

The Breaking of Bread

The 'Breaking of Bread' is one of three physical practices given to the New Testament Church in a time when the whole emphasis of the church, of which we read in the Acts of the Apostles, was to move away from any symbolic practice. The days in which the church began, the first century AD, were ones of Roman domination in Israel, and Roman culture was full of symbolism and idolatry, so for the Lord Jesus, in teaching His church, the whole emphasis would have had a spiritual direction, to cause the members to be spiritual man and women. Therefore to have a physical practice to do seems at first a little unusual but, as we shall discover, the whole direction within the physical practice is spiritual with the intention to move the people into the practices of the Spirit of God. It can be seen all too clearly that, as the church has fallen away from seeing the power of the Spirit moving in the lives of its members, more emphasis has been placed on the outward, on buildings, on ceremony, on vestments and so on. Even as we look on the physical practice of 'Breaking of Bread' it is vitally important not to get taken up with the physical elements themselves but to remain aware of the truth behind the practice, and most of all our Lord Jesus and His sacrifice on our behalf. 'Breaking of Bread' is an act of remembrance; Jesus said, *"Do this in remembrance of me"*.

We will mention two of the three practices here; for the other please go to the annex at the end of this teaching. You will understand why when you look there, as the subject is not relevant to our current concern. The two practices are, very straightforwardly, 'Water Baptism' and 'Breaking of Bread'. Water baptism is an outward demonstration of something which is internal and as we shall see is of no value without the internal work of God. That applies however 'Water Baptism' is carried out; the Biblical way is by total immersion. The Bible makes it clear that Baptism in Water should take place just once. It speaks of a beginning, an initiation. Water Baptism was and is by total immersion; it was, and is, a 'putting into' but also a 'bringing out from'. The word for baptism comes from the word in Greek to marinate, a method in cooking where items of food are immersed into a liquid to take into them the taste of the liquid. The food, usually meat, then takes on the whole character and nature of that into which it has been immersed; the flavour on the outside gets right into the substance within.

Water Baptism of course can only affect the outside and makes no difference to the inside of a person; all that happens is that the person gets wet. However 'Water Baptism' points us to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, the true spiritual baptism. If we read Romans chapter 6 we are told of a 'Baptism into the death of Jesus Christ', an immersion into His death in which those who have been through such an experience take into themselves all

that Jesus accomplished in His death. They are 'Crucified with Christ'; this is the 'One baptism' mentioned by Paul in the letter to the Ephesian church and **must** be the experience of everyone when they become a Christian. Paul tells us "*We are all baptised by one Spirit into the body of Christ*"; there is no other way into Jesus Christ, no other way into His church and no other way into eternal life. In The Baptism into the death of Our Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit everything in us which is 'of death', as a result of sin, goes through Jesus' death to render it dead. Because Jesus has been raised from the dead, He has in His death overcome all that is of sin and death; so, when we are joined into His death, our 'old man (old nature) is destroyed' (rendered inactive). If then we are planted together (AV) or united with Jesus (RV) in His death, we are also planted/united/joined with Him in His resurrection. This is what enables the Christian to walk in newness of life. Jesus died only once and rose again from the dead only once; so water baptism is a one off experience declaring physically, and usually publicly, the spiritual work which has gone on inside the person. They are declaring 'I am a Christian, I belong to Jesus, I have been through His death and my old nature has been put to death in Him and I have risen again with Him to walk in newness of life.' As we have said, the physical experience of water baptism can have no spiritual effect on us whatsoever and is only of value if the spiritual baptism has been experienced inside. Sometimes both happen at the same time, but the spiritual baptism is the important, indeed vital, one, and when it has been experienced there will be, rather, **must** be, a transformation of life. There is usually a desire in someone who has received the 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit' to undergo 'Water Baptism' and make their public confession of their union with Christ and identification with Him in His work on the cross. When someone dies they are buried; Water Baptism is in some ways a burial, but even here the true burial is into Christ where all of our old life is put away for ever. So all these practices point to spiritual truth, in the same way as the crossing of the river Jordan by the children of Israel speaks to us of the same truth. Look at it yourself in all the detail, but in essence all the people passed through the river Jordan from one side to the other. They 'went into' and 'came up out of'. To indicate this twelve stones were to be left in the river, one for each tribe, meaning all had passed through, showing that the old had been left behind in the 'going through', and twelve stones were taken out of the river as a witness that they had passed through to the land of promise. The stones were set at Gilgal, which means 'rolling'; God said He had taken away all their reproach. He had removed all their failure so they could be free to get on with living under promise, in the Promised Land. The Christian, once having been through the death of Jesus in the baptism of the Spirit, is to walk in newness of life. The whole historical event of the passing through the river Jordan says all this to us, as God had a wish to show, even then, the principles of the Baptism in the Spirit.

The book of Colossians tells us reconciliation through the cross of our Lord Jesus presents us *"Holy, unreprouvable and blameless in the sight of God"*. It is the same idea as for Israel, reproach is taken away, but for the Christian it is removed from the heart, where the Blood of Jesus can cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Jesus has made peace for us and we can get on with life, outworking the promise of the Holy Spirit in our lives. What we now need is spiritual nourishment and just as the 'Promised Land' was flowing with milk and honey so the life of Christ provides the nourishment we need. Therefore the second physical practice, 'Breaking of Bread', shows that method of nourishment to us as a reminder of our Lord Jesus and on whom we need to feed.

Jesus made an amazing statement which we read in John chapter 6. *"He that eats of me, even he shall live by me"*. So there is real spiritual nourishment in Jesus Christ, and earlier in the same chapter Jesus says, *"If you do not eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you"*. When Jesus talks of life it is always the life of God. Jesus, in John 5, says this about life, *"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself"*. This life which is the life of God is eternal life, we receive it when we receive the Lord Jesus, and that is the life by which we live if we 'eat' of Him. So in our teaching we have our first mention of flesh and blood, and of course the bread and wine are tokens which represent the body and blood of our Lord Jesus, when we break bread together.

When Jesus said these things, those who heard Him asked this question, *"How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"* Jesus never really answered their question, but if we are to understand 'Breaking of Bread' we must answer the question for ourselves and appreciate what Jesus was trying to do with His teaching, which is recorded wonderfully for us in John chapter 6. The chapter begins with the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, the only miracle mentioned in all four gospels, and therefore of great significance. Jesus fed five thousand men, plus the women and children, from five small loaves and two fish. Seven items in all, seven is the number for perfection, and so Jesus takes that which is perfect, breaks it, and feeds every person there in that remote place. Everyone was filled and there were twelve baskets full leftover, one for each disciple. This was probably done to speak to each disciple of Jesus' abilities and the abundance of His provision. This miracle speaks of Jesus, the perfect one, breaking Himself and feeding the whole world. The disciples of course did not understand that wonderful truth then, but in 'Breaking of Bread' we 'remember Him' who gave Himself for the life of the world. This is where our hearts and faith must be when we break bread and remember Him.

Those that were fed among the five thousand definitely did not understand. Their stomachs had been filled, perhaps an unusual experience for them, and perhaps better understood by those who live in developing countries where food is scarce. As we will

see the Lord Jesus in His teaching attempts to move the people away from eating food, and being full, to that which is spiritual, and eating of Him. Much is made these days of 'Breaking of Bread' being part of a meal; perhaps it can be, but that is not the intention of breaking bread; it is not an excuse for filling our stomachs. Big feasts and such practices are usually pagan, when nations, groups, religions etc. make excuses for eating food, often to excess. This is very much a 'thing of the flesh' rather than the 'spirit' or 'being spiritual'. The 'god of this world' is only too happy to put it into the minds of religious leaders to provide a means of religious practice for people to feed themselves and provide a contentment and satisfaction which is all about the flesh. 'Breaking of Bread' is all about remembering Jesus and His death. There has been confusion over the word 'feast' from the Old Testament and then linking, in error, 'Breaking of bread' or 'Holy Communion' with the feast of the Passover. In the Old Testament the word 'feast' is properly translated 'fest' or 'festival' and means a celebration or time of celebration, and is much more to do with a date or a time than a feast of food. Just for one example, and there are others, we read this in Exodus 12. *"And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever"*. This was a 'feast' of unleavened bread, not exactly a big lavish meal but we see that it was to be celebrated on the same day every year. That is the idea of the word 'feast'; it relates to the day and not the food, so breaking of bread is not an excuse for eating lots of food, rather we read in 1 Corinthians 11, *"For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken."*²² *What? Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?"*

When we return to the account in John chapter 6, after Jesus had crossed the lake and the people had followed Him, Jesus said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perishes, but for that meat which endures unto everlasting life"*. Jesus identifies that their main interest in following Him was basic food; it is the most primitive instinct in human beings, and when Jesus says *"Verily, verily"* it is to provide emphasis that this is a very important point. At the same time Jesus introduces the need to have food which lasts unto eternal life. So the chapter progresses as Jesus, having tried to turn them away from flesh, from food, moves on to dealing with religious ancestry, and tradition. If we are to understand 'Breaking of Bread', Holy Communion, whatever we want to call it, then we must follow the wisdom of Jesus' teaching. At the end we will look at the names for 'Breaking of Bread' and find the Biblical definitions, but in Acts 2, in the early church it is called 'Breaking of Bread', so if the Holy Ghost, inspiring Luke, calls it such we cannot be far from being right if we follow suit.

The Pharisees, in John 6, ask Jesus to show them a miracle to prove Himself greater than Moses. We paraphrase, "Ok, Moses fed our fathers with manna in the wilderness, what are you going to do?" Jesus replies with, "Yes, Moses fed them, but they are dead". In other words, look at the truth. Of course Jesus meant more than that their fathers were dead due to the many years which had elapsed since Moses' day. That was true, but more significantly those who ate the manna died in the wilderness because of their sin and unbelief and never entered into the land of promise. Manna never changed their inward state and removed the law of Sin and Death in them. Jesus says, *"My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes from heaven and gives His life for the world"*, and later goes on to say, *"I am the bread of lifewho eats of this bread will live for ever"*. Here is a much better thing, eternal life and all the possibilities of what God can do suddenly increase. Jesus continues, *"This is the will of my Father, that of all He has given me I will lose none of them but raise them up at the last day"*. Jesus does not give death as came from Moses, not that there was anything wrong with Moses, he did what God commanded him, but, as we have said, manna does not give eternal life. Jesus could have put it this way, "Manna does not deal with sin, but I do; manna fills you with food but I give you food which gives you eternal life. So forget your religion with all its traditions, "Come to me, eat of me and you will live"."

With the way human beings think, and the way flesh promotes itself and likes to provide that which makes things comfortable, it is not surprising then that so much has been built up which is 'religious' around 'Breaking of Bread'. There is the error of the Catholic Mass, where the bread is meant to actually become the body of our Lord Jesus; transubstantiation is the word, and the idea is that some amazing miracle happens to the elements offered. The alleged change is to the physical element, but there is nothing spiritual in it all. All this leads many into trusting in the act rather than Jesus Himself. The bread was just to be a token. When Jesus Himself broke bread at the 'last supper' He was still alive in the flesh at that time. He had not gone to the cross, so how could the token, the bread, be turned into His actual flesh? If it did not take place at the first 'Lord's supper' why should there be such an alleged change now? It is impossible but sadly believed by so many as they look for symbolism and superstition, all because they don't really have Jesus and His life by which they live. Religious leaders love to create something for people to follow, some system which keeps the leaders in control and gives them power over their people. It really is the most awful deception, bringing people into increasing darkness in their lives as they take the Mass and continually partake of that which is untrue. Such practices are not life changing, they do not give eternal life and, just like those who ate the manna and are dead because manna cannot give eternal life, so

those that take the Mass remain in death. The token does not change and therefore cannot change them.

So how does Jesus give us His flesh to eat and His blood to drink? Again, the token of the wine does not become His physical blood; when Jesus first gave it to His disciples His blood was still moving round in his arteries and veins. The cup of wine is just a token, but Jesus says, "Eat my flesh and drink my blood". We read in Hebrews chapter 9 verse 14, "*Who through the eternal Spirit*". It is only part of the verse but helps us with our understanding. Jesus offered Himself, all that He was, through the eternal Spirit to His Father. Here is the real miracle; all that Jesus was, and is, became available in the Spirit. No need for the bread to change, the life of God is available in the Spirit. Of course that does not help us if we are in the flesh and not able to partake of that which is the Spirit of God. Jesus said, "*Father into your hands I commit my spirit*". Jesus' offering was ultimately a spiritual one, though it involved His own flesh and blood. Jesus was a 'life giving spirit' and therefore He was able to offer Himself through the Spirit to His Father.

Nicodemus had come to Jesus and asked Him about the miracles Jesus did. Jesus' answer, "*You must be born again*". Why? "*That which is flesh is flesh and that which is spirit is spirit; marvel not that I say that you must be born again*". The whole secret of Jesus' life was that He was a spiritual man; He had been conceived by the Holy Ghost and lived in the Spirit as a young boy and man, which is what made Him a person of such understanding. We read in Isaiah 11, "*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord*"; the word 'quick' means living, or alive, and not fast. Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit for His ministry and then, as we read above, offered Himself to His Father on the cross through the same eternal Spirit. So all the life that belonged to our Lord Jesus becomes available in the Spirit, the life that was in His flesh and blood is available in the Spirit. So that is how we can eat His flesh and blood; not in the natural but in the Spirit. That is one of the reasons why Christians **must** be born again, so that they are 'spiritual', no longer of the flesh but of the spirit, and can partake of that which is spirit; otherwise partaking of any physical practice is of no value.

So we understand the life of Jesus, in His flesh and blood, became available in the Spirit in Jesus' death, in His offering, which is why we are to remember His death when we break bread. It is all very simple and yet totally spiritual, but we read, "*The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God*", which is why so much error develops, when people try and provide something for flesh to satisfy the natural man when Jesus has provided food for the 'spiritual man', even His own body and blood.

So we read in 1 Corinthians 11, *“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come”*.

This is the direct revelation Paul received from the Lord Jesus about what actually happened at the last supper, after they had finished the meal. They were good Jews so took the Passover together as required by the law, but then Jesus moves them on to something new. The Passover was a remembrance of the great night of deliverance which God had worked for the people of Israel to bring them out of Egypt. It was through ‘a death’, ‘a judgement’, when the first born all died in Egypt, perhaps indicative of the death of ‘first birth’. The firstborn of Israel survived as they were ‘under the blood of the Passover Lamb’, but in one way went through death. Jesus says *“Do this in remembrance of me”*. ‘No longer take elements which relate to the Passover and remind you of that deliverance, but remember me and take elements which remind you of me’. The Lamb which they would have killed and eaten at the Passover feast with Jesus was not the original lamb used in Egypt. It was a token, an example, to represent the real lamb used. There was to be a lamb for each house, and with the Lord Jesus God has a Lamb for His house which is His church. So the bread we take is not the actual flesh, and the cup not the original blood, but just a token and an example which represents the *“Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”*, and is God’s Lamb, Jesus the Son of God, for God’s house. The Old Testament is full of illustrations of this one sacrifice. Abraham offering up Isaac his only son is just one, but shows us that God had planned to offer up His Son and it was always in the heart of God to redeem His people. In the account in Exodus 12 of the Passover feast there was no drink specified. The Jews have added many things to the original pattern as part of their embellishment of God’s requirement, but no cup was there in the original as the blood was on the door posts and not to be drunk. It was merely a covering whereas the ‘Blood of Christ’ is to be drunk, as the life in it has been

offered through the Spirit. There is therefore the token of the cup to represent the blood. How wonderful. The blood represents the New Covenant which comes through Jesus' death, where sin is washed away and removed, and God writes His laws in our hearts and minds, thus changing our nature into His, in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and giving us eternal life.

How often are we to break bread? The Bible does not tell us but often seems to be frequently, as in the New Testament Church they went from house to house 'Breaking Bread', together with 'apostles' doctrine', fellowship and prayers. Breaking of Bread was an integral part of the life of the church as they were always remembering Jesus' death and the covenant which His death brings in; moreover the life was theirs only because of Jesus' death. Paul talks about *"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body"*; such a way of living was to be the normal spiritual condition of every Christian. The 'Breaking of Bread' was a physical reminder of that spiritual position and how to live and walk in 'newness of life'.

'Breaking of Bread' was to be done together. It can be done singly, of course, but the early church broke bread together; that was normal practice. They were reminding each other and standing together in fellowship as brothers and sisters testifying that they had a common life and a common salvation. They wanted to live by the life of Jesus Christ and they were declaring that they were all part of His body, His church. There is a great joy in doing it together and sharing in the same act with the same remembrance, but it was never intended that there should be a specific way in which it had to be done, and it was never intended that there should be a 'priesthood' set apart to administer 'Holy Communion'. Each member gathered was a brother of Jesus Christ, a partaker of His nature, and each and all could eat simply of that which was offered. Breaking of Bread should be a time of great joy and encouragement for all those who take part, while at the same time soberly remembering their Lord Jesus who laid down His life for them. Paul gives us conditions though and that is what we will now look at to provide a warning and safeguard to all who would 'eat the bread and take the cup'.

Let's start at the end of Paul's words which are recorded for us in 1 Corinthians 11. We paraphrase, "Don't come to eat lots of food, if you are hungry eat at home", quite straightforward and cuts out greed. People join churches for the physical provision they can get, it is all wrong but in some situations that is the case and seen by the author in a church when he was a younger man.

"Wait for one another. Wait till everyone is ready and has arrived". 'Breaking of Bread' is a corporate act, to be done with brothers and sisters to encourage one another. So be

patient and do it properly, lovingly, so all are involved, all are encouraged, within the local church or at least that meeting of the local church.

Now the most important warning, showing how seriously God takes this act of remembrance. *"Examine yourselves"*. Look at your own life, for if you eat and drink unworthily then you eat and drink damnation to yourself. The word for damnation in the AV means the process of judgement. So Paul goes on to say if we don't judge ourselves God will. So at 'Breaking of Bread' there is a time of judgement, it is a place of judgement. We are to remember the Lord's death and that it is the place of the judgement of God upon sin, in that Jesus died for us. *"God laid on Him the iniquity of us all"*. Lives therefore, when we break bread, have to be aligned with this judgement and free from sin, there has to be an examination by each individual before God; it is not before men. If there is in anyway some sin, it has to be confessed and removed before we break bread. Of course that does not involve a priest and that sort of confession, it is between God and each individual, or perhaps the church as a whole, but we are encouraged by these scriptures, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* and *"And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."* We should also be aware of this scripture, *"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother has something against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift"*. We are told "if your brother has something against you", it is not you against him. We should not hold anything against our brother in our hearts anyway. Unforgiveness is sin, and that needs to be resolved in our own hearts. Christians should not be living before God in such a way. *"If we walk in the light the blood of Jesus goes on keeping us clean from sin"*, so if we have unforgiveness, we are not walking in the light and we definitely are not discerning the Lord's body. But Jesus goes further in the scripture we have quoted, and we are to reconcile with our brother, if he has something against us, and then come and offer our gift. As our brother is part of the church, and part of the Lord's body, when we are discerning that body we must be seeking reconciliation with one another, as well as maintaining our life before the Lord.

Paul writes this to the Corinthian church, *"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."*¹⁶ *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*¹⁷ *For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread"*. This is written in the context of fleeing idolatry, asking 'how can those who partake of the bread and wine, tokens of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus, also

partake in idolatrous practices and eat food offered to idols? The tokens mean we have communion with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His sacrifice, so how can those who do that partake of that which is another sacrifice and offered to another (false) god?' Paul then gives us the basis of our unity together as one body all partaking of the one bread. This is the reason for being totally right with our brothers and sisters, so that when we take the elements and commune with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus by His Spirit there is nothing in our lives which denies that unity.

If we eat unworthily we are then guilty of the Lord's body and blood. It is as if we were responsible for His death. The result of not discerning, of eating unworthily, is that God judges us; to eat unworthily means just treating 'Breaking of Bread' as a common meal. God's judgement means many are weak and sickly among you and some have died. It really is that serious, and is the only reason given in the New Testament for Christians being sick. Perhaps that is why so many are, the word 'many' means usually more than 50%, and yet this warning is ignored and people go through the act of 'Breaking of Bread' or 'Holy Communion' without recognising the seriousness of what they do. Perhaps they are ignorant, but ignorance is no excuse. God sees and knows, and our consciences should be telling us whether or not we are right with God, or have they become so dulled that they no longer speak to us? *"Let the peace of God rule, - or be the umpire/referee, - in your hearts."* God has given us the means to know and to discern the body of our Lord Jesus and to remember His death, and if we don't discern and ignore the warnings then the consequences are seen to be severe. Perhaps if the church took just this scripture to heart, there would be far less sickness among the people of God and that would be a testimony to the world of the power of God in their lives.

So to the act/the practice itself. Jesus took bread and broke it. Very straightforward and why probably the early writers call the act 'Breaking of Bread'. It is a physical practice and so 'breaking bread' describes the physical practice. It is however a communion with the body of Christ, and when the cup is taken, of the blood of Christ, so both titles have merit. In some churches it is called the Eucharist, which describes the elements of the bread and wine and comes from the Greek word 'Eucharistia' meaning a giving of thanks. All names have some merit but what is important is the act of remembrance. It is to remind us of the Lord Jesus and the covenant He has made for us in His blood. A great deal is also made in the Old Testament as well as the New of 'not forgetting,' and there were means given to the Jews to help them remember, from feast days to phylacteries. David writes, *"Forget not all His benefits"*. In the New Covenant we have one single act of remembrance but it is to be undertaken often. Why? There is only one offering of our Lord Jesus to remember and that offering is enough to provide us with perfect salvation

for ever. So what do we do when we 'Break bread'? We show forth/ proclaim/announce the Lord's death until He comes. It is His death through which we are reconciled to God. Reconciliation is through the body of Jesus' flesh on the cross, whereby He made peace for us with God by the "*Blood of His cross*". Paul preached the "Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..... the power of God unto salvation". Everything is focussed on Jesus' death as it is the way He died, without sin, which determined His resurrection. It is 'Jesus' death' which we always bear about in our bodies if we are to have His life manifest in our mortal bodies. It is in Jesus' death where he has triumphed over every principality and every power of darkness. It is by His offering that He has perfected for ever those who are sanctified. Perhaps best summed up in Galatians 2.20, "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*". All this brings us to our opening comment, "*He who eats of me; even he shall live by me*". What is being proclaimed is that Jesus' offering was in the Spirit and His life is available to us in the Spirit in order that we can eat of His flesh and His blood, which has been offered through the eternal Spirit, and have LIFE in us. So 'Breaking of Bread' is a proclamation, but within the local church of our Lord Jesus. This is not a means of evangelism but a proclamation of encouragement between brothers and sisters to declare continually among them, in their gatherings, this wonderful death until Jesus returns. There is within the practice a looking for Jesus' coming again, as His death declares His victory over all and that He must return to take His people to be with Him for ever. Because of Jesus' death He rose again and secured eternal life, then giving it to all that believe on Him; that is what is declared, rather proclaimed, loudly and clearly, at 'Breaking of Bread'. It is to continue to establish those who believe in their faith, and give them a great and certain hope for their eternal future. Hallelujah. The bread is a token, the cup is a token, they were just the basic staple foods of the day, but Jesus is our all in all. So what is used as the token can relate to the staple food of a country; it is no great issue what the tokens are, but what we **must** do, by the Spirit, is eat and drink of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus and have life in us and live by Him to the glory of God.

Do it often, do it in remembrance; let the Holy Spirit proclaim Jesus' death before you, so that you are more and more assured of the life of God given to you and see increasingly how wonderful the love of God is to you. Use 'Breaking of bread' as a means, together with your brothers and sisters, to grow in grace and ensure that you never forget Jesus and His death for you. God bless you, Amen

Annex 1

The third physical thing given to the church is 'head coverings' for women as set out in the early part of 1 Corinthians 11. It is interesting that Paul sets out both the continuing physical things in the same part of the same letter he wrote, trying to get both of these practices right in the Corinthian church. Head coverings could be said to apply only to women but the principle applies to men too as they are not to wear a head covering and that distinguishes them before the angels from the women. So the head covering, or lack of it, is a sign of where authority rests. The head of woman is the man, so the woman has a sign that she is under that protective authority when she prays or is prophesying. The head of the man is God; their 'open head' declares that they are under the direct authority of God. In these days of supposed equality and women's rights the practice has fallen away, but demonstrates the ignorance of many about spiritual authority when the church is gathered. It is essential that things are in the right order spiritually, the order which God has set, so that all are protected. A woman rightly under authority, with her head covered, is free then to pray or prophesy in a safety as protected from demonic influence by the authority on her head. Eve sinned in the beginning as she was not subject to her husband and so women in the meeting must be subject to their own husbands and, if single, to the eldership within the church. They are then, as said, safe, and **liberated** to be open and free in the meeting to glorify God and move in the gifts of the Spirit and so on. Of course the head covering is of no value unless there is a submission in the heart. Few understand all the spiritual implications of women not being protected, and it is only too easy to see the damage caused to many ladies who are vulnerable either to stress and breakdown or to rising up and being dominant. Both are a sadness to our Lord Jesus who died to make us free. However we are warned not to use our liberty for an occasion for the flesh.

For a very good 'in depth looks' at the subject use this link to Mr GW North's book on the subject on the www.revivaluk.org.uk website. The book is used by kind permission.
http://www.revivaluk.org.uk/index_files/Headcovering.pdf

