

The Breaking of Bread
Hope Chapel Honolulu
Acts 2:41-47, 1Corinthians 11:17-34

“For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, **“This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”** In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, **“This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.” (1Corinthians 11:23-26, ESV)

Introduction

A word search for “bread and wine” leads us from Genesis through most of the Bible until some of the last writings of the New Testament. It begins with Melchisedec and Abraham at Salem (Ge14:17-24) when this mysterious priest of the Most High God brings bread and wine to Abraham and is given a tenth of all that he gained in battle. We find the theme picked up again with the blood of the Passover Lamb and the unleavened bread (Ex12:1-28) as Israel is delivered from the hand of Pharaoh. We visit the theme again in the form of the Shewbread of the Presence (Ex25:30, Le24:5-9, He9:2) as God's anointed one David, is given this bread and the sword of Goliath (1Sa21:1-10, Mt12:3-4). And of course, we come to the Last Supper (Mt26:17-29), but we are also led to Justin Martyr's First Apology to Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius in AD 150 recounting the Early Church's practice of breaking bread.

1. The centrality of communion in the Early Church. (1Corinthians 11:17-22)

a) “...They met in the temple courts and broke bread in their homes daily...” (Ac2:46-47).

b) The right observance of communion requires love, humility and unity.

2. Not just right rituals, but right remembrance. (1Corinthians 11:23-26)

a) The disciples never forgot the words of Christ at that Last Supper.

b) And they remembered not just His words and works, but His grace and truth.

3. Conviction, confession, communion, celebration. (1Corinthians 11:27-34)

a) The Early Church's belief including transubstantiation (Ro6:6-10, He6:4-6).

b) Submitting to the work of the Holy Spirit (Jn16:8) and remembering Christ.

Conclusion

While our 21st century urban lifestyles may not allow us to imitate the frequency of how the Early Church “met in the temple courts and broke bread in their homes” (Ac2:46-47), we can imitate how they received communion “with glad and generous hearts, praising God.” As we give ourselves to this outflow of the Holy Spirit from connection to communion through the breaking of bread and prayer—next week's theme—we may expect what they experienced: “the LORD added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

For our prayerful study, discovery and application:

1. What is the significance of the bread and wine, do you believe that using unleavened bread and red wine is the most important part of communion, and why?
2. What is the significance of conviction, confession, communion and celebration?
3. What is the Holy Spirit telling you about devotion to the breaking of bread?

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