

church times

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The Bread-breaking Meeting

After we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must keep His commandments, one of which is to remember Him at the bread-breaking meeting by eating the bread and drinking the cup.

The origin & purpose of the bread-breaking meeting

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' " (Matt 26:26-28) That the Lord Jesus Himself instituted this meeting at the Passover feast shows that the two are closely related.

When God ordained the Passover, He told Moses: "For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgement: I am the LORD. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance." (Exo 12:12-14) "Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, 'Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you. And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' that you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.' " (v 21-27)

As the Lamb of God, our Saviour has accomplished redemption typified by the Passover (see table on page 2).

"I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." (Matt 26:29) Thank the Lord, this was fulfilled with the setting up of the church, which is the manifestation of



"But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers"; "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"; "And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." (1 Pet 4:7; Luke 6:46; 12:47) We know in our spirits that the Lord is coming soon, and when He comes, He will judge us – whether we have done the things which He said, done God's will, done good works and done the things which are well pleasing in His sight (Heb 13:21). For example, have we done God's commandment to love Him with all our heart, soul and mind, and to love our neighbour as ourselves (Matt 22:37-39)? And have we done His words not to have divisions among us, not to love the world, not to make provision for the flesh to fulfil its lusts, but to love one another (1 Cor 1:10; 1 John 2:15; Rom 13:14; John 13:34)?

At the Youth & Young People's Camp, the brothers encouraged the young ones to add on various virtues besides Bible-reading, praying and gospel-preaching. May this issue help us to examine ourselves and to do the Lord's words, so that we may be prepared to receive His coming again, amen!

The editors

(continued on page 2)



Passover Lamb

- ⇒ Male lamb without blemish (Exo 12:5)
- ⇒ Shall be killed (Exo 12:6)
- ⇒ None of its bones shall be broken (Num 9:12)
- ⇒ Its blood on the lintel and doorposts made the destroyer pass over that house (Exo 12:23)

The Lord Jesus Christ

- ⇒ Without sin or fault (Luke 23:4)
- ⇒ Crucified (Luke 23:33)
- ⇒ None of His bones was broken (John 19:36)
- ⇒ His blood cleanses, justifies and redeems us, so that we do not perish but have eternal life (1 John 1:7; Rom 5:9; Eph 1:7; John 3:16)

God's kingdom on the earth: "Then those who gladly received his word were baptised; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:41-42) The bread-breaking meeting has been a part of the church life till today, while the Passover was no longer mentioned.

The bread – the body of Christ broken for us

"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.' ... For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." (1 Cor 11:23-26) The breaking of bread is not a rite; by it, we remember the Lord and display His death, a death which shows us the extent of the Father's love: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8) He has "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel"; "Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed"; "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit" (2 Tim 1:10; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18). "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread." (1 Cor 10:16-17) May we learn to cherish the significance of the Lord's body broken for us when we partake of the bread!

The cup – the Lord shed His blood for remission of our sins

"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, in remembrance of Me.' " (1 Cor 11:25) Hebrews 9:22 declares that "without shedding of blood there is no remission." The old covenant was likewise enacted with blood: "And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.' " (Exo 24:8) However, earthly sacrifices can never take away sins (Heb 10:11). Only the Lamb of God, our Passover, can establish an eternal covenant in His blood which was shed for many for the remission of sins forever (John 1:29; 1 Cor 5:7; Matt 26:28; Heb 10:12). He has consecrated a new and living way for us; "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Heb 10:20; Eph 1:7). We drink the cup to remember the Lord and His great redemption work until He comes again. May we all learn to appreciate the spiritual significance of the cup!

The conduct of the bread-breaking meeting

Our Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished redemption; there is nothing more we have to or can do, except to offer Him our praises and thanks at the bread-breaking meeting: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You"; "I will give You thanks in the great assembly; I will praise You among many people"; "Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, And His praise in the assembly of saints"; "My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness And Your salvation all the day"; "Stand up and bless the LORD Your God Forever and ever! Blessed be Your glorious name, Which is exalted above all blessing and praise" (Heb 2:12; Psalms 35:18; 149:1; 71:15; Neh 9:5).

Today we should learn to offer up more thanks and praises at the bread-breaking meeting. Let us praise God for His glorious and great plan, extol the Lord Jesus for the redemption He has wrought by His death and resurrection, testify of His wondrous works on us and give Him the due glory. May the Lord be glorified in our assembly, and may the Father be satisfied!



Our attitude at the bread-breaking meeting

We should come to the Lord's feast with a thankful heart and offer up sacrifices of praise to God: "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." (Heb 13:15) In Mark 14:26, we see that after the Lord and His disciples had "sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives." That is why we sing hymns when eating the bread and drinking the cup to remember the Lord. Through hymn-singing, we also exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and present our thanks and praises to Him.

Before the meeting, we should examine ourselves and learn to deal with all offenses, for this is a grave matter: "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift"; "Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgement to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world" (Matt 5:23-24; 1 Cor 11:27-32).

Conclusion

The Bible has shown us clearly that the bread-breaking meeting is instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself for us to remember Him until He comes again. So we should come with a humble heart of fear, focus on Him, extol and glorify Him with hymns, praises and testimonies. Moreover, we must learn to deal with our sins before the meeting, lest we get judged and chastened by Him. Amen!

Visit to the Church in Bahau – 13-15 March 2015

Praise the Lord for giving 18 of us – adults, youths and children – the wonderful opportunity to visit the saints in Bahau. Although we arrived in Bahau late on a Friday night, we were strengthened to visit some saints early the following day. A few elderly saints shared with us how they remained steadfast in God's love, which inspired us greatly. We also attended the Young People's Meeting and the Lord's Table Meeting. Through mutual encouragement and various love feasts, we could feel the love of the saints and their joy in the Lord. We are thankful to all who prayed for this trip. Indeed the Lord blessed us much throughout the visit. May the love of God continue to strengthen and grow in us and inspire us to bear more fruit for His kingdom!



The shepherds with the church in Bahau

Children's Camp – 10-12 June 2015

Praise our Lord Jesus Christ for the camp where over 50 children, 30 shepherds and helpers and 15 youths spent a wonderful time learning the importance of guarding our hearts with all diligence!

We thank God for His grace. Months of preparation and prayer led to the skit performance of Jonah's encounter with God. We also had a wonderful morning at Bishan Park playing games and singing hymns together.

The camp ended with a grand finale of hymn-singing, choral performance by all the children and a replay of Jonah's story. We went home remembering why and how we should always guard our hearts, for everything we do flows from it.





A wonderful morning at Bishan Park

*"Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it spring the issues of life."
(Prov 4:23)*

Youth & Young People's Camp – 14-17 June 2015

The theme was "The Making of A Faithful Christian". The aim was to encourage and help the youths to realise that to be faithful Christians, they need to have the godly attributes stated in 2 Peter 1:1-10.

Reading the Bible, attending meetings and preaching the gospel are a few practical ways by which we can add on these virtues: "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins." (2 Pet 1:5-9)

Knowing this, let us take heed not to live our lives carelessly. Then when the Lord returns, He may say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord." (Matt 25:21)



Adults' Retreat – 14-17 June 2015

More than 40 working adults came together to mingle with one another and pursue Psalms 73, 90 and 107.

Psalm 73 is an instruction. The first half talks about how the righteous was tested in afflictions and nearly slipped when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. The next half describes how he regained faith when he went into the sanctuary of God and understood their end. We were urged to learn from him to lead a life of fellowship with God in the holy place. It is good for us to desire the Lord's presence and draw near to God. Then we can also proclaim that there is none upon earth that we desire besides Him, He is the strength of our heart and our portion forever.

Psalm 90 is a cry to God. It comprises praise of God our dwelling place in all generations; lament of the brevity, sin, labour and sorrow of human life; and cry to the merciful God who is the source of joy. We were exhorted to ask God to teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom; depend on the everlasting God; and experience Him as our dwelling place that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

Psalm 107 is a hymn by the redeemed to God whose mercy endures forever, who hears their cries and saves them out of various troubles like darkness, afflictions, illnesses and storms. We learned that if we are chastised or afflicted by natural or man-made disasters due to disobedience to God's word or will, so long as we would cry to God, He will surely deliver us from all distresses. And we should learn to give Him thanks and praises at the meetings for His goodness. Amen!

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Augustus Montague Toplady (1740 – 1778)

Toplady, the second son of a major in the British army, was born in England. After his father had passed away when he was about a year old, his family moved to Ireland. His mother paid much attention to his education. From young, he showed exceptional wisdom and talent. He obtained his first degree from Trinity College, Dublin. He was diligent both in school and in the church, laying for himself a sound foundation spiritually. He even learned the Hebrew and Greek languages in order to understand the truths in the Bible, which enabled him to serve with power.

When Toplady was 15, he experienced a great turn. The first step of the Holy Spirit's work in his heart made him feel that the lack of something important rendered his life utterly meaningless. He discovered that life was full of sufferings and it was not easy for the natural man to endure them. Such thoughts engendered in his heart an intense need. Under the exposure of God's holy light when the Holy Spirit shone on him, he cried out as Isaiah did, "Woe is me, for I am undone!" (Isa 6:5) From then on, he had no rest until this message at a regular meeting pierced into his heart mightily and assured him of his salvation: When one submits to the Holy Spirit's instructions by the power of the Holy Spirit, one's faith is not based on man's wisdom but on God's power.

The August of 1755 saw another major turning point in Toplady's life, an immeasurably great blessing and work of God according to His plan. By God's arrangement, he was able to put aside all other matters and focus on drawing near to the Lord at a meeting in Morris. The message was the wedding feast of the Lamb. God's glorious appearance and calling came upon him. He was amazed that God actually wanted a filthy and unworthy sinner as he, and that by faith and the precious blood, he could now enjoy a more intimate fellowship with God.

Toplady was a brilliant hymnist who started writing hymns at the age of 15. His early works, published in 12 volumes in 1759, expressed his ardent love and awe of God as well as God's glory. As he matured spiritually, he wrote more and more hymns. Moreover, because of his outstanding knowledge of the Bible, he was appointed vicar of Broadhembury in June 1762.

Toplady suffered from ill health from his youth, but he did not allow physical weakness and pain to hinder him from working diligently. He often worked until the early hours of the day. Such labour, coupled with the cold and wet air, aggravated his condition. Finally, after much persuasion from his co-workers, he moved to

London in 1775. In the following year, 415 of his hymns were published, most of which were potent weapons for preaching the gospel.

Be it an expression of joy, sorrow or praise, Toplady's hymns are very gentle, natural and full of the Holy Spirit's moving power, bringing with them the presence of the heavens. Like a burning flame of fire, they influenced the church and her spiritual condition greatly. His most representative hymn is "Rock of Ages" written in 1766, an immortal masterpiece among church hymns. There is a beautiful story behind the writing of this hymn: To defend the truth concerning redemption, Toplady had long had a hymn hidden in his heart. One day, as he was walking in the countryside, he saw three lovely fledglings hiding in the cleft of a rock. He was so inspired by the scene that the hymn which had been hidden in him burst forth like a spring. Furthermore, although it is a hymn to defend the truth, we do not find any trace of argument or warfare. From the beginning to the end, it is so beautiful, natural and full of the Holy Spirit's anointing.

**Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save me from its guilt and power.**

In all his service, Toplady proved himself a mighty, faithful, diligent and selfless warrior of God's kingdom. He held fast to the truth of salvation by faith all his life. Because of his exceedingly intimate fellowship with God, he was extremely sensitive to sin, therefore he was also a very holy man in his living. He often wept in prayer because of his inner weaknesses, but he also exulted in the power of the Lord's precious blood. When he was 38 years old, the King whom he served called him out of his fleshly tent. Before his departure, he said something of great impact: Oh, I am such a filthy sinner. In God's light, I am an incorrigible chief of sinners. But today I can depend on the Lord's blood and draw near to this holy God, and even rest my sinful head on His loving breast. Amen!

(Reference: "The Hymnists And Their Hymns (Volume 2)" by Newman Sze, Testimony Publications; Hymn 708 in *Selected Hymns & Songs*.)

Grace Upon Grace

When I moved from the village to the city in 2003, I was a young man with colourful hair and a big ear ring outwardly, but a baby spiritually. On the advice of an elder in the church, I looked up a sister. However, I told her quite frankly that believing in Jesus and getting baptised in 2000, accompanying my mother to Sunday church meetings and praying when she asked me to were all just for her sake. As we were very poor, my two sisters had to drop out of school so that I could go to university, and my mother slogged on the farm from dawn to dusk for me. Now that I was finally free from her, I hoped I could do what I liked and I would not go to meetings for the time being.

The Lord's love enfolded me

A brother in charge of the Students' Meeting often visited me and brought me to his home for the weekends. There I enjoyed familial warmth as he loved me like a father while his wife made me my favourite food. My aunt also called me frequently to show her concern, but I always rejected her invitations to visit her with the excuse that her home was too far away. Actually, I did not want to visit that brother too, yet I kept going to his home in order to enjoy the delicious food.

Under such loving care, I was touched by the love of the Lord and of the brothers and sisters, and started learning to serve the Lord. My life began to change, for example, the coloured hair and big ear ring disappeared. Three years later, I graduated from Ningbo University Medical School and was employed by a pharmaceutical company in Shanghai. My salary was not high, but I learned to rely on the Lord because the company offered a five-day workweek and I could serve the Lord with an elderly brother in a nearby village on Saturdays. The brothers and sisters cared for me and often prayed that God would grant me grace so that I could meet sales targets and get a bigger pay.

Receiving grace in my marriage & career

The Lord Jesus prepared for me a wife who loves Him. Actually, she had never thought about marriage as her entire spine had to be supported by a steel plate and her doctor had said she might not be able to conceive. When some sisters introduced her to me, I truly experienced some struggle. However, the Lord gave me a word which calmed my heart, so I obeyed His word and married her. We are not rich but very happy. The church prayed for abundant grace upon our marriage and God indeed blessed us with a daughter.

At my company's annual industry meeting and dinner in Shanghai in 2013, the grand prize of a newly launched iPhone caught my eye and I thought, "How wonderful it would be if I could win it as it is just right for my work!" Finally, the time came for the grand lucky draw. As everybody waited in suspense, the compere announced, "Wu Airong!" Immediately a colleague beside me cried out, "You've won the grand prize, go and get it!" Amid cheering and applause, I went up the stage to receive the prize. Unexpectedly, the compere declared, "You may take away this iPhone only after you have finished up these four bottles of beer." I protested, "But this requirement was not stated upfront!" He replied, "This grand prize is offered by the Chairman himself, and the four bottles of beer are also his idea. If you drink them up, you may take the iPhone home." I answered, "If I had known about

the beer, I would not have come up the stage. I thank the Chairman for his gift, but I choose to give it up!" He asked, "Do you already own such an iPhone?" When I showed him my phone, he was taken aback. Then he took my phone and proclaimed to the audience, "I never imagined that there would be such a fool in your company who would give up the latest iPhone just because of four bottles of beer!" He asked me again, "Are you going to reject the Chairman's goodwill?" I told him firmly that I accepted the Chairman's gift and goodwill thankfully, but I could not meet the demand of the beer, for I was a man with a faith. He retorted, "I have seen many people with faiths. Don't be so serious about it, the Chairman is your paymaster!" I answered calmly, "My faith is in Jesus Christ who was crucified for me and has given His life to me. He demands that I neither smoke nor drink. Although the Chairman is my paymaster, life is more important. I thank the Chairman for his gift, but I esteem my Jesus more highly." Then I left the stage.

Suddenly, a burly man called out, "Stop! Which plant are you from and what is your name?" My legs started to tremble and I thought I would be driven away and even sacked. However, he came to me and led me up the stage again. Then he shook my hand and introduced himself as the Chairman and general manager of our company. He took up the iPhone and declared, "Because of these four bottles of beer, this staff of mine has decided to forgo this iPhone for the sake of his intangible faith. Do you think this is an intelligent choice? Will you say it is wise?" Some people whistled in response. He continued, "There are too many smart and wise people around me, but what I lack and need is such an honest and reliable person." Then he turned to me and said, "You believe in Jesus; today Jesus has introduced you to me. You are the kind of man I have been looking for. Please report for work at my office eight days later, I will be waiting for you." Everyone was astonished and speechless.

Currently I am the director of the Chairman's office. Thank the Lord, my salary has increased and my wife no longer has to go to work. Glory be to God for His grace upon grace, amen!

Bro Wu Airong, China



Announcements & Prayer Items

Gospel Meeting

Date : 3 Oct, 7 Nov & 5 Dec 2015
Time : 7.30pm

Date : 25 Dec 2015
Time : 10.30am

Venue : Meeting Hall

Church Conference

Date : 20-24 Nov 2015
Venue : Meeting Hall