

# Breaking Bread

## In this document:

**Introduction** – a broader context for the breaking of bread (page 1-2)

**Consolidation** – bringing together the main thoughts from the relevant passages and expanding on those (page 3-6)

**Relevant passages and notes** – All the passages referenced for this study as well as Michael Eaton's notes and other notes distilled from the passages (page 7-22)

## Introduction:

### Ac 2:42–47

<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching (doctrine) and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

The teaching of doctrine, breaking of bread and prayers all happen in the context of the fellowship

The teaching of doctrine gives the church (the fellowship) the right way to build the right things on the foundation of Christ and helps us keep walking in grace, by faith

The fellowship is what we are and is also what we do and thus provides context and opportunity to learn and be equipped, to be encouraged and grow in our faith together and participate with God, through prayers, in what he is doing in and through the church

The breaking of bread reminds us of what is central to the apostle's doctrine, and thus should be central to the church, the fellowship, namely: the finished work of Jesus on the cross – the focus and foundation of our faith

The breaking of bread reminds us that the salvation we have is by faith alone – faith in the finished work of Jesus alone

The breaking of bread can also be a reminder to continually be filled with the Spirit. In Acts 2 this devotion and enthusiasm we see followed the outpouring of the Spirit and they were

experiencing the power of God at work in them. In other words, their devotion was not born out of self-effort. As much as there will be a discipline in devotion, devotion, and specifically these aspects mentioned in Acts 2, are not a formula that will result in effective church life if we get them right. They are actually signs of life – the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us. So, because the breaking of bread reminds us that our own effort falls short of God's glory, we are reminded to seek to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. We need Him to be the fellowship and do the work of Jesus' body

The breaking of bread reminds us of what the foundation of all our prayers is. It is the atoning death of Jesus that has given us access to the throne room. We can approach Him in confidence and pray prayers of faith because this foundation is in place

The breaking of bread also reminds us that we are one body (one loaf) as the fellowship

Prayers are the primary work of the church, along with being a witness – proclaiming the gospel

Prayer is meant to be a personal and corporate activity – it is meant to be one of the primary activities of the fellowship

All of this is stirred up and empowered by the Holy Spirit. None of this happens the way it is intended without the activity of the Holy Spirit, without the empowering of the Holy Spirit:

We receive revelation and are transformed by the teaching of doctrine by the power of the Holy Spirit

The fellowship has life, enthusiasm, power, growth and sustainability because we are filled with the Holy Spirit and He is at work in and through us

The purpose of breaking bread together (keeping the cross central, being encouraged and strengthened in our faith, proclaiming His death (the gospel)) is achieved in us because the Holy Spirit is at work in us and not simply because we break bread. The purpose is achieved by the work of the Holy Spirit in us and not without that work

We can only pray because the Holy Spirit helps us by revealing the will of God, helping us to pray according to His will, helping us when we pray in the Spirit and by reminding us what the foundation for our prayers (the reason we pray with faith) is – Jesus

## Consolidating notes from the relevant passages (see below)

### – answering some key questions related to the breaking of bread

#### What is remembered / what are we reminding ourselves & each other of?

- The cross is a fact – a real event in history. Jesus really did die for the sins of the world
- It is finished – the work Jesus came to do to bring salvation to the world is complete – there is nothing lacking
- It is a reminder of what Jesus has done for us in His death on the cross and there is a huge amount of value to be gained for us in this constant reminder
- Jesus is the Son of God, which is why He could be a spotless Lamb, a perfect sacrifice. There was no other way for our sins to be paid for
- It is a reminder of the implications of what we have received because of the death of Jesus
  - Because He died we die with Him and escape the eternal judgement we deserve – He remembers our sins no more
  - Because we participate in His blood that was shed our sins are forgiven (in the context of eternity – He is our propitiation) and continue to be forgiven (in the context of daily life – He sanctifies us)
  - Because He died we have fellowship with the Father, we are justified before Him, we are adopted as His sons and daughters and can maintain that fellowship because, when we do sin, we can confess our sins and receive forgiveness and cleansing, because of the blood of Jesus
  - Because our death is swallowed up in His death, we live – we are born again, we are a new creation and can live in newness of life empowered by the Holy Spirit. Because we have died to our old self in dying with Him we are able to live the way those are saved live in being raised to new life with Him
  - It is a remembrance that as we share from one loaf that we are one body. Because we participate in His body that was broken we are made part of His body on earth – the church
  - Being part of His body, one loaf, has implications for how we are to behave toward each other. We see this in Acts 2 where the activities of the fellowship reflect them having all things in common
- We are partakers of a NEW covenant in His blood (Heb 8:6–13, Je 31:31–34).
  - The old is obsolete
  - We are no longer under the law – the way in which the old (imperfect) covenant was observed – set free from the law

- We receive the new covenant by grace, through faith – we walk in this covenant by faith
- He remembers our sins no more

### **In what context does this happen?**

- In the context of fellowship – it is interwoven with us being one body and having everything in common. This is the most important point
- In the context of a meal and involvement in each other's lives at first – informal and fairly spontaneous
- Later on it took place in a larger scale and seemingly at a set time – more formal and less spontaneous
- So, it seemed to be something that was spontaneous in the beginning but a little more 'arranged' as time went on – possible simply to facilitate the logistics involved
- In Jude there is a reference to communal meals called love feasts but no mention is made of breaking of bread or the Lord's Supper.
- The weight of the picture in Acts 2 suggests that the spontaneous, informal sharing together in the Lord's Supper would still be practiced and encouraged
- Does not seem that it required one of the apostles or elders to facilitate. In homes it was very likely that the host / head of the house would break bread, as was the already established custom
- The exact format is not as critical. Circumstances and culture can play a role. For example, how would you do this in Southern Sudan at present?

### **How does it happen?**

- In liberty and not in religiosity or legalism
- The breaking of bread was how they normally began their main meal before they were saved. Now they added the regular sharing of the cup (as they would at Passover) and used that first part of the meal to remind themselves of what Jesus had done and what that meant for them. It is likely that this set the tone for the 'what' and 'how' of the rest of their time together
- It would seem that the breaking of bread and a sharing from the cup was always in the context of a meal. There does not seem to be a biblical context where it happens apart from them also sharing a meal together – emphasises the aspect of fellowship rather than the eating of food. How do we interpret the application of this for us today where our cultures and contexts are so different?
- They ate with glad and generous hearts – it was a joyful occasion, a fellowship event, where they shared their food with those who did not have and engaged in generosity toward each other.

- In unity and respect for each other – without discrimination or division. This aspect of showing devotion to the fellowship is vital. When this is lacking it is no longer the Lord's supper according to Paul

### **How often does it happen?**

- In Acts 2 – daily
- In Acts 20 – on the first day of the week
- The reference to love feasts in Jude does not mention of how often this happened
- There is really no set guideline for how often. Jesus simply said, “As often as you do this....”

### **What is it and what is it not? / What does it do and what does it not do?**

- It is a remembrance but not a memorial. The remembering, keeping the cross (the finished work of Jesus) central in our minds and hearts, is intended to give an occasion to reaffirm (confess, confirm), strengthen and mature our faith
- It is a positive ritual but not a sacrament. There is not something we receive as a result of the eating and drinking itself. In other words, it is not a ritual we religiously adhere to because we believe it accomplishes something in us in and of itself. We do not believe that there is power in the ritual itself
- The bread and wine are representative and do not have power in themselves either
- We must, therefore, be careful not be religious, superstitious, sentimental or ‘magical’ in our approach to the breaking of bread.
- On one hand there is no ground to teach that we lack something essential in terms of our salvation if we do not do this. Neither can we say that we hold it in a legalistic sense that says we are found to be in serious disobedience or under judgement when we do not share the Lord's Supper
- On the other hand, this does not at all mean we do not take it seriously though. Jesus did give instructions regarding this. We should take it seriously without making it something it is not so that we do not miss out on what it is
- We do not want to miss out the encouragement and strengthening of our faith that a continual remembering (and reflection on) of the cross brings
- We also do not want to miss out on being mutually encouraged as we remember together - in fellowship, in community
- Eaton: “The eating and drinking stand for persistent faith in the atoning blood of Jesus. We get life and energy by feeding on Jesus and what He did for us on the cross. The breaking of bread reminds us to persist in real faith and not to fall back into reliance on works.”

- Sharing the Lord's Supper provides a significant opportunity, although not the only opportunity, for this to happen
- We will, however, also miss out on these things if we see it as something that it is not because we will focus on the wrong things and we will, in a sense, be putting our faith in (our reliance on) the act of breaking bread rather than what it represents. This is the way a sacramental approach subtly shifts our faith from believing in the cross alone (His work) to reliance on something we do as well. This is the essence of all religiosity – a reliance on something we do
- The obedience of faith is a loving response to the loving work of God in and through us rather than something we do with the expectation that we will receive something in return – something God must do because we obeyed Him
- It is also important to bear in mind the point made by Paul in 1 Cor 11:20, if true fellowship is missing then it is not the Lord's Supper. It is not made into the Lord's Supper simply by sharing bread and the cup.
- Breaking bread is also a proclamation of His death until He comes – and that proclamation is for our sake and also for those who are being saved – those who are being added to the church. In other words, it is one way in which we proclaim the gospel

## Relevant passages and notes

### Mt 26:26–29

#### Institution of the Lord's Supper

<sup>26</sup> 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." <sup>27</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, <sup>28</sup> for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup> I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

#### Michael Eaton's notes

### Matthew 26:17–29

#### Last Supper and Lord's Supper

Matthew 26:17 speaks of 'the first day of Unleavened Bread'. It refers to what we would call Thursday. Apparently the traditional 6 p.m.-to-6 p.m. way of measuring the day is not being followed here. The preparing for the feast (surely before 6 p.m.) and the eating of the feast (after 6 p.m.) is viewed as being the same day.

It is likely that the slaughter of the Passover lambs (around 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., following Exodus 12:6) was done on two days, the Thursday and the Friday. Possibly Jesus took advantage of this development and it enabled him to partake of the Passover meal one day earlier than the official Passover day followed by the leaders at the Jerusalem temple.

#### The Lord's Supper is a transformed Passover service.

God's people Israel once had a 'holy day' on which they commemorated the time when Israel came into being as the people who were rescued from bondage by the blood of a lamb. Eventually the 'remnant' of Israel became 'the church' (and gentiles were added to it). The lamb which redeemed Israel was replaced by the Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Passover service was abolished for the people of God and was replaced by a simple little ceremony which we call the Lord's Supper. We must remember the principles of Passover when we consider the death of Jesus. The story was to be kept before the families of Israel. Every family in Egypt, Israelite and Egyptian, had at the original Passover time been under the judgement of God. But God provided a remedy for his people. They were to take a lamb (it was always viewed as being **one** lamb), kill it on 14th Nisan and paint its blood around the side and top of the front door of the houses. The first-born sons were to shelter under the blood of the lamb on Passover night. Three basic principles were obvious in the story. All of them may be re-applied to Jesus.

(i) Salvation begins when God's judgement against sin is averted. (ii) Judgement is averted by the death of a substitute. (iii) For the salvation to be received there must be a 'sheltering under the blood' – a laying hold of the provision that has been made.

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed (see 1 Corinthians 5:7). Christ was our substitute. Faith in him and in his blood leads to God's 'passing over' our sins and taking us as his people. The Lord's Supper is for the Christian what the Passover was for the Israelite, the commemoration of salvation by the blood of a Lamb.

#### Jesus is willing that his salvation should be applied even to someone like Judas.

By saying, 'One of you will betray me' (26:20–21) but not saying which one, Jesus was offering Judas a way of repentance and forgiveness. If Judas had abandoned his plans and sought Jesus' forgiveness, Jesus would never have revealed what had been on his heart. Judas was in the act of betraying Jesus, but Jesus was not betraying Judas. It is a model of how we should treat our enemies.

At the same time Jesus challenges Judas (26:22–25). He points to the enormity of what Judas is doing, in being someone ‘who has dipped his hand in the dish with me’. Jesus tells him that the plan of God (‘The Son of Man goes as it is written . . .’) does not cancel out Judas’s personal responsibility (‘Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!’). Matthew 26:24 proves that there is conscious punishment after death and so disproves the idea of annihilation **at death**; it proves nothing about the eventual outcome **after** the post-mortem punishment of sin.

**Jesus transforms the Passover service into the ceremony of the Lord’s Supper.** Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and *Last Supper and Lord’s Supper* 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. I tell you, I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.*’

**Objectively** the Lord’s Supper preaches the gospel in visible symbolism.

**Its requirements are five.** In the Christian it requires (i) faith (as we look back to Jesus’ death), (ii) gratitude (as we look up in gratitude), (iii) humility (as we look within in self-examination), (iv) hope (as we look forward to a richer fellowship in the final glory), (v) love (as we look around at those who are sharing the bread and the wine with us).

**It is a means of grace** as (and only as) it is received in this way. It does not ‘seal’ anything (surely a mistaken idea in Christian history; only the Holy Spirit ‘seals’). But it is used by God for encouraging our fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is present with us as we trust him, praise him, confess to him, look forward to knowing him more visibly and love those around us who belong to him. He is present in the Lord’s Supper, not in any physical way but by the mysterious working of the Holy Spirit. It deepens a covenant relation, a relationship in which Jesus promises never to forsake us and in which we shall ‘enter into rest’ as we walk before him. Its basis is the total forgiveness of all sins. It is on offer to everyone for the blood is ‘poured out for many’ – a Hebrew way of saying ‘poured out for every individual’.

#### Notes

a. See further ‘The Chronology of the Death of Jesus’, in M.A. Eaton, *John*, Preaching Through the Bible (IBTB, 2009), pp. 198–201.

b. See more on the symbolism of the Lord’s Supper in M.A. Eaton, *Luke 12–24*, Preaching Through the Bible (Sovereign World, 2000), chs. 38–39.

#### Mk 14:22–25

##### Institution of the Lord’s Supper

<sup>22</sup> And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” <sup>23</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. <sup>24</sup> And he said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. <sup>25</sup> Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

#### Michael Eaton’s notes

#### Mk 14:12-26

The story moves forward. It is now **Thursday**. Jesus has one more day to live. The two feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread were observed together one after the other. Sometimes the period is called ‘*the Feast of Unleavened Bread*’. The ‘first day’ was the Thursday, and was the day when the lambs were sacrificed.

Matthew, Mark and Luke portray Jesus as eating the Passover meal at Passover-time, yet John portrays Jesus as **dying** at Passover time. There are a number of possible explanations but the one that seems most likely is that Jesus kept the Passover meal one day early.

Jesus sends two disciples to get the provisions. They will meet a man who will guide them through the streets of Jerusalem to a householder who will provide the accommodation that they need. There seems to be supernatural guidance at this point. A man has been led by God to provide what is needed. Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit to know what to do. It works out as Jesus says and at evening they begin to keep the Passover meal.

**Jesus shows great love to Judas.** He warns the disciples of betrayal. This is in effect giving a warning to Judas, yet it is also giving him time to change his ways. By not mentioning his name Jesus avoids publicly disgracing him. No one yet knew that Judas was different from the others. No one thought of saying 'Is it Judas?' They all said '*Is it I?*'. Also it seems that Judas was present during the Lord's Supper. Jesus was still treating him with amazing love. Jesus' words emphasize the seriousness of his sin, the impossibility of defeating God's plan and the terrible destiny awaiting the betrayer

**The Last Supper takes place.** After giving thanks He takes the symbols of His coming death. The bread stands for Jesus' dying in His body. The wine stands for blood atonement, which inaugurates a new covenant. The breaking of bread stands for Jesus' suffering. The blood is poured out for many. 'Many' is a Hebrew way of saying 'everyone' (since Hebrew does not have a precise way of saying 'every person'). The eating and drinking stand for persistent faith in the atoning blood of Jesus. We get life and energy by feeding on Jesus and what He did for us on the cross.

Verse 25 lets the disciples know that this is how they and their successors must live until Jesus returns. From now on they will be living by faith in a crucified Saviour. Not until after His return in glory will they dine again with Him in precisely this way, when He is literally and physically present. The meal ends with worship and singing and they begin to walk to the Mount of Olives. Judas has left earlier (as John 13:30 shows). In Mark's Gospel there is no instruction that the meal should ever be repeated. Mark is not inviting us to meditate on the institution of the Lord's Supper as a ceremony that would later take place in the church. We know of that from Luke 22:19b but not from Mark's Gospel. Mark is inviting us to look at the original cross itself.

1. **The cross invites our gratitude.** Jesus began with giving thanks. How grateful we should be for the cross of Jesus. Love so amazing, so divine...!

2. **Jesus carried our sins in His body.** There was something very literal and physical about the atoning death of Jesus. In some way our sins were literally laid upon the body of Jesus as He was hanging upon the cross. '*He bore our sins in his body...'*

3. **Jesus' death was a blood-sacrifice.** The wine was red- coloured, I suppose. It looked like blood and it spoke of Jesus' literally shedding His blood like one of the animals of Old Testament sacrifice.

4. **Jesus' death started off a new covenant.** A covenant had to be initiated with a sacrifice. A covenant was a relationship in which an oath is given. Our being in covenant with Jesus means that there is a fixed relationship between us and Him. He is asking us to live a life of persistent faith in Him, and as we do so He will give us an oath in which He swears to bless us. And it all takes place by the blood of Jesus. It is by the blood of Jesus that we get our first forgiveness. It is by the blood of Jesus that we get daily cleansing. It is by persistent faith in the blood of Jesus that we live constantly for God, so that He says '*I swear I will bless you'*.

5. **Jesus' death involved great suffering.** He was broken in His sufferings. Although not a bone of His body was broken He was broken within by the sufferings He endured. There was disgrace, ridicule, loneliness, shame, pain, and – worst of all – abandonment by the Father.

6. **Jesus' death benefits the entire human race.** It was for 'many'. It has taken place for everyone. Everyone is invited to respond to Jesus in the faith that He has died for them.

7. **What is being asked of us is that we live by persistent faith in the blood of Jesus.** We are to '*eat Jesus' body*' and '*drink His blood*'. This means that we are to persistently get liveliness and confidence by a never-ending trust in the blood of Jesus. When we pray, when we sin, when we are

weary, when we are suffering, in every situation, we turn in faith to the Jesus who is in covenant with us by means of the atoning blood.

### Lk 22:14–23

#### Institution of the Lord's Supper

<sup>14</sup> And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup> And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. <sup>16</sup> For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." <sup>17</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. <sup>18</sup> For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." <sup>19</sup> 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." <sup>20</sup> And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. <sup>21</sup> But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. <sup>22</sup> For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" <sup>23</sup> And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

#### Michael Eaton's notes

### Luke 22:7-23

God had planned that the death of Jesus would take place at Passover time. At some stage in the week Jesus had been anointed at Bethany and Judas had made plans to betray Him.

Now Luke tells us that the 'day of Unleavened Bread' has arrived. It is the Thursday. The disciples are sent to prepare for the feast. Jesus will use an upper room in the city of Jerusalem. Either God had guided both the owners of the house and Jesus 'by the Holy Spirit' to be ready for each other (as I believe and as in Acts 10:1–23), or Jesus had made an arrangement to use the house of a friend but kept the arrangements secret so that He would not be arrested too soon. It was quite possibly the home of John Mark's parents in Jerusalem. The disciples get the room ready as Jesus wishes.

So the hour comes for the last meal that Jesus will ever have during His earthly ministry. His crucifixion is only a few hours away. He sits at the table and tells them how important this last supper is to Him. '*I have very much wanted to eat this Passover with you before I suffer,*' He says. Why is this 'last supper' so important to Him?

**Jesus wants them to understand His death.** The Lord's Supper helps us to understand the cross. It makes us realise that the death of Jesus was a sacrifice for sin. It was not some kind of accident. It was the will of God for His Son Jesus, who was dying as a Passover lamb. Just as God 'passed over' the sins of each family in which the firstborn took shelter under the blood of the lamb, so God passes over the sins of all who put their faith in Jesus and His blood.

**Jesus wants fellowship with His disciples before He goes to heaven.** Jesus was a man, a real human being. Although He was the Son of God, He was also a real human being. He liked to spend time with people. He enjoyed being with His disciples. Now, during these last hours of His life, He wants to be with His friends and fellow-workers. He wants to talk to them about the things of God.

Many things were happening all in this short space of time. Jesus shared His words about love, gave a warning to Peter, told them about Scripture being fulfilled. The 'Farewell Discourses' start during this time and then continue as Jesus goes towards Gethsemane. Jesus wants to use this occasion to give last minute help and instruction to His disciples. He is thinking of them to the very end of His life. So He says, '*I have very much wanted to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*' Jesus knows about His very imminent death but stays cool in trouble. He says, '*I have ... wanted ... this ... before I suffer.*' He knows something of the great suffering ahead of Him, yet He is leaving Himself in the hands of God.

**Jesus knows that the last supper is prophetic.** The 'eating' will be 'fulfilled' in the kingdom of God. So will the drinking of the cup of wine. Jesus takes a cup and gives it to them. It is a foretaste of a banquet they will have in heaven.

**This gives us an idea of what heaven is.** Heaven is described in many ways. Among other things it is like a banquet. Heaven is a place of ease and comfort. The time for resting is not now in this life. There will be relaxation in heaven. Heaven will be a party, a banquet. At a banquet you relax in comfort while people bring food to you as you need it. Jesus brings us to His banqueting table; His banner over us is love. Heaven is a place of fellowship. We will have time to sit and talk and share. There is a lot of 'meal symbolism' in the Scriptures. When we open our heart to Jesus He 'has supper' with us (Revelation 3:20). Heaven will be a place where we banquet with Jesus. Heaven is a place of provision. Just as at a banquet the servers set good things on the table for us, so heaven will be the place where God finally and fully meets all our needs and continues to satisfy us for ever. There is an aspect of the Lord's Supper that Luke specially emphasises. This is the first cup of Luke 22:17 (before the cup of Luke 22:20 which is different) which draws our attention to the fact that we are on our way to a heavenly banquet. At the Lord's Supper we have a foretaste of this heavenly banquet. We sit down in a leisurely manner with our Lord Jesus Christ and we have fellowship with Him. We share the joys of what He is doing for us.

The Lord's Supper looks forward to the Second Coming of Jesus because it reminds us that Jesus is absent, physically, from this world and that we shall not meet Him in His glorified body until the end of the world.

Eventually the final stage of the kingdom of God will come. When it finally comes in power the kingdom will be glorious and Jesus will be its King in a visible manner. Now the kingdom is working more quietly and is only slowly gaining victory over sin and darkness. But a day of final victory is coming. On that day we will enjoy a banquet with our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Outline – summary**

### *God's plan*

#### *A room prepared for the Passover meal*

- *The final meal of Jesus' earthly ministry*

#### *Jesus wants them to understand His death*

- *A sacrifice for sin*

#### *Jesus wants fellowship with His disciples before He goes to heaven*

- *A real human being*
- *Last-minute help and instruction to His disciples*
- *Jesus – calm in the face of suffering*

### *The last supper is prophetic*

#### *This gives us an idea of what heaven is*

- *A place of ease and comfort*
- *A place of fellowship*
- *A place of provision*
- *The first cup reminds us that we are on our way to a heavenly banquet*
- *Jesus is absent, physically, from this world until it ends*
- *The final stage of the kingdom of God will come*
- *A banquet with our Lord Jesus Christ*

As Jesus continues to celebrate the Passover with His disciples He now introduces what we call 'the Lord's Supper'. In this part of the story two people and a group of people each have their minds on different things.

1. **Jesus has His mind on the cross.** In just a few hours Jesus knows He will have died. He knows that in twenty-four hours He will be dead and buried. He also knows that His death upon the cross will be a ransom for many. It will be the means of salvation for all who believe in Him.

The Lord's Supper is a time for thanksgiving. At the Passover meal there was thanksgiving for the bread. Jesus' giving thanks is a hint to us that we are to give thanks for His dying for us.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic meal. It began as a Passover celebration, in which the families of Israel would celebrate what God had done for the nation hundreds of years before. As a nation they had been saved by the blood of the Passover lamb.

Jesus takes bread and breaks it. The breaking of the bread symbolises the suffering of Jesus. Of course the breaking was necessary for the bread to be given out to the disciples, but the fact that it is mentioned probably means that there is more to it than that.

Jesus was 'broken' on the cross. It is not that His bones were broken – that did not happen – but He was broken in suffering. The breaking of bread speaks of the way in which each person who eats it will participate in the benefits of the cross; and it speaks of the suffering of Jesus.

The bread itself is a symbol of the body of Christ. Jesus will bear the sins of the world in His body on the tree. 'Do this' means 'have a symbolic meal like this; and break bread and distribute it to the believers'. Its purpose is thanksgiving (as the first part of the verse suggests) and remembering.

The cup speaks symbolically of the new covenant. In the new covenant God relates to His people, gives us certain promises, and offers to confirm the promise by the taking of an oath. Every covenant has to take effect in direct connection with sacrifice. There can be no covenant without 'the blood of the covenant'. It is the death of Jesus for our sins that makes it possible for us to be in relationship with God. That is the 'blood of the covenant'. The wine speaks of the blood which keeps us in covenant with God and enables us to continue in obedience and faith until God swears the covenant oath and we inherit what He is wanting to give us.

2. **Judas has his mind on betraying Jesus.** Judas is a pretender. As we have seen, he has never been a true believer but has been deliberately play-acting, pretending to be a supporter of Jesus and a believer. He was not a backslider: he was a fake disciple. It is possible to be a hypocrite in the church: a person playing a part. Judas was a personal colleague of Jesus. He saw dozens of the miracles of Jesus and heard all His sermons, but none of this brought him to faith. Judas gets a loving warning from Jesus.

Jesus lets His disciples know that one of them whose hand is on the table eating a meal with Him is about to betray Him. It is a warning to Judas and yet it does not expose him. Faced with this supernatural knowledge Judas ought surely to have realised that Jesus is exactly who He says He is, God's Messiah and Saviour. To disown Him and side with His enemies will be terrible evidence of unbelief.

Judas does not defeat the plan of God. Jesus will die according to God's plan, but the one who deliberately betrays Him will face terrible judgement. Human responsibility and God's sovereignty are present at the same time. God uses Judas to get the divine will done, but Judas is still willingly sinning. And Judas has no chance of defeating God. Judas will not get his will done; he will be used in getting God's will done.

We note that Judas is not exposed by Jesus. The other disciples do not know who He is referring to. Judas betrayed Jesus, but Jesus never betrayed Judas. Judas betrayed himself.

3. **The disciples have their minds on earthly greatness.** Luke places the dispute about lordship at this point. The other gospels have it in a different position – perhaps it happened twice. More likely this dispute was continuing all the time. The disciples are interested in earthly greatness. Jesus does not criticise that. It is good to want to be great in serving God, but there is a right and a wrong kind of ambition. There is ambition for worldly greatness, which the disciples are not to want to have.

They must be a contrast. They must be concerned about ministering to others as Jesus Himself is. Their reward will come in due course.

Different things were all happening at the same time. Judas was showing his wickedness. The disciples were showing their immaturity. But Jesus had His mind on the cross and His going there to be a Saviour for us. At the time when some were being wicked and others were showing immaturity, Jesus was showing faithfulness. The foolishness of others did not stop Him. Jesus was determined to be the Saviour of the world.

## **Outline – summary**

### *The Lord's Supper*

#### *1. Jesus has His mind on the cross*

- *Thanksgiving for the bread began as a Passover meal*
- *The breaking of the bread symbolises Jesus' suffering*
- *Broken for us*
- *Eating – sharing the benefits*
- *Its purpose – thanksgiving and remembering*
- *The cup speaks symbolically of the new covenant*
- *The blood of the covenant – enables us to be in relationship with God*

#### *2. Judas has his mind on betraying Jesus*

- *A fake disciple*
- *A loving warning from Jesus*
- *Judas was not exposed by Jesus*
- *Judas does not defeat the plan of God*
- *Judas betrayed himself*

#### *3. The disciples have their minds on earthly greatness*

- *A dispute about greatness*
- *Ambition – two kinds*
- *Judas – wicked*
- *The disciples immature*
- *Jesus – faithful*

## **Notes from the synoptic gospel accounts:**

- Bless – give thanks for
- Eat it / drink it – physical act that represents our participation in His death by faith
- Remembrance – as often as you do it – mental / heart
  - His body was broken – given for us
  - His blood was shed – cup poured out
  - Remembering what has taken place
  - Remembering what the current implication is for us – what we receive / have as an ongoing result of His death
- A new covenant in His blood – they knew of the new covenant spoken of in the OT. Now new one is given in His blood

## **Jn 6:29–59**

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

<sup>30</sup> So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? <sup>31</sup> Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ ” <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” <sup>34</sup> They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

<sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. <sup>36</sup> But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

<sup>41</sup> So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” <sup>42</sup> They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’ ” <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. <sup>44</sup> No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— <sup>46</sup> not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup> This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

<sup>52</sup> The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” <sup>53</sup> So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” <sup>59</sup> Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

### **Notes:**

- He is the bread of heaven / bread of God / bread of life
- The bread is His flesh – His body
- Only way to eternal life is to eat His flesh and drink His blood – participate in His death and resurrection (See 1 Cor 10)
- Jesus is referring to His death and showing that in His death is our life. His death swallows up the death that should be ours and thus gives us eternal life

### **Lk 24:35**

<sup>35</sup> Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

### **Ac 2:42**

<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

### **Ac 2:46-47**

<sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

## **Michael Eaton's notes**

### **Acts 2:42-47**

Further results follow. Acts 2:42–47 records what this first newly revived and restored congregation of 'Israel' was like. This one congregation was at this time the entire church; it was God's 'Israel' restored to life by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Later on the church would become 'churches'; it would consist of many congregations. And gentiles would be added to God's 'Israel'.

Here we have the church newly revived and at its best. In verse 42 they (i) are a people who have received the teaching that has come from the apostles, the inspired eyewitnesses of the resurrection. (ii) As the result of their common faith in the apostolic teaching they have fellowship together. (iii) The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ is kept central in their lives. This is the point of the 'breaking of bread'. The Lord's Supper keeps the church focused on the cross. (iv) They are able to pray. Prayer does not come first; it is mentioned fourth! You have to submit to God's Word, be in fellowship with God's people and have faith in the cross – before you can really pray.

In verses 43–47 they (v) experience in a powerful way the presence of God among them in signs and wonders (2:43); (vi) they practise great generosity among each other (2:44–45). The communal lifestyle was a short-term matter, and was entirely voluntary (as 4:32–5:11 makes clear). It was not a permanent institution – just as temple worship was not a permanent institution (2:46). (vii) As the last verse of Luke's Gospel has already told us, they worshipped daily at the temple. It was part of the persistence, dedication and joyfulness in their new-found anointing of the Holy Spirit. The temple was a public building; it was quite natural for the church to use its courtyards as a meeting-place. Jesus had used it. It was good as a place to share the gospel (see 5:19–21). They also had smaller meetings in each other's homes. (viii) They have a great impact upon those who are outside of their fellowship, and they see many of them coming to faith in Jesus and joining their congregation in Jerusalem. Those who are 'saved' are added to the congregation of the Christians. 'Saved' means brought to initial salvation. It is the way the word is often used today – but there are other ways in which the word 'saved' is used in the Bible.

The people of Jerusalem were well disposed to the Christians. God's people had such unconquerable joy that observers were impressed. The church did not go out of its way to get new members, but they came every day, and the Lord added them to his people.

## **Notes:**

- Devoted to breaking bread – in the context of the fellowship

- Broke bread in their home
- Broke bread daily
- Was part of a meal together – the term ‘breaking bread’ often referred to having a meal together
- They had glad and generous hearts as they ‘received their food’
- There was an atmosphere of praise in their coming together
- They enjoyed favour with all the people (including unbelievers at this stage)

### Ac 20:7

<sup>7</sup>On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

### Michael Eaton’s notes

#### Acts 20:7-12

2. Acts 20:7–12 gives us a rare picture of how Paul would visit an established church and talk with them for many hours. It is a moving picture. Paul is like a tender father. He talks for hours with his junior workers.

On the Sunday morning he ‘broke bread’ with them (20:7a); that is, there was a celebration of ‘the Lord’s Supper’. The ‘Lord’s Supper’ was Jesus’ way of keeping his sin-cleansing death central in the preaching of his church. Paul’s fatherly talk with his people began with the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We notice that he had a lot to say! He talked for hours until midnight, and then (after the raising of Eutychus) kept going all night until daybreak (20:7b, 11)! The Christian message comes to us not in word only but in the power of the Spirit. Yet one could also say: the Christian message comes not in the Spirit only but with a lot of words! What sort of things was Paul saying? He would be clarifying his teaching. He would be urging that they work out their faith in a disciplined and godly manner, losing their lives in order to find them again in Jesus.

He would be encouraging them in the face of great adversities, reminding them that it is through many tribulations that we experience the kingdom of God.

His ministry was an empowered ministry. Paul could not only talk; he could raise the dead when necessary! When young Eutychus falls asleep in the heat of the upper room and is killed (20:8–9), Paul goes down and embraces him. He is restored to life by Paul’s embrace (20:10), and Paul (letting nothing distract him) carries on speaking (20:11)! The last thing we hear of the young man is that he is alive and well (20:12).

Here is model Christian ministry: team-work, plenty of rich teaching and motivation, resurrection-from-the-dead power.

#### Notes:

- Breaking bread was one of the reasons for meeting but it seems it included having a meal– see v 11
- Met on the first day of the week for this in this account. Seems to indicate that this had become regular practice

### Ac 20:11

<sup>11</sup> And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed.

### Ac 27:33–36

<sup>33</sup> As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. <sup>34</sup> Therefore I urge you to take some food. For it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you.” <sup>35</sup> And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat. <sup>36</sup> Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves.

### Notes:

- More illustrations of the normal practice of breaking bread at the beginning of a meal and the use of this phrase to refer to a meal

### 1 Co 10:14–22

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. <sup>15</sup> I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. <sup>16</sup> 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? <sup>17</sup> Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. <sup>18</sup> Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? <sup>19</sup> What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? <sup>20</sup> No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. <sup>21</sup> You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. <sup>22</sup> Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

### Michael Eaton's notes

#### 1 Cor 10:16-22

This leads Paul to talk about the Lord's Supper in order to illustrate what goes on at pagan religious gatherings. What happens in **their** gatherings is parallel to what happens in **our** gatherings. But in **their** gatherings they are fellowshiping with demons; in **our** gatherings we are enjoying fellowship with the Lord, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*The cup of blessing for which we give thanks, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?* What is the Lord's Supper? (i) It is a means of keeping the cross of Christ central in the life of the church. There is always a danger that the church of Jesus Christ will drift away from its central message. But the central experience of the Christian church is our experience of the cross of Jesus Christ. What is the cross of Jesus Christ? It achieves many things, but it is first and foremost God's way of salvation from the death penalty that is attached to sin. The wages of sin is death – in many senses of the word. But Jesus 'died'. His blood pays the price for our sins. The Lord's Supper is primarily connected with salvation from sin. (It is not **primarily** connected with physical healing. If you use the Lord's Supper in the right way it is certain

you will be forgiven. But even if you use the Lord's Supper in the right way it is not **certain** that you will be physically healed.)

What is the Lord's Supper? (ii) Among other things, it is a symbolic meal. The **wine** symbolizes the blood of Jesus Christ. The **bread** symbolizes the body of Christ upon the cross. The **breaking** symbolizes the sufferings of Christ. The **one loaf** symbolizes the unity of the fellowship. *Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all share in the one loaf.* Paul uses the word 'body' here to refer to the church.

In the previous sentence it referred to the literal body of Christ upon the cross.

What is the Lord's Supper? (iii) It is an occasion for fellowship with Jesus in the blessings of the gospel. It is a 'participation in the blood of Christ', a 'participation in the body of Christ'. On our side there is faith. We are telling God again that we believe in the blood of Christ, that we know Jesus died for us in his body (10:16).

How should the Lord's Supper be used? (i) With gratitude. We 'give thanks for' the bread and for the wine, because we are grateful for what they say to us about Jesus. (ii) With faith. We believe again in Jesus' death upon the cross. We believe again in the power of his blood to forgive our sins and minister to us peace of conscience.

### Notes:

- Cup and bread we bless – give thanks for
- Cup is (representative of) a participation (koinonia – fellowship / communion) in the blood of Christ
- Bread is (representative of) a participation (koinonia – fellowship / communion) in the body of Christ
- Communion – having all things in common – common Lord, common loaf, seek welfare of each part, actively contribute to the welfare of each part
- The body of Christ in the literal sense of His flesh – His body given for us
- The body of Christ in the figurative sense of His church (the one loaf) in which we partake
- There is an exclusivity in this communion – there is no other and we cannot participate in this and the cup / table of demons (referring to idolatry)

### 1 Co 11:17–34

#### The Lord's Supper

<sup>17</sup> But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. <sup>18</sup> For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, <sup>19</sup> for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

<sup>20</sup> When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. <sup>21</sup> For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. <sup>22</sup> What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

<sup>23</sup> 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, <sup>24</sup> 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." <sup>25</sup> 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.”<sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

<sup>27</sup> Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup> Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup> That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. <sup>31</sup> But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup> But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

<sup>33</sup> So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—<sup>34</sup> if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

## Michael Eaton’s notes

### 1 Cor 11:17-26

1. **We have to take the trouble not to allow discrimination in the church.** In Corinth the pride of the majority and their love of wisdom and social status were damaging the fellowship. *When you gather together in one place it is not the Lord’s Supper you eat, for each of you takes his own supper, and one person is hungry and another is drunk.* They were forgetting that the Lord’s Supper is not just a social occasion, it is something ordained by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is his supper; he is the host and he is feeding all of his people. It was wicked to be using it as a kind of party in which people ate too much and drank too much wine, and ill-treated the poorer Christians! God hates it when we discriminate against poorer people in the church. Poor people are not to be treated badly. And they are not to be treated patronizingly either! We are to realize that wealth counts for **nothing** in the eyes of God. The rich are not rich when they come to church. The poor are not poor. We are simply ex-sinners, forgiven sinners, people wanting to know God. Poverty and wealth do not come into the matter at all!

2. **We must not forget the importance of the church.** We do not treat the congregation of God’s people as unimportant or trivial. *Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God, and do you embarrass those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I do not praise you!* The church of God is precious to him. We do not use it as a social club or a musical society or a debating forum or a political agency – and certainly not as a party to meet our friends and be unkind to the poor! The church of Jesus Christ is the place where the redeemed have fellowship. It is the fellowship of the saved! We come together to encourage one another in the things of God, and to have Jesus feed us with the cross.

The church of God is so precious to him that if we misuse it he will be displeased. Jesus is building his church. We are to build it with him, not slow the progress of the building or pull it down.

Those who love Jesus must love his people.

3. Paul speaks of **the meaning of the bread.** *I received . . . that which I also passed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed took bread, and having given thanks he broke it and said, ‘This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’*

It was **an occasion for thanksgiving.** Jesus gave thanks for the bread. The bread symbolized **the body of Jesus.** It reminds us of the fact that Jesus literally bore our sins in his body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24). Of course the bread is not **literally** the body of Jesus. The **literal** body of Jesus was standing there holding the bread in his hands. ‘This is my body’ means ‘This represents my body’ (just as, in Revelation 1:20, ‘The seven lamps are the seven churches’ means ‘The seven lamps represent the seven churches’). The breaking symbolized **participation**, for the bread could not be shared without being broken. The broken bread also symbolizes **suffering.** Some Greek manuscripts have ‘which is

broken for you' in verse 24, but they are the less reliable ones. The best manuscripts have 'which is for you'. Actually not one of Jesus' bones was broken on the cross. Yet Jesus did suffer immensely in his death upon the cross. The greatest part of his suffering was being abandoned by the Father. The eating of the bread is an occasion for **remembrance**. We must not get too superstitious about this word. There is no repetition of the sacrifice of Christ. Jesus died once-for-ever and that sacrifice is finished and complete. Nor must we get too 'magical' in thinking about the Lord's Supper as if mysterious spiritual magic was taking place without our knowing it. The visible bread and wine stirs our faith and points our memory in the right direction. But the 'remembering' is not the remembering of a dead friend; it is remembering a living Saviour. Although Jesus is not **in** the bread and wine, he is present as we pray and as we believe. We remember what our **living** Saviour who is present with his people did for us for our redemption. It is the bread and wine that makes us thank him for the greatest thing he ever did: his death upon the cross.

4. Paul speaks of **the meaning of the cup of wine**. *In the same way also he took the cup, after the supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'*

The cup speaks symbolically of the new covenant (22:20) – an offer of God in which he relates to us, gives us certain promises, and offers to confirm the promise by the taking of an oath. Every covenant has to involve sacrifice at one point or another. There can be no covenant without 'the blood of the covenant'. What makes it possible for us to be in relation with God is the death of Jesus for our sins. That is the 'blood of the covenant'.

The wine speaks of the blood which keeps us in covenant with God and enables us to continue in obedience and faith until God swears the covenant oath and we inherit what he is wanting to give us.

5. Paul speaks of **the proclamation of Jesus' death**. *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.* The Lord's Supper is a way of preaching to ourselves. We **listen** to preaching in the words of the preacher. We **see** the preaching when we gaze upon the bread and wine (which should let us know that our eyes should not be closed during this time!). We gather together and preach to each other in visible form as well as in spoken words, when we eat bread and drink wine in commemoration and gratitude to Jesus. We shall have to go on reminding each other of the cross of Christ in this way until he comes, and then we shall need no reminding.

So the Lord's Supper is God's way of getting us to keep the cross of Christ central in the life of the church. We use the Lord's Supper to draw close to Jesus in gratitude for what he has done for the entire church through his cross – and as we do so Jesus draws near to us. The visible symbols of bread and wine will not be empty symbols. Because they direct our faith, they become powerful channels of blessing to us. Jesus is not specially present in bread and wine, but he comes close to us when we use the sight of bread and wine to praise him for his cross, and take his cross into our lives more than ever.

#### **Notes:**

- When you come together (v20) to eat (v33) ensure that you eat (the Lord's supper / eat the bread and drink the cup) in a worthy manner
- If we eat when there are divisions or are disrespectful of each other when we eat then it is no longer a participation in the Lord's supper
- Do not simply begin to eat you own meal and so despise the church and humiliate those who have nothing. This seems to imply:

- Those who could brought food to the meal
- The meal was intended to be eaten together with everyone sharing in it – in common
- It was obviously more than only a loaf and a cup
- Those who participate wait for one another so that all can participate
- If anyone is too hungry to wait then rather first eat at home and then come and share in the Lord’s Supper with the other believers
- Eating in a worthy manner includes a number of things but we see that many are actually about being devoted to the fellowship:
  - Examining yourself
  - Discern the body
  - Be in unity – don’t have divisions
  - Respect each other and do not discriminate
  - Make sure that everyone has enough – especially those who are poor
  - Waiting for each other – eating together – which could be part of what ‘discerning the body’ means
- Paul says that when they do not do this ‘in fellowship’ it is no longer the Lord’s Supper
- See again that the eating of bread and drinking of the cup was part of the meal and there was significance in doing this together
- The aspect of remembrance is repeated here
- So is the aspect of the cup being a new covenant in His blood
- The aspect of this being a proclamation of the Lord’s death is added

### Passages on the new covenant

#### Heb 8:6–13

<sup>6</sup>But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. <sup>7</sup>For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.

<sup>8</sup>For he finds fault with them when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, <sup>9</sup>not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. <sup>10</sup>For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>11</sup>And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. <sup>12</sup>For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” <sup>13</sup>In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

#### Je 31:31–34

<sup>31</sup>“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup>not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant

that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. <sup>33</sup> For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup> And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."