

The Integrated Practice of Breaking Bread in Church Life

Thank the Lord. Let us pray for this meeting.

O Lord Jesus, God has highly exalted You after You came to accomplish salvation for us sinners. God raised You from the dead and sat You on the right hand of the majesty on high. This is the Christ that we have today. We exalt You. You once wore the crown of thorns and bled for sinners. Now You wear the crown of glory and honor. All the power is given to You. We thank You for this Christ that we have. Even now we are in Your presence. You are here with all the power from heaven. Send forth Your Spirit now, Lord, as we pray for this meeting. O Lord, anoint the words. Without Your words, by the letters and only my own mind, it is all useless and vain. How we need You, Lord. Anoint the meeting, anoint my mouth, anoint the ears, Lord. May the whole meeting be filled with You. That is the only good purpose we have, which is You. Praise You in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Let us read from the book of Acts, chapter two.

Acts 2:42, 46-47; 20:7, says, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread..."

Matthew 26:27 says, "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;"

I Corinthians 11:23-25 says, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

Introduction

From these verses, the topic we would like to fellowship on today is the Lord's table, or breaking bread, also known as communion.

I would like to give just a theme: "The Integrated Practice of Breaking Bread in Church Life." "Integrated" means that breaking bread was combined with other spiritual activities in church life. Just as we have daily life: getting up in the morning, eating, going to work; the church also has church life. The theme is integrated practice.

As I was studying the topic of breaking bread, I found that in the book of Acts, the topic is interwoven with other spiritual activities. Not only just woven, but interwoven. This means that breaking bread was woven, for example, into fellowship, and fellowship was woven into breaking bread. So interwoven: many components together with breaking bread form that unified whole, which I call church life. That is how we will look at this topic today.

There are other messages on CTM website that Brother Kaung has spoken, and others have shared, specifically on the Lord's table. Since we, as a corporate body, are going through the book of Acts, I would like to share from that perspective: the book of Acts and how the early Christians broke bread or held the Lord's table.

The Lord's table is such an important topic and such an important thing to do. It is the only meeting you can see in the Bible that the Lord commanded His disciples to do; and later the apostles continued to do. It is so important that the early Christians received such teaching, and they did, they broke bread very often.

This was even before the church elders were set up. We think that eldership was important, but that came later. From the very beginning, from the very get-go, in the same chapter that the church was born, we see that they were breaking bread. So, it is very important.

For believers here who have been in the Lord for many years, I hope today's fellowship will be a refreshing one. To those who may have come into our midst and are not as familiar with why we break bread weekly, I hope and pray that from the Word of God, it will enlighten us and leave a deep impression on us.

They Gather to Break Bread

This is from Acts 20:7, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread..."

We see from the three passages that breaking bread, the breaking of the bread, and coming to break bread, is the same topic but in different forms. The nuance is a little bit different at each instance. The one in Acts 20:7, "the disciples came together to break bread." Just like this morning, we came to break bread. This tells us that they came for the purpose of breaking bread. Very simple, it tells us the purpose. We come together, and we know we are coming for the purpose of breaking bread. Well, just saying that we come for the purpose of breaking bread is still vague. What does that mean? What is the purpose of breaking bread?

So, we can look deeper into the meaning of breaking bread. Let us review a little bit, but I still hope and pray this is something fresh. We will look at the bread and the cup.

Let us look at what the Lord said about remembering. He said, "this do in remembrance of Me." One brother shared here one time that we tend to forget. There was a brother a long time ago who believed in the Lord. Not long after, he fell away. For many years he did not meet, did not fellowship, did not read the Bible. For many years,

he just kind of went into slumber in the world. But then one day he got sick and was vomiting blood. He knew he was about to die. Then he remembered, "Oh, I once believed in Jesus. I want to go back to church to tell the brothers that I am dying." So, he went back to church and met up with this one brother. The brother, with the Lord's Spirit moving in him, gave him some scripture, and they prayed together. He went home, expecting to die soon, but the Lord healed him. He told his family, "Look, we need to come back to church life." So, the whole family came back and resumed meeting.

That is an instance where we tend to forget, and we may fall into slumber in the world. But the Lord set this up: "this do in remembrance of Me." When I was younger, I tried to use a method, a man's method. I said: "Well, yes, I forget the Lord during the day also. I will just set a timer for myself. It beeps every hour. It beeps, and I remember the Lord." That is a man's method.

The Lord here tells us, "this do," referring to breaking bread. He took bread, gave thanks, and took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them. "This do in remembrance of Me." The Lord, in His wisdom, has a purpose in that.

The Bread

Let us look at the bread first.

The Lord said, "This is My body broken for you." In Luke and Acts, one says, "broken for you," and one says "given" or "offered" for you. Well, it is the same thing. The Lord offered His body up, giving His body for us. This time I focused on what the offering of the Lord was for us. It could mean we receive some benefit, or a lot of benefits, lots of blessings. When it is for us, it means some blessing was bestowed upon us. So, let us look at what that blessing is.

He died, or He offered Himself for us so that we may live. We may live the Christian life. We need Him to live today: the Christian walk, the Christian way, the way of the cross is not easy. By our own flesh, there is no way I can walk in His way, to follow Him, to overcome. Yes, there is that great blessing of living forever, receiving eternal life. But today, in this age, while we are learning or walking in His way, to be transformed into overcoming saints, we need His life. So, He offered Himself for us so that we may live.

This can be seen in the early church life in Taiwan. In the 1950s, when the church first revived there, it was very poor. They sat on wooden benches, not even with back support, and just had canopies. They met together to break bread. During the rainy season, the rain would splash, and the ground would be all wet. It was in that kind of very poor difficult conditions that they met together and broke bread.

The older saints from that generation shared with me later, that every time they broke bread together, the Lord's love filled the meeting, and they were strengthened so that they could go on. It is like that, thank the Lord. We too have difficulties. Yes, we are a lot more comfortable now, but we have our own personal lives. I am sure we have difficulties.

Well, breaking bread: we take His life, we eat Him, we get strengthened, and we can go on.

He died so that we may die, that is another blessing. Dying in Him is a blessing. Brother Kenny shared on Romans 6. If it were not for Romans 6, dying and being buried with Him; we could not say Philippians 1, "For me to live is Christ." Our old man, in a family, in a workplace, would still all be there, all rough. But dying with Christ, then Christ lives in us, lives through us, and out of us. That is one of the many blessings which we can receive from the Lord as we come to the Lord's table.

How about another meaning? When the Lord said He did it for us, it was as our substitute. He took it in our stead, for us. He was crucified and crushed for us. In this, we often give thanks to the Lord. We were the sinners; we were the rebels. Yet He took the drink, the bitter cup, for us so that we may have His life.

There is a lot when we think about our doom as sinners, rebels. The Lord said to Adam, "This day you eat it, you shall surely die." That death is from the soul first, the spirit first, then the body will disintegrate back into the dirt. Then the soul ends up in the lake of fire with Satan. That was the destiny.

If it were not for the Lord dying for us, we would have been in that kind of death. But the Lord's death saved us. As I thought about it, the blessings that we receive, the Lord will reveal to us each time we come to the meeting. Some preparation beforehand does help a lot.

I saw this couple in Southern California. When we came to church early, they were sitting in the swing outside. They were already reading the Bible and praying. When the meeting started and we came together, then the Lord's presence and His love, His Spirit filled all of us. What a remembrance of the Lord that meeting would be.

The Cup

Let us come to the next one: the cup. The Lord said, "This is My blood," the covenant in blood, for the remission of sins. He shed His blood; He said that He shed it for you. So again, for us, I thought of how many blessings come with the Lord shedding His blood for us.

Sin is like a law, sin has its own law in our flesh. Sin was in our flesh. It is like a law. Even though we do not want to sin, we still sin.

I think I have shared about one really great sinner: he was involved in gambling and a lot of other sins. But as soon as he was saved, yes, all those sins departed from him. The Lord entered into him and conquered a lot of that evil wickedness that was in him. But still, we are living in this flesh. We still have sin's temptation, sin's gravity tries to pull us to commit more sins.

The blood of the Lord is just for that. Even after we are saved, we still commit sins. It may be like, "Oh, just a little white lie that does not hurt." That is still sin. Our thoughts:

even as Christians, we want our minds to be clean; the cleansing work of the cross. But we do have enemies, sending thoughts into our minds like rockets, that is sin. But the blood of the Lord Jesus cleanses from all those kinds of sins.

The cup as a “covenant in blood” is another great blessing; this is something that God ordained. But humans, in the old days, did similar things. When they entered into a covenant, they would draw blood. Some would smear blood; others would split an animal in half, and there would be bloodshed; then they would agree on some promise or promises. They would walk between the two halves of the split animal where there was blood. In doing that, they are saying whoever breaks the promise will suffer the same fate as this animal.

I just use that as an example of blood and how it seals a covenant. Well, Jesus shed His blood for us, for the new covenant. The new covenant we enjoy as His people, mentioned in the book of Hebrews. Also, our sins, He remembers our sins no more.

We can look at it also as a substitute. Did we shed our blood for this covenant? This is entirely one-sided, He did it. When God, Jesus, sheds blood and makes a covenant with man, that becomes binding or self-binding to Him; and the force or the enforcement of His covenant is tied directly and only to His power and His integrity.

The Bible tells us God cannot lie, He never breaks a promise. The assurance that we have meditating on the covenant in blood that He made with us; we have many hymns like, “Standing on the Promises of God,” because we get discouraged easily. In our Christian walk we often get discouraged thinking: Oh, it is hopeless now, it is hopeless; Oh, I cannot go on; my eternity, I am doomed in hell.

Well, no, the enemy may trick us to think that, but that is not the case. God's covenant is sure; it is firm. His promises are kept forever, and it is tied to the integrity of His blood, and He will never break that promise.

The significance of the bread and the cup is already very rich. When we come to the table with a purpose, the Lord will reveal more each time. It could be from a Bible verse we read, or a hymn that we sang during the week, the Lord speaks to us. Or even during the opening, the reading of the Word opens some spiritual insights for us to come to worship the Lord.

One Loaf, One Cup

The Lord also said, “Drink ye all of it,” or “Drink ye all from the cup.” In the old days, they used to share cups. In the early 1900s, it was banned to share cups in public. The invention of the microscope may be to blame, but the Lord had His wisdom when He told them to drink out of the same cup.

We drink of one cup in the Spirit: we display one cup; it is the implementation. But there is that intimacy. Brother Nee said this: “We would not drink out of the same cup if we did not feel or sense the intimacy of the saints.” So it is that intimacy. We share the

same cup, drinking out of the same cup is sharing, and that is fellowship. We will go into a little bit more on that soon.

There is also the significance of showing our oneness. There is a hymn: “We gather together to eat the Lord's supper: By eating and drinking, our oneness we show.” How do we show it? Well, first, we display one loaf, one cup. The loaf is the Lord's body. What is the Lord's body today? The church. So that loaf also represents us: one body, one loaf. We break it, we eat it into us, we express our oneness. We will fellowship a little bit more on oneness later. So, it is one cup, one loaf. We show our oneness and our togetherness in one accord.

Perseverance in Spiritual Activities

“They continued steadfastly,” this is from Acts 2:42. I looked at several words to translate “continue steadfastly,” and I chose “persevere,” which most closely translates that word from Greek. Another word for it is “persist.” “Persist” is more focused on the act that is consistent in the midst of opposition; but “persevere” focuses on the effort to continue despite opposition and challenges. So, I like to use the word “persevere.”

Acts chapter two, I will just briefly summarize the context. You remember it was the birth of the church, and the Holy Spirit came down. They spoke in tongues, and people wondered, “What is going on?”

Then Peter came forth to speak of the Lord's death and resurrection, and it was added to them 3,000 that day. That is where we pick up. They, referring to those who were newly saved, persevered in these four things.

Teaching

King James uses “doctrine,” but the original is “teaching.” We see that word comes from the same base form, “teach.” So that is where we get the word “teacher.” Teaching is the noun. The apostles, in the Spirit, knew and were led by the Spirit. They knew what to do at that time, when there were so many believers. Why does it not say they persevered in the prophesying of the apostles? They prophesied too, but they persevered in the teachings. There were so many new believers, and in Ephesians the Bible says He gave gifts: apostles, prophets, and then teachers, shepherds. For new believers, spiritual things are quite high; and they need teachers to, in a sense, break it down and teach it to them.

So, what is included in teaching? It is very broad; it is the Word of God. You can say it is Christ Himself. It may include teachings on breaking bread, teaching on the kingdom of God. Everything is Christ and comes forth like sincere milk of the Word taught to new believers. That was very appropriate at that time because there were 3,000 added to them. New believers need a lot of teaching.

But teaching also is not just knowledge. It is a life matter: when we see it as Christ, the anointing of the teachings is Christ Himself. It is a life matter; it is not just knowledge. Yes, we do learn; it is in our mind, we know it. But it is because it is anointed with the

Holy Spirit, it is a matter of life. It is Christ's life, received, eaten into them, into us; such that it can shape and change the inner man; whereas dry knowledge does not change or shape the inner man in any way. So, it has to be life. And they persevered in the teaching. Why? They were hungry for the Lord. Newly saved people want to know the Lord. They were hungry for the Lord, and there was proper teaching. They ate it, and it strengthened them, giving them strength to go on in the Christian way.

I will give an example of two young brothers, they were in their 20s. One led the other one to the Lord, and the one who was saved for more years said, "Let us read *The Normal Christian Life* together." So, they started reading it. They just kind of met weekly in the car. They did not have a fancy place to meet; they just met in the car, using a dome light at night, and they read *The Normal Christian Life* little by little, praying. They did not go fast, and it took them eight months to finish that little booklet. Fourteen chapters took eight months. They persevered in that. It is very easy to start a book and give up, but they persevered because they were hungry for the Lord.

We can say teaching is proper for new believers as opposed to, say, having them read *The Spiritual Man* by Watchman Nee as soon as they believe. So even in spiritual teaching, there are things that are appropriate. The apostles provided appropriate teaching for them.

Fellowship

They continued steadfastly, "in fellowship." I like to give a brief working definition so that it is easy to understand, because fellowship is kind of an abstract word. We often say, "Oh, yes, we have some fellowship," like we talk about the Lord. Yes, that is included. But at the core of fellowship is sharing in a relationship. We can say it is a "relational sharing," sharing anything, sharing in a relationship. The saints were related. We are all the family of God, we are related by the life of Christ. A family is a group of people related by blood or adoption. So, it is a relational sharing.

How did we go from teaching to fellowship? After eating Christ, through the teaching of the apostles, they digested; they have the life of Christ in them. Well, do not just keep it to yourself, share. It is that simple: share Christ. In that chapter, we see not only are they sharing Christ, but they also shared everything, even physical things, food. They were in communal living. They shared everything.

But human nature is such that it is not always easy to maintain that relational sharing. Human nature, I admit I have inherited from Adam things like pride. "Oh, he has more Christ than I." "Oh, I have jealousy." "I have my ego." In a church where there are, imagine, 3,000 people; or even with just 100 people, it is easy that we offend one another. We may step on each other's toes, in a sense.

Well, I was at an assembly, and there was a brother who was very young. The brothers asked, "Oh, would you like to share at the Bible study? Just do the opening at the Bible study." So, he did. They continued to do that for a time. But then the brothers thought,

“Oh, he is still a bit of a new convert to be bearing that kind of responsibility.” So, they told him, “Okay, now we are going to have a rotated sharing and Bible study opening.”

Sadly, the young brother got offended. He was talking with me on the phone, and he said, “That is the reason I want to cut ties with the church.” Where there is offense, we need to persevere in maintaining sweet fellowship. Fellowship is not all that easy because we still have that fallen human nature.

What do we need? The Lord says, “Forgive, forgive.” How many times? “Seventy times seven.” Repent and forgive. That really requires us to bear the cross, to lose face.

Well, there was a brother when he was younger, he did not care about saving face and he diligently learned repenting. In church, he often said, “Oh, sorry brother, sorry brother.” During interactions, he knew he was kind of a blunt, outspoken, more aggressive person. But then quickly, he would say, “Oh, sorry brother, sorry brother.” So, it is like that in church life.

It does take effort to persevere in maintaining fellowship. That is why if we have an offense against someone in the church and we come to break bread, we will sense a kind of tension there, would we not? Tension, dissonance. Because of the bread, we are saying we are one; we are in one accord. But when I have an ill will or a grudge against someone, a brother or sister in the church, then there is tension.

It is best to resolve that in the blood of the Lord, forgive. Otherwise, if I am breaking bread, it is not genuine. Rather, I am actually a hypocrite. I would say I am a hypocrite if I am taking bread when I have ill will or a grudge against someone at church.

Fellowship can be very sweet. I think there is a hymn that starts, “Oh, what sweet fellowship can be very sweet.” It would be filled with concord, harmony in the spiritual sense, and joy.

Breaking of Bread

We go from fellowship to breaking of bread, a further expression of fellowship. Not only does it show our oneness, but we also show our fellowship together.

The appearance of this phrase, “breaking of bread,” is a little bit different from “breaking bread,” or “to break bread.” Breaking of bread is, for those who are kind of English majors, a noun phrase. It is a noun. We can say it is bread’s breaking. So, it is a noun form. I just bring that up to show that this verse, “persevering in the breaking of bread,” is not the action, here it is the concept. Translating that into a spiritual sense: it is a deep conviction, a holding, firmly gripping the idea or the concept of breaking bread.

For new believers in Christianity today, a lot of times they are taught to preach the gospel, for instance. Yes, once you are saved, that is good. It is important to preach the gospel. Or they are taught we need to be baptized. Yes, baptism is good. But what happened several thousand years later? We do not see this concept taught that often

anymore: breaking of bread. What is the big deal about that? Well, if we have the deep conviction of breaking the bread each week, it guides us.

Some saints were visiting the east coast, and they were looking for a place to break bread. One time I was planning to go to London [I did not end up going,] and I contacted the brothers and sisters there in Honor Oak, and I asked them, “Do you break bread?” The brother replied, “Oh, yes, we do.” Then he even said that was a topic he was going to share that Sunday. He told the brothers, “A brother was coming to visit, and he asked us about whether we break bread every Sunday.” So, it guides us. Not only that, look at what happened: we survived the pandemic. We could not meet in person to break bread, but we did it on Zoom in California. The saints continued to persevere in breaking bread. Also, we love the Lord, we keep His commandment to break bread. We love the saints. We do not really need any other reason, just the love for the Lord.

We want to hold firmly that deep conviction of breaking the bread. “As often as ye do it,” the Lord permits us to do it often. We will see how the early Christians did it daily first and then weekly on the Lord’s Day.

Sadly, how has Christianity lost grip on this? I kind of did a brief search. In 2013 there was a survey done by the National Association of Evangelicals, and an article’s title says, “Once a Month is the Norm. Seventy percent of churches in America hold communion or the Lord’s table once a month.” The reason they cited was, “Well, the scripture does not specifically address that, and so there is a wide variation of it.”

Well, I felt that the brothers ahead of us had shown us from the Scripture, from the Book of Acts, something to imitate. There are certain things we do not just copy from the outward. But the Holy Spirit in us can confirm us imitating the early Christians in breaking bread on the first day of the week. It confirms us, it assures us that, yes, the Lord’s presence is with us; and we are blessed that we can have that kind of breaking bread meeting.

It is very easy to fall into a ritual. That is why persevering applies to this as well. Outwardly, it is just a tiny piece of bread and a small bit of juice or wine. But inwardly, what are we doing inwardly? We are remembering the Lord’s death. There is so much involved in that. With the opening, when the Spirit reveals to us, when we see Christ, each time in us ought to be filled with light about our Lord’s suffering and His love. There are endless things we can count.

Then in response, we give thanks and praise to Him at the table. Sometimes it is the Lord through a servant, like at the opening. Paul, we just read, said, “The Lord spoke to me, and I delivered to you.” The Lord may speak through a brother in our opening, or directly, if we come before the Lord early in the morning. We get up in the morning on the Lord’s Day, and start to pray individually; or even in the household come and pray. And then when we gather together, we have already seen something of the Lord. In the meeting, the Lord fills every one of us. Then our voices of praise are offered up to heaven. He would be satisfied.

Prayers

They continued steadfastly, “in prayers.” Prayers here are plural. They had a lot of prayer even before the church was born. Once it was born, they continued to persevere in prayer to have the church continue. The apostles were people who lived a prayerful life. We learn that as well.

Partaking of the Food

“They were partaking of the food.” Acts 2:46. This verse seems very basic and starts out very casually, this is an ongoing thing. Partaking of food is not the same as eating food. Eating food, you could be eating individually; but here, “partaking of” means together, and no one was excluded. It is just like when we are about to have lunch at 12 o'clock; we are partaking of lunch together. That is how the early Christians ate.

Eating food is a basic thing in life—but it is also life-dependent. Something that is life-dependent is not particularly easy. I want to use that to make a connection with fellowship. This is what Brother Watchman Nee said in *The Normal Christian Life*. He said he went to meet George Cutter, and that old brother, 93 years old, could not say much. But what did he say? He kept telling him, concerning a brother in the body, “Brother, I could not be without him, and he could not be without me.” It is that kind of interdependence in the spiritual sense, that is the spiritual ground we are on.

In Gladness

They were having meals together in “gladness,” or intense joy. About 18 to 29 percent of Americans are depressed. It is kind of an ultimate goal in life, on our inside, our emotions, to achieve happiness. Outwardly, anything we do to try to achieve happiness does not work. The only true joy is in Christ. The Lord was with them, even eating meals they were enjoying that utter joy. They can maintain that joy. In the midst of suffering or pain, or later they might face persecution, it is not easy to maintain joy.

In Simplicity of Heart

“In simplicity of heart,” I was going to gloss over it; but then I thought, Jews are not simple, they are complicated. I remember a friend who was Jewish. He said Jewish people are very intellectual, they are very complicated. He was a Christian, and the Lord used him to go to the synagogue to share Christ. He was telling me how the Jews nowadays at the synagogue did not stone him or anything, but they questioned him. They would ask him very deep intellectual questions. “Well, what about this? What about that?”

It is like in the book of Romans. Paul had already started saying, “We are all sinners. Christ is the only way.” But then he had to address those who know the law and then say, “Oh, Christ died, and the law is dead, and you are no under the law and sin.” He had to go through all those arguments for the Jews because they are complicated. They are intellectually complicated.

Well, simplicity of heart does come with being in the Spirit and by the cross. I know that preaching the gospel to Chinese is also very difficult, especially to scientists. They question everything. But in simplicity of heart these early believers received the Lord.

Daily Persevering in One Accord In the Temple

Oh, how sweet and beautiful it is to be in the temple of God. Brother Kaung, in his book on the Book of Acts, did mention this. Yes, they may have been in the physical temple, but the more important thing is that they were in the spiritual temple. They were the spiritual temple.

Today we are the temple of God. What is in the temple of God? God Himself, His presence. The Old Testament described when the temple was built, God filled the temple with smoke. Well, that is the Old Testament. Today, the Lord's glory fills us individually. Our spirit is a sanctuary, He can fill us in our spirit. As a corporate body we come together, and He fills. This is the temple of God.

They continued daily in the temple and in one accord. One accord means of the same mind, no quarrels or strife, no jealousy, fighting. In one accord stems from oneness. Oneness is more of the deeper essence, and one accord is the manifestation of that oneness.

We are the living stones. But to be built into a temple, what does it take? It takes the cross. It takes death and resurrection. We were old, rugged stones. How can we try to build with stone? Can the structural engineer build a foundation with just all rugged stones? Build the whole house? What would it look like? We all need to be shaped by the cross and then fitly framed into a temple of God.

Breaking Bread in Each House

Breaking bread in each house, this is the action. This is the practical side. Breaking bread in each house daily. Does "daily" apply here? Grammatically in Greek and I think in English as well: if the first phrase is semantically similar to the second one, because the modifier "daily" modifies "persevering in one accord in the temple;" does it apply to breaking bread? Did they really break bread daily? I believe yes, because the two phrases are similar.

"In each house:" the house is not a physical house, but the people in it, the household. The household is the temple. Breaking bread is an expression of oneness. So, persevering in one accord in the temple is not only similar; I would say it is spiritually synonymous with breaking bread in each house. So "daily" would apply to that part as well. Brothers ahead of us had already taught us, yes, they broke bread daily first and then weekly on the first day of each week.

It is even more precious if we translate the word house as "household." From household to household, referring to the people. The household is God's intended unit for mankind. Not just individuals like roaches, but intended units. I am sorry for that little casual thing; but people are born with parents and have children. God's intended unit, the

basic unit for man, is a household. Just like in Passover, it was one lamb per household. In Exodus it says, "According to the house of their fathers." What is important about the household? Well, keeping the unit of the household is a great blessing. Today the enemy attacks the household, breaking up marriages, breaking up children from parents. It is such a great attack, causing so much pain, unnecessary pain.

The early Christians, they broke bread in each household. It comes with great blessing; the Lord is with them. We already talked about the significance. Oh, if there is offense, forgive. The blood of the Lord cleanses us, and we eat His life so that we may have strength to live with our siblings, so to speak, live with our parents and live with our siblings.

Praising God

They were, "praising God." Acts 2:47 To praise God, we first have to appraise Him. A brother shared this one time here. What is praise? It is to appraise first. We must touch God, touch something of God first and see His value, see what great value He is. Then naturally, we do not even have to try, we will respond in the Spirit to praise Him. In light of what we have seen: the table, the bread, and the cup; every time, automatically from the Spirit, we ought to offer up praise and thanksgiving to God.

I like to tie this to the Passover. That is something we respond to with a great response: we are coming to a feast, Passover is a feast. In the days of Josiah, they had a great revival, just think of it, 41,000 animals: 30,000 lambs and goats, and then others brought cattle. Altogether about 41,000 animals would occupy a field of about six acres; then slaughtering, slaughtering, blood flowing. That is the Old Testament picture of what? The picture of the exceeding riches of Christ. It is endless.

The Old Testament could only use animals. Today we have the reality, Christ. He offered Himself once for all. Every time we come together, we touch something of His love, of why He offered Himself for us. We could not resist but praise Him. This feast that we come to ought to be filled with singing and praise, and it is festive also, filled with joy. Just like when they were eating meals together.

Having Favor with All the People

Having favor with all the people can seem abstract. I like to think of it by some actions. Well, it is gracious. Being gracious is undeserved, unearned giving. Then favor also means generous; it also means treating them kindly. The people saw the Christians and treated them kindly, with goodwill. Favor could also mean attractive. It is a very rich word. So put that in the context of the end of chapter two of Acts. They had favor with all the people. Also remember, fear came upon all the people.

Let us combine these two and look at the condition at the end of Acts 2. What was the condition like? It was like in I Kings when Solomon took the throne. He prayed to the Lord for wisdom, and the Lord blessed him. You can read from I Kings, chapters 2, 3, and 4, and all the way to 10. How prosperous he was, how many chariots he had, how much

gold, silver and precious stones he had. Nations around did not attack him. It even said that they had peace with all the nations surrounding him. The Queen of Sheba came and gave gifts. That is favor, giving gifts to Solomon. That is the Old Testament description of when God is at the right place among His people.

At the end of Acts 2, the people, the believers, and the apostles, put God in the right place. That was the condition they enjoyed, having favor with all the people.

I will share another testimony out of Taiwan, right after the revival. The church there in Taiwan, the buildings are very close, and the saints can walk to church, walk to meetings. But some who live a little further could take taxis. Taxis were frequently used, and they drove saints to and from church.

One time there was a taxi driver who drove that route, and he picked up a passenger who was a lady, and she was very depressed. This was not a Christian who was going to church. She was in the taxi in the back seat, depressed and crying. The taxi driver was not a believer, but he told the passenger: "Oh, you go to that place, that group of people. They are always happy; they are always singing; they are always joyful. You go to that place."

The taxi driver was telling this depressed lady to go to church, and she did, and she got saved. Yes, thank the Lord.

The final clause, "The Lord added to them daily." Oh, thank the Lord for such a condition. Oh, I pray and hope that we may be encouraged.

Shall we close with a little word of prayer?

O Lord Jesus, how precious You set the table for us. Each time we can come to Your feast, O Lord, we are so thankful; we are filled with joy. Lord Jesus, help us to see more of You each time. O Lord, how I have fallen; but how red, how effective is Your blood in cleansing our sin. And how Your life sustains us not only today, in the midst of our trials and tribulations, but even for eternity we can live with You. How uplifting that You have brought us to a place to be able to sit with You on Your throne. Praise You, Lord Jesus. Indeed, we do this until You come. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Supplemental Hymn

1

We gather together to eat the Lord's supper:
By eating and drinking, our oneness we show.
His presence possessing, our oneness confessing,
'Tis thus we eat and drink, and His blessing we know.

2

We're eating the bread of His body once broken
As now we're enjoying His Body made one:
One loaf on the table—one Body, we're able
To testify to all that the Lord's made us one.

3

We also are drinking the cup of His blessing,
The church's true fellowship of the Lord's blood;
Redeemed by believing, all saints we're receiving,
All those who through redemption have come unto God.

4

Oh, what can we say now except "Hallelujah!"
For such a reality given to us.
Thy blood we're employing, Thy Body enjoying;
Thus Thou wilt have the church for Thyself glorious.