Bible Basics Conference 2015: The church

Part 4

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[00:00:00] A sister said to me, when are you speaking? I said, I happen to be speaking just before dinner. And she said, oh good. And I thought, quite proud. Someone likes me speaking. And then she said, you'll be finished in time for dinner. So, I will try and finish in time for dinner. One of the great things about being at Bible Basics is some of the things that you're going to say has already been said. And so you think to yourself, well, at least I think I'm on good ground. So, it is my privilege to speak a little bit about the Lord's Supper, which we know as the breaking of bread. Amongst other denominations, amongst other churches, it is known as the Eucharist or various different words which are meaning the Lord's Supper. And we call it the Lord's Supper because that [00:01:03] is the scriptural term that we read about in 1 Corinthians chapter 11.

The institution of the Supper, as perhaps we all know, but in case we don't know, we need to go back into the Gospels and we find there that the Lord Jesus instituted this Supper in the upper room. And I put the scriptural references there in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

We have there the actual time in which the Lord Jesus was with his disciples and he spoke to them in relation to this act of taking the loaf and taking the cup.

Now Matthew's Gospel says, drink ye all of it. And Mark's Gospel says, they all drank of it.

Now I know there are those who think that when the cup is passed round, we should drink [00:02:04] it all so it keeps going round and round. But I want to tell you that as far as I can see, putting these two Gospels together, it meant that every believer took of that cup.

And I said there was 11 and we'll come to that in a minute. And so everyone in that room took the cup, took the bread and partaked of what we may say the Lord's Supper.

And so the first challenge to us here today is are we taking this which speaks of the body and his blood? Are we regularly remembering the Lord with the local assembly? You need to challenge yourself and come up with an answer. A brother once said to me, he says, I'm not breaking bread at

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this assembly. So I said, why not? He said, well, about 12 years ago, [00:03:05] somebody said something to me and upset me. So I said, when you see the Lord and the Lord says to you, why are you breaking bread? You will say, well, 12 years ago, someone said something that upset me. You know, we have to come up with a reason as to why you are not remembering the Lord. And I'm sure that each one of us, as we look at our own consciences, we look at our own lives and we will come up at the end of this week, at the end of this time, with the thought that we ought to be remembering the Lord.

Now, we said it was the 11 disciples. And I think it's very important that we realise that although the Lord Jesus had 12 disciples as he was here upon this earth, when it comes to the Lord supper, there were only 11 present. Now, if we read through Luke's gospel and [00:04:01] the account in Luke, we may come to the conclusion that Judas was there. But as it says, Judas as I put here, Luke presents the gospel in a moral order. Mark presents it in a chronological order. So Mark gives the life of the Lord Jesus exactly as it happened. But Luke puts it in a moral order. And there's a reference there to Luke 22 and Mark chapter 10, which I think will help us to understand the difference. And another way in which we can see that Luke uses a moral order is if we think of the temptations of the Lord, and we look at them in Matthew's gospel, and then we look at them in Luke's gospel, and the sceptic says this proves that the gospel writers were just written, wrote what they want. No, they are different because Luke presents the temptations in a moral order. And so we can say confidence because [00:05:06] John tells us in chapter 13, that Judas went out and the supper is not a place for those that are not believers. It is for those who have put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus. And I would go as far as to say that every saint that has put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus should be remembering the Lord at what we call the supper. Now if we only had the account in the gospels, we may consider, should we remember the Lord?

We read them, we find that it is particularly the Lord speaking to the disciples. But when we come into the New Testament, further on, we come to first Corinthians 11 has been already been read, [00:06:01] already been pointed out, and there we see that the Apostle Paul has a revelation from the Lord Jesus in heaven. And Simon mentioned these revelations which the Apostle Paul had.

The revelation of the gospel, which we all love, is found in Romans, other places as well. The revelation of the assembly of the Christ and the church, we go to Ephesians. The revelation of the Lord's coming, Thessalonians. But the revelation of the supper, the Lord's supper, first Corinthians chapter 11. And so if we are going to keep the Lord's supper, we ought to keep the teaching of the Apostle Paul. You know, if you were to receive the letter at Corinth, you didn't have the ability that we have to turn to chapter 11. The chapters didn't exist. [00:07:05] So you would have read through the rest of the gospel up to chapter 11, and then you would have come to the question of the Lord's supper. And so I want to suggest that the previous verses, the previous chapters, in relation to how Christians should gather, has a vital, important principle when we talk about the Lord's supper. Because in chapter 11, we have that expression, three times is it, when ye come together. And it's when we come together as an assembly that we can have this privilege of breaking bread and remembering the Lord. Now if we look through the book of Acts, as far as I can see, there are only five references to the actual expression, break bread. But we have to look at them and see which ones [00:08:09] apply to what we would call the supper. And this is my suggestion, if you disagree with it, well that is one of the good things, so you can come and speak to me afterwards and put me right. But I'm going to suggest that in Matthew 2, 42, which we've already had read, they continue steadfast in the apostles doctrine fellowship, the breaking of bread. That is the breaking of bread that we know on the Lord's day morning. In Acts 20 verse 7, we read there that the apostle gathered with the saints

on the first day of the week to break bread. In Acts 2 verse 46, they broke bread from house to house and did eat their meat with gladness. And I suggest that that [00:09:02] was a simple meal. And in Acts 20 verse 11 again, after they had broken bread, they went down and it says they broke bread and it was a meal which they had eaten. And quite clearly the reference in Acts 27, it is a reference to those on the ship who had this food and it said it was meat for them.

Now if the prophet, and here is a quotation from 2nd Kings, I may be taking it out of its contents but I think you will understand, if the prophet had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather then when he says unto thee, do this in remembrance of me. You see, you see the Lord Jesus didn't ask us to do something extremely difficult. The Lord didn't [00:10:01] ask us to go a long way. He took what was there present on that table on that Passover supper.

He took the bread and he took the wine. And you know, the very fact that the Lord asked us to do this little thing as it were, is it not something that we should respond to? Again, this is another challenge to each one of us. Are we remembering him? Now we know that it is only bread and it is only wine. And it is never anything other than bread and wine. But the Lord Jesus did say, and we need to remember this, this is my body. And so that bread symbolise the Lord body. And the cup [00:11:01] or the wine is a picture of his precious blood. Now if we read through the accounts in the gospels and also in 1st Corinthians, it is never referred to as wine. It is always referred to as the cup. And if you were here last week, you would have heard Nick speak about the cup in the various parts of the scriptures. And you know, I think that what is brought before us when we think of the cup is that cup of judgment that the Lord Jesus bore. And when we take the wine, when we take the cup, do we not concentrate our thoughts upon the very fact that the Lord Jesus shed his precious blood? He bore the judgment that you and I deserved. In eating and drinking, in eating this bread and drinking this cup, we do show the Lord's death [00:12:03] till he come. It would be a sad thing, wouldn't it, if somebody thought that they would wait until next year and then they would remember the Lord. Because the Lord Jesus, as we've already mentioned, could come again today. And if the Lord came before this, I was going to say before this meeting is finished. But the Lord will not come before this meeting is finished because this meeting will finish the moment the Lord comes. But if the Lord did come, you won't have any more opportunities to remember him. There will be no breaking of bread in heaven. It is only while he is absent that we have the privilege of being able to break the bread and to drink the cup and we show his death till he come. Remember that. It's only till he come.

[00:13:09] Now Simon mentioned something in relation to this and I was very glad he did because the supper is not a matter of gift. There are meetings which it is a matter of gift. If you take the going out of the gospel, I think that we can say that an evangelist is clearly a gift. We can also say that a teacher is clearly a gift.

But the supper is not a matter of gift. The supper is not a place where we exercise our gift.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, the apostle Paul says, having spoken about the breaking of bread, he says, now concerning spiritual gifts. I'm now [00:14:06] going to talk about spiritual gifts. And so as far as the supper is concerned, it is our affections for Christ. And if we have a genuine affection for Christ, we will want to be there and we will want to be remembering him. Because the supper is not a commandment. Now this might be, technically, he didn't say do this. He said this do. And the quotation in Matthew is a centurion and he says, he says, I have people and I say do this and they do it. And if the Lord had said do this, it would be a command. But he says this do. And I believe that when the Lord says this do, he's appealing to our affections. And if we have a great love for the Lord,

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[00:15:02] we ought to treat it as a command. We ought to treat it as something that he expressed. And you know, the apostle says it was the night in which he was betrayed. Paul could have said it was the night before he was crucified. But as we focus our attention on that night of his betrayal, there was Judas Iscariot had gone out to betray him. Within was Peter, who was about to deny him. All around him were the disciples which were going to forsake him. It was in that time that the Lord Jesus instituted this supper. Now we know what the supper is for. It's to remember him.

But it's not. And I think we've we've had this already. I'll emphasize it because it is certainly not for teaching the Bible. When you're at the supper, you sometimes hear [00:16:05] things that is teaching. At the last morning meeting I was at, the last supper I was at, a brother in his prayer mentioned some of the qualities of the Lord Jesus. And he was referring to the tabernacle. And he said he the bloom, which speaks of him as the heavenly man. There's a bit of teaching. But that is not the prime reason of the supper. It is not to pray for our needs. It is very important that we as believers do pray for our needs and pray for the needs of others. But that is not what the supper is there for. It is not to preach to the unsaved. But we are very thankful that we have heard of people being saved in the supper. But the primary reason is not to preach to the unsaved. It is not for mutual fellowship. There are times when we can get together and we can have fellowship one with another. The supper is not [00:17:06] for that. The supper is for worship and thanksgiving. It's when we as the Lord's people can give him thanks for what he has done. When we can worship him for who he is. And as was said in the previous speaker, that our hearts can go to the Father and thank him for what he has done. Well, I've eaten this bread and drink in this cup of the Lord unworthily.

Some people have been very concerned about this. Ah, or have I taken the emblems on the Lord's Day morning unworthily? Well, first of all, no Christian is unworthy because of the work [00:18:04] of the Lord Jesus. But nobody who is not a Christian is worthy. But because of the work of the Lord Jesus, you are worthy to be there. But what does it mean unworthily? I believe it means that in an unworthy manner, not discerning the Lord's body. So when you are sitting at the Lord's Day morning meeting and that cup or that basket is passed to you, are we considering it to be the Lord's body? Are we considering it to be the Lord's precious blood which was shed?

It is very easy and we stand on good ground because Mr Darby spoke about his wandering mind. It's easy in the morning meeting to wander to every other thing. It's easy in the morning meeting to be occupied with what you're going to speak about in the gospel or in the Sunday [00:19:05] school class. But you know the Lord Jesus said to those three disciples, could you not watch with me one hour? And I feel that it should be an exercise of each one of us as to when we gather in the Lord's Day morning meeting that our hearts should be centred upon him and that we should seek to put everything else out of our mind and we should as we take that loaf and as we take that cup, remember what it speaks to us of, the Lord's precious body. And if we judge ourselves, we should judge ourselves before the meeting and not stay away. We should judge ourselves and then partake of the supper. The question could be raised, when do we do this? Do we do this where we've already said we do this till he comes? Do we do it once a month? Once a year? It says in Acts 20 verse 7, the first day of the week when the disciples came together [00:20:07] to break bread. And that seemed to be the pattern that we have accepted amongst the assemblies and amongst the church generally that it is the first day of the week that we gather together to remember the Lord Jesus. And you know I challenge us today, are we all present on that first day of the week or are there other things that we would rather do than gather to remember him? Are there other places that we would rather be than gathering to remember him? And the great challenge that I put today is would we rather be on holiday in a place where there is no assembly or gathering to remember him? It is, and I put these two

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references down, in 1 Corinthians 11 verse 20 we read of the Lord's [00:21:06] supper and in Revelation 1 verse 10 we read of the Lord's day. And if you put your microscope on your Bible you will find that this is one Greek word, it is only used twice and it means it's a dominical day of Christ, it belongs to him. The supper is for him and the Lord's day is for him.

Now I got a quotation from Mr Mackintosh which I thought was very good and it's already been covered, but if the table be spread upon any narrower principle than that which embraces the whole body of Christ it becomes a sectarian table. I think we've seen that when we take that loaf it would speak of the Lord Jesus but it also would speak of the whole body of Christians and that we should make absolutely certain that we are not gathered on a narrow principle, we're not gathered [00:22:04] simply as Baptists or as one particular group of people, we are gathered together on the ground of the whole church of God. Well I've also been asked just to say a few words on the collection for the saints as we read in 1 Corinthians 16 and the Lord's supper, they both seem to have been on the same day and the great challenge is to speak about this in a way that is scriptural, because if you want to fall out with brethren start to talk about money, start to talk about what's in your pocket, it has been said the last part of a man that is converted is his wallet, but you know I'm going to stick to scriptures and answer a few questions so that you can answer them. In Hebrews chapter 13 verse 15 [00:23:03] we read there, by him let us offer the sacrifices of praise to God continually, so there's a sacrifice of praise which is the fruit of our lips, but then in Hebrews 13 verse 16 it says to do good and communicate forget not, and so there seems to be for such sacrifice God is well pleased, the sacrifice is in both of those verses, and so it seems to be a direct connection between the two and to add emphasis upon this in 2nd Kings 12 verse 9, the priest took a chest, they were after money to repair the temple, he put a hole in the lid and set it beside the altar on the right side of it. Why did he put it beside the altar? I believe it was so that there was a direct connection between what we give and our worship to God. Now in 1st Corinthians 16 we read of a few [00:24:03] points, it was regular the first day of the week, let every one of you, it was individual, we've just said that every one of you, it was systematic, it was laid by him in store and it was as the Lord had prospered you. You know I challenge myself and say do I give on the Lord's day morning as the Lord has prospered me or do I give on a regular basis just the same every week? That's a good thing to think about. Are we really giving according to these things here? And there's one verse I would just like to read, it's a verse that is very, I think, important in relation to giving and it's in Luke chapter 21, you know the verse but I want to emphasise something of it [00:25:01] and it says it's the question of the widow and he looked up and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury and he saw a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites and he said of a truth I say unto you that this poor widow has cast in more than they all. And I want you to notice two things, that it says he looked up and saw, he saw the rich men and he saw the widow and you know what we give the Lord sees it. We can hide what we give from the brethren because when the basket come around we can easily hide it but the Lord sees it. And now I'm just going to ask you some questions to challenge our hearts. [00:26:02] What we give, is it a sacrifice? We live in a quite a prosperous country in compared with other parts of the world. Is what we give a sacrifice or is it something that we can easily give? We have to ask our own selves, as far as I'm concerned what I give it's not a sacrifice. Is it a sacrifice to you? The second thing is, is it the only place to give the Sunday morning meeting? Well actually if we look at the verses in first Corinthians it says that there be no collection when I come and so although the collection is connected with the supper it is completely different because on the day that the apostle Paul went to Corinth there wasn't a collection but you know the collection that they were having at Corinth and it's been touched upon [00:27:02] it was for the poor saints in Jerusalem so there was fellowship between those assemblies. Is it the only place to give? Well I'm going to say it's not the only place to give. We should lay aside at home and we should give for the Lord's work. Is it the best way to give?

Well clearly it is not the best way to give. If you want to give money in this country we have a great ability, a great agreement with the tax authorities that you can claim your tax back if you are a taxpayer and it may be basic but it's a fact that if you give a hundred pound to chapter two and you're a taxpayer you can give them an extra 25 pound. Is it the best way? It is not the best way and you know when we talk about the collection on Sunday morning and we all give money on the Lord's day morning is it all for the Lord's work? I often challenge myself and say we're giving this [00:28:04] money and it a lot of it is for our own benefit. It's because we like a nice clean hall. It's because we like a nice warm hall. It's because we like food. There's a collection box there. Why is it there for? It's to help pay for the food that we are all enjoying and so I believe there should be other occasions when we give money for the Lord's work and various ways are possible to give it and is it only money that counts? I'm sure that it is not. I'm sure that it is something that we can sacrifice in our lives. We can put time aside. We might not have be that wealthy but we've all got the same amount of time each week and do we spend our time in a sacrifice for the Lord? So just to refer back the important thing that I have said is that we gather [00:29:09] on the Lord's day morning to remember him. To remember him in his death till he come and I repeat the challenge at the beginning. Are we all remembering him? There will be no supper in heaven and we show forth the Lord's death till he come. A brother was asked, I think it was the brother from Paris was asked, who do we show it forth if there's only a few of us? He said to all intelligent beings and the angels are looking down and they're watching us and so let us when we gather together if the Lord leaves us here tomorrow to have our hearts really centered upon him, upon his death, upon what he has done for us, let us show forth his death until he come.

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