

A Hungry People, Part 3

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[0 : 00] Once again, we return to the book of Acts, chapter 2, verses 42 to 47. Let's ask the Lord's blessing upon his word together.

Father, as we come to your word now, we come together. We come as family.

We come, Lord, because together we need you. We can't do your work without you. We can't do anything. Jesus, your son, told us without him.

So, Lord, we come. We come as those who are engrafted in Christ, in the vine. And we come as those, Lord, who face many struggles in this land and in this world.

But we recognize that you have won the victory in Jesus, your son. So, Father, hear our cry as we ask, oh, Lord, that you would speak to us from your word.

[1 : 01] We don't. Lord, we want to hear your word. Lord, we want to see Jesus and hear his voice. And, Lord, we want to follow. So, help us, Lord.

Help him who preaches to preach the text, to preach the word, to preach the whole counsel of God. But that's what we want.

That's what we need. So, be with us now. Give us ears to hear. To hear you. To hear. Forgive us. Deliver us from itching ears.

That want to hear what we want. Help us to hear what you say in your word. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Verse 42. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to our text, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

And awe came upon every soul. And many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need.

[2 : 11] And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts. Praising God, having favor with all the people.

And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. That is once again the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

Thank you, praise team, once again for leading us so beautifully and strong. Why do we eat food? I mean, I'm convinced I really don't like food.

I like what you put on the food. I like sauces. I like dressing. I like, you know, spices. That's just me. But why do we eat?

Because it's there. Oh, no, no. Well, that's true sometimes. But we eat because we're hungry.

Hunger is a sign that our body needs nourishment to replenish our energy and strength.

[3 : 17] If we deny our bodies food for too long, our bodies get weak and do not function well. And eventually we die.

The Lord's Supper or the, the text called it, the breaking of bread is given to nourish and strengthen us spiritually. Now, we won't die spiritually without it.

Keep that in mind. Okay? Because after all, Christ has already given us eternal life and eternal life by definition is forever.

So we won't die without it. But without the breaking of bread, taking by faith in the work of Jesus, understood biblically, without it, we are weakened in our spiritual lives.

Because God wants us to come to the table hungry. And he stimulates that hunger through his word, through worship, but also through our life experiences throughout the week.

[4 : 25] Do you have doubts, but you are clinging to Jesus? This table is for you. Is there sin or struggle or struggle with sin in your life that you're seeking to defeat in Jesus' name?

This table is for you. Are you suffering?

So again, I ask you, are you hungry? Are you hungry? First of all, I want you to notice as we continue looking at the benefits of the Lord's Supper, what we call communion, or the breaking of bread.

Hunger for God in the breaking of bread allows us a tangible way of enjoying our spiritual union with Christ. The breaking of bread is about spiritual union with Jesus.

And when we come to this table in faith, we are enabled to enjoy that union with him in a deeper way. It's more than a memorial meal.

[6 : 01] Some churches teach that, but it's more than that. Remember what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10, 16, and 17. He said, The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?

But participation, by the way, is the word fellowship. The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there's one bread. We who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

Now this only applies to those who belong to Jesus by faith. To eat at the Lord's table is to understand that you eat in the presence of Christ.

As a matter of fact, Jesus is the host here. It's not me. It's not any particular pastor or particular church. All the pastor does is distribute the elements in the name of Christ.

Your job, as the people coming, is to look beyond us and see the Lord serving you. Because you are participating, Paul says, in the blood of Christ.

[7 : 13] And you are fellowshiping with him through his sacrifice for you. This table isn't the table of any particular church.

Some churches practice closed communion. We don't do that. We invite any who believe in the Lord Jesus to come. If you are a follower of Christ, we say come and participate in the table.

The cup of blessing that Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 10 was a common component to a Jewish meal. Jesus took the Jewish meal, and especially the Passover, and did something powerful with it. That cup of blessing. As one commentator, Gordon Fee, makes the comment, the cup of blessing was the technical term for the final blessing offered at the end of the meal.

That's what they did. And Jesus took that cup of blessing at the last supper in the upper room. Took that cup and turned it into something more profound.

[8 : 23] 1 Corinthians 11, 25. In the same way, also, after supper, he took the cup, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

The last cup. The final drink, as it were. Jesus takes it and says to all his disciples, it is the new covenant in my blood.

Something has happened. The cup for which we give thanks is a fellowship in the blood of Christ. And fellowship speaks of union or communion with Christ.

We take the cup by faith. In the work of Christ on the cross for us, we, watch this, we participate in the benefits of his death for us.

His, as one commentator put it, it is the grace of an ever closer fellowship with Christ, of spiritual nourishment and quickening, made alive, and of ever increasing assurance of salvation.

[9 : 27] This table is so powerful. Because it's a sacrament of the Lord, something that God has given to us to sign and seal the covenant of grace.

It brings us back to grace. The grace, the undeserved favor of the Lord given to us in Jesus, the table brings us there again and again and again.

And we remember and benefit all over again from his self-sacrifice to redeem us from our sins. He is not being sacrificed again at this table.

Some teach that. That is incorrect. That's horrible to think. One sacrifice for all time. But at this table, Jesus says, because he's present spiritually, he says, my forgiveness, my grace, my adoption, all of those benefits, my presence in your life, you'll be enjoying to me forever.

My love, all of that is being pressed onto your soul once again. You're not being saved all over again. But your soul forgets.

[10 : 46] Just like your mind forgets. And we need to be reminded of that wonderful work of Jesus. More than just reminded, we need to feel it again.

Come to the table. You see, the problem is we're all spiritual diabetics. And we need to eat right. And exercise God's way.

And when our spiritual blood sugars begin to drop. And we feel weak and trembly. Before trials and temptations and struggles.

We get weak. We got to eat something. Got to come to the table. And as it were, get spiritual insulin. Amen. To raise our blood sugars.

We are reminded that the lamb was slain for us. To cleanse us and heal us. R.C. Sproul said it so beautifully. Every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper, his death is impressed.

[11 : 47] Not just upon our memories, but upon our souls. I'm renewed. You're renewed. Strengthened in faith.

You're reminded that his life. His life. Lives in you. You're not. Hallelujah. I am not alone. Paul said it wonderfully in Galatians 2.20. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live. But Christ who lives in me. And the life.

I now live in the flesh. I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Listen. My spiritual, real union with Jesus is renewed at this table.

I am reminded that he lives in me. Even as you take the bread into your mouth and swallow. And the juice. And you swallow. You are reminded that his life lives in you.

[12 : 46] He lives in you. Never to be forsaken by him. Wow. It's more than just remembering Jesus.

Jesus. It's Jesus feeding us. Feeding us on him.

Feeding us. The Lord's table is a real spiritual encounter with Christ together. Father. So when you come to the table.

You're therefore saying to Jesus. My life. Depends on you. When you come with that mindset.

My life. Depends on you. Secondly, I want you to notice. Hunger for God at a break in a breath.

Reminds us that we have spiritual fellowship. With Christ's body.

[13 : 50] Spiritual fellowship with the church. Spiritual fellowship with the fellowship. It's not a private communion. We come together. When he told us at the Lord's Supper.

That the bread is his body. And the wine was his blood. He reminds us that he would suffer for us. And would suffer actually in our place.

And we who say we believe that. When we come to the table. We are acknowledging that we believe that together. Though we are many.

We are still one loaf. There are not many bodies of Christ. Even denominations can't change that.

All true Christians are part of the one mystical body of Christ together.

We have one. We can fellowship with any true believer. Wherever he or she may be. Even sometimes we don't speak the same language.

[14 : 56] But Christ is the universal language. And the table. The universal translator. Of that language.

The Lord's table renews our relationships to care for and serve one another. So the sacrament strengthens the fellowship. When we come to the table.

The fellowship. Is to be strengthened. We are to remember that we belong to each other. Yeah. It's interesting that it was abused even in the time of Christ.

Of Paul. The table was abused. Because people. Paul says in 1 Corinthians. That sometimes people. In chapter 11. That people came to the table.

And remember I told you. They celebrated around a fellowship meal. But remember as I pointed out last time. That they would sometimes. If it was a rich person's house.

[15 : 56] They would partition people out. The rich and their friends would eat in one place. And those who were not so rich. Would eat in another place. And what Paul reminds us. In that passage.

In chapter 11. Is that we are to discern. In chapter 9 verse 29. That we are to discern the body. As we come. We are to be aware. Of the body around us.

We are to respect. The body. Remember what they were doing. In chapter 11. Paul says. Some of you get drunk. Some of you just eating. Eat.

Gluttoning yourselves. And other people. Don't have anything to eat. And then you want to celebrate. The Lord's Supper. And you're making this division. Between the rich. And the poor.

Chapter 11.

I mentioned it last week. Go back and look at it for yourself. They forgot. They were eating. In the presence of Christ. Not just one another.

[16:50] It's not just you. Sitting in the pew. Who is here. When we eat together. We're eating together. In the presence of Christ. And therefore. That relationship. That we have in Jesus.

Is also. Transferred to each other. Disunity. Their disunity. Highlighted in 1 Corinthians 11. Made a sham. Of this supposed. Spiritual unity. At the Lord's table. Because Jesus died. And prayed.

That his body. Would be one. John 17. 21. Jesus says. That they may. Talk to the father. That they may be one. Just as you father. Are in me.

And I in you. That they may also be in us. So that the world. May believe. That you sent me. The unity. Of the body. Is essential.

[17:47] Essential. He says. To our identity. And witness. In Christ. The table. Should unite us. It should bring us together.

We're not just doing lunch. We are in Christ. And we're doing life. Together. At the table. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So that.

Listen. That means. It's imperative. That we deal with friction. Between ourselves. Humbly seeking. Reconciliation. And rendering. Forgiveness.

As Paul. As the writer. Hebrews says. As much as it depends. On you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Some people won't be reconciled. To you. We understand. But have you tried? Have you really tried? Amen. I don't mean that you. Walk by one day. And said. Hi. Uh. Uh. Uh. Are we good? No. You ain't good. Don't come to the table.

[18:45] Talking about. I love my brothers and sisters. And you have not tried. To reconcile. Now. If you tried. And they won't listen. Amen. Go before the Lord. Go before the Lord. And say. Lord. Just help us.

But brothers and sisters. And trying. Don't mean just trying once. It means you tried a few times. Amen. Some people just won't listen. I understand. But. Are you trying? Are you really trying? This. This table says. We are one loaf. And. And it unifies. It's a beautiful thing. When you think about it. This table unifies us across.

Social economic lines. It unifies us across. Racial lines. It. It unifies us across. Political lines. We may even have some different doctrinal stances.

As long as they don't take us out of the gospel. That we can still come to the table together. Don't allow pride and prejudice. And minor doctrinal differences. To divide us.

[19:48] But it seemed to have happened. Really. In the New Testament. In Corinth. But not here. In Acts 2. In Acts 2. They are one.

Yeah. In every church. Is to reflect that oneness. Don't let even distinctions. Between rich and poor. Like so much of our culture.

And black and white. And Asian. And Latino. Don't let anything. Divide us. We come to this table. In Jesus name.

If we don't listen. And we. We don't seek. The unity. Of the body. And we do hold prejudice.

In our hearts. Against one another. Because we think we know. And we don't know the person. But we think we do. Listen to what he says. In 1 Corinthians 11. In 30 and 31. Same chapter.

[20:52] He says. Because of their disunity. He said. That is why many of you. Are weak and ill. And some have died. But if we judged ourselves. Truly. We would not be judged.

That. He takes it seriously. One. We are to recognize. Christ's body is here. That he is. But also. He says. We are to recognize. One another.

As brothers. And sisters. And fathers. And mothers. And Jesus. And he says. Some of them. The Lord. In his grace. They didn't say they were lost. He just says.

They. Had trouble. In their lives. And some. Wow. I can't even. It's hard. It's hard. To get your head around that. Some have died. I don't know.

When he does that. But that's what the Bible says. And I go with the word. The table is real. The fellowship must be real. Third thing.

[21:48] Hunger for God. And the breaking of bread. Is a continued reminder. That you've been given new life in Jesus. You come to this table. You're saying. You are new.

You are transformed. And are being transformed. We are. We share in his holiness. And are committed to living as his people. When we come to this table. First Corinthians 6.

19 and 20. Do you not know. That your body is a temple. Of the Holy Spirit within you. Whom you have from God. Watch this. You are not your own. For you were bought with a price.

You are not your own. The death of Christ. That's the price. The blood of Christ. You don't belong to you anymore. You've been bought with a price. Look at how he ends it.

So glorify God in your body. Amen. Because you say. We say. That we've been bought. By the blood of Christ. We therefore.

[22 : 44] Must let God live in us. Let God go crazy in us. Let Jesus show up. Humble ourselves. So that we might.

There in the power of his spirit. Given to us. By his sacrifice. We might glorify God in our bodies. And brothers and sisters. That means with your lips. And your keyboard.

I got to go there. Because that's where we live today. Right? Amen. Trying to be practical. That's where we live. The church and acts came to the table. Of the Lord.

They were reminded. They no longer belong to themselves. Their lives were not theirs. To do as they wish. Speaking of you too. Me and you. They've been rescued by our savior.

And therefore. They joyfully surrendered themselves. To his purposes. These. Go back and read the acts. Read. Read this church. Read about this church in Jerusalem. And see. I've been pointing out things along the way.

[23 : 42] But see. How they lived. They lived for his purposes for them. And I mean. Here's a question. What is his purpose for our lives? Can I throw just one idea out to you?

One two. To fellowship with him. Living with him. And walking in his light and truth together. How do I get that?

First Corinthians six. First John. So I mean. First John six. One. Six and seven. If we say we have fellowship with him. While we walk in darkness. We do not. We lie. And do not practice the truth.

But if we walk in the light. As he is in the light. We have fellowship with one another. And the blood of Jesus' son. The blood. That this table represents.

Cleanses us. From all sin. New life.

[24 : 43] You're cleansed. To live. To walk in the light. To walk together. With each other. In the light. His blood.

Goes on. Cleansing. Us. Transforming. Us. By grace. Through faith. In Jesus. Alone. Together.

Why were they called Christians? The Bible says they were first called Christians. Here in the book of Acts. We are told they were first called Christians.

It occurs in Acts chapter 11. Verse 26. The place was called Antioch. Today. That city. Is a. Is a. A major town. In south. South central.

Not LA. South central. Turkey. They were called Christians there. For the first time. They were followers of the way. Why were they called Christians? Because their lives mimicked.

[25 : 40] And were centered around the Jesus. They couldn't stop talking about. Their lives reflected the new life of Christ in them.

The table. Or the breaking of bread. Was a means of grace. To keep them in touch. With Christ's death. Watch this. And therefore the death of their old lives.

The old you is now gone. It's dead. He killed it. The old you. The old man. Jesus. Put it to death. Your old you.

Was nailed to the cross. With Christ. There's a new you now. That new you. Is to walk. In righteousness.

In love. In truth. Not trafficking. In hearsay. In lies. In fables. In myths. Like the apostles warned us. No. We walk in truth.

[26 : 36] Truth. Because Jesus is the truth. And our lives are being. Reflective. Reflective. Of his reality.

It's what Romans 6 and 7 says. We know that our old self was crucified with him. In order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing. So that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

For one who has died has been set free from sin. This table reminds you that your old you was killed. And now you've been set free for the first time.

You can actually begin to obey Jesus. Oh you're not going to obey him perfectly. But you should want to. There should be desire to do so. He didn't save us to be disobedient.

He saved us to help us grow in obedience. And we fail. Yes. Yes. But man we say Lord have mercy. Thank you for grace. Thank you for loving. And we get up. We get up because he's holding us.

[27 : 41] We get up because we trust him. We get up because he loves us. Get up. There is a very existence.

There is a very existence. Display this truth. This church in Acts 2 was gathering in the very place where they killed their leader.

And the very place where Jesus was put to death. Here is this fledgling little church gathering everything. House to house. Going to the temple.

Because they've been transformed. They're going to that temple. And they knew it would lead to trouble. They knew. They had to know that they kept talking about Jesus.

It was going to get them in trouble. Because they're in the very place where they was killed and murdered. Acts 4 1 to 3 reminds us. As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captains of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them.

[28 : 42] Greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. They arrested them, put them in custody until the next day for it was already evening. They knew it would cost them.

They knew that this new life in Christ was a costly life. And they were willing to suffer. Listen, listen. Here's what happens in chapter, in that chapter 4 down in verse 18.

Here's how they respond. So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them. Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than God, you must judge.

For, watch this, we cannot speak but speak of what we have seen and heard. And when they have forever threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them.

Listen, saints. This is huge. The threat of suffering and even death could not stop them. The new life was in them. The threat of suffering and even death could not shut them up.

[29 : 54] We are strengthened and resolved to follow Christ no matter what. When we in faith and reverence come to the table, we come to the breaking of bread, we are reminded, we are renewed, we are strengthened in our sense and our ability and our commitment to follow Jesus no matter what.

And we need that today. He said, they said, we could not, we cannot help.

We cannot, we cannot but speak. Literally, we are not able not to speak of but of what we have seen and heard.

Here's the question I put before you. What have you seen and heard? What have we, we, we, we talk about young people walking away from Christ and the church and when they, but the question is, have they seen and heard?

What have you seen and heard? They said, now they literally saw Jesus do the work. But here's the thing. He's still working. Have, what have you seen and heard of the work of Christ in your life?

[31 : 06] Have you seen his glory as the only son of God? Have you seen his answers to your prayers and his care for you? Even though you might be in pain right now.

But do you know he cares for you? Have you heard of what he did on the cross? Do you believe it for you? The real gospel empowers and sustains you in times of crisis.

In times of crisis, no matter, and when your faith is being assaulted. And then you're being told that this stuff, don't believe that stuff. Don't believe it.

When you're, when you're suffering in pain of telling you God has forgotten you, he's forsaken you. Come to the table. Come to the table in faith in Jesus.

Christ shows us the way. Hebrews 12, 1 to 3. Since we're surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely.

[32 : 21] Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. How, power rider, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.

Is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself. So that you may not grow weary or faint hearted.

Listen. He points us back. The writer is pointing back to Jesus. Jesus, his death. He looked at the cross. He despised the shame of the cross.

But he kept going all the way. This table encourages and strengthens us to follow a crucified Savior in our growing pursuit of holiness and righteousness.

And putting off sin in our own lives. Jesus encourages us to trust him. To keep going. Looking to him. Bleeding.

[33 : 28] And pierced. But we know he's resurrected. And triumphant. The table prepares us to suffer and to endure suffering as we follow him.

Because the text goes on to say in Hebrews. Consider him who endured such sufferings. And hostility against himself.

Why? So that you may not grow weary or faint hearted. Consider. When you're willing to give up on your faith.

It's just saying, I'm at the end of my rope. Lord, I'm grieving. Lord, I'm hurting. The pain is real. And he says, look to him.

Look to him. People. The opposition. Coming at him from left and right. And left and right. And yet he endured it. Because of the joy set before him.

[34 : 34] He knew the last word over his life. Would not be the hostility of people. Or of the devil. The last word over his life.

Was joy. Was joy. Wow. Later in that chapter.

Verses 3 through 7. But later in that same chapter. He says, my son. Do not regard lightly. The discipline of the Lord. No, be weary. We will reprove by him. For the Lord disciplines. The one he loves.

And chastises. Every son he receives. Discipline. Is real. But it's not. But it's because you have a father.

Who loves you. And so you're suffering. He says, see it as discipline. See this God. Molding and shaping. It's okay.

[35 : 30] It may be unjust. People. It's okay. He says, receive it from the Lord. And this table reminds me. That my Savior. Suffered.

He learned obedience to what he suffered. His father was the one. In control of the suffering. And so I know he's in control of mine.

He's in control of yours. No matter where it's coming from. He's in control. There's joy coming. Weeping may endure for the night. But joy is coming in the morning.

Come to the table. Come to the table. And be renewed in your ability. To follow Christ.

Even through the pain. Even through the struggle. Well. I just encourage you.

[36 : 27] Just a couple thoughts to keep in mind. He's present. We're going to have this right now. We're going to come to the table. He's present.

He's here to serve you. He's here to renew your strength. He's here to pick you up. He's here to help you. Through any sin you're struggling with.

He's here to help you. Through any pain you're going through. He's here to remind you. That his life is in you. He's here. At this table.

He's here. Come in faith. If you come in faith in him. Trusting in him. Because he is the leader of your life. You are welcome at this table.

You. You will be nourished. You will be. You will have new life. Put in you. And as it were.

[37 : 30] Applied to your soul. His life. he knows your suffering for he himself has suffered he knows and he won't let you go run to the table run to the table eat something rejoice every time you come knowing all your sins no matter how horrible or recent past, present and future were nailed to the cross and people want to hold it up maybe against you don't listen to him nailed to the cross and you are not the same you got problems yes but you're not the same come to the table to be reminded come to the table knowing you have a father who welcomes you always always welcomes you and an older brother who stands there with his nail scarred hands ready to wrap around you feast on Jesus he is our hope in this life and the next father as we come to the table today may these words linger in our minds may these truths linger we are one family one loaf help us to deal with our stuff rightly before you help us to deal with our own sin rightly before you help us to come rejoicing bless those who are hurting in particularly right now oh God renew their faith renew their hope renew their lives renew their strength at the table in Jesus name amen share you switch back to al