

The Culture of the Kingdom The Breaking of Bread

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We're in this series of messages entitled "The Culture of the Kingdom" and I'm showing you from the Scriptures how God is restoring the culture of the kingdom to the Body of Christ. We understand Scripture through the culture with which we are familiar. If, for example, we are currently familiar with present day, Western culture or Middle Eastern culture or present day, Far Eastern culture then the way we understand Scripture will reflect that cultural pressure. But there was a culture to the kingdom when the kingdom first came into the earth and that culture is referred to in the book of Acts the second chapter beginning at verse 42, which says, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers."

Now as we have been teaching in this series previously, we've covered the apostles doctrine and we've looked at the role of the apostle in presenting the word of God to the ear of man in all of the epochs of human history. And so we see that there's a place for the current word of God, the thing that heaven is speaking into the earth at any moment in time and that that shifts and changes the churches view of what God is saying in the earth at the time. That is why we don't need 400 year old revelation to live on, that God gives us the revelation of the things that He's saying presently. It doesn't mean that what He spoke 400 years ago is irrelevant but it does mean that fades into the background and becomes part of the blend, part of the fiber of what God gives us as He continues to reveal the word to us. If you do away with the apostles of course, with that you do away with the current direction of the Spirit of God for the church. And when you do, it becomes glaringly apparent that the church is irrelevant because we cannot speak intelligently to the issues of the age by way of bringing light and understanding to the people of that particular epoch.

We also spoke of the second element of the culture of the kingdom which was fellowship and we saw that fellowship is far more...far more than meeting to eat together or having less structured meetings where we could sort of just chit chat. Fellowship is actually the fellowship of the Holy Spirit which means the way that the Spirit of God arranges the Body of Christ because everyone has his place in the divine order of the kingdom. In this discussion we focused upon the restoration of the culture of the patriarchal as a way of

showing that the intention of God, when Adam sinned, was not to abandon the creation but to rescue it and that the way He would rescue it would be to restore fathers because when Adam sinned what was lost was a mans relationship to his Father.

Fatherlessness, as it has proliferated, has created a culture of orphans in the kingdom and even though people belong to the household of God and know that they're kings and priests, as a general rule the character of orphans is still very commonly in practice. That character is the character of hoarding because orphans do not know where their next meal will come from. So we talk about being sons of God and we talk about being members of the great household of God but we act like orphans; we hoard. And the reason is we have no fathers, therefore we cannot build trans-generationally, we're always having to start over in every generation because nothing has been bequeathed to us by way of fathers opening the way for sons to come to their greater maturity and to take up a greater measure of inheritance than even the fathers themselves had.

You could see this progression of fathers and sons between say David and Solomon. David was the warrior king who subdued the nations and established the spheres of his kingdom; the territory and the alliances and the broad geography and resources of the kingdom. But Solomon, when he came to the throne, had a different requirement for rule: he needed wisdom. He did not need the military skill of his father because that was the previous epoch; there were no new worlds to conquer, so to speak, at least the sphere of David's kingdom had been established. Now what was required was not a military king, what was required was a king who had wisdom to bring together all of the diversity of his kingdom and to bring it to profitable, peaceful coexistence and rule. So he wisely asked God for wisdom, not for the lives of his enemies.

So one father succeeds another but when we build trans-generationally we, of necessity, build with fathers and sons. And one father will hand off all of his accomplishments to his son – spiritual son – who then takes it to the next level. Now in the beginning, when the patriarchal order was first inaugurated in the earth, it was natural, meaning it was a natural father and a natural son, the son who had sprung from the loins of his father. But in the kingdom a father may or may not be a natural father, indeed quite often as in the case of Paul and the Corinthians, the father was not a natural father, Paul was not their natural father but he was their spiritual father.

So the natural is the first appearing of the principle; the spiritual is the subsequent appearing and the more complete appearing. In fact, it is the intended appearing. So we always begin in the natural but we matriculate to the spiritual because the spiritual is what God intended and it is always the more complete; it is the greater than the natural. So Jesus would say, "The flesh profiteth nothing," and He'd also say, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers except he who does the will of the Father," so He understood that His intention was - the purpose for which He came - was to show the Father. That's

why He's called the Everlasting Father and He says, "I have come to show you the Father."

So the household of God is arranged in a patriarchal order except that the patriarchs are not necessarily natural fathers but they most definitely are spiritual fathers. The ideal of this arrangement is where the natural father is also the spiritual father but it is not limited to that. Where men grow into maturity in God and they have children, the ideal is for that man to be both the natural and the spiritual father of the one who is a son to that person. And again, as we were speaking earlier, a son in this case is not limited to a male; a son is just as readily a female because we're standing in the place of God the Father and God the Father is the Father of our spirits, not the Father of our flesh.

This is the culture of the kingdom relative to the arrangement of the household of God; the order is patriarchal, the fathers have households, households being inclusive of many families within that household. But every family – and indeed every individual – within a spiritual household is taught by that father that there is only one Body, the Body of Christ. It is in that household that you are taught that there is one Body. But you see, as long as we think as orphans we will consider the household of God our own personal domain and we'll divide the house of God into fiefdoms; into its divisions that benefit us. Paul speaks against that in the strongest possible terms where he says, "Christ is not divided, Paul was not crucified for you," and he says, "Whoever fails to discern the whole Body is subject to weakness, sickness and even premature death."

But it is in the household of faith that is ruled over or presided over by a patriarch that one learns to care for the whole Body. This is a critical element of the restoration of the culture of the kingdom just as the restoration of the apostolic is also a critical element of the culture of the kingdom.

The third element that we wish to address now and we'll introduce it and develop it and discuss it as we have the other two elements of the culture of the kingdom, is the breaking of bread...the breaking of bread, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers," we're at the breaking of bread as a cultural element of the kingdom. Now again, when present culture has been superimposed upon the culture of the kingdom, the "apostles doctrine" means "500 year old doctrines" by Luther and Calvin and so on and fellowship means meeting to have a potluck or a common meal usually at the church building. The breaking of bread is relegated to the Lords supper and prayers means either prayers that have been written down in a book of common prayers or all night prayers, as is the current vogue.

Needless to say again, these are present culture superimposed upon the Scriptures producing a totally insufficient, largely meaningless interpretation of Scripture as we've seen in the two previous examples of the apostles doctrine and fellowship. The breaking

of bread. We're immediately struck with the fact of the reference to bread. There's nothing more basic to life itself than bread. We eat on a daily basis or, after just a short while, we die from starvation. Now why is it that God created a creature that needed to eat? There's no reference to the angels needing to eat, for example. And we will have a spiritual body when these earthly bodies we're in no longer are useful to us and those spiritual bodies will not require bread.

So why is the breaking of bread a critical element of the culture of the kingdom? Is it more than a common meal? Why does God even use the symbology of bread? This principle of bread has been selected by God, as we've said in previous messages, God selects objects in time or persons, like God presents male and female as ways of showing things about God; types, shadows, indicating the reality. And the more common the type, the more common the shadow, the more significant the representation of God that that thing is.

So when we speak of the human need for bread on a daily basis, to consume bread, we're speaking of the nourishment of the human being that is also required as regularly as bread is required. But there is more to the human being than just this physical body and more to bread than just eating that he might be sustained in his physical body. Here's what Jesus speaks of. This is from the book of John chapter 6 verse 47, "I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the Bread of Life. Your fathers ate manna in the desert yet they died but here is the bread that comes down from heaven which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that comes down from heaven, if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is My flesh which I will give for the life of the world." Do you see? When God said to man in the garden, "Of all the trees of the garden you may freely eat but of the tree that's in the midst of the garden you shall not eat of it because in the day that you eat of it you will surely die." He is introducing us to the notion of bread and not all bread is good for you, even though our thinking is, "Surely, all bread must be good for you." But here God says, "Do not eat of the tree that's in the midst of the garden," and He calls that tree "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

Now the first type of bread that God ever gave to man was of the trees of the garden. Because you see, man was not yet at the place, he had not fallen so he wasn't growing crops, refining grain, and creating bread that he may break and eat; that's after he fell. By the sweat of his brow he would eat in this fashion. But before God had said to man, "I have given you every tree of the garden and every green herb of the earth I have given to you as food." So a man was simply to go and gather his food. In that context God says, "You may eat of all the trees of the garden except this one." Now immediately you're impressed with the fact that this has more to do with food than just being sustained. For God says, "You may eat of all the trees of the garden, they're yours as food, I've given you the green herbs also as food. I've given you, you may simply go around and gather

up but of this tree you cannot eat," because He says, "if you eat of it you will surely die." This was about bread and a type of bread that was forbidden, bread that brought death. Do you not see any comparison between bread that brings death and "I am the bread of life come down from heaven, if anyone eats of this bread he will live forever,"? There's bread that brings death and bread that brings life that rescues one from having eaten of the bread that brings death. This is the threshold issue and all of what is meant by bread in the Scripture if it is more than just food to be ingested plays off of these two critical pictures; there's a bread that brings death and there's a bread that brings life. The bread that brought death was bread from a tree known as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And that compares to another tree that was called the tree of life. Once man ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he was forbidden to eat from the tree of life but there is no indication that he could not routinely eat from the tree of life as part of his daily eatings.

So you see, you could think of this breaking of bread as being the Lord's supper or you could think of it as being something vastly more significant and different. You could think of the symbology of breaking and eating bread and drinking wine in celebration of the Lord's supper or you could understand that beyond the symbol of that is something that is meant to give life. The breaking of bread in the Scripture, as part of the culture of the church, is far more....far more than the Lord's supper and goes back to bringing forth the full significance of the conflict in the garden into the kingdom of God. That is, it's not that it brings the conflict of the garden into the kingdom but the kingdom resolves the conflict that began in the garden between the two trees; one that brings death and one that brings life. Because it's in the kingdom that one gets to eat the bread of life come down from heaven because man has routinely eaten the bread that brought death.

Now as we move this matter forward, let us look at a little bit of the history of bread in the Old Testament. When Israel was in the wilderness God fed them with manna. The word "manna" means "what is it?". They didn't know what it was, they only knew that it was bread from heaven. But to that very generation and while they were eating bread from heaven God told them this - look with me, the book of Exodus - concerning a table. In Exodus 25 God said, "Make a table of acacia wood," and then He describes the dimensions of the table, He says, "Overlay it with pure gold and around it make a rim, a hands breadth," and then He tells them how else to make it, you know make rings so you cannot put poles through it, so you can move it, but then He says, "And make plates and dishes of pure gold as pouring out of offerings," and then verse 30, the purpose of this table, "Put The Bread of the Presence on this table to be before Me at all times." The Bread of His Presence. The table was known as The Table of Show Bread because they put twelve loaves on that table every week, it was changed out every week. So for seven days out of the week, there were twelve loaves put on golden plates on this table. The table was called The Table of Show but the bread on the table was called The Bread of His Presence.

So the table and the bread together was meant to show the presence of God. And then now, at the end of this sojourn in the wilderness in the book of Deuteronomy chapter 8, God would say this, "Man shall not live on bread alone," in fact He said, "I took you..." let me find it very quickly. Here He said, Deuteronomy 8:15, "He led you through the vast and dreadful desert with it's waterless land, with it's snakes and scorpions, He gave you manna to eat to test you and to humble you so that in the end it may go well with you. You may not say that, 'It was by my strength or by my power have I done these things'," and God said to them, "Remember the Lord when you come into the land." And just previous to that God had said, "The reason I did this was to show you that man does not live on bread alone, he lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Now I want to get into this picture in the next broadcast, however here and for the remaining time, I want to follow on because while God is feeding them manna, bread that they may consume but even by consuming this bread they would still die. He had them create a memorial of another kind of bread: bread that brings life. He said, "Put on the table of show twelve loaves of the Bread of My Presence," to teach what? That man does not live on bread alone, he lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

In discussing the bread from heaven, we'll pick up at this point in the next message. And I want you to see how the breaking of bread is part of the culture of the kingdom meant to impart life to the believers.

I'm Sam Soleyn, we'll discuss this further in the next broadcast.