

## Are You in the Basket?

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Two weeks ago on a Friday afternoon I had gone to the town of \_\_\_\_\_ to give communion to a woman who is home-bound. She had requested the communion. As I knocked on her door, the door immediately opened. A man in his 50's answered the door with a strange look on his face. He saw the Bible and Communion kit under my left arm. There was no smile, there was no gesture of kindness. He simply asked, "Are you one of the those SDA's?" I said, "Yes". With a finger pointed in my face, he then asked, "Why are you going around the country-side preaching the work of the Devil, and teaching a message which is cursed?"

Well it had been a long time since I had been asked that question and hadn't expected it this particular afternoon. (In truth I had never been asked that question.) My options were few. I could do an about face and just leave. I could start to return answers to the man in the same tone and manner he was asking them of me. Or I could go about my job of getting communion to the home-bound lady inside the house. This last option was going to cost me some time because I knew the man was not really asking questions of me, he simply wanted to get on his soap-box and tell me everything he felt was wrong with the Seventh-day Adventist church.

My first inclination was to leave. I did not leave. Secondly, I wanted to humiliate his illogical reasoning and speak to him in the same ugly tone which he was speaking to me. But I very well couldn't do that because the prayer I had had just moments before in my car before knocking on the door was to ask God to give me the humility of Christ that He had displayed in letting His body be broken.

Holding in my hand the symbols of the Lord's broken body and spilled blood changed me at that door. Two natural inclinations had been overcome. Two wrong natural tendencies had been defeated.

After the first ten minutes of being chewed out, there was a pause, I chose not to answer his multitude of questions, and simply stated, "You must have been hurt awfully bad in the past by the church, and I am so sorry." He did not acknowledge my words, and went back on another 10-15 minute diatribe. This time I engaged him in the conversation explaining some Bible texts. His tone quieted. Again, I generically apologized for whatever hurt he had suffered. After 40 minutes of standing in a front door he finally let me past to see his mother.

As I stated — holding in my hand the symbols of the Lord's Broken body and spilled blood changed me at that door. Let me try to explain this a little more fully. Let me read for you John 6:10-13.

***10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.***

***11 Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted.***

***12 And when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the***

***leftover fragments that nothing may be lost."***

***13 And so they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten.***

This is from the story where Jesus feeds the 5000 people. This story is not just about feeding 5000 people because later in the chapter the event of feeding the 5000 people spurs Jesus on to talk about the greater meaning of the Bread. Jesus, in John 6, goes on to claim that He is the Bread of Life, and that those who believe in Him need to eat His flesh

***53 Jesus therefore said to them, "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 yourselves.***

***54 "He who eats 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 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.***

When Jesus fed the 5000 people, the setting was not the Upper Room, but the lessons that He was trying to teach to His disciples were preparing them to understand the Last Supper. That is why Jesus said that all the fragments should be gathered up so that none may be lost.

When we talk about communion, the bread, and the body of Christ we almost exclusively think of the physical body of Christ. His broken body on the cross. But what does the apostle Paul say about the Body — doesn't he tell us that we, the church, are the Body of Christ?

When Jesus died on the Cross, when His body was broken He was taking the punishment which we deserve. He represented sinners. He who knew no sin, was made to be sin.

When Jesus has the bread fragments gathered up, they are collected into 12 baskets. Twelve being representative of the fulness of Israel, being representative of the fulness of the people of the church. Jesus wanted every fragment picked up. He wanted His Body picked up. Jesus wanted every one to be left out.

When Jesus went away from the feeding of the 5000 people, 5000 people went away with filled bellies. But there was still more to give. There were still more who would believe in, and find need for the Bread of Life. These too should be given an opportunity to eat.

By having every fragment and morsel of bread picked up and accounted for Jesus was displaying a great desire that each individual person know he/she is an important part of the His Body. Each individual person is precious.

The man who scolded me at the front door had been a church member at one point in time. It would have been fun to turn my back and walk away. It would have been fun to point my finger back in his face. But he is one of the morsels of bread that Jesus wanted collected into the baskets. He is part of the Body that Jesus loved so much that He was willing to die for.

At times we may wonder, we may question God's love for us. We at times may have attitudes

and behavior which is inconsistent with a loving relationship with Jesus. But in a few moments from now we are going to hold the symbol of the Body of Christ in our hands. We are that Body for which He died. Sitting to our left and our right are other members of that same Body. Staying home today, are some who are discouraged and distrustful of God, or us. They too are part of the same Body. We hold in our hands a very precious symbol. A symbol for which Christ wanted none to be lost.

Let us throw away lostness and let us now emotionally and spiritually come together at the table of togetherness.