup is the New Covenant ratified by His blood, and His blood is the means by which the New Covenant was established. His blood was poured out to institute the New Covenant, and the New Covenant was established through His blood; hence His blood has become the cup of this New Covenant. For this reason, when we drink, we do not speak of drinking His blood, but of drinking His cup. Because His blood has already established the New Covenant and become the cup, our ordained portion—this portion delivers us from sin and grants us possession of God and all that is His.