

Unity through Broken Bread

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Imagine with me if you will! Imagine what it would be like to have union with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? I am speaking of Union with and in each part of the trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Have you ever thought about that?

(By union I mean oneness with Christ or unity – I will use these terms interchangeably. Union, oneness and unity all mean the same thing – together as one)

Well, you should, because that is exactly what God provided when Jesus was crucified and rose again. It was that crucifixion and that resurrection that provided this life to all believers. You have it now – and I am going to tell you exactly how it was obtained and why you now have it if you are born again. Paul said to teach Christ and Him crucified and that is what this message will be.

Recently, during communion, the Lord opened my eyes *(Just as He opened the eyes of disciples on the Road to Emmaus)* to focus on the bread, the broken bread that forms part of the emblems we eat to remember Christ, the wine being the other.

That focus led me to add to the studies I had already done. Did you know of the incredible importance symbolism of the broken bread during our life on earth? It is not just something towards eternal life after death. Without that broken bread – representing the broken body of Jesus – we would not be able to live our lives as God intended.

Today I am going to tell you very clearly the basis of our life on earth, through Christ that we remember by this simple sacrament. Hence the title and theme of today's message is Unity through Broken Bread.

(Pray before proceeding)

What are God's purposes for us believers?

The full purposes of God in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are beyond our wildest dreams and are worthy of deep examination. *(today, we will just begin that examination)* God's purposes are so deeply embedded in life that we barely understand them when we talk about our salvation. Eternally, our salvation

means escaping hell and enjoying heaven. That much we know well. But there is far more – to do with everyday life.

The purpose of our salvation here on earth is for us to manifest the life of the Son of God in our mortal flesh – always of course, in order to do His will. Think about that! It is to live out of the life of Jesus from within us! That is what the Bible says, even when we do not fully know, understand or experience this.

Let me say a little about the depth and breadth of these things. When we celebrate the Lord's Supper each week, we are instructed to remember both the body of Christ (symbolized by broken bread) and the spilt blood of Christ (symbolized by wine). If you search the scriptures you will find multitudes of scriptures dealing with the part the blood plays in our redemption – it is mainly to do with the forgiveness of our sins. Not quite as easily, although there are many, you will find scriptures explaining various outcomes for us of the physical bodily death of Christ.

Today, we are going to focus on the importance of the physical death of Christ, which we remember by partaking of broken bread.

Let me ask two questions. The first one is – Did Christ die for us? Well of course He did – without His death our sins would not have been forgiven. But for today, we are going to focus on the other aspect of our relationship to His death. The second question is:

Did we die with Christ? Well of course not you might say – because He died 2000 years ago and we were not alive then. But the truth of scripture is that by some miracle of God, we did die WITH Christ, despite the time difference. As hard as that might be to understand, we need to accept it is true from scripture and the actual doorway into living the life of Christ, through His resurrection.

The Bible says this in several places. Consider these statements from scripture. (full scripture details are at the end of the notes)

“I have been crucified with Christ;”

“We died with Him,”

“You died with Christ”

“Our old man was crucified with Him,”

“We were buried with Him.”

In various ways, these all say with Him – we died with Him

Then, there is this scripture, putting it differently.

*“We have been **united together** in the likeness of His death,” (which is **WITH** Him in His death)*

(Finally, to complete the story, when that verse says we HAVE BEEN united, WHO does that mean? Paul tells us the answer – **ALL** died {with Him})

“If One (Jesus) died for all, then all died;”

How many died? **All died!** And that includes you and me.

Right now, whether or not you can accept and understand this, (*I know there are some are good reasons for not immediately accepting and understanding*) the scriptures do clearly indicate that **we died when Christ died.**

Obviously, this is quite a mystery. How could we die with Christ, when His crucifixion occurred almost 2000 years ago? It is a physical impossibility isn't it? The brain won't compute that. It is an offence to our logical mind! However, if you are rejecting this biblical truth right now, that we died **with** Christ, it is because your mind is rejecting it, for when we think of death, we think of it in the physical realm. We know something because we actually see or experience it.

But in the case of the death of Jesus, not only was it in the physical realm, but it was also in the spiritual realm, which is unseen, and has no connection with time. (time in the Spiritual realm is different from time in the physical realm – which is chronological) Our spirit, if we were in touch with the Holy Spirit on this issue, would know this, inform us, and would embrace it, whatever we might know or not know intellectually. (to be in touch with the Spirit, we need to wait on Him in faith and believing) Somehow, God did that miracle of us being in and **WITH** Jesus Christ in His death.

We have seen from the scriptures that we were WITH Christ in His death. As far as God is concerned, it does not matter when in chronological time that event happened, as in the Spirit realm, they were at the same time. Consider this. We easily believe His blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins nearly 2000 years ago. In similar fashion, we need to believe about our death with Him (that we died with Him) that we might be resurrected with Him. In similar fashion, we died with Christ at that same time. Without that belief we may not know or experience newness of life. (No death, then no resurrection, then no Life – Zoe in the Greek)

We don't know how the Father organized for us to die with Jesus – and it cannot be understood in our minds – but just accepted by faith. So it is a case of – are you going to believe the Bible or not? Apart from not being able to hear the Spirit, it is perhaps our unbelief of the written word that holds us back from many things in God. Just believing the words of scripture is a good start, even if we cannot understand. (Believing is often a prerequisite for understanding) There are some things we will never understand, but we can believe by faith. Even further, it may underline any inability to receive revelation from the Spirit of God. But believing in itself is a good start, as it is fodder for the Spirit to bring revelation.

So why am I making such a point that **we died WITH Christ?**

1 **There cannot be a resurrection without a prior death.** Jesus Christ died and then was resurrected. Since we were with Him, we also died, so we could be resurrected, that we should live and walk in newness of life. BECAUSE HE LIVES, SO ALSO DO WE! Without **His resurrection** we would not have **His life!** That's what Jesus did for us. To confirm this, one scripture will suffice. Paul tells us in *Roman 6:5*

*“For if we have been **united together in the likeness of His death,** certainly **we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,**”*

Another way of saying it is that because we participated in His death, we also participate in His life. That is the nature of spiritual unity, union and oneness with Him.

A second reason for affirming that we died WITH Christ is this.

2 **Because the brokenness of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ is therefore then connected with our own brokenness.** Without our own brokenness – without our own crucifixion – without our death on the cross – we could not have received our new life – and become a new creation in Him. (If there is no brokenness in our life, there can no resurrection in order to be filled with His Spirit to serve Him) Our becoming a new creation totally depends on our death with Christ on the cross. This is the key point in this first part of this message.

Paul affirms the centrepiece of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and explains how it becomes a personal daily aspect of life. Here are his words in 2 Corinthians 4:11.

*“For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, **that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.**”*

So we may see that the life of Jesus is able to be manifested in our lives – in our very beings – that is what the broken body of Jesus achieved – that is His Gospel for our life whilst here on earth. Another way of saying this is that the need to satisfy our personal selfish needs in life is set aside or put to death in order to give preference to the needs of others. Isn't that what agape (love) is? Without the death of Jesus on the cross and our participation in that death, we would never be able to love as He loves and live as He lives.

Moreover, His life within us is affirmed by the witness of the Spirit, as John affirms in 1 John 3:24, 4:13, 5:10. So – out of our association with His death, we get life!!! What a mystery! What a deal! What a paradox! We allow Jesus to take over our life, by dying to it (and not getting anything much of what we want in life – except Him) and allowing our lives to be guided and controlled by His Spirit, for His purposes and His glory.

Remember that in this message today, we are not primarily dealing with the blood aspect of the crucifixion – although it is related, in that it sets the principle from 2000 years ago, for it to be of future benefit. The spilt blood of Christ was to satisfy the wrath of God for the sins (plural) of every believer – or believer to be. All our sins were imputed to Jesus, so He would bear them on our behalf – and that achieved forgiveness for us all – even though prospectively carried out ahead of our future lifetime.

The Cross of Christ had a dual effect – sins (plural) relating to the blood – and sin (singular), relating to the body death of Christ. So, Christ also had to die for our sin (singular). Our sin was who we were in Adam, before the regeneration of our life, to become who we are in Christ. The physical body death of Christ had to be in order to kill off the Adamic life (correctly called the old nature or the old man in Romans 6:6) which was handed to us at birth as a son of Adam. And because we were there and participated in that death with Him, the purposes of God were achieved – to rid us of that Adamic old life. He brought it to death, by our participation in His death – and makes possible resurrection into new creations based on the resurrection of Christ.

So when we take the broken bread, we are remembering the symbolic importance of the union of our death with the physical death of Jesus Christ. Without Christ's body being broken to the point of death (*and by our participation, ours with it*) it would be impossible to have the new life we have. (now this is so, even if we do not understand or fully know that this transaction has taken place – even as believers, we may not fully know, but it is still true whether we know it or not) There are two aspects of getting to know this. One is simple

intellectual understanding, which is inadequate for life, and knowing that which comes by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

So prospectively, we were together in union with Him at His death and in His burial and we were together in union with Him in His resurrection. By prospectively, I mean that these things were applied to us at the time of our confession of faith in Jesus Christ, when we were regenerated by His Spirit. The preparation had been done for us in A.D. 29 when Christ died, was buried and rose again. More amazingly perhaps we are together as one with Him in our lives!

Next time you look at the broken bread you receive, be thankful in the light of this new awareness, especially if you know it be revelation.

Summary so far. So, to sum up so far, we were in union with Christ in His death, His burial and His resurrection and His life which He shares with us. I believe there is a central theme running through the NT. Death leads to life. Paul modeled His life on this. Jesus Himself taught it in John 14 and 17.

Oneness in Christ

Let's take a look at what Jesus Christ said about our oneness with Him, the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught these things in John 17, when He prayed before the crucifixion. In these words He revealed the whole purpose of the Gospel, that we be One with Him. Notice as I read the verse, this oneness or union of us with Christ that I have been talking about.

“...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent Me. ²²I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved Me.”

In these verses, the whole purpose of the gospel was revealed – that our lives are forever entwined with Christ both in our daily lives and in our death.

John 17 explanation

Notice Jesus said to His Father – “we are one” So Jesus saw Himself as One with the Father – they were of the same Spirit – united through the Spirit

In the audio MP3 version, please imagine with me that I am using a set of visual aids to enable you to visualize this oneness.

Introduce Folders.

Blue Folder – represents the Father

Red Folder – represents Jesus Christ

Yellow Folder – represents the Holy Spirit

Grey Folders – represents us as disciples of Jesus Christ

1 Jesus said **“as you are in me and I am in you”** referring again to His Father being in Him, they being one together.

(Online – In reading this you will need to imagine me merging one folder behind the other to indicate their oneness – First, the blue folder (The Father) being slipped behind the red folder (Jesus) indicating that the Father is in Jesus. Then, you will need to imagine the reverse, where the red folder is slipped behind the blue one – to indicate that Jesus is in the Father) He then concludes that they are one)

This is demonstrated in this way – imagine me slide BLUE folder behind RED folder, indicating that the Father was in Jesus. The reverse is also true – sliding the RED folder behind BLUE folder, indicating that JESUS was in the Father.

So – The Father is in Jesus – Jesus is in the Father – Jesus and the Father are one, both then and now.

2 Jesus continued **“May they also be in us”** showed Jesus plans for the disciples.

(Online – In reading this you will need to imagine me merging one folder behind two others, the other to indicate their oneness together – the grey folder, indicating disciples, being slipped in behind the RED and BLUE, being one with both the FATHER and JESUS)

Our oneness with the FATHER and the SON is indicated by the sliding that GREY folder representing us behind the others.

So – The disciples were and will be in Jesus and the Father.

3 Jesus also prayed the words **“I in them”** indicating that Jesus would be in the disciples and us. In this part of the verse Jesus connected the disciples with Himself and the Father, the connection being through the Holy Spirit.

(This is demonstrated by the grey folders – disciples – being merged behind the red folder – Jesus, to indicate that He would be within us)

This fits with all the Pauline scriptures that say the life of Jesus is within us.

So we can say – Jesus is in the disciples.

4 “that they may be one as we are one” Jesus prayed that the disciples would be one together – one in spirit and unity – in the same Spirit in which the Father and Son were in union and unity.

(This is indicated with the folders by again merging red and blue and also (separately) merging two grey folders, then merging the two grey folders behind the red and blue)

5 **Finally, by and through the Holy Spirit**, by merging red, blue and grey behind the yellow, the Holy Spirit. This shows that the Father, Son and disciples are as one, joined together by the Spirit of God

You have now seen and heard that:

The Father is in Jesus. And Jesus is in the Father.

Jesus and the Father are one.

Jesus is in the disciples.

The disciples will be united

The disciples will also be one as the Father and Jesus are one, all via the Holy Spirit. (as we are all in one Spirit)

So the Father, Son and Spirit were always in unity and that potentially we are also in unity with them ----The Father, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

What are God’s purpose in this Union?

That the world may know Jesus came – by the world seeing Jesus in us – and that we are new creations in Him!

What made these things possible?

It was by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that these things became possible. There was no other way for God to reconcile us to Himself.

It was not just through His spilt blood that this was possible but also by His physical death – that is what made union with Him possible.

So it is possible for anyone who is a believer, to KNOW they in union with Father Son & Spirit. (and to partake of these divine attributes of Jesus)

There is only one answer as to how all this can be. Union is only possible through the death and resurrection of Christ.

It was by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that these things became possible. There was no other way.

It was not ONLY through His spilt blood that this was possible but ALSO by His physical body death by our participating in His death, burial, resurrection, and now – His life.

Imagine!

- If you really knew you had union with Christ – and had the actual experience of knowing you were one with Him!
- If you were able to live within union with Christ in relationships with other brothers and sisters!
- If such union were to operate between partners in marriage
- To be in full knowledge of union with Christ as you represent Him to the world!

Relevant Scriptures

Colossians 2:20 “Therefore, ***if you died with Christ*** from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations....”

2 Timothy 2:11 “This is a faithful saying: ***For if we died with Him,*** We shall also live with Him.”

Roman 6:8 “Now if ***we died with Christ,*** we believe that we shall also live with Him,”

Romans 6:6 “*knowing this, that **our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with,** that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*”

Roman 6:4 “Therefore ***we were buried with Him*** through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Roman 6:5 “For if ***we have been united together in the likeness of His death,*** certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,”

Galatians 2:20 **“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”**

2 Corinthians 5:14 **“For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that **if One (Jesus) died for all, then all died;**”**

Roman 6:5 **“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly **we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,**”**

2 Corinthians 4:11. **“For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, **that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.**”**

1 John 3:24 **“Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this **we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit** whom He has given us.”**

1 John 4:13 **“By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because **He has given us of His Spirit.**”**

1 John 5:10 **“**He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself;** he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.”**

This is the sixteenth in a series of articles to further outline and provide resource for believers to move towards Fullness of Life in Christ.

This unit of study continues the study of an aspect of adversity.

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Availability. This study is for use in one to one teaching or in small groups by those who know this experience for themselves, or by those open to the Spirit to learn together.