The Essentials of a Growing Church (Part 3)

DEVOTION TO THE BREAKING OF BREAD

Acts 2:42-47

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.

43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. 44 Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. 45 They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47 CSB)

Let's pray!

There are seven essentials to which the first believers devoted themselves.

(1) Apostles' teaching
(2) Fellowship
(3) Breaking of bread
(4) Prayer
(5) Giving or ministering to one another
(6) Praising God or worship
(7) Sharing the gospel or evangelism - *"the Lord added to their number those who were being saved"*.

We Must Devote Ourselves to the Breaking of Bread.

- In the first message, we focused on “the apostles’ teaching” which was followed by “fellowship.”
- In this message, our focus is on “the breaking of bread.” This is the third essential of a growing church!

What does the “Breaking of Bread” refer to?

“Scholars debate as to whether "the breaking of bread" refers to the Lord's Supper or to communal meals—specifically, the first loaf of bread that is broken and shared at the beginning of a Jewish meal. Acts 2:46 suggests full meals were included.” (https://www.bibleref.com/Acts/2/Acts-2-42.html)

“Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts…” (Acts 2:46 CSB)

Two activities involved in the breaking of bread:

- The serving of the Lord’s Supper
- The sharing meals in the context of fellowship

Serving of the Lord’s Supper

- The Lord’s Supper or communion is one of the two ordinances which we do as a church in response to Jesus’ command. The other ordinance is baptism by immersion.
- An ordinance in simple terms is a ceremony or practice which we observe as an act of obedience to God. In other words, an ordinance is a God-ordained ceremony which is to be performed on the part of believers as commanded by God.

- In some Christian denominations, baptism and Lord's Supper are considered as sacraments. Depending on one's view of the purpose of a sacrament, it is either necessary for salvation or a means of grace.
- For evangelical believers, more specifically as Baptists, we treat them as ordinances.

<u>The Last Supper and the First Lord's Supper</u>

14 When the hour came, he reclined at the table, and the apostles with him. 15 Then he said to them, "I have fervently desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. 18 For I tell you, from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

19 And he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

20 In the same way he also took the cup after supper and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:14-20 CSB)

<u>Passover as a Foundation for the Lord's Supper</u>

- In the Old Testament, Exodus 12:1-17, God commanded his people, the Israelites, to remember what he did for them, delivering them from their slavery in Egypt, by annually celebrating the Passover.

- As Jesus observed the Passover on the night of his betrayal and arrest, he actually instituted the Lord's Supper on that same night.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper in All Services this Weekend.

<u>FIVE SIGNIFICANT POINTS ABOUT AND REMINDERS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER</u>

1. **When We Partake of the Lord's Supper, <u>We Acknowledge and are Reminded of the Humanity of Jesus</u>.**

   22 "Fellow Israelites, listen to these words: This <u>Jesus of Nazareth was a man</u> attested to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did among you through him, just as you yourselves know. 23 Though he was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail him to a cross and kill him. 24 God raised him up, ending the pains of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by death. (Acts 2:22-24 CSB)

2. **When We Partake of the Lord's Supper, <u>We Reflect on and are Reminded of the Cost of Our Sin</u>.**

   22 According to the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. (Hebrews 9:22 CSB)

   18 For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things

like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb. (1 Peter 1:18-19 CSB)

3. **When We Partake of the Lord's Supper, <u>We Celebrate and are Reminded of the Love of God</u>.**

   16 For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 CSB)

   6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For rarely will someone die for a just person—though for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die. 8 But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:6-8 CSB)

4. **When We Partake of the Lord's Supper, <u>We Affirm and are Reminded of Our Unity in Christ</u>.**

   19 And he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19 CSB)

   15 I am speaking as to sensible people. Judge for yourselves what I am saying. 16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, since all of us share the one bread. (1 Corinthians 10:15-17 CSB)

5. **When We Partake of the Lord's Supper, <u>We Encourage Each Other and are Reminded of Our Future in Christ</u>.**

   16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God…18 For I tell you, from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." (Luke 22:16, 18 CSB)

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

   27 And just as it is appointed for people to die once—and after this, judgment— 28 so also Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:27-28 CSB)

Having these significant points and reminders in mind, let me address three questions:

- Who Can Participate in the Lord's Supper?
- How Frequent Shall We Observe the Lord's Supper?
- How Do We Prepare Ourselves for the Lord's Supper?

<u>Who Can Participate in the Lord's Supper?</u>

Only believers, those who have a personal relationship with God through Christ, can participate.

How Often Shall We Observe the Lord's Supper?

The guiding principle: to have it frequent enough to reset our mind on Christ and to recommit our relationship with Christ, without being so frequent that it becomes routine. What matters is that we have the right heart attitude with God and each other.

How Do We Prepare Ourselves for the Lord's Supper?

27 So, then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself; in this way let him eat the bread and drink from the cup. 29 For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. (1 Corinthians 11:27-29 CSB)

Let's pray!

Jo Kaminaga (Joel)
Tokyo Baptist Church
September 7&8, 2024

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