

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*His Body and Blood.*"

On Sunday mornings we're working our way through Luke's Gospel verse-by-verse and we find ourselves in the middle of **Luke 9:16**. We're toward the end of one of the most familiar accounts in Scripture: "The Feeding of the 20,000."

Let's back up to **verse 14**...

Luke 9:14 For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." **15** And they did so, and had them all sit down. **16** And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.

Even though there are 20,000 people and they're all sitting down in the middle of nowhere, you'd never guess that from these two verses. The verses are written in such a way that it sounds like the people are sitting down to enjoy a meal:

- **Verse 15** says everyone sits down together...
- **Verse 16** says Jesus takes the bread...
- He says a blessing over it...
- He breaks the bread...
- Then He gives it to the disciples...
- And they, like servants, or waiters, distribute the food to the people.
 - The imagery isn't really of 20,000 people eating bread in the middle of nowhere.
 - The imagery is of people sitting down to a meal together.

And there's one meal described in Scripture that most resembles this meal and that is communion. Listen to this verse describing communion and consider how much it sounds almost exactly like

Luke 9:16:

- **Luke 22:19** He took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to [the disciples], saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
- There's also **Matt 26:26**, **Mark 14:22**, and **1 Cor 11:23-24**, which has the same verbs and uses the same language.

Luke writes **Luke 9:16** in such a way it looks forward to communion. He uses all the same verbs to describe Jesus engaging in the same actions He engaged in at communion.

Many Bible teachers also see a connection to communion. Here are a few:

- My Moody Bible Commentary says, "*[The actions in verse 16] were done so often at a typical meal that they would not have been included [by Luke], except [that] he probably intends to...forecast the Lord's Supper.*"
- Robert Stein said, "*The feeding of the five thousand was seen by the early church to prefigure the Lord's Supper.*"

- R.T. France said, “*The Gospel writers saw this supernaturally provided meal as a foretaste of [the Lord’s Supper].*”

The one difference you notice is when Jesus instituted communion He said something about His body, but you don’t see anything about His body in **Luke 9:16**.

The question is: did this miracle ever make a connection to Jesus’ body? Most definitely!

Let me tell you what happened after this...

The people Jesus miraculously fed told their friends who told their friends who told their friends. Pretty soon there were even more people coming to Jesus wanting food. But they wanted more physical food, and Jesus wanted them wanting spiritual food. So He said...

John 6:51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh...53 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.”

That’s a pretty clear connection between the bread, and Jesus’ body, isn’t it? And this brings us to Lesson 1...

LESSON 1: THE BREAD PREFIGURED THE BROKEN BODY OF CHRIST.

If you write in your bible, let me get you to circle two things in the second half of **verse 16**...

- Circle **five loaves** and write, “body of Christ.”
- Circle **he broke the loaves** – or if you have NKJV or NIV **he broke them** - and write, “crucifixion.”

We typically refer to communion as “communion” or “the Lord’s Supper,” but what’s it called in Acts? It’s called **breaking bread**. One reason it’s given this title is they broke the bread when they ate it at communion, but the other reason is the bread pictures Christ’s body, and Christ’s body was broken on the cross. That’s not my opinion. That’s exactly what Jesus Himself said...

1 Cor 11:24 When [Jesus] had given thanks, He broke [the bread] and said, “Take, eat; this is My body WHICH IS BROKEN FOR YOU.” (NKJV)

I don’t necessarily feel like we should do this, but this is one of the reasons some churches have communion with bread you break apart. Since the bread is unleavened – which means there’s no yeast in it – it’s more like a big cracker. It breaks versus pulls apart. When they break the bread it reminds them of Christ’s body being broken on the cross.

Let me tell you a few more things that connect this miracle to communion...

First, the timing of the miracle connects it to communion:

- Communion was instituted at Passover.
- The parallel account in **John 6:4** says **the Passover...was at hand**, so the miracle took place near Passover.

So here's what's fascinating...

- Jesus instituted communion at Passover, but one year before that He first prefigured communion on the mountain with this miracle.
- Jesus broke bread for all these people, foreshadowing for all of them what would happen with His body one year later on the cross...the miracle prefigured the crucifixion.

Second, let me ask you this: between the fish and the loaves, which is emphasized? The loaves!

There's such an emphasis on the bread, you can almost forget there were any fish:

- The fish are only mentioned twice, but the loaves are referred to twice that.
- **Verse 17** says they picked up the broken pieces and I'm guessing this is talking about bread. Hard to imagine picking up broken pieces of fish to put in a basket and take home.

Robert Stein said, *"By omitting any reference to the distribution of the fish, Luke heightened the analogy to the Lord's Supper."*

I received Samuel Zumstein's permission to share something that took place with him two weeks ago...

- He came up to me after service and said, *"How come you keep mentioning the loaves, but you don't say anything about the fish?"*
- I thought this was a good, insightful question. The basic answer is, "I emphasize the loaves b/c the account emphasizes the loaves."

The miracle seems to focus on the bread that's broken and given to the people.

While we're discussing communion, I'd like to look at a verse in **Acts** that shows just how important communion was to the early church. Please turn to **Acts 20:7**. You don't have to mark your spot in **Luke** b/c we won't turn back to it...

Acts 20:7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

Notice it says they **gathered together to break bread**:

- This isn't fellowship or simply eating together.
- This is referring to communion.

The NLT actually says **On the first day of the week, we gathered with the local believers to share in the Lord's Supper.**

And this brings us to the first part of Lesson 1...

LESSON 2: (PART I) THE EARLY CHURCH GATHERED TO CELEBRATE COMMUNION...

If you look at the way **Acts 20:7** is worded it says **[they] gathered together TO BREAK BREAD**. It sounds like they came together for communion. I'm sure they did other things when they gathered for worship, but observing communion was so important it's presented as the reason.

Just to let you know this is one of the reasons we celebrate communion weekly. You can also look at the early church fathers' writings to see many of them supported weekly communion.

Discuss not liking weekly communion when I first came to WCC.

Next, please notice the words **On the first day of the week**. If you've ever wondered why we worship on Sunday versus Saturday, I hope to explain that for you!

The early church gathered on the first day of the week, which is Sunday. **1 Cor 16:2** also makes this clear...

1 Cor 16:2 ON THE FIRST DAY OF EVERY WEEK, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

Paul commanded them to get their offering together on the first day of the week, b/c that's when they gathered and that's when Paul visited them. John MacArthur said, *"The writings of the early church Fathers confirm the church continued to meet on Sunday after the close of the NT period."*

Sunday became the day of focus b/c it was the day of Christ's resurrection:

- The early church met on Sunday in remembrance of Christ's resurrection.
- It's interesting to consider that if the Lord wanted the emphasis to remain on the seventh day Jesus could've been resurrected on that day instead of the first day.

And this brings us to the next part of Lesson 1...

LESSON 2: (PART I) THE EARLY CHURCH GATHERED TO CELEBRATE COMMUNION (PART II) IN HONOR OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION ON THE FIRST DAY.

It's important to understand the Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel under the Old Covenant. It was not a sign between God and the church under the New Covenant. Listen to these two verses...

Exo 31:13 [God said], "You shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you ("you" being Israel) throughout your (Israel's generations) generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you...17 It is a sign forever between ME AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL (not the church)."

And just like the Sabbath – or seventh day – was the important day under the Old Covenant, the first day – or Sunday – is the important day under the New Covenant:

- Matthew Henry said, *“The first day of the week is to be observed by all the disciples of Christ; and it is a sign between Christ and them [like the Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel].”*
- This is why Sunday is called, “the Lord’s Day.” It receives this title in **Rev 1:10**.

Let me explain the transition that took place...

The Old Covenant and the New Covenant were both instituted with blood:

- The Old Covenant with the blood of oxen.
- The New Covenant with the blood of Christ.

Listen to the parallelism between these verses discussing the institution of both covenants:

- **Exodus 24:8** Moses took the blood...and said, **“Behold the blood of THE COVENANT** (referring to the Old Covenant or the Mosaic Covenant) **that the LORD has made with you.”**
- **Luke 22:20** [Jesus took] the cup after they had eaten, saying, **“This cup that is poured out for you is THE NEW COVENANT IN my blood.”**

With Jesus’ death – or with the shedding of His blood – there was a transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, and from the seventh day (Saturday), to the first day (Sunday). So...

- The Old Covenant is associated with the seventh day of the week.
- The New Covenant is associated with the first day of the week...b/c of Christ’s resurrection.

This is why when you read the New Testament you see the emphasis on the first day of the week versus the seventh day of the week. The phrase **“first day of the week”** occurs 8 times in the NT:

- It occurs the two times we just discussed: **Acts 20:7** and **1 Cor 16:2**.
- And it occurs six times in the Gospels pointing out the day Jesus was resurrected (**Matt 28:1, Mark 16:2, 9, Luke 24:1, John 20:1, 19**).

As far as what the NT says about the seventh day of the week, or the Sabbath, I would say, “Not much.”

- Even though the phrase **“first day of the week”** occurs 8 times in the NT, the phrase “seventh day of the week” never occurs.
- And the word Sabbath only occurs once after you leave the Gospels.

The reason you see the Sabbath discussed in the Gospels is b/c:

- They were still under the Old Covenant...
- Christ hadn’t died yet and instituted the New Covenant.
- The focus was still on Saturday.
- The transition hadn’t taken place yet.

After you leave the Gospels the one time the Sabbath is mentioned is **Col 2:17**...

Col 2:16-17 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a...Sabbath. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Two things to notice about these verses...

First, the words **let no one pass judgment on you [regarding the] Sabbath** is exactly the OPPOSITE of what you would expect Paul to say if we were supposed to keep the Sabbath or worship on Saturday:

- Then Paul would say, “Judge those who don’t do this.”
- Instead, he says, “Don’t let anyone judge you.”

Paul actually puts the Sabbath in the same category as **food and drink**, which under the New Covenant, is an amoral or spiritually neutral issue.

Since the epistles are the letters of instruction to Church Age believers, if we were meant to keep the Sabbath, it’s really unfathomable for that not to be mentioned even one time.

Second, Paul says the **Sabbath is a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ**. I’ve talked to you about types and **shadows** many times before. They prefigure or serve as pictures of Christ. And Paul says the Sabbath is simply a shadow – or type – of Christ. A shadow doesn’t have any substance. There must be something casting that shadow. The substance is found in Christ Himself...and this brings us to Lesson 2...

LESSON 3: KEEP THE SABBATH IN THE TRUE AND GREATER WAY BY RESTING IN CHRIST.

The rest the Sabbath offered on the seventh day only prefigured or foreshadowed the true and greater rest Christ offers. John MacArthur said, “[The] Sabbath [was] instituted as a symbol of the true rest to come in Christ.”

Heb 4:9 So then, there remains a rest FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD, 10 for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

This is talking about the rest available in Christ, and the words **for the people of God** are very important. Whereas the Sabbath was strictly for Israel, the rest Christ offers is **for [all God’s] people**.

The true and greater reality of the Sabbath is not in a day of the week. It’s found in Christ Himself. If you really want to “keep the Sabbath” then:

- Rest in the finished work of Christ on the cross.
- Don’t strive to be saved by works.
- Trust the Lord for your salvation.

And you can enjoy this rest seven days per week.

In **Matt 25:28-30** Jesus said, “**Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**”

Contrast this yoke with the yoke the Law put on people’s shoulders:

- If we tried to keep the 613 commands in the Law for even a week we’d see how heavy it is.
- You might remember at the Jerusalem council, in **Acts 15:10** Paul said, “**Why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?**” Even Paul – one of the godliest men to ever live – complained about the burden of the Law.

The point is, there’s a great rest offered through Christ. If someone ever says to you, “Why don’t you keep the Sabbath?” Say “I observe the true and greater Sabbath rest found in Christ.”

Now before we leave **Acts 20:7**, I just want to be clear about why we looked at this...

1. First, it shows that the early church gathered on the first day of the week versus the seventh...to honor Christ’s resurrection...
2. Second, it shows communion was a large focus of that gathering.

Now if we take our minds back to the feeding of the 20,000, many of the people missed the spiritual significance.

- They saw what took place physically.
- But they didn’t understand it spiritually.

Please turn to **John 6:26** so I can show you what I mean. Here’s the context...

Earlier I told you Jesus fed the people and then they told their friends and then another huge crowd was following Jesus. They were hungry physically, but Jesus wanted them hungry spiritually. Look at **verse 26**...

John 6:26 Jesus answered them, “**Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.**”

When Jesus said, “**Not because you saw the signs**” it looks like He’s saying they didn’t see the miracle He performed, but of course they did. You can’t miss one Man feeding 20,000 people with five loaves and two fish. They knew what He did. That’s why they’re following Him. They wanted Him to give them more food.

So why did Jesus say **not because you saw signs**? He means they saw it physically, but they didn’t see it – or understand it – spiritually. The NLT says “**You want to be with me because I fed you, not because you UNDERSTOOD THE MIRACULOUS SIGNS.**”

The miracle was meant to reveal spiritual truth, and this brings us to Lesson 4...

LESSON 4: MIRACLES ARE CALLED SIGNS, BECAUSE THEY POINT TO SPIRITUAL TRUTHS.

Miracles are called signs b/c they point to something else...they take place physically, but they reveal spiritual truths.

This is why many of Jesus' miracles were followed by sermons, so He could explain the spiritual significance. For example:

- Jesus feeds the 20,000 and then He preaches a sermon on Him being the true Bread of Life people should desire.
- He heals the paralytic on the Sabbath, and then He preaches a sermon about being Lord of the Sabbath.
- He heals the blind man and then He preaches a sermon on spiritual blindness telling the religious leaders that they're blinder than the blind man...spiritually speaking.

So when we read Jesus' miracles, we should look for the spiritual truths behind them.

I think we've done that with the feeding of the 20,000. We've seen that it's about a LOT more than just Jesus feeding people physically. It's about Him wanting to feed them spiritually, and it looks forward to communion.

With this in mind please turn to **John 2:11** so we can look for the spiritual significance of another miracle.

The verse we're looking at first is at the end of the account. I know it seems strange to do it this way, but I need to show you something important. This is when Jesus turned water into wine, and look what it says about this miracle...

John 2:11 This, the first OF HIS SIGNS, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

Notice this miracle was a **sign**. So it took place physically, but the question is, what is that spiritual significance?

Look at **verse 6**...

John 2:6 Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.

This verse is the key to understanding the spiritual significance of the miracle. Anyone can read the account and understand what took place physically. It's pretty straightforward. He turned water into wine. You can't miss that.

But to see what's going on spiritually you have to see the purpose of the water that Jesus turned into wine. If we didn't have this verse, or at least if we didn't know the purpose for the water that Jesus

transformed, the miracle wouldn't have much spiritual significance. The point is Jesus didn't just change water into wine, He changed water that was meant for ceremonial washing into wine.

There are a few things you need to know about these ceremonial washings...

First, you need to know they have nothing to do w/ hygiene, or washing off germs, or preventing sickness. They were for religious reasons.

Second, even though the Jews engaged in these ceremonial washings, there's nothing about them in God's Word. They're man-made inventions.

The third thing you need to know is the Jews – especially the religious leaders – took these ceremonial washings VERY seriously. Listen to these quotes:

- Rabbi Tahaneth said, *“Whoever has his abode in the land of Israel and eats his food with washed hands may rest assured that he shall receive eternal life.”*
- Another rabbi said, *“It's better to go four miles to get water than to incur guilt by neglecting hand-washing.”*
- There's a famous story about Rabbi Akiba that when he was imprisoned and had his allowance of water restricted, he took what little water he had and used it for the ceremonial washing rather than drinking it.

So these ceremonial washings were a HUGE deal. The Jews took them so seriously, they actually thought they cleansed them spiritually:

- In the verse, notice the word **purification**.
- The Jews thought these washings purified them or cleansed them spiritually.

When you think you can be spiritually cleansed from washing your hands, you know you've got a problem.

Jesus was alluding to this when He criticized the religious leaders...

Matt 23:25 He said, **“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.”**

Jesus meant that the religious leaders went through all this physical, external religious activity – or cleansing – but it did nothing for them spiritually or inwardly:

- All the ceremonial washings helped the people look good outwardly, but it left them filthy inwardly.
- You could use the water in all six of these pots and it wouldn't wash away even one sin.

So here's what Jesus did...

John 2:7 Jesus said to the servants, **“Fill the jars with water.”** And they filled them up to the brim.

Then Jesus replaced all this water – which is to say He replaced all the Jewish ceremonial washings – with wine. Kind of hard to perform ceremonial washings with wine instead of water.

And this brings us to Lesson 5...

LESSON 5: THE WINE PREFIGURED THE CLEANSING BLOOD OF CHRIST.

This water couldn't do anything for the people. It couldn't cleanse them. Jesus took it and replaced it with wine that pictures His blood.

Follow me for a moment:

- The Jews thought this water could purify them, but **Heb 9:14** says **how much more will the blood of Christ...PURIFY our conscience from dead works.**
- The Jews thought the water could cleanse them, but **1 John 1:7b** says **The blood of Jesus...CLEANSES US from all sin.**
- The Jews thought the water could wash them, but **Rev 7:14** describes saints saying, **“They have WASHED THEIR ROBES and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”**

Remember by the time of this miracle, the religious leaders had turned Judaism into a false, works-based religion:

- It was filled with commands that had been added to God's Word.
- These ceremonial washings are a perfect example.

Jesus took all this water – picturing all the bad traditions – and replaced it with something **good**.

Let me get you to look at **verse 9** which I think hints at this...

John 2:9 When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom **10** and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But **YOU HAVE KEPT THE GOOD WINE UNTIL NOW.**”

These verses are particularly interesting to me:

- The **master of the feast** said this to the groom.
- He gave this man credit for what Jesus did.

But he just as easily could've said these words to Jesus – the true and greater Groom...as the Bride of Christ He is our Groom – who really was responsible for the miracle.

Jesus was the One who **kept the good wine until now**:

- He didn't just provide more water for more physical cleansings.
- He provided something new and better that would actually cleanse the people from their sins.

Consider something for a moment...

Of all the miracles Jesus performed, there are only two creative ones. In other words, there are only two miracles that involved Jesus creating something...versus...

- Healing a disease...
- Calming a storm...
- Or casting out a demon.

There's multiplying bread – which He did twice – and there's turning water into wine:

- Both of these miracles speak of the main elements of the Lord's Supper:
- Both of these miracles affected large numbers of people.
 - Jesus miraculously fed around 20,000 people, and then later He miraculously fed around another 16,000 people.
 - We aren't told how many people were at the wedding, but weddings were huge deals that attracted lots of people:
 - I don't know how many people were in attendance, but Jesus thought they needed 150 gallons of wine AT THE END of the wedding.
 - I'm guessing there were a lot of people in attendance.

I doubt many of these people understood the significance of the miracles when they took place, but of these thousands of people some number of them were saved and became part of the early church:

- Even if they didn't understand the significance of the miracles at the time, I suspect when they participated in communion just a little over a year later, they were able to look back and make the connection to the miracles.
- If you imagine you were part of these miracles, I bet every time they broke the bread and drank the wine they looked back and understood what Jesus was foreshadowing.

It was probably much easier for them to reflect on the significance of each individual element. I want to encourage us to do the same, and this brings us to our last lesson...

LESSON 6: CONSIDER EACH ELEMENT SEPARATELY.

Sometimes when people take communion, they quickly consume the bread and juice, and it seems like they might not reflect on each element individually. I think this happens b/c communion is one event so we tend not to distinguish between the two elements. We see the bread and juice as the two parts of communion, and we assign them almost identical meaning.

This is unfortunate, b/c each element has its own symbolism:

- When Jesus instituted communion, He didn't give the bread and wine to the apostles to be consumed simultaneously. He drew attention to each element individually, allowing them to see symbolism of each element separately.
- I would like to encourage you, when you take communion, make sure you:
 - See the elements separately...
 - Consider the symbolism of both elements...
 - Spend time reflecting on what each element represents.

This morning I'd like to do this by partaking of communion slightly differently:

- Normally we distribute the elements and allow you time to meditate and partake privately when you feel prepared.
- This morning, I'd like the elements to be passed out, but then I'd like you to hold on to them so I can draw attention to each element and then we'll partake together.

So I'll pray and the servers will come forward:

- If you're a believer, when you receive the elements, please hold on to them.
- If you're an unbeliever – or you're simply unsure whether you're a Christian – we would ask you to please let the elements pass by:
 - The 1 Corinthians 11 says you can actually bring judgment on yourself if you partake as an unbeliever.
 - Then Pastor Doug and I will be up front after service and we'd consider it a privilege to be able to speak with you if you have any questions.

Let's pray.

First, let's reflect on the bread's symbolism...

When you look at the bread, you should think clearly of Christ's body hanging on the cross receiving the punishment your sins deserve:

- Imagine all the wrath God has against you b/c of your sins, and God took that wrath and He poured it out on His Son, so He wouldn't have to pour it out on you.
- Because of the Lord's great love for you, Jesus was willing to endure that terrible punishment.

His body was broken so you could be made whole...

Luke 22:19 [Jesus] took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Now let's reflect on the juice's symbolism...

When you look at the juice, you should think of the blood of Christ that was shed so you could be cleansed of your sins:

- Imagine all the sins you've committed throughout your life.
- Then imagine Christ's blood washing away all those sins so you can be forgiven, innocent, and pure in the Lord's eyes.

Luke 22:20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

