

BREAKING BREAD

Week 3 | Ancient | Acts 2:42

Acts 2:42-47

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Deeper Dive

The book of Acts begins with Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit, as promised by Jesus before He ascended to heaven. Soon after, we see thousands coming to faith in Jesus, and the birth of the early Christian Church. Acts 2:42-47 describes the Spiritual Practices adopted by followers of Jesus, as this early body of Christ forms into what we know as the modern church.

Day 1 - What is “Breaking Bread”?

When we think about “breaking bread” a variety of things might come to mind. Most of us probably imagine sharing a meal together with friends or family, or if you grew up in church you might think about communion, or maybe you have never heard the term and just imagine someone literally karate chopping a baguette? Throughout history the words “breaking bread” have held a variety of meanings. In scripture, the greek translation is Klao, and it literally means “to break”. In this Acts 2 passage, there are two instances that use the words Klao, both in different contexts.

The first Klao in verse 42 is used in the context of worship and prayer. This example of breaking bread is what we would call Communion in our churches today. Communion is an act of worship that helps us to remember what Jesus did for us on the cross. In Luke 22:19, while Jesus was eating the Passover meal with His disciples He says, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” Jesus literally broke the bread to symbolize His body that was going to be broken for them. The Passover meal would have included a passover lamb as a sacrifice, and Jesus was preparing to be the ultimate passover lamb through His death and resurrection on the cross. He was asking the disciples to use this meal as a new covenant to remember His body was broken and His blood was poured out for all of us. This is an act of remembrance, worship and prayer still in our churches today.

The next mention of Klao is used in Acts 2:46. This was used in the context of sharing a meal together as a community of believers. In these verses it says they “ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people”. They were coming together as a part of the body of Christ. This practice of communal fellowship was necessary for the growth of the early church. It was much more than just a meal around a table, it was a time of praising God and authentically spending time encouraging each other as a community of believers. Again, we are called to continue this form of Klao together with our church family today.

- Do you have a regular rhythm of Klao in your life? Do you see this as a necessary spiritual practice? Why or why not?
- What barriers get in the way of Klao becoming a regular rhythm? 1

Deeper Dive

Additional scripture to meditate on this week.

- **Exodus 12: 17** ~“Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.
- **Exodus 24: 11** ~But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.
- **Psalms 23: 5** ~You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
- **2 Kings 6: 22-23** ~Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink and then go back to their master.” So he prepared a great feast for them, and after they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away, and they returned to their master. So the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel’s territory.
- **Luke 24: 30-31** ~When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him.
- **Revelations 19: 9** ~Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”

Day 2 - Breaking Bread is a Promise

As we read about the significance of sharing meals throughout scripture we often see a meal as a tool for creating a covenant, or a promise, between God and His people.

1. **Fulfillment & Faithfulness:** In Genesis 18, God and Abraham share a meal as God re-establishes His covenant and promise of a son to Abraham.
2. **Redemption & Freedom:** In Exodus 12, God calls His people to their first passover meal as He makes the covenant promise to bring Israel out of Egypt, and free them from death & slavery. This is the same passover meal that was eventually shared between Jesus and His disciples to create a new covenant with God’s people as Jesus became the true passover lamb.
3. **Peace & Relationship:** In Exodus 24, Moses and the leaders of Israel share a meal with God just before God gives Moses the 10 commandments and establishes His covenant with His people.
4. **Honor & Protection:** In Psalm 23, David speaks about God laying a meal before his enemies as a promise of God’s honor and protection in the face of adversity. We see this same promise in 2 Kings 6, as God uses a meal to promise His people that their enemies would return to their masters after eating the feast.
5. **Renewal & Endurance:** In 1 Kings 19, Elijah becomes so exhausted that he asks God to take his life. Instead of rebuke, God sends an angel to provide a meal of rest and renewal for him.
6. **Wisdom & Understanding:** In Proverbs 9, the wisdom of God is personified and invites us to a life of understanding through a covenant meal together.
7. **Provision & Compassion:** In the gospels, Jesus breaks bread to multiply a small meal into a meal for 5,000+ people showing His compassion and His ability to provide all that we need.
8. **Restoration:** In Luke 24, Jesus restores relationship with His disciples when He reveals who He is by breaking bread with them.
9. **Eternal Fulfillment:** In Revelations 19, God promises we will dwell with Him forever with a final covenant meal celebration.

Daily Reflections:

- What do these moments at the table with God reveal about His desire for a close relationship with you? Take time to pray silently today while imagining yourself sitting at the table with God.
- Are there specific promises above that stand out? If so, take time to read those scriptures more in depth during your time today.

Deeper Dive

Additional scripture to meditate on this week.

- **Matthew 9:10-13** ~While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."
- **Matthew 14: 17-21** ~"We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. "Bring them here to me," he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.
- **Luke 7: 36-37** ~When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume.

Day 3 - Breaking Bread is an Invitation

God often uses the dinner table as an invitation. It is used as an invitation to His Kingdom, His acceptance, His promises, and an invitation to accept His provision in our lives.

1. Invitation for ALL: Jesus spent a lot of His time here on earth around a dinner table. His dinner guests were an unlikely crowd including the outcasts, the marginalized, those considered sinners, His disciples and occasionally the religious elite. Jesus used these dinner table moments to reflect His Father's kingdom as He accepted and welcomed all who wanted to have a seat at His table.
2. Invitation to LEARN: Jesus often used the dinner table as a teaching moment. It was an invitation to learn from Him and to follow His leadership. In John, He says that He is bread of life. In Luke 10, He welcomes Mary to sit at His feet and learn from Him during a meal at her home, showing how He welcomed teaching women as well.
3. Invitation to RECEIVE: God uses the dinner table to show His power and willingness to provide for us. In the Old Testament, God provides daily sustenance in the form of bread from Heaven, or Manna, for His people. In the New Testament, Jesus takes a few small loaves of bread, and miraculously breaks the bread into enough bread for thousands of people to eat until they were full.
4. Invitation to WORSHIP: Throughout scripture, a feast or a meal was often associated with celebrating, praising, and worshiping God as a way to remember what He has done for us. We continue this today through the practice of the "Lord's Supper".
5. Invitation to be CHANGED: Sitting at the table with God changes everything if we allow it. In every example from our Day 2 this week, those that ate with God were changed. Even when sometimes uninvited guests joined Jesus' table, as with the sinful woman interrupting Jesus' meal in Luke 7. Jesus didn't rebuke her, instead He gave her freedom and a new life with His grace.

The Good News is that we are all invited! God has a seat for you at His table. All we have to do is accept the invitation and take a seat!

Daily Reflections:

- How does it feel to know that you are personally invited by God to have a seat at His table?
- Which invitation above is the hardest for you to accept and receive? What barriers are keeping you from accepting this invitation of Good News and fully receiving it in your heart?

Deeper Dive

Additional scripture to meditate on this week.

- **Exodus 12:14** ~This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord—a lasting ordinance
- **Nehemiah 8:10**
~"Nehemiah said, 'Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.'"
- **Deuteronomy 16:15** ~"For seven days celebrate the festival to the Lord your God at the place the Lord will choose. For the Lord your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete."
- **1 Corinthians 11: 23-26**
~The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Day 4 - Breaking Bread is Remembrance

Many of us have experienced smelling a familiar food and being transported to a specific memory. Maybe you've smelled fresh bread baking and suddenly think of being in your grandma's kitchen. For those of us from other areas of the country, or even the world, specific meals can even remind us of our heritage or identity. Since we eat even before we can speak, meals are often engrained in our earliest memories.

When we look at the scientific connections between meals & our memories, we can see why God would often use meals as a tool for remembrance throughout His Word. Neurologically our brains remember meals more vividly than other experiences. We process taste and smell in a way that causes specific parts of our brains to work together linking the experience to the hippocampus, which is the part of our brains responsible for creating memories. As a result, meals are powerful tools for bringing back very specific memories. Of course God designed us this way, and uses this as a way for us to remember His promises. Throughout scripture, from the Passover, to the Feast of Tabernacles, to the Last Supper, God asked His people to eat very specific meals, during specific times of the year, with specific sensory elements such as songs or scriptures read. Incorporating all these elements becomes a powerful memory. God in His goodness provides us these vivid memories to encourage us. Just like a parent might remind their child that they love them, God uses these rhythms to remind us the same. These are powerful breaking bread memories!

In our churches today, we have a regular rhythm of breaking bread through communion. This is the meal that Jesus asked His disciples to continue as a way to remember His death and resurrection on the cross. Some churches may use crackers, wafers, or loaves of bread. If you attend our church, you know we are partial to King Hawaiian Rolls. In fact, it might be strange to eat King Hawaiian bread outside of communion for this exact reason. Regardless of the type of bread, or whether you use grape juice or wine, this is one of the only meals that Jesus specifically asked His disciples to continue, which is why we regularly do this today. It's a moment for us to pause, and to remember Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross. As you receive the bread during communion it should be more than a ritual act. Take time to process and think about the elements of what you are eating and what they symbolize. Pray and think about what Jesus has freed you from through the cross, and ask for His forgiveness if there is anything heavy on your heart.

Daily Reflections:

- Has the act of communion become a ritual, or a "ceremony", verses a meaningful time of remembrance for you and your family? Pray and reflect on how you can move towards true remembrance during 4 this special practice of breaking bread.

Deeper Dive

Additional scripture to meditate on this week.

- **Luke 24: 30-35** ~When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

Day 5 - Practicing Breaking Bread

Following Jesus' resurrection, the dinner table becomes a second invitation for His disciples. In Luke 24, on the road to Emmaus, Jesus and His disciples had been walking and talking together all day. As His disciples, and close friends, they should have known that this was Jesus. However, in this moment, they didn't recognize Him. They were so focused on their grief over Jesus' death that they couldn't see him walking right in front of them. It says they thought He was a stranger. Before we judge the disciples, don't we do the same? We often become overly focused or blinded by our challenges and miss God standing right beside us. These are the moments when we especially need the regular practice of pausing, remembering, and coming together breaking bread. This is exactly how Jesus revealed himself. As soon as Jesus broke bread at the dinner table the disciples eyes were opened and they knew it was Him! Practicing breaking bread can open our eyes to His goodness, faithfulness and remind us of His promises when we need it most. How can we faithfully create rhythms of breaking bread in our everyday lives? Take time to pray over what this looks like for you and your family in the New Year.

1. Breaking Bread as Fellowship ~

- **Rhythm:** Depending on your season of life, decide on a rhythm that is "doable" for you or your family. The important part is making it a consistent rhythm, and keeping it up even when you are walking through a hard season.
- **Spiritual Fellowship:** This is more than a cookout with friends. Acts 2 is describing a type of fellowship that incorporates spiritual practices into your time together. Consider adding a moment to pray for each other, share what the Lord is teaching you, or study in the word together. The important part is taking the time to encourage each other in your faith journey.
- **Keep it Simple:** This doesn't need to be a feast, or a fancy dinner party. This can be lunch in the break room with co-workers that pray and encourage each other, or hosting regular meals in your home with neighbors that share what God is doing in your lives, or even coffee before work with a small group of believers.

2. Breaking Bread as Worship ~

- **Regular Attendance:** Participating in church services and observing communion as a church family is an important rhythm to both participate & to serve others in.
- **Remembrance Verses Ritual:** Taking communion as an act of remembering what Jesus did for you on the cross.