



## **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

### **Acts 2: 42 – 47, “The Breaking of Bread”**

In these weeks following Pentecost we're looking at the result of Peter's sermon on that day. In the power of the Holy Spirit the disciples went out onto the streets and told people about Jesus. It is what Spirit filled disciples do. It is evidence of the Holy Spirit in someone's heart and life.

Peter told them about Jesus and they were cut to the heart and asked the disciples “What can we do to be saved?” the answer was repent, be baptised for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the Holy Spirit”. In Acts 2:41 we read that 3,000 people responded to the invitation to follow Jesus.

“They”, this church of followers of Jesus, devoted themselves from that moment on. And in these weeks following Pentecost we're looking at the marks of the Spirit filled church, because the things that marked them out then are the same things that mark us out as Spirit filled disciples of Jesus – here, now.

They devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching, which are the commands and the ethos and the teaching of Jesus, passed on by the Apostles who were there and heard him say these things. These are the things recorded in the Gospels.

They devoted themselves to the koinonia fellowship, deep, connected, real fellowship of one with another.

They devoted themselves to “the breaking of bread”. It's mentioned here in v. 42 and again in v. 46. Whether gathered in their public assembly or when guests enjoying fellowship in one another's homes, they broke bread.

This refers to the events that we might call “The Last Supper”. We can read about this in Matthew 26:26-30, or in Mark 14: 22-26 or in Luke 22:14-23. At Passover Jesus took the traditional bread and he broke it and he changed the words, he trashed the tradition. “This is my body” he said, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me”.

After the Passover supper Jesus took the last cup (they quaffed quite a few cups of wine in this meal!!), it was called the Cup of thanksgiving, and Jesus said “take this, all of you. This is the blood of the new covenant, sealed by my blood. Do this in remembrance of me”.

The bread, the wine, symbols of the death and resurrection of Jesus that was to take place within hours. Of course the disciples hearing this command from Jesus at that Passover supper wouldn't have had a clue what he was talking about. But they would know, as the dreadful events of Good Friday unfolded, as Jesus lay in the tomb on the Saturday and as the faithful women of God went to the tomb on the Sunday morning and returned to say “He is not there, he has risen”.

Break bread, share wine, I command you to do this in remembrance of me and my sacrificial death that will secure you forgiveness and freedom and life everlasting. This is what Jesus said.

Just note, this wasn't a suggestions from Jesus. He wasn't saying this was something they could do if they didn't have anything more pressing on. This was a command of Christ. This was a mark of the Church, that they devoted themselves to breaking bread together out of love and respect for Jesus, because Jesus had commanded them to



do this. In almost all Baptist churches it is a constitutional requirement that they participate in Communion services “unless unavoidably detained” is the usual language used in Constitutions. In churches where membership is taken seriously and solemnly people are removed from the membership list when they fail to share communion without serious reason for 6 months, that’s usually in the constitution as well. It is a reflection of the Biblical command of Christ. And the spirit filled response of being devoted to the breaking of bread as commanded by Jesus.

Those early disciples, and ourselves can find that we “know” Jesus in the breaking of bread. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus on Easter Day, Jesus is made known to us in the act of remembrance of the Cross, in the breaking of bread and the sharing of wine.

The church in Corinth, in Greece, gave Paul cause to write to them about the way they were not conducting their breaking of bread in what he called a “worthy manner”. It was one thing to obey the command of Christ to break bread but they had to remember why they did this and act with love and respect, to Jesus and to each other. Paul (1 Corinthians 11: 17 – 32) gave them a good telling off because they were cliquy, there were divisions. They didn’t wait for one another. It sounds like they did the breaking bread bit but they completely lost the koinonia fellowship bit. In 1 Corinthians 11: 27, Paul warns them that eating the bread or drinking the cup in an unworthy manner makes someone guilty of sinning against the body and blood of Jesus. We are told that we must examine ourselves before we break bread and share wine and ask God to show us if there are unworthy ways, or thoughts, or words or actions within us – either done or entertained in our hearts. In v. 30 Paul says that some have died as a result!!

It’s not just what we do – it is why we do it.

We break bread and share wine because Jesus commanded that we do so and if we are Spirit filled followers of Jesus we will obey his commands.

We remember in the act of breaking bread and sharing wine that the sinless lamb of God gave his life so that our sins could be forgiven, so that we could be free and so that we could be reconciled to God and know life in all its fullness. Wow, just wow!

Let’s reflect on this as we either sing or listen to our next song. It’s not new but I can’t remember every hearing it at Stanground. By Matt Maher and Matt Redman it is a sung reflection on “Remembrance”, sing if you pick it up or know it, listen if not ....