

The Agape Meal – Where the Eagles are Gathered

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Returning to the fourfold foundations of Christ's Fellowship

- Acts 2:42 – 'And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers'. In this present season the Lord is restoring to us and establishing us, as the body of Christ, in the four dimensions of His grace or the fourfold foundations of His fellowship. If this is the case, then we must realise that we have not been established in these foundations as we thought we were. This has become evident to us, especially in our house to house fellowship. It is critical that we understand this, for this is a major point of repentance for us all.
- A vital key to this repentance is that we must receive the messengers who come to us in the name of the Lord. Jesus said to the Jewish house, 'Behold your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me (have no illumination) until you say, 'Blessed is he (the messengers sent of God) who comes in the name of the Lord'. For your house to be left desolate is to be a house left deserted and forsaken, a house void of His presence. His glory has departed. Eze Chapter 10.
- This is a sobering example for every house, whether single or multiple. We have learnt that it is His proceeding word, proclaimed by messengers in His right hand that establishes a ground of fellowship on which to meet. This word establishes His faith in us so we can testify to one another that we are joined to His death and are participating in His resurrection life. Every house needs to be established on the fellowship and ground of the presbytery, this is the apostles' fellowship which is the ground of Christ's own fellowship.

Restoration of the Agape meal

- A key understanding that has come to us concerning the Agape meal is its rightful and appropriate place in the midst of our fellowship.
- We are being renewed in the spirit of our mind to understand that coming to church to partake of the elements in a sacramental way has been a coveting of the life of God. We have ignorantly coveted the idealism of possessing God's life but without an understanding of what it means to participate in the dying of the Lord. This too has been a major point of repentance amongst us.
- The Lord is now calling each one of us to a greater accountability concerning our personal participation as a son of God. We will not be raised with Him if our responses are wayside, stony or thorny ground responses to the word that is proceeding. Only a good ground response to hearing and receiving the word brings forth the fruit of His sonship life.
- When Jesus spoke to His disciples at the first communion He said to them, 'This is My body given for you' and 'This cup poured out for you'. He was demonstrating to His

disciples how they were to be given and poured out for each other as the body of Christ. Luk 22:19-20.

- The eyes of our heart are being enlightened to see and know our participation as members in particular (no one else can do it for you) of His body, in the offering and sufferings of Christ.
- Therefore as we believe and receive the word of present truth we become the broken bread given to the other members of the body and we become the cup poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of another's faith. Phi 2:17-18. This is how we participate in and have genuine communion with one another. Communion is fellowship and fellowship is communion. This takes communion right away from us attaching great importance to the sacraments, to being a genuine participation in the body and blood of the Lord.

The beginning of birth pangs

- Quote from Vic's notes 'Fellowship in the agape meal'. – We are in the period of time that Jesus described as 'the beginning of birth pangs'. He explained to His disciples, 'For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, *but the end is not yet*. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. *All these are the beginning of sorrows [birth pangs]*'. Mat 25:5-8.
- Birth pangs are the pain that a pregnant woman experiences during labour. This pain is caused by contractions as her body presses for the birth of her child. During labour, her birth pangs generally increase in frequency and intensity for the purpose of this outcome. Each pang is bringing forth, in part, the child who will be fully begotten at the conclusion of her labour.
- In this season the whole world has begun to experience the birth pangs associated with the fulfilment of God's Everlasting Covenant on earth. The nature of this sorrow is twofold. *First*, it is the sorrow, or travail, through which the sons of God are being brought forth into the perfection of Christ. Paul called this distress 'the fellowship of Christ's sufferings'. Php 3:10. *Second*, these sorrows are the distress of the sons and daughters of men who live by the principle of the flesh. Their hearts are beginning to fail because of fear as God's judgements come upon the earth. Luk 21:26. The birth pangs spoken of by Jesus will continue to increase in frequency and intensity in the earth until God's purposes are fulfilled. – End of quote.
- Luke explains in His gospel that the heart of the sons and daughters of men fail them for fear because they are 'looking after those things that are coming on the earth'. Luk 21:26.
- In contrast to this response Jesus exhorts His disciples to look upon Him. '*Now when these things begin to happen, look up [straighten up] and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near*'. Luk 21:28.

- To 'look up' is to lift up our heads and look upon Him whom we have pierced. Zec 12:10. Our focus is always to be upon His offering journey. Only those who look upon Him are healed and restored. Num 21:4-9. Joh 3:14. Joh 12:32-33.
- It is also the time when God is speaking to every son to straighten up in their sonship. We are to stand upright in our name and works, discerning who we are in His body and who our brethren are. 1Co 11:29. Spiritual people are able to see themselves and others according to new creation and not according to the flesh. This is a great healing that the Lord is bringing to us. 'Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed'. Heb 12:12.

Where the body is there the eagles are gathered together

- Difficult times are upon us. Paul writes, 'But understand this, that in the last days there will set in perilous [difficult] times of great stress and trouble – hard to deal with and hard to bear'. 2Ti 3:1 [AMP]. He then goes on to describe, in very practical detail, a relational culture that has fallen from and is a betrayal of the culture of the apostles' doctrine, the apostles' fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers. 2Ti 3:2-5. We heard last week that betrayers are those who refuse to receive, believe and obey the word that is proclaimed by Christ through His messengers. They undermine, and war against, the fellowship of the body of Christ through their self-centred initiatives in the church, and their propagation of alternative gospels. This fallen culture is in stark contrast to the doctrine and life of Paul which Timothy and we as believers, are being strongly exhorted to follow. 2Ti 3:10-17. Paul's culture is the culture of the Agape meal.
- When Jesus was discussing the period of time that He called 'the beginning of birth pangs' He went on to say to His disciples, 'For wherever the carcass (body) is, there the eagles will be gathered together'. Mat 24:28.
- Here we have a picture of the Agape meal. The eagles being those maturing sons of God, who feed upon the word of present truth (the apostles' doctrine), and who are participating in the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- When describing to Job the way of the eagle and how it mounts up, The Lord says to Job, 'And where the slain are, there is he (the eagle)'. Job 39:30. The faith of those who are born again as sons of God is to eat and drink of the body and blood of our Lord. Joh 6:54.
- The current emphasis by the Spirit on the restoration of the Agape meal will be critical for the church in these last days. The Lord, as the Great Shepherd of the sheep, is preparing a table for us even in the midst of our enemies. Ps 23:5. The Agape meal is a place of safety and protection for every family. It is our assembling together for the Agape meal that Paul exhorts us not to forsake. We are to give it the highest priority, both publicly and house to house, and prayerfully consider how we can stimulate one another to love and good deeds. Heb 10:24-25.

The capacity to overcome is granted in the Agape meal

- When Jesus addressed the church at Laodicea He was motivated by His love for them. 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent'. Rev 3:19. Jesus then makes offering of Himself to them by saying, 'Behold (be illuminated), I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine (sup) with him, and he with Me'. Rev 3:20. Jesus is offering to participate with them in an Agape meal. This is what it means when He says, 'I will come in to him and dine with him'. Jesus was coming to them where they were at, even in their fallen ways of independence and self-sufficiency that warred against the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. He wanted to restore the Agape meal and therefore His fellowship to all those who had an ear to hear what the Spirit was saying to the church.
- Jesus then speaks some amazing words to those who turn in repentance and faith and open the door to Him and join with Him in an Agape meal. 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne'. Rev 3:21. Eating and drinking with Christ in the Agape meal grants to those who participate, a capacity to overcome. We recall Jesus' words to His disciples, 'In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world'. Joh 16:33. The only life that can overcome the world is the life of Jesus Christ. When we eat and drink of His life we are granted, by the Spirit, the same capacity to overcome the world. Can you see! The capacity to overcome sits within the fellowship of the Agape meal. How beautiful the mercy of the Lord; He comes to where we are at, to raise us to where He is at, to a participation with Him in the administration of the Son's throne. Hallelujah!
- Can I close today with this simple thought; Jesus loved to gather and eat a meal with people. The gospels are filled with many occasions in which Jesus sought to minister His love and truth to those who were gathered. What a beautiful example we have in the first 'men's breakfast' on the shores of Galilee, where Jesus prepared breakfast and restored his disciples to His first love. 'Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast'. Jesus then manifested or revealed Himself to His disciples during this time. Joh 21:12-14. The Agape meal is a very tangible and practical expression of how we can demonstrate and participate in the fellowship of the love of God.
- There is still much illumination that needs to shine on us concerning the Agape meal, so let's not presume we know anything, but rather let us come humbly as ones who are poor in spirit and needing to learn. The Lord is granting opportunity for every family to be revived in being the bread and the cup to one another.