

# MESSAGE MINDER

November 21, 2010

And he took the bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

Luke 22:19



## To Give Yourself

By Jonathan Stone

The late Henri Nouwen has pointed out that there are four words that mark the ministry of Jesus when He walked the earth. The same four words also mark the way He uses our lives to accomplish His work in us and others. In these four words we see a constant, repetitive pattern of the working of Christ. They are four words that come from each of the gospels, and are found in the accounts of the multiplication of bread, the Last Supper, and on the road to Emmaus. Those words are: He took, He blessed, He broke, and He gave.

Those four words mark the pattern of Christ who was taken, who was blessed by God, broken on the cross, and given to the world. And we see Him working the same pattern in us as He takes our lives, blesses our lives, breaks our lives, and gives our lives that others

might receive spiritual sustenance and nourishment through us.

The first two words are foundational. We must understand that God has taken us, that He has chosen us. We must also understand that He has blessed us, and is blessed by us. We see this in the life of Jesus when the voice came from heaven declaring, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22). In the same way that these words were declared before Jesus began His earthly ministry we must hear these loving words from our Heavenly Father before we are ready to give of ourselves to others.

Once we have been armed with the love of the Father, we are able to move to the next word. It is not always to easy to embrace this word. Even Jesus struggled

to take the final step to the cross. However, it was through His being broken that we were healed. If we are healed through His stripes it makes sense that He would use our stripes to heal others. Once we embrace our brokenness and allow God to comfort our sorrows, we are able to comfort others as well.

Thus comes the final word. He gives. When we are taken, blessed, and broken we can give ourselves to others. It is in the giving that the multiplication happens. It is when we are broken enough to allow our lives to be given away that we are able to bear the kind of fruit that He desires to bear through us. If you know that you are chosen, that you are blessed, that you are broken, then you can know that your life will bear fruit. So give your life away today, and rejoice as others receive it.

**Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.**

**Romans 12:1**

## Spiritual Exercises

- 1.) Every morning for the next two weeks ask your spouse, "What can I do for you today?" Then do it. Talk to God about what this is like for you. What do you see about yourself?
- 2.) Sign on to set up or tear down for an event. This part of an event is the least sought after. What is it like for you to do a task that requires no special skill? What is it like to offer a service that goes largely unrecognized? What does this tell you about your acts of service?
- 3.) Lead your family in choosing an annual service project or mission trip. Lead your family in reflecting on the trip or project. What did they learn? What did they like about it? How did it affect their relationship with God? With others?
- 4.) Divide a paper into three columns. Above column one write, "For Me." Above column two write, "For Others." Above column three write, "For God." Review the past month. Jot down in each column what you have done for yourself, for others, and for God. What do you see? What does this inventory reveal to you about your life? Prayerfully consider your response. How would you like to see the answers in your columns change over the next months? Listen to your longings and to God's promptings.

## Ideas for Giving

Here are 7 ideas, some general and some specific, of how to give yourself to others.

- 1.) Doing service projects: Volunteer for *The Caring Place*, missions trips, *Habitat for Humanity*, holiday gift baskets, food drives, *Operation Christmas Child*, etc.
- 2.) Build a mentoring relationship.
- 3.) Pursue the gifts of mercy and helps.
- 4.) Inquire about assisting in the care of widows and widowers, orphans, prison inmates, or the oppressed.
- 5.) Reach out to your neighbor(s). Strive to see them as important and love them as yourself.
- 6.) Receive little interruptions as opportunities to do good.
- 7.) Use your influence to better the lives of others.

**For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.**

**Luke 22:27**

**Jesus replied: "‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."**

**Matthew 22:37-40**

