

# THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE BODY OF CHRIST PART 3

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Peter Hay, prepared for word ministry, 25 October 2020  
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## Introduction

In today's session we will consider in more detail how we practically commune together house to house within our own homes.

When we gather to church for communion, it is a house to house fellowship, but we can also meet from house to house - literally, in our houses - for communion.

## Eating and drinking at communion

Let us begin with the question that no doubt many people have, and I know that there is no doubt because some people have asked me this.

'If there is nothing special about the bread and the wine, and nothing supernatural is added to these elements to make them the communion, is it necessary to eat and drink together?'

I hope that the answer is obvious: of course, we do! Unless we *literally* eat and drink together, we *do not have communion*.

Today we will answer the question as to why it is important that we do eat and drink together, even though the elements are not changed into the body and blood of Jesus. Nothing supernatural is added to the elements of the communion meal.

## Meals of firstfruits households

When we meet as firstfruits households for a meal, in the name of Christ, Christ Himself is in the midst of us.

The meal is a meeting point as we gather in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We gather in the name because of the way that we *receive and respond* to the word which proclaims the name of the Lord. When we meet for a meal, Jesus is in the midst with us.

## Eating and drinking as a participation

Eating and drinking is our practical participation, *by faith*, in the fellowship of Christ. So, the act of eating and drinking is a practical, *or literal*, participation in Christ. We consume and drink something in the name of Christ as a participation, *or an acknowledgement*, that it is Christ's own table.

It is because we have this meal in the name of Christ that we can be the bread and the cup to one another.

Do you see the point?

## We can be the bread and cup to another

We must gather to Christ's table so that, as we participate *practically*, we are able to *be* the bread and the cup to one another.

However, it is important to emphasise that it is *how* we eat and drink with one another that determines whether our meal is the table of the Lord or the table of demons.

This is a major point.

## How we eat and drink is vital

I will say it again. *It is how we eat and drink with one another* that determines whether our meal is the table of the Lord, and He is in the midst of us; *or* whether it is the table of demons.

Let us be practical. I may have invited a family to my house on a Friday night and we are going to have a meal together. I am committed to communing house to house with my brethren. During this meal, I do not need to stop and *ceremoniously* take the bread and bless it to those present.

When we get to the end of entrée - we have had sausage rolls for entrée - I do not need to stop and say, 'Right, let us get our biscuit and I will bless this biscuit as a point of participation in the bread.'

Neither, when we get to the end of our main course, which is burgers and chips, do I say, 'Let us take the cup', and minister the cup to one another.

## What makes our meal communion?

That is *not* making our meal the communion.

Rather, the whole meal, the *whole interaction*, is the breaking of bread and drinking the cup with one another when the *four dimensions of grace* are present with our meal.

We do not make the *elements* the mark of the communion, either within the church or within our houses. It is the presence of the four

dimensions of grace that are foundational to our whole fellowship.

### **The four elements of grace**

The four elements of grace are the word of present truth, the fellowship of offering, breaking of bread and prayer.

Two sessions ago, I made the point that at a meal in our house, we do not need to have a discrete time for the word of present truth, a time for fellowship, a time for breaking for bread, and a time for prayer.

What it does mean, though, is that our whole meal needs to be sanctified as the communion.

These four elements should be *expressed* or *revealed* through our gathering together and our interactions with one another.

### **The word of God, prayer and thanksgiving**

I have written it this way: 'This does not mean that there should be four discrete activities or phases of our meal. Rather, it means that *whatever we are eating* must be *sanctified* as the communion, by the word of God and by prayer.'

Paul made this point in his first letter to Timothy, where he referred to what they ate when they gathered. It is an amazing point.

Paul said, 'For every creature of God is good [this is within the context of a conversation about what is allowed to be eaten], and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving.' 1Ti 4:4.

But what is *thanksgiving*? It is incense, isn't it? Incense is *prayer*.

Paul then said, 'For it [the meal] is sanctified by the word of God *and prayer*'. 1Ti 4:5.

*The word of God* is foundational to our fellowship, but then *prayer*, being the conversation of grace, continues throughout the course of the meal. By these, our gathering house to house as the communion is sanctified.

If you want to know whether your meal is a communion meal, then the question is, 'Is your gathering sanctified by the word of God and by prayer?'

But what will it 'look like' if it is being sanctified by the word of God and prayer?

### **Grace at a meal**

The beginning point of our meal will be prayer, or 'saying grace'. Several people have asked, 'Do we have to come up with a new grace', or 'What do we say now when we pray?'

I am not going to define what your grace should be, but I will say that grace, *before we eat*, will contain these elements as part of the sanctification of our fellowship.

Of course, those elements should form part of grace at meals both within our own house and from house to house.

### **Grace commits to fellowship**

When we say grace, we *commit* to participation in fellowship with one another.

That is the first element of grace. It is an *articulation* of our commitment to fellowship with one another *in the name of Christ*. When we are *in the name of Christ*, we partake of *His* table.

Through prayer, we acknowledge that our point of meeting is a table that belongs to Christ.

That is a beautiful point, isn't it?

### **Our table belongs to Christ**

The first element of grace is our commitment to fellowship *in the name*, which is an *acknowledgement* that our point of meeting, house to house, individual to individual, *is a table that belongs to Christ*.

We have access to this table, by faith, *because* we have received His word into our hearts and into our homes.

Following that, we must give thanks through prayer for the meal. We are to give thanks for the meal but we *also* give thanks for our *fellowship with one another* in the name of the Lord. That is how we partake of the elements. We partake of the elements through fellowship with one another in the name of the Lord.

Do you understand these elements of grace? We do not need a grace catechism. What we need is those elements of grace to be part of our commitment when we eat and drink together.

### **Grace throughout the meal**

A notable point that we have learned in this season is that saying grace is not just the prayer before we eat.

*It is our conversation throughout the whole meal.*

In this fellowship, *our ongoing conversation* is 'grace on our lips, and our speech seasoned with salt'.

This exhortation was made by Paul. 'Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer one another.' Col 4:6. That describes how we are to converse together.

### **Present truth sanctifies**

We gather in the name when the *ground*, or *basis*, of our fellowship is the word of present truth proclaimed from the presbytery. This word grants us faith to *believe* and to *speak to one another*.

To emphasise this point, I will say it again. The *ground*, or the *basis*, for our meeting together is *the word*.

That word has granted us *faith* and, 'having that same spirit of faith, *we believe and therefore speak*'.

This becomes the *conversation* of our meal together; and our conversation is our *conduct*, or *care*, for one another.

This will be expressed through testimony, through points of understanding and illumination from the current word. And it may even be questions regarding the application of the word in our lives.

We should give 'room' for all these aspects, but should not *obligate* everyone at the table to speak, to contribute and testify and share illumination.

This conversation is *essential* to our ministry to one another *as the bread and the cup*.

### **Repentance from old understandings**

Before I speak more specifically about what it means to *be the bread and the cup to one another*, I want to bring this *encouragement*.

In this season, we will need to *apply ourselves to fellowship in the name*, so that we 'do not forsake the assembling of ourselves together'. Heb 10:25.

I recognise that what we have taught over these last couple of weeks is quite a cultural change. It is amazing how much tradition, and our desire for communion to be something supernatural, imposed by someone else, is right 'in our bones'.

It needs to be *part of our repentance* to turn from that, to what the Spirit is saying to the church,

and is establishing among us, as access to the Tree of Life.

### **The tree of life to another**

You do realise that our participation in the communion is eating and drinking of the Tree of Life.

And *we* are to be the tree of life to one another!

That is a focal point, and it means that we *must apply ourselves to this*.

For some, it will mean that where you have been uncertain or not confident to invite people to your house, the exercise of faith, or the point of the obedience of faith, will be to invite people to your home with communion in view.

That will be your way of '*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves*'.

Of course, many of us are quite familiar with hospitality, and committed to it. But I encourage you to recognise that you are part of a whole body, and to extend yourself beyond your comfortable group of friends, and to give and receive beyond the point of comfort and ease.

### **Gathering to the word of truth in simplicity**

Our basis of meeting is the word that we hear and receive, not the commonality of our interests. It is built on a completely different base.

We must *give ourselves*, which is the initiative of faith to 'continue steadfastly' in these elements. Act 2:42.

Now, although we are all firstfruits believers in Christ, there will be some who, because they have had seasons of offering and have grown in the Lord, and because of the course of their spiritual practice, will be more mature.

These ones should exemplify this culture, and are to encourage and support others in *their* faith for participation. Encouragement can occur by providing an example to follow or by going to others' homes in simplicity and ease of meeting and ministry.

### **Teaching our children to participate in devotional conversation**

In addition, we will need to take time to teach our children how to participate in sanctified, devotional conversations.

Of course, we need to be devotional as families, but my encouragement is to teach our children to *participate* in the *whole conversation* of the table when we invite others to our house.

Let us try to avoid the situation where parents converse in a particular way at one part of the table, while the children converse on a completely different subject at another part of the table.

### **All ages to participate**

So, let us *all* be *in one Spirit together as we converse around the table*.

This means that we need to talk with our children about how this can be done.

We gathered with another family at our house a couple of months ago and, as we were conversing around the table, one of the little girls wanted to ask a question. Her father said to this little one, 'Why don't you ask Uncle Peter the question that you have had?'

I was really impressed by this, because I know that her father could have answered her question straight off the top of his head. It was not that he didn't know the answer to the question. What I recognised was his initiative toward his daughter to *connect her to fellowship*, house to house.

Our questions will be like those of Jesus who, as a youth in the temple - where *the name of the Lord* is placed - asked questions and discussed the word with those who were caring for the believers. Jesus acknowledged, or testified, that when He did this, He was 'about His Father's business'. He was being a son of God.

This is part of the culture that we need to teach in our households as a communing reality for us, as we encourage our children to this participation house to house.

### **The bread and cup to another**

Let us look more practically at what it means to *be* the 'bread' and the 'cup' to one another.

We have made the point that, when we eat and drink, the bread and wine do not 'turn into' anything other than what they are. But, as we participate in an *agape* meal where Christ is in the midst, *we become these elements to one another*.

Paul's exhortation to gather provides us with helpful instruction on this point. 'And let us

consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.' Heb 10:24.

To 'consider one another' is the *element of the bread*.

And to 'stir up love and good works' is the *drink element of being poured out* on the service and sacrifice of another's faith.

Paul immediately continued, 'Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together', thus connecting those two activities with our assembling together.

'As is the manner of some, but exhorting one another [*encouraging* one another], and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.' Heb 10:25.

### **Being the bread to another**

What does it mean to be the 'bread' to one another?

The beginning point to being the bread to one another is to be a *member in particular* of the body of Christ.

The Scripture that we have quoted highlights that we are the bread. 'For we, though many, are *one bread and one body*; for we all partake of that one bread.' 1Co 10:17.

This means that, to be a functional member of the body, in particular, is the way that we are the bread to one another.

Do you see the point? To be bread to another is determined by the way that we function as a member of the body.

### **Being the 'bread' – a member of His body**

It is important to note that, regarding our participation in the body, the Father places every person in His body as He desires - which means *according to His will*. His 'desire' is His 'will'; or we could say that His 'good pleasure' is His will. 1Co 12:18.

The Father's will for us - for every son of God - is our sanctified sonship; the *truth* of who we are.

Therefore, to be the bread is to be a member in particular of the body of Christ. Then, to be a member in particular of the body is to *participate* in fellowship according to what is true.

However, that means that it is possible to operate according to what is false.

### **The truth of our name is the bread**

But let us focus on what is *true*. What is true is the truth of *who you are as a son of God*.

And to be the bread to one another is to *meet in the truth*.

It is to be whom the Father has named us to be, and to acknowledge *the name* of those with whom we are meeting. This means that we are to have an understanding of the name of another.

When we are not so concerned about our own name, it's much easier to *see* the name of another, and to *meet* one another without projection or pretence.

### **The unleavened bread of sincerity and truth**

Regarding 'meeting in the truth', Paul said, 'Therefore let us *keep the feast*, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.' 1Co 5:8.

This means meeting without the *projections* and *presentations* that you want people to believe about you.

This is an amazing passage considering what we are beginning to understand about 'keeping the feast'.

Paul spoke about a meal - the Feast of Passover - a fundamental element of which was eating and drinking the communion.

He said, 'Therefore let us keep the feast, not with *old leaven*, nor with the *leaven of malice and wickedness*, but with the *unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*'.

We are to eat 'the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth'. But what does that mean?

If we are to be the bread, it means that we are to *meet with one another and to engage with one another sincerely and in the truth*.

Do you see the connection to the body of Christ where the Father has placed every member?

### **The bread of sincerity and truth**

So, the bread, which we are to be to one another, is to be the *unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*.

And, as we have just considered, this means that we are to *give* ourselves to meet and to be met by others as sons of God.

We are not to be *more than* or *less than* who the Father has named us to be.

### **Image projection or relational withdrawal**

If you are trying to be *more than* whom the Father has named you to be, you are *projecting* something, aren't you? The projection is beyond what is real.

If you are *less than* who the Father has named you to be, you are *drawing back*.

Neither of those is *true*. A projection is not true; it is a lie. And, if you are drawing back, you are hiding; and that is also a lie.

It follows, therefore, that if we are to be sincere and truthful, we have to *know our name*, and we have to meet within the sanctified lines of our name.

### **We know in part**

However, there is a slight dilemma here, isn't there? The dilemma is that we do not *know* our name in full.

Paul said, 'For we *know in part*.' 1Co 13:9.

Each of us will know that we are born as a son of God - and that is a good beginning to knowing our name. However, when we are born from above, and we receive our name as a son of God, we do not know the full measure of our name, nor the full expression of it.

So, if someone says that they fully know their name, they are lying. Not even Paul knew the full measure of his name, because he said, 'We know in part.'

The question is, 'How do we come to a *fuller* knowledge of our name?'

### **We prophesy in part**

So, Paul said, 'We *know in part* and we *prophesy in part*.' 1Co 13:9. Now, prophecy involves you or me *speaking*. So, Paul said that our articulation and our capacity to minister to another will be *in part*. It will not be our full capacity, but we are to grow in it.

### **Incomplete knowledge and capacity must not hinder our participation**

However, just because it is incomplete, does not mean that we *do not participate*.

It means that we are to participate to the degree that we have arrived at the knowledge of ourself as a son of God in Christ.

Of course, we know that there are some things that we have to *put off* when it becomes clear that

they are projections; and other things that we need to *put on* as it becomes clear in the light of fellowship.

We are becoming clearer in our understanding.

'For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come [the sonship of Christ], then that which is in part will be done away.' 1Co 13:9-10.

The element that is not *fully* our sonship yet will be gone, and 'we will be like Him for we shall *see* Him as He is'.

Then Paul said, 'For now we see in a mirror, dimly.' 1Co 13:12.

We *do* know our sonship in part, but if someone says that they know their full sonship, that cannot be true. It will be sourced in themselves.

### **Knowing beyond the part**

If we accept that we know in part, the question is, 'How do we know *beyond* the part? How do we *grow* in that knowledge?'

We need to *look in a mirror*. 'For we now see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face.' That means *face to face with Christ*.

And how do we look into the face of Christ? We look into the face of Christ by looking into the face of our brethren. That is firstly with the presbytery, and then with one another.

What comes from the face of Christ?

It is 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God'. The knowledge of the glory of God is the *knowledge of your sonship* because, when you are a son, who is being glorified? It is the Father!

### **The mirror of presbytery and our brethren**

As you look into the mirror, which is Christ's face, you receive light, which is the knowledge of your sonship.

You know *more and more* each time you receive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining from Christ's face, which comes from the word proclaimed by His messengers.

'For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.' 1Co 13:12.

That is a beautiful point, because God the Father knows our finished name, doesn't He?

It is already perfected and finished in Christ and, even though I only know in part, if I continue in this fellowship, I will arrive at that finished and perfected sonship expression.

### **We fellowship in and by faith**

I have written, 'To the degree to which we have attained a knowledge of our name, we give ourselves to meet and relate with our brethren in Christ.' That is the simplicity of it.

We accept that we do not know the full extent; we know in part. But, to the extent that we do know, we *give to meet* our brethren.

As we meet, and walk with our brethren in the *light of the word* - the word brings the light - *the will of God* - our sanctification as a son of God, the expression of our name - *is being proven*. Our sanctification is the expression of our name.

### **Our name expressed in fellowship**

Let us simplify this.

We are born of God; we continue to hear His word. It proclaims our sonship, but that does not mean, that I say, 'Oh, I know who I am and what I have to do.' It simply means that, as I receive it, and as it becomes my testimony, I express it.

I do not say, 'I have something to say because I have a name.'

Rather, I express it *because* I have a name. The *reason* is not because I have a name; the *ability to express* is because I have a name.

Do you see the difference? One is demanding a voice because of some nominated identification; the other is the reality, and the expression of that reality is something that I almost cannot contain.

### **Walking in the light**

It is the *overflow* of what I have received. The more that I walk in the light with my brethren, the more my capacity to express the life *grows*.

This simply means that I am becoming more and more the son whom the Father has named me to be.

It happens as I receive my brethren to me, as well. As we meet and walk with our brethren in the light of the word, the will of God, which is our sanctification as a son of God, is being proven.

We see and know ourselves *more clearly* as we are being delivered from the darkness of our self-definition. That is the 'truth', isn't it?

### **Godly sincerity**

What about *sincerity*?

Sincerity is the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Sincerity and truth go together, but we can sharpen our understanding of being 'sincere'.

Sincerity specifically relates to the basis of *our conduct and conversation*.

The following Scripture is most effective in highlighting this reality.

'For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly to you.' 2Co 1:12.

In this passage, Paul explained the meaning of godly sincerity. This referred to the culture of the presbytery itself, where he spoke in relation to himself and his fellow messengers.

### **The testimony of our conscience**

'For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience.' This is a conscience that has been sprinkled clean from being an evil conscience, and there is now a testimony, or an expression, of that life.

Godly sincerity relates to 'the wisdom from above', as we stand in grace; and the evidence of standing in grace is an overflow to others.

It is a ministry to others which Paul called 'godly sincerity'. It is a testimony stemming from a clean conscience.

### **The absence of deception**

Sincerity, therefore, means 'the absence of pretence or deceit'. It is the absence of deception

Our fellowship and offering are to be genuine, or authentic, and are the actions of revealing others. If you are sincere, it means that you are not hiding anything.

Sincerity is the complete opposite to the way in which Satan functions. He is called 'the Deceiver.' If you are a deceiver, you are obviously not being sincere.

To be a deceiver does not mean that you are intentionally setting out to be 'tricky'. It means, as

Paul said, that you are operating from fleshly wisdom.

### **Wisdom based in 'another word'**

This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, as the gentle rain or the dew on the grass. It is 'another word', fathered by Satan; and it is based in a fleshly, or worldly, wisdom.

If this is the basis of your articulation or participation, you are insincere. You are like Satan, in the midst of that meal or how Peter was when Jesus said to him, 'Get behind Me, Satan.'

Peter was Jesus' friend. However, when his conversation was other than that of Christ, he was found to be operating from another base which was insincere and was in opposition to the will of God.

Jesus' conversation, on the other hand, was, 'I must go and be killed and be raised in three days.'

Even though Peter had a strong motivation for what he was saying, it was from the basis of another word, which was not of the wisdom from above. In this regard, we can contrast sincerity with deception.

### **Satan – the author of deception**

'So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.' Rev 12:9.

Satan, the ruler of the kingdom of darkness, is called 'the Deceiver'. And what is his deception?

As I said, it is not just that he wants to be tricky. He is actually deceived *within himself*. The basis of his deception is that all of his function is sourced in himself and is for his own glory.

When we function in the same way - that is, when we are trying to find ourselves by who we think we can be to another - we are similarly deceived and insincere.

This is a leaven among us, and speaks of this deception which is based in the principle of Satan.

'When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.' Joh 8:44.

### **The ground of our conversation**

The 'ground' of our conversation is to be the word from above, the wisdom from above.

This is the word that proclaims the name of the Lord, and it comes like gentle rain, 'line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little'. Isa 28:10.

This word is bringing to us the blessing of God, and we are to reveal it to one another *through testimony*.

When we speak from our own resources, we are communicating in another vein. It doesn't matter whether our intentions are good or not; it is a lie because it is not sourced from the truth.

'When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and he's the father of it.'

It means that he 'fathers' that way of operating in all those who choose self-expression over the expression of sonship, which is from the tree of life.

### **Two tables in operation**

Herein, we see two tables in operation.

The tree of life is the table of the Lord.

The other table, however, is sourced in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is where the table of demons is situated.

'When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory.' Joh 7:18.

The motivation to speak in this way is for their own glory. It is not so that their sonship glorifies God. This shows that they are trying to find themselves.

### **The unleavened bread of sincerity and truth**

On the other hand, conducting ourselves, or conversing, with sincerity is what it means to be the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth to one another. It means that we are standing in and by the *grace* of God.

Now, isn't that what Paul said? 'We conducted ourselves in this world with simplicity and godly sincerity, by the grace of God.'

### **Committed to the four foundations of grace**

This means that we are committed to those four dimensions of grace, or those four foundations of

fellowship. We accept that we are not the 'establishers' of the four foundations, as they are established by the word of God through the presbytery.

This is the beginning point for sincerity.

In practical terms, this means engaging in the four foundations of fellowship as a member of the body of Christ.

We receive our introduction into this grace by the faith that comes by hearing the word of present truth, which is the wisdom from above.

Our conscience is being sprinkled clean in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

### **The testimony of our conscience**

This is what Paul referred to as 'the testimony of our conscience'?

We have the choice of an evil conscience or a good conscience; and the good conscience is only made good as it is sprinkled by the blood. It is sprinkled by the blood only if we are in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

The word of faith which we receive, and our fellowship in the offering of Christ, are the basis of our testimony. They are not sourced from within us.

Our testimony is because we have received the word which is becoming life in us, and our heart has been sprinkled clean to priest, or to minister, that testimony by the grace of God.

### **Our conversation is the testimony of Christ, which is the spirit of prophecy**

It is not sourced from *ourselves*. Rather, our speech is the testimony of *Jesus Christ*.

It is not even 'our' testimony in the sense of what we have generated. What is coming out of our mouth is the testimony of Jesus Himself. Because we have received His word and are walking in His way, His life is becoming our life.

The expression of that life, therefore, is the testimony that belongs to Jesus. This testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. To testify to one another is an element of prophecy.

### **Speaking according to our sanctification**

So, we *consider* ourselves and one another, and we speak edification and exhortation and comfort to one another, according to our sanctification.



Consequently, we do not address matters that we have no business to address. If we are sanctified, we do not address matters for which we have no accountability.

If, however, a conversation is occurring in our house which is not commensurate with the word of life, neither will we draw back from that.

We will say, 'Hold on a moment, that's not what we're learning according to the Spirit of God.'

In that situation, we are standing up in our name, particularly as heads of houses, and are sanctifying the ground of fellowship in our house.

In our daily conversations, we are considering ourselves and we're speaking edification, exhortation and comfort to one another, according to our sanctification.

### **Fellowship in the light**

This means that we are prophesying to one another; we are ministering to one another; we are actually able to pray for healing for one another.

This is a fellowship in the light.

As different ones come to the light, they are able to turn from their darkness and to walk in the light of the word, finding healing and capacity to walk in the will of God. They knew in part, but now they are knowing more fully and can walk in that way.

This is the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

### **The ministry of the cup**

Regarding the ministry of the cup, we recall the words of the apostle Paul.

'Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.' Php 2:17.

The cup is a drink offering, and that drink offering had two elements to it.

### **The two portions of the drink offering - Drinking and pouring out**

A portion of it was to be poured on the burnt offering or whatever offering was on the altar.

Also, a portion of it was to be drunk by the priests.

Both these elements are to be part of our participation in the cup.

We have to drink something, and we have to pour something out.

'Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.'

'With you all' indicates that this is a fellowship practice among us all.

Then he said, 'For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.' 'You also pour out on the service and sacrifice of another's faith.'

This is how we are to commune with one another, or to *be* the cup.

Therefore, to be poured out on the sacrifice and service of another's faith is to enable their offering so that they also are revealed.

### **In order to stir up love and good works**

Paul said, in writing to the Hebrews, 'And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.' Heb 10:24.

Now, the Greek word that is translated 'stir up' in this passage literally means 'to provoke or incite'.

This statement does not say, 'provoke it *in yourself*' or 'incite *in yourself*'.

Provoking is what you do to *someone else*; and inciting is an action that you take to elicit a response from someone else; isn't it?

To 'stir up love and good works' is to provoke, or incite, or *encourage* your brother and sister at the table, to love, which is sacrifice and offering, and to good works, which is the obedience of faith.

To incite or provoke love and good works is to *encourage* someone to sacrifice, or offering.

And good works is *the works of faith*. This is the same thing as being poured out on the sacrifice and service of our faith.

So, sacrifice is the element of *love*. Love is revealed by offering, and offering is a sacrifice.

And good works are the works of our sonship. They are the works of faith.

### **Pouring out on the sacrifice and service of our faith**

So, to pour out on the sacrifice and service of our faith is to stir up love and good works in our brethren. This is part of our ministry as the cup to

one another, and to receive that encouragement from another.

This is why Paul said that the communion cup is a blessing. Through offering, and by doing the works of sonship, we are obtaining a blessing; aren't we?

### **Enabled to pour out**

However, we are doing that because someone is enabling us, or equipping us, or assisting us, to do that.

This is how, and why, it is a cup of blessing which we bless to one another.

Paul was saying, 'This is the way in which you are the cup to another. This is how you pour out to one another.'

The other side of the equation is that you are to receive that pouring out from the one who is pouring out to you.

It is a fellowship of giving and receiving, so that we all are rejoicing.

### **Being poured out is a death to us**

Now, we also understand that to be poured out means to 'die'.

In another passage, Paul, when he was speaking about 'being poured out', was literally saying, 'My life is coming to an end. I've finished my race and it's coming to an end.'

Therefore, the principle of being poured out on the sacrifice and service of another's faith, literally has to do with our death.

This means laying our life down for another. It means to die.

### **The fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings**

This is the capacity to minister life and grace to others, which we obtain in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

When we are in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings and are 'touching' His death, we are being poured out.

And the life that we are receiving in the fellowship of His death and sufferings is being poured out on another.

It does not mean that we receive the life, in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, simply for

ourselves. Rather, the *multiplication* of the life is sufficient for our life. This is our *protection*.

It is sufficient for our life, yet it overflows beyond our life.

### **Life multiplied through offering**

This is an amazing point about the offering and sufferings of Christ. The life generated, or multiplied, when His blood was poured out, was greater than all the life that was necessary for every son and daughter of God.

So, when we are specifically joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, the life that is overflowing from Him to us, is more than we need for our own life.

It is a cup that we are receiving, that is overflowing. The action of *overflowing* means that it is being poured out *on someone else*.

### **Discerning our participation in suffering**

It is important to realise that we cannot pour out on another person's sacrifice and service of their faith if we are not conformed to Christ's offering and sufferings. This conveys to us the importance of our discerning the body.

We must discern and accept our participation in that suffering body. Otherwise, we are not obtaining the life ourselves, and we have nothing to pour out on another. The outcome of this is to become weak and sick and to die before our time. We understand, therefore, that to be poured out means to die.

Paul testified of this reality to the Corinthians.

'For we who live are always being delivered to death for Jesus' sake.' 2Co 4:11.

### **Living by the principle of *exanastasis***

His testimony was, 'I am living by this principle of life out of death. The life I'm living is because I am living this *exanastasis* life.'

As we live by *exanastasis* life, the outcome is that we continue in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. According to this manner of life, we are always being delivered to death. Every time we take a step, it is a step in the fellowship of that suffering.

'We who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.' 2Co 4:11.

We are receiving life in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings.

‘So then death is working in us, but life in you.’  
2Co 4:12.

Through this, we see the life that was multiplied to him in his mortal flesh, yet he was saying, ‘That life is not just for me; it is working life in you as a ministry of grace to you.’

This is how Paul was constantly being poured out.

### **Do not draw back because of suffering**

It is therefore important that we do not draw back from fellowship because of our sufferings.

It is not the case that, if you are really sick, you should continue to visit other people in their homes. The truth is, if you are suffering, don’t draw back, saying, ‘This is unfair.’

When you are suffering, press into Christ and find grace for your participation. By this means, it is doing a work in your heart and you are being delivered from your other law and your flesh.

At the same time, you are obtaining His life, which is not just sufficient for you to be a son of God and to make offering. Rather, it is *abounding* to another.

It is important that we do not draw back from fellowship because of our sufferings. This is because they are a participation in the life of Christ.

### **A suffering which does not lead to life**

If your sufferings are *not* your participation in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings - meaning that you may be suffering because you are weak and sick, and are dying before your time - then turn in repentance!

Turn and find illumination so that your suffering can lead to life. There is certainly a suffering which is the mark of condemnation leading to spiritual, as well as physical, death - and that is not desirable.

### **The cup which we drink – a participation in Christ’s offering and sufferings**

If our sufferings *are* a participation in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings, they are a part of the cup that we drink - and this cup is the crushed fruit of the Vine.

Remember, the cup that we are drinking is not the blood of the Lamb. The cup that we are drinking is the crushed fruit of the Vine, of which we are a branch.

Where, then, is the fruit coming from? It is coming from the branch.

### **I am the Vine and you are the branches**

Christ said, ‘I am the Vine’, which means He is the whole source of it.

He then said that the place where the life is being manifest is where the fruit is growing from the branch. If there is no fruit growing, then there will be no grapes for harvest.

The cup of wine that we drink is generated by the crushing of the grapes.

If, therefore, they are a participation in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings, the cup, which is the crushed fruit of the Vine, of which we are a branch, is overflowing.

### **My cup overflows to give life to another**

That life is becoming our life, but the word says, ‘My cup overflows.’

It goes beyond being merely the provision for our life, and it is able to *minister blessing* to others as we remain faithful, and dwell in the house of the Lord.

Psalms 23 is an example of how we are poured out on the sacrifice and service of another.

‘You prepare a table before me [the table of the communion] in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil [You enable me to be in one Spirit with those who are at that table; to meet in the name. Your name is like an ointment poured forth.]; my cup runs over.’ Psa 23:5.

What an image this is! We can sit at a table and there can be so much wine coming into the cup that it is pouring out over the table.

### **The pouring out of a blessing on another**

That life that is in the cup is pouring out as a blessing on another, to stir them up to their sacrifice and their works of sonship, so that they, also, obtain their inheritance.

That is being the ‘cup’ to one another, because your cup is overflowing. This is what it means to ‘partake of the cup’. It is both being poured out and being drunk.

### **Dwelling in the house of the Lord – not forsaking the fellowship of gathering**

‘Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.’ Psa 23:6.

This is the confession of a person who does not forsake the gathering together to commune.

So, that is ‘the table of the Lord’; to be the bread, which is sincerity and truth, the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, to one another.

And to be the cup, which is to pour out on another because we are joined to the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings.

### **A table of blessing and a table of demons**

Sadly, there can be enemies at that table, for whom it has become a table of demons.

If we do not partake of the communion in a worthy manner, the elements of the bread and wine become to us a table of demons.

I find it a very confronting statement that I could eat and drink in a way that makes the very fellowship that I am part of to be a table of demons to me, so that I am eating and drinking judgement to myself.

‘Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?’

We are eating and drinking of Christ when we meet *in His name*.

‘What am I saying, then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? [No] Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.’

### **Anything other than a fellowship in the name is a fellowship with demons**

There is a fellowship that is ‘in the name’, and anything other than fellowship in the name, in partaking of the altar, is a fellowship with demons.

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table *and* of the table of demons.

There is a bread and a cup that belongs to the Lord’s table. And there is a bread and a cup that belongs to the table of demons.

### **Provoking the Lord to jealousy**

‘Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?’ 1Co 10:18-22.

This ‘provoking to jealousy’ is the deluded idea that the love of God embraces every person’s view; every alternative doctrine or idea about what it means to be a Christian.

The fire of God, the jealousy of God, is provoked on that because it is idolatry. If we eat and drink with that as the basis of our fellowship, it is the table of demons, and it comes under the judgement of God. The jealousy of God Himself burns on it.

It is the idolatry in our own heart, and idolatry has to do with living and walking by any doctrine other than the doctrine of sonship. It is a worthless idol.

It is the idolatry in our heart that renders the communion to be a table of demons for us.

### **A synagogue of Satan**

Of course, a table of demons can be ‘set’ by those who are of the synagogue of Satan.

The term ‘synagogue of Satan’ comes from Christ’s letters to His churches in the book of Revelation.

And there is a synagogue of Satan in our midst when the word of Satan is taught over and against the word that calls us to the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings.

If you are eating of the word that is being proclaimed from a synagogue of Satan, that word is the bread which is of the table of demons. It can be set.

### **An alternative gospel preached**

These are ministers of Satan who proclaim that life can be obtained in a way other than through fellowship by the Spirit in the offering and sufferings of Christ.

We have noted that our eating and drinking is our ‘conversation and conduct’. A conversation can be promoted that is an alternative to the word and fellowship of the presbytery, which is the fellowship of the Father and His Son.

They may, for example, teach that life can be found through good works. As we are going to learn next week, that is old leaven. Or they may

teach that life is found through positive faith or by God's 'blessing'.

People give ear and loyalty to these doctrines because they appeal to their flesh. This is idolatry.

If we give ear to them and walk in the false faith of that word, we have partaken of a table other than the Lord's table.

### **Idolatry – the gospel of our own desire**

Idolatry is what we worship because we believe that its pursuit will result in the life we desire. It is based on another doctrine proclaimed by Satan, where he said that we will have life if we pursue what we believe to be good or evil.

Idolatry is worshipping something that we believe will result in the life that we desire. That desire is provoked in us by Satan, who said that we can have life if we obtain what we believe to be good, and avoid what is evil. It is sourced from the Deceiver.

Now, when we live this way in the church, we provoke the jealousy of the Lord, which means that we come under His fiery judgement.

### **Capacity to speak the prophetic word of edification, exhortation and comfort**

Now, we have just spoken about sincerity and truth being a *prophetic* word that is edification, exhortation and comfort.

And the source of this capacity to prophesy, or speak, is *by the faith* that has come from the wisdom from above. It is not sourced in ourselves.

Our ability to prophesy is because we are established in the word proclaimed by Christ through His presbytery.

### **The word spoken – either the spirit of faith or the spirit of Satan**

If the prophetic word that is spoken in this meal – our *communion* meal – is not in sincerity and truth; if it is not based in the word that we have received from above, it is of the spirit of Satan.

This is because the word which is from above is by 'the same spirit of faith'.

There is a spirit which provokes articulation.

It is either the spirit of faith, which comes by receiving the word from above; or it is the spirit of Satan, which is sourced in the flesh.

### **The word of a false prophet**

So, if the prophetic word spoken in this meal is not sincerity and truth, it is of the spirit of Satan, who 'seeks whom he may devour'. This person rejects the name of the Lord, and Satan is the one who comes and devours that household. They are taken, snared and made captive.

This is a false prophet who looks like a sheep.

When they come into our houses, we believe that they are genuine, firstfruits believers, but they begin to speak another word.

This is a false prophet, because their word, their speech, is an alternative prophecy.

We sometimes think of false prophets as being ones who go around dressed like a prophet and saying, 'Thus says the Lord.' It is not like that at all.

### **The nature of the false prophet**

The false prophet is the one who *looks* like a sheep, but *speaks* something different. Jesus said they are 'ravenous wolves', and their appetite is the attention and loyalty of those who receive them.

'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing [they look like a sheep] but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.' Mat 7:15.

### **You will know them by their fruit**

Now, we may wonder how we are to recognise these ones. Helpfully, Jesus said, 'You will know them *by their fruit*.'

And what is 'fruit'? It is the fruit of their lips, Paul said in Hebrews.

What is the fruit of our lips? It is our conversation and our conduct.

### **A word spoken, other than present truth**

If the word that is being proclaimed, or spoken, by someone is other than what is being proclaimed from the presbytery as the word of present truth; or someone says, 'What they really mean is "this"', that person is hungry for attention.

Or, if they have a cynical edge about the word or about those who are proclaiming it, they are 'baring their teeth'. The point is that we do not need to be afraid, because the Lord Himself set that table in the midst of His enemies.

What do we need to do?

### **The place of protection**

We need to be sincere, truthful, and to lay our life down. That is where our protection is.

The protection is not to decide, 'Well, I'm not asking anyone over for a fellowship meal.'

The protection is to be *obedient*, and to *break bread*. As we do this, we are feeding and giving drink to our enemies, not even knowing that they are our enemies.

The truth is that they come under judgement because they commune with you. They are eating and drinking in an unworthy manner.

All you have to do is to be accountable for your own response. So, the fruit is 'the fruits of the lips'; it is the content of our conversation and conduct.

### **Understanding the principle of leaven**

Now, the issue of 'keeping the feast' and 'rightly discerning the Lord's body', brings to our attention the principle of 'leaven'.

Keeping the feast is not just eating and drinking communion at church or in our houses. Indeed, it requires us to rid our houses of leaven. In the Old Testament, in relation to keeping the Passover, leaven needed to be removed from their houses; and, today, it has two elements for us.

One is that we must *remove leaven* from the culture of our own houses. And we will need to consider how we know where leaven is, so that it can be removed.

Second, we need to *prevent leaven from coming into our houses*.

These are aspects of how we keep the feast with *unleavened* bread.

I hope that you are encouraged to not forsake the gathering together, and to be the bread of sincerity of truth to one another and the cup that is being poured out on the sacrifice and service of another's faith, in the name of the Lord.

If you do this, you will be protected, and He will be present with you in the midst of your house.