

I. The Manifestation of the Lord's Table

Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

The word proclaim here corresponds in the original text to set forth / display. The apostle says that whenever we eat the Lord's bread and drink the Lord's cup, we proclaim the Lord's death—that is, we set forth the Lord's death openly.

The Lord's bread signifies His body, and the Lord's cup signifies His blood. Therefore, the cup placed beside the bread indicates that the Lord's blood is now separate from His body, having flowed out and been divided from it. We know that when a person's blood is separated from their body, it means death.

Thus when we break bread and set the bread and the cup before us, we set forth the Lord's death. We display His death openly to the universe—before God, the angels, Satan and demons, all created beings, and even to ourselves. (For this very reason, the bread and the cup should never be covered with a cloth during the breaking of bread.) Whenever we see the bread and the cup laid out, we ought to discern that the Lord's death is there set forth.

Though our breaking of bread is to remember the Lord Himself, it is also to proclaim His death. At the table of breaking bread, our heart remembers the Lord, our spirit enjoys the Lord, and our eyes behold the Lord's death set forth before us.

The Lord's death is the center of His redemptive work. All that the Lord has accomplished in redemption was perfected through and based upon His death. His death dealt with our sins, fulfilled the demands of the law, appeased God's righteous wrath, and reconciled us to God, making us acceptable before Him.

His death also dealt with our old man, the flesh, and all that belongs to the old

creation, delivering us from the bondage and dominion of sin, the law, and all things of the old creation. Furthermore, His death overcame Satan, demons, and the world, enabling us to triumph over them all.

The Lord's death is all-inclusive. Whether it be sin, the flesh, Satan, the world, or all things of the old creation—everything that opposes God, contradicts God, is not of God, does not belong to God, and is not for God—all have been dealt with and terminated in His death.

When we break bread, through the bread and the cup placed on the table, we set forth this all-inclusive death of the Lord in the universe, the death that resolves all things both for God and for us. By openly proclaiming the Lord's death in this way, we also set forth and exhibit all that His death has accomplished, before God, all created beings in the universe, and before ourselves.

II. The Hope Set Forth in the Lord's Table

Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

When we break bread, we have not only remembrance and proclamation, but also hopeful expectation. Remembrance is to remember the Lord Himself and enjoy Him; proclamation is to declare and set forth the Lord's death; hopeful expectation is to look toward the Lord's return and wait for His coming.

At the breaking of bread, we should at once ponder the Lord Himself and touch Him, while beholding His death and looking forward to His return. He has departed from us and ascended to heaven, and for this reason He calls us to remember Him. Yet He has promised to come again from heaven to receive us, and so He bids us wait for

Him.

Remembrance tells us that He is no longer here in this world; waiting tells us that He will come to us once more. Though He is now with us invisibly in our spirit, dwelling within us, His visible outward presence awaits His return.

In the breaking of bread, we may touch His invisible presence within us, yet we long all the more for His visible presence outwardly. His invisible presence stirs within us a yearning for His visible appearing. Therefore, as we break bread, we enjoy His invisible fellowship on the one hand, and look forward to His visible coming on the other; we draw near to the Lord Himself, and we wait expectantly for His return.