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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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**“Would you say that the Breaking of Bread service is the most important Meeting of the Church. I have heard a number of brothers say this when they have been presiding at the Table?”**

As far as I understand – and I have not the slightest doubt that someone will correct me if I am wrong – the Meeting for the Breaking of Bread is the only one which is directly commanded in the Bible. This is when the church comes together for a specific purpose. I am well aware that the Great Commission says that we are to go into all the world with the Gospel, but this does not necessitate the whole church coming together. Our fixed Gospel Meeting is a very important Meeting provided that we have someone in to listen to the Gospel; it becomes relatively unimportant if this is not the case, and little effort is made to get people in. I am also aware that we have Bible Schools and Womens' Meetings, but I find no scriptural warrant for these even though they may be necessary expedients. If we are to be really objective, then I believe we would have to say that without the event which the Breaking of Bread service portrays, there would be no need for the other Meetings which I have mentioned, So this Service is very important indeed, and I would like to discuss with you at some length why I believe this to be so.

I have attended Breaking of Bread Services for almost forty-five years, and during that time I have seen attitudes displayed by some Christians which have made me wince. Some have wandered in fifteen or twenty minutes after the scheduled time for starting; the same ones have done this quite regularly. Others seem to have wanted to get away so quickly that they have left their contribution with someone else, and immediately they have partaken of the emblems they have made an unseemly bee-line for the exit. Yet others have seemed so disinterested in what is taking place that they have spent all their time looking around at other people, or even talking among themselves. What has saddened me most has been to see Christians, who were obviously in some sort of dispute with each other, meeting around the Table, ostensibly worshipping the Lord, and yet completely ignoring each other. Brethren, such attitudes should not exist. When we meet to remember the Lord, **He is present with us**, according to His promise. The realisation of that should fill us with great joy, and also with great reverence. We do not meet exclusively because of command; we meet because of love for Him, and the fact that He is there with us should refine our attitude of loving adoration and worship. Why should this be so? Surely it is because the Breaking of Bread is a:—

#### **FEAST OF REMEMBRANCE**

When Jesus instituted His last supper with His disciples, Luke records, **“And he**

took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them saying, **This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you**". (Luke 22:19,20). We in the Church have dissected these words with textual precision so that we should not do anything wrong at the Table; I do not quarrel with that, because textual precision when applied to the Word is necessary. But surely what the Lord was saying to His disciples was, quite simply, 'remember me'. But how could we forget you, Lord? Ah, but He knew how fickle was the fidelity of the disciples at that time. Impetuous Peter had said to Him, "**Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples**". (Matt 26:35), but after Jesus had been arrested in the Garden, v 56 records quite sadly, "**Then all the disciples forsook him and fled**". The Lord also knows how quickly we forget as well; how quickly we are engulfed with the cares of this life so that the memory of Him fades. In His wisdom He says to us remember me; come to the Feast and look into My face. You see those lines of pain and suffering? They were for you. But look closer still; you see the serenity and hope in My face? They are for you also. Come, remember Me and stay close to Me. All will be well'. How can we slight this gracious invitation. How can we slight this gracious Saviour and Friend?

### FEAST OF THANKSGIVING

Oh, how our feet should hurry to be around the table with our Lord, to offer our heartfelt thanks for the wondrous blessings wrought for us by both Himself and His Father. Peter says that we are given great and precious promises, "**that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust**" (2 Pet. 1:4). Paul also, commenting on the Table, says, "**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? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread** (1 Cor, 10:16,17). We being many are one bread. We do not stay in our own homes, we come around the Table together, to be partakers of that one bread, the Lord Himself. It is the KOINONIA, the 'communion', and it is epitomised in the fellowship of the saints around the Table, sharing their Lord in the emblems of the bread and fruit of the vine; loving Him, praising Him, adoring Him, thanking Him. How dare we stay away wilfully from this Feast of Remembrance and Thanksgiving? How dare we come together with unwholesome thoughts in our hearts and minds?

The Hebrew writer says, "**We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.**" What shall we offer on our altar? After speaking about Jesus suffering outside the gate, he goes on, "**By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name**" (Heb. 13:10-15). Paul also on this theme, Says, "**present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable (spiritual) service.**" (Rom. 12:1). Yes, indeed! The hymn writer puts it quite succinctly, "Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to thee." At our Feast of Thanksgiving we say with fervent hearts, "**Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.**"

### FEAST OF PROCLAMATION

Speaking about the Table Paul says, "**For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come**" (1 Cor. 11:26). Did you believe, dear reader, that when you meet with your fellow-saints around the Table that you are proclaiming the Gospel? And what a proclamation it is: let the Apostle explain, "**For I delivered unto you first of all (as of first importance) that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures**" (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Oh, what a Feast ineffable is this. Do you hear what the Apostle says; "**he rose again.**"

**Our Feast with all its memories of the sacrificial offering by the Lord of Himself, with all of its attached blessings and promises, with all of its overtones of grace and love, is only temporary. It is preparing for the time when we shall Feast with Him in Heaven. The Good News which is proclaimed to the world is that the Lord is risen. Every time we meet around the Table we tell it forth. Brother, sister, never let your feet drag when you leave home to meet your brethren around the Lord's Table. Hurry there; the Table is spread, and the blessings are on the Table.**

### **CONCLUSION**

Remembrance, thanksgiving, proclamation, they are all there around the Table. Is the Breaking of Bread Service important? Well, what do you think, dear questioner? Fifty-two opportunities we have each year, God willing, to meet our Lord and our brethren around the Table. Let's not just resolve to be there: **Let's do it.** I feel I can do no better than end with a few words from the poet John Donne;

Since Christ embraced the Cross itself, dare I  
His image, the image of His Cross deny?  
Would I have profit by the sacrifice,  
And dare the chosen altar to despise?  
It bore all other sins, but is it fit  
That it should bear the sin of scorning it?"

(All questions, please, to Alf Marsden, 20 Costessy Way,  
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