



Dear Fellow Eagles,

The second March Editorial for Rhythms of Grace focused on the subject of 'Breaking Bread'; I have included it here, as the Eagles' Wings email continued the theme:

HOPE FOR THE HURTING

Paul declared that he knew nothing but Christ crucified [1 Corinthians 2:2]. This earth-shattering event was the cornerstone of his whole ministry, because Paul knew that Jesus had dealt the death-blow to every demonic power on the Cross; and that deliverance from the brokenness the Evil One has brought upon humanity is accessed through His crucifixion and resurrection.

As we continue our thoughts on 'Hope for the Hurting', it is to the foot of the Cross that we must ultimately turn for healing. Not only did Jesus bear all our sins so we could be forgiven, He also bore our sicknesses and infirmities, *and* our mental and emotional sorrows, in order that we could receive healing.

Isaiah 53 is a key passage dealing with the crucifixion. The brackets below hold an amplification of the translation from the original Hebrew:

Surely He took up (removed to a distance, like the scapegoat) our ('our' is emphatic) infirmities (sicknesses) and carried our sorrows (physical, emotional & mental pain), yet we considered Him punished by God, stricken (word used in connection with leprosy) by Him, and afflicted.

But He was pierced (defiled) for our transgressions (rebellion), He was crushed for our iniquities (punishment); the punishment that brought us peace (well-being, wholeness, safety, prosperity, peace with God & man) was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed. (Literally, 'by the means of His stripes there is healing for us'.) [Isaiah 53:4,5]

As we approach Easter it is worthwhile spending some time reflecting on what Jesus has purchased for us on the Cross. [We could spend every day for the rest of our lives, and not exhaust the magnitude of what He has done!]

The Power of the Cross page amplifies this theme, and includes other resources including the personal 'retreat', '**The 7 Wounds of Jesus**'.

POWER OF HOLY COMMUNION IN HEALING

And [Jesus] took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you. [Luke 22:19,20]

When we celebrate 'Communion', 'Breaking Bread' or 'the Lord's Table'—whatever label we give it—we actively pay attention to what Jesus purchased for us on the Cross. It's a physical act which connects us with a powerful spiritual truth. And although it is all part of our inheritance, we can bring our specific needs to Him, and release faith to receive from Him as we take in the elements.

In addition, Paul adds that ***'whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes'***. The act of taking the bread and wine, representing His body and blood, is a prophetic announcement—like baptism—in the heavenly realms, of the power of the Cross over ourselves, our families and our circumstances.

I have heard many testimonies of healing, both physical and emotional, through the Breaking Bread, why not let your faith be ignited...

WHAT ABOUT 'HOLY COMMUNION' FOR THOSE WHO ARE NO LONGER PART OF A CHURCH?

The 2nd March Eagles' Wings Email was a response to this question...

EMAIL

Dear Email Friends,

I hope you have had a blessed week, and that you and all in your circle are keeping well and virus-free.

In the last email I mentioned the value of establishing regular rhythms. One rhythm to consider is that of 'Breaking Bread'. For many churches, Holy Communion is the centrepiece of their worship, and something which is sorely missed when people leave. Last week's Rhythms of Grace editorial (see above) described how it is a practice which is hugely beneficial in our pursuit of wholeness.

But can we take 'Communion' (or whatever label we want to give it) on our own, away from a 'church' setting?

The first mention of bread and wine in Scripture is when Melchizedek (a type of Christ) brought them out to share with Abraham after he defeated the five kings [Genesis 14]. This was a normal way of 'cutting a covenant' in ancient communities. A lesser 'ruler' (in this case, Abraham) would acknowledge the Overlord (Melchizedek) in a Covenant Meal. The Overlord would promise protection and provision in return for loyalty—which we see being referenced in this story. The emphasis in this simple meal was the covenant relationship between two individuals; the location was unimportant.

In the New Testament we read that Jesus was often to be found away from the crowds, at someone's home eating a meal with them; it seems to be one of the ways He really enjoyed relating to people as individuals. And these ordinary mealtimes often became the 'sacred spaces' when lives, such as the disciples at Emmaus [Luke 24:13-35], were transformed by an encounter. This idea is repeated in Revelations: ***Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. [Revelations 3:20]***

In Jesus' day, bread and wine featured in every meal, as there was little food variety and watered down wine was safer to drink than possibly contaminated water. So when it came to the Last Supper, Jesus took these everyday elements, available in every household, from the poorest to the richest, and invested them with powerful significance. By relating bread and wine to His body and blood, and therefore to His coming crucifixion, He was saying to His disciples, 'Whenever you take bread and wine, you can remember Me, My Covenant with you, and My death on your behalf'.

The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.[1 Corinthians 11:24-26]

Just as Jesus, in His days on earth, delighted in focusing on the individual and his or her specific needs, He draws close to us as individuals when we break bread. He invites us to remember the Covenant He has made with each of us personally, like Abraham, the covenant of protection and provision; the covenant of forgiveness and deliverance—the Covenant of Salvation—all ratified through His death on the Cross. And in taking the bread and wine we make a prophetic declaration to the powers of darkness that we are under the protection of our 'Overlord', the Lord Jesus Christ!

There is no suggestion in Scripture that Communion needs specially reserved elements, special people to officiate, or special words to be said. It says nothing about location or numbers; what we do have is the Lord's invitation: 'Do this in remembrance of Me!' And we can make this a part of our household or personal practice as often as we like...

Why not send me your testimonies? He always comes close when we break bread in His name!

I hope the weeks ahead are filled with the experience of His grace and love. The next Eagles' Wings email will be on Monday April 5th. Do get in touch in the meantime, and please do share this invitation with anyone you think would find it useful.

God bless you,

Kate W at Rhythms of Grace: a Journey into Rest

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