

I. The Fellowship of the Lord's Table

1. The Fellowship with the Lord

Scripture Reading

Matthew 26:26–28 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

Luke 22:19–20 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

At the breaking of bread, the Lord passes the bread and the cup to us, and we receive them from Him. In this very act, fellowship is established between Him and us, and between us and Him. When He hands us the bread and the cup, He imparts to us His body and His blood—that is, He communicates Himself into us. When we receive the bread and the cup from Him, we receive His body and His blood, and thereby receive Himself, entering into fellowship with Him. He communicates Himself to us for our enjoyment through His body given for us and His blood shed for us. When we receive His body and His blood, we enjoy Himself and have fellowship with Him through that which He gave and shed on our behalf.

Fellowship means mutual communion and intimate sharing between two parties. For such mutual fellowship to exist, both sides must possess the same life and share a common nature. The Lord Jesus became incarnate to take upon Himself our human

nature, becoming one with us. He gave up His body that we might receive His divine life, becoming one with Him. His incarnation and the surrender of His body have united Him with us and us with Him in one shared life and nature. Though He is God, He bears our human nature; though we are men, we possess His divine life. Thus He and we, we and He, share one life and one nature. Within this common life and nature, He and we may commune intimately and share in mutual affection. Though we were once sinful and unable to draw near to the sinless Lord, His shed blood has redeemed our sins, making us righteous and equal in standing with Him, so that we may now draw near to Him and have fellowship with Him.

Since the Lord's giving of His body and shedding of His blood has made fellowship with Him possible, His body and His blood have become the ground of our communion with Him. We have fellowship with Him through His body and His blood, and within this fellowship we partake and enjoy His body and His blood. His body and His blood enable our fellowship with Him, and they are the very fellowship between Him and us. In this fellowship, we touch the Lord Himself by means of His body and His blood. We also receive from Him His body and His blood, together with all that His giving up of Himself and shedding of His blood have accomplished, to be our spiritual enjoyment.

2. The Fellowship with the Saints

Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 10:16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

This word speaks not only of our fellowship with the Lord in His blood and His body, but also of our fellowship with all the saints in His blood and His body. When we drink the Lord's cup and eat the Lord's bread, we partake of the Lord's blood and

His body, which surely brings us into fellowship with the Lord. Yet we do not drink the cup nor eat the bread alone, nor do we enjoy the Lord's blood and His body in isolation; rather, we drink, eat, and enjoy together with all the saints.

When we drink the Lord's cup, we share jointly with all the saints in the Lord's blood; when we eat the Lord's bread, we share jointly with all the saints in the Lord's body. Therefore, as we drink the Lord's cup and eat the Lord's bread, we have fellowship with all the saints in the Lord's blood and His body.

The Lord's cup and the Lord's body enter into you, into me, and into every one of us and all the saints. Every saint partakes of the Lord's cup and the Lord's bread, shares in the Lord's blood and His body, has received the redemption accomplished by the Lord's shed blood, and possesses the life dispensed through the Lord's given body.

The Lord's blood and the Lord's body are the portion we enjoy together with all the saints, bringing us into fellowship with them and becoming the very fellowship we share with one another. Thus it is written that the cup we drink is the fellowship of Christ's blood, and the bread we eat is the fellowship of Christ's body. Whenever we drink the Lord's cup and eat the Lord's bread, we enter into fellowship with all the saints in the Lord's blood and His body.

For this reason, our breaking of bread is not only to remember the Lord, enjoy the Lord, and have fellowship with the Lord; it is also to have fellowship with all the saints. It is not merely a matter between us and the Lord, but also a matter between us and all the saints. If the breaking of bread does not bring us into fellowship with the saints nor express our mutual relationship with them, it is improper and flawed.

II. The Testimony of the Lord's Table

1. To Testify to Our Union with the Lord

Scripture Reading

Matthew 26:26–28 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

At the time of the breaking of bread, the Lord passes the bread and the cup to us and bids us eat and drink, that we may receive His body and His blood into us for our enjoyment. This speaks of the union between the Lord and us, and also testifies to our union with the Lord. When we eat and drink the Lord's bread and cup into our being, it signifies that the Lord has entered into us and become united with us through giving His body and shedding His blood. It also testifies that by receiving His body given for us and His blood shed for us, we have partaken of Him and all He has accomplished, and have been united with Him.

Therefore, every time we break bread, we testify there that through the redemption of the Lord's given body and shed blood, we are one with Him and He is one with us; we are in Him, and He is in us. The bread we break testifies that through His self-surrender and the breaking of His body, His life has been released to become our life. Our breaking of bread testifies that by receiving His body given for us and all He accomplished through giving Himself, we have obtained His life and are united with Him in life.

The cup we drink testifies that His shed blood has taken away our sins, qualifying us to be united with Him. Our drinking of the cup testifies that we partake of His

blood and the redemption accomplished by His blood. Thus, through His blood and the redemption of His blood, we receive His life and are qualified to be united with Him in His life.

2. To Testify to Our Union with the Lord

When we break bread, we testify not only to our union with the Lord, but also to our union and oneness with all the saints—the oneness of the church. This is what the bread we break signifies with regard to the Lord's table.

The bread we break, on the one hand, speaks of the Lord's physical body at the Lord's Supper, signifying how His own physical body was broken for us. On the other hand, with regard to the Lord's table, it points to the Lord's mystical body, which is His church, declaring how His mystical body is perfectly one and undivided.

The Lord gave up His physical body to obtain this mystical body. He was originally a single grain of wheat, and through death and resurrection He brought forth many grains. These many grains are all those throughout all time and from every place who have received His life. These many grains do not remain scattered and separate; rather, in the Holy Spirit they are blended into one bread and one body. Though we are many living grains, many regenerated believers, we do not exist as isolated individuals. Instead, we are all joined together as one bread, forming the one mystical body of Christ.

Thus the apostle declares: Though we are many, we are one bread and one body.

Therefore, with respect to the Lord's table, the bread we break signifies the entire Body of Christ, including all the redeemed throughout all time and from every nation. Peter and Paul are in this bread; Luther, Darby, Müller, Moody, as well as we who are saved today, and all who will receive grace in the future, are also in this one bread. All the redeemed—those of the past, the present, and the future—are contained within this bread and are each a part of it.

Thus when we break bread, we testify on the one hand to our oneness with the Lord, and on the other hand to our oneness with all the saints—all who throughout time and across the nations have received the Lord's life. We and all the saints of every age and every land are one in the Lord's life, united to form one Body. Every person who possesses the Lord's life, regardless of era or location, is a member of the Lord's mystical Body, united in His life as one single Body. This is what the one bread we break signifies at the Lord's table, and this is the testimony borne through our bread-breaking.

For this reason, the bread we break must not only signify the Lord's own physical body; it must also represent us together with all the saints throughout all time and all the earth. Likewise, our bread-breaking is not merely to remember the Lord and proclaim His death; it must also testify that we are one with all the saints of every generation and every nation. We all partake of this one bread. Though many break this bread at different times and in different places, it is still the one and the same bread. The bread broken by Peter and Paul in ages past is this same bread, and the bread we break today is likewise this one bread. Our brothers and sisters in China break this one bread, and our brothers and sisters abroad break this same one bread. Though there are many places where believers across time and nations break bread, the bread itself is one, for all belong to this one bread and to the one Body it signifies.

Since the bread we break also signifies the one unique Body of Christ in the universe, the bread we break each time and in every place is always this one bread, signifying this one unique Body. Whether last year or this year, last Lord's Day or this Lord's Day, in Taipei or Kaohsiung, in one meeting place or another, the bread broken is always the same, pointing to the one unchanging Body. For in the universe, the

Body of Christ is one and only one. It is for this very truth that we break only one bread, as a standing testimony to this eternal oneness.