

THE ACTIONS OF JESUS: BREAKING BREAD

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." (Mark 14:22, NIV)

PERHAPS I SHOULD BE PROUD TO SAY that I have actually eaten what Golf Digest recently named the best golf course food item in America. It is The Olympic Club's burger dog. Let me describe it in a word: tasty!

What I also relished (OK, pun intended) was sharing this novel new meal with my partners that day. Though we ate from our laps rather than sitting around the refectory table, it was an enjoyable breaking of bread that punctuated the camaraderie of the afternoon.

We are in the midst of a little series about the actions of Jesus and how these actions can inform our own discipleship—that is, the outworking of our faith in real-world practice. Today, we come to this idea of breaking bread, which is offered in both a literal sense and communal expression.

Before the passage specifically in our sights today, for instance, Jesus notably broke bread in feeding the crowds. This happened on two occasions, and each time Jesus started with only a few loaves and fish, broke the bread, and had the disciples distribute the resulting food to the thousands. These were remarkable miracles, and if we keep them in mind when we come to the context of the upper room, we might say to ourselves, "Oh, this is a message not only for the Twelve, but for the many who would believe its worth."

What is that message? It is that Jesus, in breaking the bread on that Passover night in Jerusalem, was engaging in a prophetic act that foretold what would happen to him: his body would be broken for us. Moreover, we know from the account of that meal, the wine they shared was "the blood of the [new] covenant." This was a meal of poignant and enduring meaning.

The meal itself also endures, both in its commemoration and its fellowship. We read in Acts 2 that a standard practice of the early church was the breaking of bread. This meant that they made every effort to come together, not just "at church" but throughout the week. But more than this, the breaking of bread was specific—coupled with the sharing of the wine, it pointed to the sacrifice of Christ and the new relationship with God afforded by it. Done in remembrance of Christ, it fueled the continuing worship of him. It still does this for us.

Opening questions What's your favorite snack while playing golf? Besides food, what makes a meal a special experience? • What does taking the Lord's Supper (Communion, Eucharist) mean for you?

READING Mark 14:12-26; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

Jesus' last meal (Mark 14)

Reading through the account of the Last Supper, what details freshly catch your attention? How will knowledge of these things affect your own participation in Communion going forward?

The 'co' in Communion (1 Corinthians 10)

Who is in focus during Communion? How does the practice of Communion bring God's people together?

Remembrance and reckoning (1 Corinthians 11)

What is Communion meant to commemorate and proclaim? How does it do this proclaiming? What might make a person unworthy of participation?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2016 Links Players International.