

A Hungry People, Part 2

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[0 : 00] You know, every time we do those songs where you break up into parts, you know, you'll sit sopranos and altos and tenors.

I'm never one of those. I might be a bass, but someone told me I'm a narrow tone. Now, I don't, I can't carry a narrow tone.

So, I want you to know I'm offended. I feel like you've left me out. So, anyway. But I'm going to make a joyful noise. Amen, somebody.

Thank you. Appreciate you helping me out. Ah, Acts chapter 2. You should know it by heart by now. 42 to 47.

Let's pray. Father, we are living a new resurrection life. And Father, we would live it. We would truly live it.

[1 : 17] We would live it for the glory of Jesus. We would live it in the power of your spirit to revive our hearts. We would live it, Lord, so that we might love one another truly and bear witness to Jesus profoundly.

We would live it. So, help us. Even now, use your word. That it may go forth in the power of your spirit to accomplish all your will.

You said your word would not return to you void, but it would accomplish your purposes for which you send it. Well, we believe that. And so, we ask that you do it.

I don't even know all the purposes you intend. And I'm preaching. I trust in you to do anything you want. We just want you.

We want Jesus. We want your spirit. So, use your unworthy servant now to proclaim this great message from your word for the glory of Jesus.

[2 : 26] And that we might hear his voice, see his face, worship him. Save someone today. In our presence or online, would you save someone today?

And grant them that new resurrection life we just sang about. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Speaking of the church on fire.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And all the signs were being done through the apostles.

All who believed were together and had everything, had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need.

Day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts. Praising God.

[3 : 34] Praising God. And having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Lord to it.

That is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Please be seated. Thank you once again, praise team. Thank you, Mariel, for sitting in for Kosh.

I know he's proud of you. Don't ruin your supper. I know somebody's heard that before.

Or maybe said it before. When parents tell their children that saying they don't mean that the kids can somehow mess up dinner.

I mean, mom or dad cooked it. They can't mess that up. But what they mean is that if they eat junk food or something else before the meal, they want what mom or dad cooked.

[4 : 39] Their supper is ruined because their appetite has been satisfied by something else. You know, God sets the table for us every day.

But especially at the times when we celebrate the Lord's Supper and the fellowship. He uses our experiences of life in a fallen world during the week or month.

To get us hungry for him. But if we seek satisfaction and hope without him, you will not want or even smell what the Lord is cooking.

Wars and rumors of wars. Continued racial injustices. Protests over the right to kill babies in utero.

Illnesses. Our personal sinful failures. Engagements in weddings. Births.

[5 : 48] New jobs. Vacations. These are all used by God to make us hungry for him. You see, he is our greatest comfort.

That no hardship can conquer. He is our greatest joy. That all lesser joys seem small in comparison to his joy.

But are you hungry. Do you have those experiences of life. Good and bad.

Made you hungry. For Jesus. Or have you ruined your appetite. We've been looking at the Lord's Supper.

We started last week. The breaking of bread. That's the Lord's Supper. They are devoted. Remember in 42. They are being. They are devoted to the breaking of bread. I suggest that's referencing the Lord's Supper.

[7 : 03] Now today, keep in mind, many New Testament scholars believe that the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the early church doing a feast of love. My dear brother, Stan Morton, who's an African-American pastor in Richmond, Virginia, celebrates the Lord's Supper every Sunday with his congregation as they have lunch together right after morning worship.

I preached to you some years ago, and I remember we preached, we got together, we ate, and in the middle of the dinner, we celebrated the Lord's Supper.

However, many scholars believe the early church did, and there is evidence for it, even in Acts.

You see that idea, if you were to turn to, I think it was on the screen, like 1 Corinthians chapter 11, you get the idea that that's what's happening here, 17 to 22.

Paul is chastising them for how they're doing it, by the way. In the following instructions, I do not commend you, because when you come together, it is not for the better, but for the worse.

[8 : 16] For in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and I believe it in part. For there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk.

What? Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you?

Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not. See, they were coming together for a meal, probably in one of the more wealthier members' homes, and there would be divisions, because in that culture, the wealthier people would eat in a particular place, and those who were not as wealthy would eat in another place, probably the atrium outside.

And it seems that in Corinth, they were making divisions between them, and people were having a good time. They were having a feast, and then they wanted to celebrate the Lord's Supper in the middle of it, and Paul was like, no, you're shaming the poor in the middle of doing this.

[9 : 32] But it did seem to be a meal. This idea of celebrating the Lord's Supper as part of a meal follows the Passover meal, where the lamb that had been slain was then eaten.

It was during Passover that Jesus came into Jerusalem for the final time. Do you remember? We call it Palm Sunday. He entered Jerusalem at the very time that the lambs for Passover were being brought into the city, and in comes Jesus with those lambs.

Speaks in 1 Corinthians 5, 6. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. He demonstrated that he was the true Passover lamb, while John cries out, behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

This is what is on God's menu at the Lord's Supper. As our Lord, then Paul taught us, the bread, remember, as you know, represents his body, and the wine or grape juice represents his shed blood.

What we learn is Christ is on the menu. To put it in today's terms, let's put it in today's terms. The appetizer is the law.

[11 : 01] The Father says we are guilty of sin, but it also pointed to one who would save us. The main dish is Christ's sacrifice to save us and set us free.

And the dessert is grace applied to our hearts by the Holy Spirit that sweetens Christ's death to our souls, so that we go on to live with and for him.

The Trinity has set the table. But Jesus is the main course. You eat all of this menu off of this day.

Every day you're eating off of that menu. I pray you are. But especially when we come to the table, we come to that table and it becomes, it's a visible representation of a real, true, spiritual feast that God lays out for us in the breaking of bread.

This is why we call the Lord's Supper a means of grace. It is not just a memorial where we remember Jesus, but the table, the breaking of bread, is an encounter with God in Christ by the Spirit that spiritually nourishes our souls.

[12 : 37] We are nourished with fresh grace out of the oven. Now I want to spend this time and probably next week looking specifically at what we taste in this meal.

They were devoted to the breaking of bread because it was more than just having food together. It was the table.

Hunger for God. We're talking about hunger. Hunger for God and the breaking of bread keeps the cross central in our hearts. Remember in chapter 2, Peter's spirit-filled sermon, he emphasized the death of Jesus.

It seems that he couldn't stop talking about the fact that Jesus died. You see this really in verse 23. He said, This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

In verse 31, he says, He foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of Christ that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

[13 : 54] In verse 36, Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

Paul's, Peter's sermon is full of the emphasis of the death of Jesus. And notice, if you listen carefully, it's very difficult to talk about the death of Jesus without speaking of his resurrection.

They go together. He pointed out their guilt in his death and therefore, our guilt. Because though we were not there, we too are oh so guilty of sin before a holy God.

Romans 3 reminds us of that. It won't be on the screen. I'll just mention some of it. There is none righteous, no, not one. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

But it ends with these words, there is no fear of God before their eyes. That's our story. I hope you'll stick to it because that is your story, whether you believe it or not.

[15 : 01] We got a better story than that, but that is our story. We participate in the guilt of his death since it is our sins that made his death necessary for our salvation.

The death of Jesus is his personal sacrifice for us. Instead of us dying for our own sins, which would have been just.

It would have been right. But Jesus, Jesus took our place. Jesus died.

Our death. Amazing love. How can it be that thou, my God, should die for me? Our Lord displays this concern that we keep his death before our eyes at the last supper in Luke 22 in one of four places.

Jesus says, Luke describes, and he took bread. When he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them saying, this is my body which is given for you.

[16 : 11] Do this in remembrance of me. And likewise, the cup, after they had eaten, saying, this cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

You know these words. You've heard them many times if you've been a Christian for any length of time. Do they grab you? And he said again, do this in remembrance of me.

And Paul even says that in 1 Corinthians 11, 25. As often as you do it, do it in remembrance. In the Lord's Supper, we keep fresh in our memories the fact, and to our senses, the fact that Jesus gave his body and blood for us.

You're touching. You see, at the table, we touch, as it were, we touch Christ. We are reminded that this is not myth.

This is not story. This is history. It wasn't just a spiritual, it was a physical, real sacrifice.

[17 : 27] And by the way, spiritual does not mean not real. Just so you know. No charge for that. In the book of Acts, the early church devoted themselves to the breaking of bread by engaging in this sacrament corporately in the temple area.

And I don't know if you've noticed how when the apostle speaks of Christ's death, they tend to emphasize emphasize his blood. There's so much talk about the blood of Jesus throughout the New Testament.

Why? Why the emphasis upon his blood? It's because blood was seen as purifying the sinner. It meant a substitute has paid the ultimate price for your debt as a human being.

The Bible says the soul that sins, it shall die unless a substitute takes his place.

Now, God is not into human sacrifice, so he didn't ask any humans that is like you or me to take our place. Hence, animals in the Old Testament were used as substitutes to bring forgiveness under the law to cover our sins.

[18 : 49] Hebrews 9.22 makes it like it says this, indeed, under the law, almost everything is purified with blood and without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

The emphasis upon blood is significant. In the Passover, remember, the Passover, the lamb's blood was literally painted on the doorframe of their homes.

Can you imagine doing that? Most of you, I'm sure, have painted before, you've painted your walls in your house, I've done a lot of painting. Oh, you know, I hate the taping part, you know, I just hate that part.

But can you imagine rolling blood on your walls? Can you imagine doing that? You go to the pan, you open the can, you pour the blood in the pan, you get your roller out, you roll it, and you're putting blood.

blood. It's horrible. People would take you away in a rubber boat. They literally got out hyssop or brushes or whatever they used to paint blood on their doorframe.

[20 : 05] And all through the history of Israel, it is the blood of animal sacrifice that is emphasized.

So the writer of Hebrews then even comes in in Hebrews chapter, Hebrews chapter 10, and he helps us understand a little bit when Hebrews chapter 10, one through four, he says, for since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come, instead of the true form of these realities, watch it, the law, it can never be the same, listen, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year make perfect those who draw near.

Those sacrifices couldn't make us perfect. He says, other, would they not have ceased to be offered since the worshipers having once been cleansed?

would no longer have any consciousness of sin. These sacrifices, there is a reminder of sin every year.

And then he ends it with this quick statement, it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. You see, the old covenant was needed, God gave it to us to point to something better to come.

[21 : 26] The old covenant was insufficient. All of the lambs and goats and bulls that were slain could not take away our sins, could not take away the consciousness of sin, could not remove the guilt that we bear in our souls.

Something better than animal blood was needed to finally deal with our guilt, our shame, and our sin once and for all.

The lamb of God had to come who takes away, not who covers, but who takes away the sin of the world.

Jesus is that final lamb, that final sacrifice for sin for all who believe, for all who trust in him as their Lord and Savior. He is that final.

So therefore, in the New Testament, his blood is emphasized. I'll just give you a quick overview. Romans 5, 9, since therefore we have now been justified, this is Paul talking, by his blood, much more, justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by his life from the wrath of God.

[22 : 41] Paul again, Ephesians 1, 7, in him we have redemption. We've been bought out of the slave market of sin. We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace.

The writer of Hebrews, who's anonymous, we don't know who wrote it, Hebrews 13, 12, so Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.

First Peter, Peter, the apostle now speaking, chapter 1, verse 18 and 19, knowing, he says, you should know this, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your mama, daddy, grandfather, grandfather, forefathers.

How were you ransomed? Not with perishable things such as silver or gold, money, but with the precious blood of Christ like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

The apostle John jumps in, he won't be left out, but if we walk in the light, he says, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus cleanses us, cleanses us from all sin.

[24 : 02] And then John can't leave it. He has to end the book on the subject. Revelation chapter 5, verses 6 and 9. Here's the, here's looking into heaven at the throne room of God and between the throne and the four living creatures among the elders.

I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain with seven horns, with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth.

And in verse 9, the saints break out and they sang a new song saying, worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals for you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe, every language, every people, and every nation.

Oh, the blood. Oh, the blood of Jesus. Nothing but the blood can cleanse us.

I find it interesting that God turns us upside down once again. His kingdom, the kingdom and ways of God are so foreign to us.

[25 : 21] He turns us upside down again because he takes something like blood, sticky and stinky, fly-ridden blood to actually cleanse us.

Have you ever heard of blood cleansing anything? Only in the kingdom of God, only when God decides to save people like us who don't deserve it, does he do something totally different?

We would say totally crazy. But it's not crazy. It's divine logic. It's God's way of thinking.

It's God showing us he can do anything. He can take that which is horrifying to us and use it to bring blessing and grace and display his love.

Oh, the blood of Jesus. His ways are better than our ways. At the breaking of bread, we are brought face to face with the Savior who washes us clean again and again in his blood.

[26 : 43] This should humble us. shouldn't this humble us before God? Shouldn't this humble us before one another? Because I need the cleansing and so do you.

I don't care how mad I am at you or how mad you are at me. We both need the cleansing. We both need the blood. We both have no hope without the blood.

That's why in every service that we serve the Lord's Supper next week, I think, what do we do? Third Sunday? Before we come to the table, what do we do? Do you remember in the service?

We have a time of confessing our sins together and then we share from Scripture an assurance of pardon. Meaning, meaning, we hear God saying from his word that he forgives our sins because Christ sacrificed for us.

Do you think about it? There's a reason why we do it. When we come to the table, remember, next week, third Sunday, I think it's third Sunday, when you, is that third Sunday?

[27 : 56] Am I right? Help me out, Rob. Is that third Sunday next week? Yes. Yeah. Table. We're going to come and we're going to do everything I just said. focus on the blood shed for you.

Focus on the Christ who cleanses you with his death but also gives you new life through his resurrection. We're going to come back to that.

Do you hunger for God? Will you come to the table? Will you prepare even this week to come to the table?

Will you ask Christ? Will you go before God even this coming week to say, Lord, cleanse me from hidden faults. Reveal where I'm wrong.

Show me where I'm wrong. Lord, so that, so that, Lord, you can cleanse me from all unrighteousness so I can begin to walk in the ways that honor you in this area of my life.

[29 : 01] Will you go? Will you this week spend some time just going before the Lord and saying, Lord, deal with my stuff. You see, we spend so much time looking at other people's stuff and by stuff, I mean sin, rebellion, whatever bad thing we think they did.

We spend so much time pointing the finger at them. You know something? That's not going to change you. Amen. It may even make you feel better about yourself, but that's false pride.

That's pride. I love putting out my wife's sins. She ain't here, is she? I love putting out some of your sins too. It makes me feel better about me.

I look good compared to you. Oh boy, do I. But that's false. It's arrogance and pride. It's damnable.

No, no, no. I got to go to the mirror and take the beam, the two by four out of my own eye. And then maybe, maybe God will use me.

[30 : 12] Maybe he will use me to take the speck out of your eye. But the truth of the matter is he may say, just get the beam out of your own eye and shut up. Leave that person alone because you know something?

We are speck inspectors. And you know what happens when you start messing with someone else's eye? You probably will poke it out. Stay away from other people's eyes.

Let God deal with yours. And by chance, this is, this is some point, think about this now. I'm applying. If by chance, God should say, after he's humbled you before the cross, after he's humbled you by the blood, if per chance, God says, I want you to help your sister or your brother, then you know how to go to them.

What does Galatians say? We go to them, you know, you know, we looking out for yourself, lest you also be tempted. If you're going to help your brother, you got to go in a special, special way, in a humble way, recognizing the cross and the blood is for you.

And then, then maybe, maybe you can, then God can use you to help your brother or sister who may be carrying a load of sin upon their back. Maybe then he can use you to help.

[31 : 33] But, you can't go until you're humbled. You can't go until you've, allowed the blood to be painted on your own soul.

So, let's ask God this week, will you? Paint the blood on my soul. Remind me once again that I'm in need of your sacrifice.

I'm in need of your forgiveness. I'm in need of your powerful love and grace and mercy. Father, bring us to the table this coming, next Lord's Day, bring us to the table.

But bring us, Lord, knowing that our sins have been taken away, knowing that we are sinners and that they've been taken away. Even this week, help us to be humble before another.

Lord, bring, begin even to bring healing in relationships and hope as we recognize our own sin and approach one another with great grace.

[32 : 52] Help us, Lord. Forgive us, for we tend to fall into pride and arrogance and finger pointing. We're good at it.

Deliver us from it. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen.