

**Acts 20:7-12**

7 On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul was holding a discussion with them; since he intended to leave the next day, he continued speaking until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the room upstairs where we were meeting. 9 A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in the window, began to sink off into a deep sleep while Paul talked still longer. Overcome by sleep, he fell to the ground three floors below and was picked up dead. 10 But Paul went down, and bending over him took him in his arms, and said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." 11 Then Paul went upstairs, and after he had broken bread and eaten, he continued to converse with them until dawn; then he left. 12 Meanwhile they had taken the boy away alive and were not a little comforted.

Before I became a preacher, I was talking with a colleague at work. When you are a Christian, everybody that knows you, knows you are a Christian. Occasionally you get talk about and respect each other's faith. People are discouraged from talking about faith and politics. That is because people get emotionally charged and become argumentative. I love to engage in conversation with logical people that want to learn. I find it quite interesting to learn and gain insight from others. In one conversation I mentioned that Acts reveals information about our church services starting on Sunday. A lot of Christians do not realize that they got together on the first day of the week to break bread.

The Scripture is clear and specific. They met on the first day of the week to break bread. They met on Sunday for the sacrament. A sacrament is a sacred and visible sign instituted by Jesus Christ to give us grace, the undeserved gift from God to us. The book of Acts is specific; they met on Sunday for the Holy Communion. The church is the people that are actively involved in the mission of Jesus as he taught to his disciples. In establishing the church, they got together on the first day of the week for the specific purpose of breaking bread.

I want to make sure we understand what is going on here. This is very important. It is set up by Jesus Christ himself to remember what he did for us on the Cross of Calvary. Jesus instructs his disciples to do this in remembrance of him. This is his farewell message to his people. When we say goodbye, we emphasize the things that are the most important. He emphasizes the things that he does not want them to forget. So, the disciples got together to break bread as they were told. On Sunday they met for communion because that is the church that Jesus Christ himself set up. The disciples got together and did as Jesus instructed. They got together on the first day of the week to break bread.

Throughout time religion evolves, people change things and put in their own preferences. They change the church for their own human preferences. However, Jesus demanded devotion and we are to do as Jesus instructed. Jesus Christ himself said "Do this in remembrance of me." He did not say please do this if you feel like it. He did not say do this once in a while. He said "Do this in remembrance of me." The disciples understood it and did it when they met as Jesus instructed them. We are to do it too. Humans have different preferences. Some prefer juice instead of wine. Some prefer once a year, once a quarter, or once a week. Some forbid you partaking of the elements if you are not a member of their specific denomination. However, that is not the teaching of

Jesus. That is human preference and it is divisive which goes against the prayer of Jesus. God's problem all along is the conflict between human preferences and divine preferences. Ever since Adam and Eve, the problem has always been humans preferring to do their own thing instead of God's thing.

The purpose of what we do as a church is to honor God through our devotion and obedience. They met to break bread. We meet to break bread. They prayed to God. We pray to God. They studied the word. We study the word. They have loving fellowship. We have loving fellowship. Don't worry about anything in the life of the church. The main thing is to stay true to God. We live in a society of preferences that claims to have faith but lives without devotion and does not understand the significance of breaking bread. If you are asked "Why do you have communion every week?" Ask back "Why did the disciples get together on the first day of the week?" They did what Jesus told them to do. We do what Jesus tells us to do. You are in communion with Christ when you follow Christ. Communion is a matter of being together in the solidarity of a close relationship, sharing intimacy in one spirit. We break bread to be in communion with Christ. That is why we call it the Holy Communion, to be one with Christ and with each other, to share Christ and be all one hundred percent in fellowship and likeness of mind and spirit.

There is training, workshops, books and resources for revitalization. But a one hundred twenty year old ministry is a blessing. A church with a long life span owes its success to being true to Christ. You do not get to be a successful ministry with gimmicks for publicity or campaigning for the sake of the institution. You get to be a successful ministry by being true to Christ when the world has gone astray.

The life cycle of an organization is liker the life cycle of a person. There is a consistent pattern for life cycles for any living entity whether it is a person, business, empire, or church. It goes from birth to growth to apex then decline and death. What we are to do is not worry about money or the numbers but focus on being true to Christ as the world goes astray. Today is World Communion Sunday and we are in solidarity with the rest of the world. But our main focus is to be in solidarity with Jesus. Therefore, we celebrate and the sacrament that solidifies our loving relationship.