

EATING THE BREAD OF HEAVEN

Peter Hay, prepared for the Presbytery fellowship word, 06 February 2022

Transcription of recording, slightly edited

Introduction

Today we will continue to consider how we participate in eating *the bread of heaven*, which is the food *from the tree of life*.

We will particularly consider how Jesus feeds it to us, and will begin to connect this to *dealing with iniquity*.

I will begin by reminding us about, and establishing, some key foundational points which are necessary for us to comprehend what this conversation at the tree of life 'looks like'. It is much broader than we may have previously thought.

Agape love is the nature of Yahweh's life and fellowship

Agape is the Greek word for 'love'. The first point I will make is that *agape* love is the love that describes 'the nature of God' – it is *God's love*. *Agape*, revealed through offering, is *the nature of Yahweh's life and fellowship*.

When we refer to Yahweh, we are talking about the *fellowship* of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The apostle John wrote that 'God is love'. 1Jn 4:8.

The *tree of life* symbolises *the one Spirit and life of Yahweh's fellowship*. *Agape* love is the nature of Yahweh's life and fellowship. So, the tree of life symbolises the sharing, or multiplying, of the one Spirit and life of Yahweh.

The fruit of the tree of life, which is Spirit and life, belongs to the sons of God

The *fruit* of that tree, which symbolises that fellowship, is *Spirit and life*.

John said that *that life was in the Son*, and it became the *light* of men. Joh 1:4. The apostle Paul addressed this, noting that we are to '*walk as children of light*'. Eph 5:8.

The *fruit* of the tree of life *belongs to the sons of God* in the body of Christ; to those having been predestined by God to be born of Their life and to be participants in Their fellowship.

The agape meal is the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

God *the Father* is *the source* of this life. He is the One who feeds the fruit of the tree of life to the sons of God in the *agape* meal. The table of the Lord belongs to the Father.

The flesh and blood of Jesus, who gave His life for the world, is *the food and drink* of this meal.

An important point that we made last week is that we cannot 'pick and choose' what that meal is for us, because *the substance*, or the food, is *fed to us by the Spirit*.

So, the Father is the *source* of the meal; the Son is the *substance* of the meal – His body and blood are the food; but it is *fed* to us by the Holy Spirit, because it is the Spirit who gives the life.

This is the *fellowship* of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

The agape meal is the entirety of the fellowship of Christ's offering

It is important to recognise that the *agape* meal is not only a public or house to house gathering.

Yes, we are gathered here for an *agape* meal. And when we meet from house to house, we are participating in an *agape* meal. It should have four elements to it – 'the apostles' doctrine, the apostles' fellowship [a meal], the breaking of bread and prayers'. Act 2:42.

However, the *agape* meal is not only when we come together.

The actual meal is *the entirety of the fellowship of Christ's offering*.

The *agape* meal is our total and continual fellowship in Christ's offering, because we live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Mat 4:4.

'Eating' the word proclaimed to us has implications on how we live

We are to gather together to receive the word and to share the word with one another, so that the eating of it is *living*.

We are not merely 'eating' now; we are 'eating' by 'living' what we are hearing.

In fact, Moses said to the children of Israel, in effect, 'The Lord Himself made you hungry, and *fed* you with the bread from heaven, to teach you that man should not *live* by bread alone.' Deu 8:3. He was talking about 'a life lived', and connecting it to 'food eaten'.

Now, if this word that is proclaimed today is the tree of life to you, it will have implications for how you live and walk, because living and walking is part of 'eating'.

We have made this point a few times; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life are *both* in Christ. Its fruit is either *the knowledge of good and evil* or it is the fruit of *life to us*, depending on how we interface with the word.

If this word is the tree of life to you, it will have implications for how you live and walk, because living and walking is part of eating. I am sure that everyone agrees with that; but is that simply conceptual. How do the Scriptures bear that out?

The comprehensive reality of the *agape* meal was highlighted by Jesus

The Scriptures bear this out through Jesus' own experience.

Let us consider the comprehensive reality of the *agape* meal. By 'comprehensive', I mean the fact that the *agape* meal is more than what is happening right now.

The comprehensive reality of the *agape* meal was highlighted by Jesus, who shared a cup of wine at an *agape* meal similar to that which we are having now. That *agape* meal was called 'the last supper'. He drank a cup and He shared it with others.

Then He 'drank a cup' in the garden of Gethsemane, didn't He? As He prayed, He said, 'If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.' Mat 26:39.

Was it a different 'cup' or the same 'cup'? He had an *agape* meal and drank a cup. In the garden of Gethsemane, He commenced an offering journey, where He drank a cup.

Then He continued to drink this cup throughout the course of His offering journey. We remember that He said to Peter, 'Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?' Joh 18:11.

So He did not drink the cup only in the *agape* meal; He did not drink the cup only in Gethsemane. He 'drank the cup' in *every wounding event* that He experienced.

When Jesus came to the end of His offering journey, when it was finished, what was the first thing that He did? He drank a cup of wine. Do

you see that the entirety of this experience was 'a meal'?

This meal was achieving a *work*. It was causing something to die, and it was multiplying life as a new creation. That is an awesome meal!

Eating by believing

That is the *agape* meal to which you and I are invited today. How do we eat this meal? That is the key question.

Jesus said that we eat and drink of the tree of life by *believing in Him*.

We know this because Jesus said that we are to labour 'for the food which endures to eternal life'. Remember that this is the food of the tree of life.

Then He said, 'This is the work [or labour] of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.' Joh 6:27-29.

First, we 'eat' by 'believing'.

Receiving the word that the Father speaks to us through His messenger administration

The first implication of this direction is that we must *receive* a word to believe.

If you do not believe that He has a messenger administration by which His word is being proclaimed to you, then you are not eating from the tree of life. You are not even at the beginning of being able to 'believe unto eternal life'.

We need to receive the word in the way in which *He* proclaims it.

Jesus said, in effect, 'If you receive him whom I've sent, then you receive Me and you receive Him who sent Me.' Joh 13:20.

And who is the One who sent Jesus? It was the *Father*, who is the *source* of the food.

So the first implication of the direction to believe unto eternal life is to receive the word that He speaks to us, through the messenger administration which He has established.

Jesus said to the Jews, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me.' Joh 5:24.

The point is that you cannot believe in the Father *unless you receive the word*.

Your belief is not simply because you have some personal conviction that God exists. That is not believing.

Jesus said, 'I say to you, he who *hears My word* and *believes in Him* who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death into life.' Joh 5:24.

His food, His words, are Spirit and life

We are building this picture of the food from the tree of life. Jesus described His words as being Spirit and life. He said, 'The words that I speak to you are Spirit, and they are life.' Joh 6:63.

The fruit of the tree of life, which is the one-Spirit fellowship of Yahweh and the life of Yahweh, is communicated through the word that Jesus proclaims – 'My words are Spirit and life'.

And they are *fed* to our heart as we receive the *conviction* of the Spirit.

We obtain faith by hearing and receiving His word to believe and to participate

Through His word, we obtain the *faith* by which we are able to believe in Him, and then to *participate in the fellowship* of Yahweh as a member of His body.

I have titled this section, 'Believing is participating'. 'Having received the same Spirit of faith, "I believed and therefore I spoke".' 2Co 4:13. I engaged in a conversation; I participated. How does faith come? It comes by *hearing* the word. Rom 10:17.

The *evidence* of believing is that a person is *doing* something.

The first response of believing the word is to come to *Christ, who was lifted up on the cross*, in the same way that Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Joh 3:14-15.

We are hearing the word; we are obtaining faith; we are believing.

Connection to the process through which we are delivered from our iniquity and are cleansed of sin

And the first point of believing is a 'conversation'.

The first point of this conversation is to *come to Christ*, who was lifted up as the seraph, as Moses lifted up the seraph in the wilderness.

We note the words of Jesus. 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the

Son of Man be lifted up [on the cross], that whoever *believes* in Him should not perish but have eternal life.' Joh 3:14-15.

The beginning of eating from the tree of life, or it becoming the food that results in eternal life for us, requires us to *connect with Him in that way*.

This is the beginning point of 'believing', meaning 'participation in the offering of Christ', because it is the connection to the process through which we are delivered from our iniquity and cleansed of our sin.

To come to Jesus, who is lifted up, so that we obtain eternal life, is the beginning point of believing, because it is the *connection to the process* by which we are *delivered from our iniquity* and are cleansed of our sin.

Joining His process of deliverance; not going our own way; obtaining our inheritance

The question is, then, 'Why does that need to be the beginning point?'

Unless this deliverance happens in our life, we will unavoidably go astray!

This is because iniquity is the desire *to go our own way*. It is 'another law'.

And what is that law 'other than'?

It is other than *love*, which is where we started – love reveals the nature of Yahweh's life and fellowship.

So, unless we are joined to a process by which that is being removed from us, we cannot help but go astray. Unless this deliverance happens in our lives, we will unavoidably go astray.

More importantly, we will fail to obtain the eternal inheritance that belongs to a son of God.

That is why Jesus said that 'whoever believes in Him should not perish [because they have gone astray] but have eternal life'. Joh 3:15-16.

Jesus said that we have to join this process, not because we are 'dirty, rotten sinners', but because He wants us to *have the treasure that belongs to us*.

Sometimes we become 'stuck in the process', because it is revealing the 'muck' that is in us. It is not that the Lord wants us to know that we are 'mucky'; He wants us to be *delivered* from that so that we have eternal life.

Wonderfully, when this process is happening, through the effect of the word upon our heart and through our fellowship in Christ's sufferings, the *fruit* of this process is our 'sanctification and the end, eternal life'.

Paul said, 'But now having been *set free from sin*.' Rom 6:22.

That is, we are joined to a *process* by which we are being delivered from iniquity, or the desire to go according to our own sight and our own understanding. That would be a slavery - to not be able to help but sin.

'Having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God [living by obedience], you have your fruit to holiness [sanctification].' Rom 6:22.

This means that you are being absolutely liberated from sin to be *constrained to your name*, where 'the lines have fallen for you in pleasant places', and you rejoice in 'the liberty that belongs to the sons of God'. Psa 16:6. Rom 8:21.

This is not so that you can go and do whatever you want, but because you have *no hindrance* to fulfilling that amazing predestination that belongs to you.

Fulfilling the works of righteousness that belong to our sonship

We *are* able to fulfil God's will as the son whom He predestined us to be in Christ.

These works of righteousness are the ongoing reality of *eating from the tree of life*.

We should accept that we have a daily process, or daily fellowship, in Christ's offering and sufferings, by which we do have to 'put off' some things as they come to the light, and as they 'bubble to the surface' in the experiences of life.

However, our whole focus is not on our sin. Most of our life is *fulfilling the works that belong to our sonship*.

We are being set free from sin, becoming slaves of God, and having *fruit* - our sanctification, or holiness.

That holiness is *the works of righteousness* that belong to our sonship.

These works of righteousness are the ongoing reality of eating from the tree of life.

Our food is to do His will; to do the works of our sonship

Jesus said of Himself, who was a man, the Son of Man, 'My *food* is to *do the will of Him* who sent Me, and to finish His *work*.' Joh 4:34.

For us, our *first connection* to 'the bread' is to accept that we need to be joined to a process by which we are being delivered from iniquity - that is easy.

Our *ongoing fellowship* with Christ is that food - to do the will of which we are not the source.

Unless we are joined to the process by which we are delivered from that strong desire to be the source of the will of our own life, that is the way in which we will walk.

But, when we are delivered from it, every step that we take is with Jesus, and fulfils a righteousness that we did not determine.

We are eating from the tree of life and are obtaining eternal life *now*. This is the assurance of eternal life.

Two facets of believing - cleansing from sin; righteousness revealed

We will consider the relationship between the two facets of believing.

The first is to *come to Christ and to look on Him* who is like the seraph lifted up in the wilderness. That is to deal with our iniquity and sin; that is the first element - *cleansing from sin*.

The second element of believing is *righteousness revealed*; that is, our sonship works being fulfilled.

We see the relationship between these two facets in the experience of Isaiah. He heard the message, 'Holy, Holy, Holy', which we are learning is the same for us; it is the beginning point of the gospel.

And that is, 'God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all.' 1Jn 1:5.

Isaiah heard the message and he was illuminated to his uncleanness. It had to do with his *speech* and his *interactions with others*.

He demonstrated his belief by *receiving the atoning ministry* of the seraphim. That was the first element of believing.

However, the end, or goal, of this interaction was not only the deliverance from iniquity; it was so that Isaiah could get on and do the works of being a prophet, for which he had been called.

The Scriptures recorded that after he found deliverance from iniquity, and his sin was purged, he said, 'Also I heard.' Isa 6:8. It was as though he said that these two things happened to him.

'Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me".' Isa 6:8.

How awesome is that? His *speech* had been changed so that he could give himself to his *sanctification* that came in a word, 'Whom shall I send?'

He was able to meet that word with faith. 'Here am I! Send me.'

And the Lord said, 'Go, and tell this people: "Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive".' Isa 6:9.

Have an ear to hear

That was an interesting commission, wasn't it? Having been called to be a messenger, he was told that no-one would hear or see what he was saying. I suppose that is the mandate given to all messengers.

The point is that we all have to *have an ear to hear*, don't we? Otherwise, the word will cause us to become even more deaf.

The significance of prayer

Let us move now to the importance of prayer. We will refresh ourselves in one of the points that I made last week, and will expand it further.

We will see the significance of prayer to 'eating' – eating from the tree of life.

The atoning ministry of the seraphim under the Old Covenant was given to Christ

When Christ was made to be an offering for sin in the garden of Gethsemane, the atoning ministry of the seraphim under the Old Covenant was given to Him.

He was the Son of Man 'who had been made a little lower than the angels', 'born under the Law'. Heb 2:9. Gal 4:4. This was part of the establishment of the New Covenant.

This happened in the garden of Gethsemane, which was right at *the throne of the true tabernacle*.

It was not that the throne was 'way up high' and Jesus was 'down here', lower than the angels. He was right *at the throne*. He was made a little lower

than the angels because He was a 'man' and had been born under the 'Law'. It happened right at the throne room.

The seraphim came down. I suspect it was not only the seraphim; I suspect it was one of those living creatures. The great myriad of angels came down, and they laid down this atoning work to a man – Jesus, the Son of Man.

Through prayer, every individual is personally connected to the process and healing of the Lord

We remember that, under the Old Covenant, the seraphim ministered atonement to those who were made aware of their uncleanness and who requested deliverance from its resulting woe, so that they might live. This is what we have been learning.

In both of the examples that we considered, *prayer was foundational to this ministry*.

We remember that the children of Israel entreated Moses to pray for them when they were bitten by the seraphim because of their complaining.

The answer to his prayer was the instruction for the people to *present themselves to look upon the seraph lifted up on a pole*.

The key point to note was that they were dying, and they came to Moses to ask him to pray for them. But Moses' prayer was not from the place of being an intermediary for them. It was not a sacramental prayer.

Where they were dying, he did not act as an intermediary to do something on their behalf before the Lord so that they would not die.

This is very important to understand – how we are to pray for matters.

What did the prayer of Moses establish?

Through Moses' prayer, every individual was personally connected to the process and healing provision of the Lord, through the seraphim. It needed prayer to *establish the ground* where that atoning ministry would happen; but that person had to individually come and *join the process*.

Moses' prayer did not circumvent that process; it joined the person to it.

So, if you are looking for prayer to deliver you from the process, that is still sacramental.

And if any elder is 'standing in the gap' between you and the process, they are in grave danger, because that is iniquity, and that is 'answering an idol'. Eze 14:4-10.

The work of the fire of Yahweh's fellowship in the tree of life

It is very important that we understand how this works, because this is still the tree of life.

The question is, 'How is the life ministered and then received?'

Moses was not an intermediary; nor was his prayer a sacrament.

In the case of Isaiah, the seraph took a coal of Yahweh's fire from the golden altar. Isa 6:6. The golden altar symbolises prayer in the true tabernacle.

The seraph, a fiery angel, took this coal, which was the fire of Yahweh's fellowship; but he did not do the atoning work, himself.

He took the coal *from the fire of Yahweh's fellowship* with tongs - not even with his own hands - to put on the lips of Isaiah in order to remove his iniquity to and purge him of his sin.

The true golden altar was revealed when Jesus prayed in Gethsemane

That was the golden altar that Isaiah interfaced with.

The true golden altar was revealed in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was praying. It is amazing! That is the clearest picture of what the tabernacle was.

It is as though the whole of time, both the past and the future, was gathered up, right there.

In the garden of Gethsemane, the golden altar of the true temple was revealed when Jesus began to pray to the Father, by the Spirit, when the Father made Him to be an offering for sin.

The prayer of Jesus Christ

We have read this passage in the book of Luke, but we will read it again, because we will study 'prayer' and explain what Jesus said as He prayed.

What did His prayer achieve, and why did it accomplish that? That is what we need to find out.

Jesus' prayer began, 'And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed.' Luk 22:41.

I love that beginning, because it resembles the imagery of the tabernacle.

He had gone right into the holy of holies. The disciples were out in the holy place, but Christ, as on the Day of Atonement when the golden altar was taken into the most holy place, was in the holy of holies.

'He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done."

'Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.' Ibid. 42-44.

Jesus was strengthened with Eternal Spirit by an angel

When the angel came and strengthened Jesus, He received the capacity of Eternal Spirit.

That is why we took so much time in explaining the angelic order, and particularly 'the living creatures'. This is because, when Ezekiel saw it, he saw the seven Spirits of God, or Eternal Spirit, in that administration.

The work of the angels, through the expression of their identity, was not for them to reveal themselves.

Rather, they were to *reveal the seven Spirits of God* as 'the eyes in all the earth'.

When the angels came and laid this down to Jesus, He was strengthened by the very capacity that they were revealing in the earth. It was as though the whole 'machinery' came down to Him right at that moment.

The strength which He received was not just the capacity to do the atoning work; it was *the Eternal Spirit of God Himself*.

Christ's blood for our atonement, and for the multiplication of His life to His sons

He received the capacity of Eternal Spirit, through which His blood was shed for the cleansing of our sin.

The work of atonement, which had been previously facilitated by the seraphim, now belonged to Jesus, the Son of Man.

He was strengthened, and the mark of it or the effect of this strength was that He began to *pray more earnestly*. It is hard to imagine how much more earnestly you can pray as you are being made an offering for sin.

'Father, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done.'

Do you see that something of a new way had been established, which belonged to *a new prayer*?

It was a more earnest prayer, of Eternal Spirit, forever interceding.

The *fruit* of this offering prayer, by Eternal Spirit, was that *His blood began to flow* over the whole of His body.

For what purpose? It was for *our atonement*; to deal with iniquity and the cleansing of our sin.

But even more than that, it was for *the multiplication of His life*, that we may be *made one with Him*.

That is what 'atonement' means - to be 'at one' with the Lord; not just legally, but literally; part of His body, becoming the bread that you eat. In this regard, Paul said, 'You are one bread, because you are one body.'

He became the Father's table, offered to us

His blood began to flow over the whole of His body for atonement, and for deliverance from iniquity and cleansing from sin.

Through this offering, He began to feed His flesh and blood to the world as *the bread of heaven*.

It is as though the Father had prepared a table by making Him an offering for sin.

As Christ became that, and as He received the capacity of Eternal Spirit, and through His prayer, *food* was provided for the world. How about that for 'a table'?

The full expression of Christ's prayer revealed in Gethsemane

Significantly, *the full expression of Christ's prayer for every person* was manifest in the garden of Gethsemane.

This is a focal point for us to understand. The full prayer, the full statement of prayer, the full shedding of blood, was *revealed* there.

Christ's prayer continued throughout His offering journey

But then, as Jesus *continued to walk on this offering journey*, 'the cloud of incense' went with Him in 'seven sprinklings.'

This means that everything that He said, as He walked, was a *prayer*.

So we see that the cup, and the food, which was 'a will being done', is connected to *prayer*.

The full expression of Christ's prayer for every person was manifest in the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus became sin.

Then, in each wounding event, a specific application of prayer was associated with a specific work of atonement.

Seven wounds captured the *fullness* of atonement for the whole of humanity, associated with His prayer in Gethsemane, and with His ongoing prayer as He journeyed to Calvary.

Christ's twofold prayer

Christ's prayer accompanied each wound. The content and effect of His prayer was twofold.

First, Christ's prayer *established and fulfilled the word and will of the Father that was for a multitude of sons*.

Jesus went out to find all the sons who were lost. His prayer first accomplished that will - to bring them all back.

Then there was a second element to Christ's prayer.

He *proclaimed*, through prayer, *judgement upon the enemies of the Lord*.

We have previously written about this. The term used is 'the imprecatory prayers of Christ'.

These two dimensions of Christ's prayer are captured in the Messianic psalms and, in particular, in Psalm 69.

It is as though we can hear Jesus praying these two prayers in Caiaphas' house.

Why is that important? It is important because that was *where iniquity was dealt with*, because He was 'bruised for our iniquity'.

Christ's prayer for Peter, bringing deliverance

That was where Peter found deliverance from iniquity because Jesus prayed for him.

In Psalm 69, King David spoke words that refer to Christ's prayer for the will of the Father to be done, in relation to sonship.

'Let not those who wait for You, O Lord of hosts, be ashamed because of me.' Psa 69:6.

What did Peter do? He was ashamed to be connected to Jesus, wasn't he? He denied that he was connected, or had journeyed, with Jesus.

But the Lord prayed so that, as the fullness of Peter's iniquity was manifest, he found deliverance at that moment.

'Let not those who wait for You, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed because of me; let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel. Because for Your sake I have borne reproach.'

Jesus prayed this prayer in Caiaphas' house, where He was beaten for Peter's iniquity.

If Peter did not draw back from watching, Jesus' prayer became effective.

Peter had to see the effect of his iniquity on Jesus, who bore the reproach of it, praying that Peter would be delivered of the iniquity in himself that caused him to be ashamed and to deny Jesus. How beautiful is that!

Christ's prayer for judgement upon iniquity

In the same prayer, Jesus prayed, 'Pour out Your indignation upon them, and let Your wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their dwelling place [that is, the temple] be desolate; let no-one live in their tents. For they persecute the ones You have struck, and talk of the grief of those You have wounded. Add iniquity to their iniquity.' Psa 69:24-27.

On the one hand, *He took iniquity away*.

On the other hand, He piled *iniquity upon* all those who used the Law to condemn Him.

'Add iniquity to their iniquity and let them not come into Your righteousness.'

That sounds like someone who is locked up to their iniquity through the prayer of the great Saviour of the world.

'Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.' This happened to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin as He was beaten for our iniquity.

Deliverance or damnation

The same *prayer* leads to *deliverance* or to *damnation*.

The epitome of that picture is Judas, isn't it? He had associated himself with the group of disciples, but could not let go of his self-righteousness.

So 'iniquity was laid on iniquity', and he did not come into righteousness.

Do you see that Jesus was feeding His body and blood, through *prayer*?

The bread became *deliverance* for Peter, because he continued to look at Jesus, even though his response was poor. It was not just poor; it was indicative of the reality of what was in his heart.

But those who do not look upon Jesus, like Judas, go out, fully embracing their shame. That food, to them, is their everlasting condemnation.

The tree of life leads to life; washed by His word, abiding in Christ

Let us now look at 'the way that leads to life', for those who eat of the tree of life.

We noted last week that manna was provided for the children of Israel in the dew, each morning. It is a beautiful image, isn't it?

The 'dew' is 'the water of the word' that is received by those who *abide in Christ's body*.

Some of you will make the connection immediately; that is, the need to *be washed*. Jesus said, 'Unless you have your feet washed, you have no part with Me.'

The dew is the water of the word that belongs to those who abide. 'Abiding' refers to those who 'dwell in unity', doesn't it? The words of Psalm 133 teach us this.

Washed so as to engage in His offering

The washing of water is necessary for our *participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ*, as those who are 'eating His flesh and drinking His blood'.

We do not have time to develop it today, but I will make the passing comment that, for the priests under the Old Covenant *to engage in the*

offering, they had to wash their bodies, their hands, and their feet beforehand. One of the things that marked the priest was the right to *eat* of the sin offering.

The point that I'm making is that we must *receive washing* as those who will *eat of the offering* so that we can then participate.

If we are not washed by the water of the word, we have no right to participate. But, if we do, we will come under the judgement of the offerings that we are mediating, or are participating in.

Washing of this water is necessary for our participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ, as those who eat His flesh and drink His blood.

This ministry was exercised by Jesus at the last supper, where He *gave* His body and blood.

What did He do? He washed their feet. It was as though the dew of heaven came to clean their feet.

Rejecting His washing

We know that, at first, Peter resisted this washing, viewing it as being demeaning for Christ to do that for him.

I suspect that Peter viewed it as demeaning for Christ to wash his feet because he thought, 'I would be demeaned if I had to wash another's feet!' It had to do with his pride, and his sense of indignity about the need for his feet to be washed.

Some of us are like that. We hear the word about the need for fellowship, and may think, 'I don't know if I need that. It is a bit demeaning for me to have to come and have that conversation.'

However, Jesus said to him, 'If I do not wash you, you have *no part with Me*.'

Having heard that, what did Peter do? He said, 'Well! For goodness' sake, douse me in it! Soak me. Wash me from head to foot!'

That is like many of us, isn't it? We begin carefully about how we respond to the word. Then we hear that, unless we respond, we have no part, after which we say, 'Whatever you have to do, do it!'

Already clean because of the word

However, that was not the point. Jesus said to Peter, 'You are *already clean, because of the word* that I have spoken to you.'

This was the word that had called the disciples to 'eat His flesh and drink His blood'.

At that time, what was Peter's confession? He said, 'Lord.' This was after everyone had left, and only the disciples remained with Him. Peter said, 'Lord, where shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

So, many of us are like Peter. We have heard the word concerning our need for cleansing and have desired a 'full soaking'.

However, many are 'already clean' because of our *response to come to Christ, and to believe His word*.

The fact that you are here to have an *agape* meal does not mean that you are perfect, but it does mean that *you believe that you need to eat*.

You have responded, 'I need to eat the flesh and to drink the blood of Christ. I don't really know what that means, but here I am.' You are in a good place.

Journeying with Christ – eating the fruit of the tree of life

However, iniquity is *not* dealt with simply because you have come to eat.

We need to understand how to *journey with Christ* for the full implications of eating and drinking from the tree of life to be outworked in our lives.

When is our iniquity dealt with?

This is an amazing point. I had not registered it before, but it was *after* Peter received the washing of his feet that Jesus, through His word, addressed the issue of Peter's *iniquity*.

Do you see the point? Peter had to *receive the washing of the water of the word*, which marked him as being *part of the body of Christ*.

But it was then, like the dew that came down, that that *bread* had to be fed to him.

What was fed to Peter was the prophetic statement, 'You will deny Me three times.' That was 'the bread of heaven' to Peter.

It was after he had received this washing, as rain from heaven, that Jesus said to Peter, 'Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.'

In response, Peter said, 'Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for

[You]”. Jesus prophesied, saying, “Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times”.’

Believing His word of our iniquity

I will now demonstrate how that word to Peter was the bread of heaven to him *because he had received that washing*.

Judas rejected the washing because he rejected the call to eat Christ’s flesh and to drink His blood.

The interaction between Peter and Jesus demonstrated Peter’s self-righteous zeal. He professed to love Jesus as his friend, yet he would *not receive nor believe the words regarding his fundamental Christian expression*.

He believed that Jesus was the Son of God, but he did not believe what Jesus said about him. Do you see the difference?

We do have to believe that Jesus is the Son but, when we do, what do we see in His face? What comes from that revelation?

It is our *condition*. That is the next thing we must believe.

Our iniquity is our natural sight

Peter’s reliance on the sight of his own eyes, and his readiness to act according to the dictates of his own heart, were iniquity within him. His iniquity was an idol in his heart, which made him vulnerable to the oppression of Satan.

This is an amazing point. We have previously considered idolatry, and that connection.

Jesus noted this vulnerability in relation to Peter, specifically addressing his iniquity. Jesus said to Peter, ‘Indeed, Satan has asked for you.’

Jesus prays that our faith will not fail

Why would Satan have the temerity to ask for Peter? It was because they all knew that he had an idol in his heart. Satan thought, ‘This guy is “ripe for the picking”.’

‘Satan has asked for you that he may sift you as wheat. But *I have prayed for you*.’

This prayer is important. Jesus did not pray for the healing of Peter’s iniquity.

What does the Scripture record that Jesus prayed for?

Jesus said, ‘I have prayed for you [Not that you are going to be a great guy. Not that your iniquity is going to be healed so that you can journey with Me] *that your faith [may] not fail*.’

Jesus prayer connects us to His journey, for our deliverance and sonship

Peter, by faith, had to walk his journey to the end. No-one’s prayer should circumvent a person’s connection to their individual participation in Christ’s offering and sufferings.

If it does, it is a sacrament, and it only leads to death.

Jesus’ prayer was like the prayer of Moses on behalf of the children of Israel. It *connected* Peter to the process through which he would find *deliverance from iniquity*, and would *be established in the works that belong to his name* as a son of God.

Jesus said to Peter, in effect, ‘I am praying for you. I have given you the word. This word is the beginning of food for you to eat, Peter. I am praying for you, that you will be joined to this process. And you have to *walk with Me* until it is done in your life.’

That was the faith that Peter had to then *demonstrate*. It was the faith that he had received when he said, ‘Where will I go? You have the words of eternal life.’ Joh 6. That was all he needed – ‘faith as of a mustard seed’.

The word reveals the journey that we must walk

Significantly, those words were the bread of heaven to Peter, but the *feeding* of this food was not only in the ministry of that word to him.

This is a major point. The feeding of the bread of heaven to Peter encompassed the journey that he was to join because of that word.

That is the point that we made before. The *agape* meal is *a total and continual fellowship in Christ’s offering*, because we live by every word.

Continuing to eat and drink His word concerning our deliverance from iniquity; remembering Him

How do we know that the feeding of that word to Peter about his denial was to continue to be fed to him throughout the process?

In this regard, Paul said, ‘For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the

Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me". 1Co 11:23-25.

Jesus gave the elements of the bread and wine. Remember, this is the word which is *Spirit and life*.

He said, 'Take it, and eat it, and do it in remembrance of Me.'

'In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it [drinking is part of believing, isn't it?], in remembrance of Me".'

Peter should have eaten the bread that was fed to him, doing it *in remembrance of Jesus*.

What was the bread that he ate? It was, 'Peter, you will deny Me three times.'

The bread and cup were ministered to Peter at the last supper as the word addressed his iniquity. We know this because, when the rooster crowed, the Lord turned and met Peter eye to eye and heart to heart.

What happened in that moment? Peter *remembered the words* that Jesus had spoken to him.

The food had been fed to him through the word at the *agape* meal, but he *continued* to eat it all the way through to its work being done in his heart.

This is the way Luke rendered it; and Luke did this to reveal Paul. 'Immediately, while he was still speaking,' These were the curses that Peter spoke from his wicked heart; 'out of the heart, the mouth speaks'.

'Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter *remembered* the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So Peter went out and wept bitterly'. Luk 22:60-62.

That word *delivered* Peter; and that word was a *prayer*.

In the coming weeks, we will look in detail at how Peter was delivered.

What was the transaction that happened as Jesus came alongside Peter in the court of Caiaphas?

The point to note today is that *eating Christ's flesh and blood*, which is the fruit of the tree of life, requires us to *hear* and to *receive the word that makes a breach on our heart*.

Then, by the Spirit, we *walk in the fellowship* of Christ's offering and sufferings, where the process of atonement is effective in our lives.

We must be *where Jesus is* in order to receive the cleansing of His blood, which is shed on Him, in our heart.

His purpose – our sanctified sonship

This is for *His purpose* of continuing to establish us in our sanctification as sons of God.

That was the point for Peter, wasn't it?

'After you have been converted, go and strengthen your brethren.'

Jesus spoke to him concerning *the works that belonged to his sonship*.