

From the Pastor's Desk.....

June 10,2011

“Broken Bread”



1 Corinthians 13:8

“Charity never faileth: ...”

First Corinthians 13 is the famous “Love Letter” to the church. Paul describes a specific love, **“Charity.”** According to the Apostle, Charity is a type of love that surpasses all, overcomes all, and helps all. The word itself comes from the Greek word: – ‘agape.’ ‘Agape’ is simply defined as, ‘love; charity; affection; benevolence;’ but most specifically it is defined as, **‘love feast.’**

The specifics of defining **‘Love Feast’** are most interesting, because it comes from the idea of “Breaking Bread.” In the book of Acts there are descriptions of the early church performing such an act: **Acts 2:46-47** *“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”*

The ‘Breaking Bread’ ceremony that was conducted from house to house was more than just having a ‘common meal’ and it was not to be confused with the communion ceremony. This particular **‘service’** was one of keeping the people in ‘good fellowship & unity’ with one another. It was never intended to be a gathering to talk about problems of each other or to carry on gossip and unfounded conversations that would divide or hinder the work of the gospel, but that would cause the hearts of the believers to be strengthened in their fellowship in Christ. Therefore it obtained the title of **‘Love Feast,’** because it created an atmosphere & spirit of Love and generosity toward one another.....

There are many examples that are used for such a feast and the symbolism of the bread. Be reminded that 'We Are the Bread.' The bible states in 1 Corinthians 12:27: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," so then as being the 'body of Christ' Jesus said of the bread at the Last Supper Meal, Matthew 26:26, "Take, eat, this is my body." As Jesus' body was broken for our redemption and we are to carry on His work until He comes, we also, as the body of Christ, the Church of God, must be broken to further the Gospel, and to be broken is to surrender our will and submit to His will.

Thus the defining of sharing in the breaking of bread from house to house or with one another, we are joining together in fellowship and surrendering together to Christ for the work of the ministry

From the Old Testament to the New here are examples of the Bread:

- 1.) The Passover Bread is a symbol of the power of God to Deliver us from Bondage.
- 2.) The Last Supper Bread represents the willing sacrifice of Christ that we may live.
- 3.) The Broken Bread given to the disciples, including Judas, was an act of forgiving love by Jesus Christ
- 4.) When Jesus fed the 5,000 and 'broke bread' He showed His care and provision to the needy.
- 5.) And the early church in the breaking of bread from house to house represented the people who joined to unity and Praise of God.

We may have different traditions today as compared to then, but the message is the same as Jude said in Jude 1:21, "Keep yourselves in the Love of God..." We, as the Body of Christ, are to be the "Broken Bread," a people who have passed from "Death to Life," and not be "Entangled with the Affairs of this Life," not to please the flesh, but to "Please Him who has chosen us to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

The "Love Feast" is a ceremony that is still practiced by some even to this day in which they will gather, break bread as a token of fellowship and union with one another and they offer this following prayer in a personal silent devotion to the Lord.....

- “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalms 139:23-24 NIV).
- Am I willing to know myself and accept responsibility for what I am and for what I do, or do I blame others?
- Am I honest, or do I profess principles in public that I do not practice in private?
- Am I more severe in my judgment of others than I am in judgment of myself?
- Am I making demands upon others which I do not make of myself?
- Am I listening to others so I may understand them, or do I think only of my own thoughts when others speak?
- Am I gracious and courteous toward all my family, my associates, and the strangers whom I meet?

(Source: Designed to fulfill Par. A/379, in the Book of Discipline, “The Love Feast.”)

I would like to encourage us, to follow these examples and to indulge in the Spiritual Love Feast of our Souls that was granted to us by Jesus Christ and “Keep ourselves in the Love of God.”

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