

Spring Series: “Emmaus: Walking with Jesus”

Sermon #3: “Sharing the Meal”

Scriptures: Luke 24:27-33a

Text: “After Jesus sat down to eat, he took some bread. He blessed it and broke it. Then he gave it to them. At once they knew who he was” -Luke 24:30-31a

Opening Video - For the sermon series “Emmaus: Walking with Jesus”

PP#1: *John Wesley’s statue outside of St. Paul’s Cathedral, subtitled with his dates: 1703 - 1791.*

John Wesley is considered the founder of the Methodist movement. He lived in England in the 18th century, is considered one of the greatest preachers of all time, and is a key leader of the First Great Revival. Here is a full life statue, for example, of John Wesley on the grounds of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. John also has a memorial inside Westminster Abbey. Pretty important guy, not just for United Methodists, but for England and America.

PP#2: *Picture (nice, warm, inviting) of Susanna Wesley.*

Yet as important as John is, many consider his mother, Susanna Wesley, the mother of Methodism. You see, it was John’s mother who had such a huge impact on John, forming him from his birth until well into his adult life, that all of John’s influence and importance can be linked almost directly back to her. She was the one who taught him studiously, instilling within him his love for learning and the Scriptures. When John, at the age of five, was pulled from their burning house just as the roof collapsed, Susanna marked him “a brand plucked from the burning,” and continued to instill within him that God had a special purpose for Him. She also taught him that although his mind needed to be full of knowledge, what mattered more to God was *his heart filled with love*. And that became the hallmark of the Great Revival that spread across two continents and changed the course of history - a heart filled with love. Thank you, Susanna, mother of John and mother of Methodism.

PP#3: *Image for the importance/significance/power of motherhood!*

Never underestimate the influence of a mother! For most great people throughout history, you needn’t dig very far to find a very influential mother. Think about your mother, and the impact she has had in your life. This is a special Mother’s Day for me, because I have the joy of having my mother here with me today! Happy Mother’s Day, Mom! I love you! I thank you for your great influence in my life. And I am blessed to tell you that today in person!

PP#4: *Image of our group standing next to the Aldersgate memorial in London.*

John Wesley’s personal spiritual journey was a bit complicated. His study and learning about God earned him a Master’s degree and made him a clergy. But his lack of heart in his faith kept him awake at night, literally! His mother’s influence was weighing on him.

Finally, one night he went to a small group at a home on Aldersgate Street in London. While there, they were reading Martin Luther’s introduction to Romans in the Bible. John Wesley wrote this in his journal:

“In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a Society in Aldersgate-Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, *I felt my heart strangely warmed*. I felt I did trust in Christ; Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

Wesley at last finally had the heart-felt feeling of his faith in Jesus Christ not just as the Lord and Savior, but as his personal Lord and Savior. He made the journey from his head to his heart. When he told his mother she was overjoyed.

“I felt my heart strangely warmed.”

Here is a picture of the group of us a year ago next to the plaque on Aldersgate St. that marks the spot this happened. The quote on the plaque is what I read to you.

Here is a question from Susanna Wesley, the mother of Methodism, to you. Have you ever felt your heart strangely warmed? Have you ever experienced the love of God powerfully in your own life? Do you know that Jesus did *for you*, that He has taken away *your* sins, even *yours*?

PP#5: Emmaus: Walking with Jesus

Sharing the Meal

“After Jesus sat down to eat, He took some bread. He blessed it and broke it. Then He gave it to them. At once they knew who He was....” -Luke 24:30-31a

Today we’re back “on the road again.” We’re looking at the story of that first Easter, when Jesus appears to two disciples while walking along the road to the village of Emmaus. And this story, I’m suggesting, is a good model for us today, for how Christians are to live. You see, Jesus followers are people of the road. Jesus meets us as we journey back into our normal, everyday lives. He calls us to include the stranger along the way of life, to invite new people into our lives. And when we do, we meet Jesus. Last time I used Willie Nelson’s song “On the Road Again” to help us remember this.

And a number of you each came up to me individually after the service and shared with me the same joke. “Did you hear that Willie Nelson died? Yep, he was playing “On the Road Again’!”

Christians are people of the road. And in this Easter story we see that. “Emmaus: Walking with Jesus.” Last time we saw in it the sharing of the road. This time we see in it the sharing of the meal. Luke 24:30-31a “After Jesus sat down to eat, He took some bread. He blessed it and broke it. Then He gave it to them. At once they knew who He was....”

Next time we go back a couple of verses and see in it the sharing of the Word.

PP#6: Luke 24:28-29

28 When the two of them came near the village where they were going, Jesus seemed to be going farther. 29 They begged Him, “Stay with us! It’s already late, and the sun is going down.” So Jesus went into the house to stay with them.

Remember, back in verse 16, that when Jesus appears to them along the road, it says that “they were kept from recognizing Him”? I said that I think this was on purpose. I think Jesus intentionally kept Himself from being recognized by them. Here’s my theory: He wanted to see if they would live out what He had been teaching them. As His disciples, He taught them over and over again to love the stranger, to do good to those they did not know. If they recognized it was Jesus with them, of course they would treat Him well, they loved Him! But Jesus wanted to test them to see if they would still live out His teachings, even if they weren’t sure He was around.

Luke 24:28 “When the two of them came near the village where they were going, Jesus seemed to be going farther. They begged Him, ‘Stay with us! It’s already late, and the sun is going down.’ So Jesus went into the house to stay with them.”

So, they included Him—a stranger—along the road! They talked with Him, and listened to His teaching. Then, near sunset, they get to Emmaus—and this is why I think that at least one of them lived there: they get ready to get off the road and head to the house in the village. Jesus, however, acts as though He was going to keep going. Would they invite Him in? Would they treat Him as a guest? They barely knew Him. But would they invite a stranger into their home, their lives?

For all you in school—17 school days left!—notice that so were these disciples. They were being tested on what they had been taught. And they passed the test! They begged Him to come into their home, for the evening meal and spending the night. They lived in a welcoming, including way.

PP#7: Hebrews 13:2

“Be sure to welcome strangers into your home. By doing this, some people have welcomed angels as guests, without even knowing it.”

Way back in the first book of the Old Testament, Abraham invited two strangers into his home. He prepared a meal for them, and invited them to spend the night. He didn’t know it, but they were angels. God taught His people to be people of radical hospitality. You see, God chose the Chosen People not for some special and preferred status, but God chose them to do a certain mission. God chose them to be His witnesses to the rest of the world, God chose them for the task of sharing His salvation with others. Sharing hospitality is a key part of biblical and godly living. Jesus had taught it to His followers, too. In the book of Hebrews, it says, “Be sure to welcome strangers into your home. By doing this, some people have welcomed angels as guests, without even knowing it.” This is a reference to Abraham. It also points to the Road to Emmaus.

PP#8: Sharing the Meal

1. Invite strangers into your home

“If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.” - Matt. 5:41

When we are called to be people on the road, we are called to radical hospitality. We often think about being God’s witnesses as what we do “out there.” That’s true...it does include what we do wherever we go. But notice here that it also includes what we do “in here.” It includes how we invite people in.

A huge value of our culture today is our privacy. We have the right, we think, to protect ourselves from others, from not letting them take us away from what we plan, or how we live, or what we want to do. I’ve heard it over and over again, the justification for not dealing with people we don’t want to, saying, “They are just not a positive influence in my life. They bring what I don’t need in my life right now. I have to lose them for my own health’s sake.” Now, this is sometimes true, but I’ve usually heard it merely as a justification to be selfish. People are annoying, and it’s so much easier to only deal with people we like. But the Gospel that Jesus taught was a gospel of radical hospitality. It was making time and room for others, even those who impose upon you! That’s part of your witness.

I love Christian history and I’ve studied it a lot. But there are parts I don’t like. One part that continues to haunt me is a teaching among monks back in the Early Church. They looked at Jesus’ teaching which says, “If someone forces you to go with him one mile, go with him two” (Matt. 5:41),

and said, this means if someone wants you to carry them on your back for a mile, do it. But then, offer to carry them a second mile, too.

I hate this! This is craziness, isn't it? That is so being taken advantage of! I'm supposed to just drop whatever I'm doing, throw my schedule to the wind, and do whatever makes a stranger happy?

Actually, yes! God, you see, is less concerned about your comfort as He is with your witness. One of the key ways you are a witness is to spend time selflessly serving others. Then "they will know that we are Christians by our love." They will see what it looks like!

I think of this often, and it convicts me! For you see, I'm so busy. I'm so important. I don't have time for annoying strangers. I'm too busy following Jesus and doing God's work. Ouch!

PP#9: *Image suggesting a MN backyard party, grilling, with neighbors over.*

Do you invite strangers into your homes? Now, I know there are safety precautions, of course. But do you open your lives, your meal times, your cars, your homes, to people who are not your friends? This is a key part of your witness. Remember, we may be entertaining angels unawares! As the disciples found out, we may be entertaining Jesus!

How tragic would it have been if they had not invited Him in. They would have missed Jesus. Same with us. When we do it for the least of these, we do it for Jesus.

How about a back yard party this week. It's spring. Invite those neighbors over—you know, the ones two houses down—that you've never really done anything with. First of all, learn their names! Fire up the grill. Throw on some extra brats. Go for a short walk and invite them over.

PP#10: Luke 24:30-31

30 After Jesus sat down to eat, He took some bread. He blessed it and broke it. Then He gave it to them. 31 At once they knew who He was, but He disappeared.

This stranger takes over when it comes time for the meal. He just jumps right in and takes the lead. The stranger is the host! Weird! But notice what He did. He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them.

Does this sound at all familiar? Where have we heard this before? At the Last Supper! These two disciples had just shared a meal with Jesus three days earlier, and this is exactly what He did! And at that moment, they finally recognize that it is Jesus.

PP#11: The Four Movements When Jesus Shares Food [*Keep PP#12 in mind when you design this*]

1. He *took* it
2. *Blessed* it
3. *Broke* it, and
4. *Gave* it

Actually, we see these four movements every single time Jesus serves food in the Gospels. Each time the Bible says He takes it, gives thanks, divided it, and gave it out. It wasn't just at the Last Supper. It was every supper, every meal.

Side note: This is also powerful when you think about this is what happens to Jesus Himself, as Jesus is the Bread of Life.

PP#12: The Four Movements of Jesus as the Bread of Life

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| 1. He <i>took</i> it | God took His only Son (Christmas) |
| 2. <i>Blessed</i> it | God blessed His Son (Baptism) |
| 3. <i>Broke</i> it, and | God Broke His Son (Calvary/Easter) |
| 4. <i>Gave</i> it | God Gave His Son to the world (Commission/Pentecost) |

God *takes* His Son Jesus, as the Bread of Life, takes Him out of heaven and sends Him to earth. God *blesses* Jesus at His baptism: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am very pleased.” God *broke* His Son, allowing Him to die on the cross at Calvary for the forgiveness of sins and be raised on Easter to conquer death. And God *gave* His Son to the entire world in the Great Commission and in Pentecost, when God sends Jesus’ followers out on the road into all the world.

PP#13: Sharing the Meal

1. Invite strangers into your home
2. Invite others to eat with you

“After giving thanks, He broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this to remember me.’” - 1 Cor. 11:24

Jesus says at the Last Supper, “do this, whenever you do this, in remembrance of me.” Whenever you share food, do it in a way that remembers Jesus...do it like Jesus did...share it with others. The strangers you invite in, share food with them. There is something about sharing food together. It’s all over the Bible, and, interestingly enough, it is in every culture. Sharing food with others brings a blessing that cannot be fully explained. I think it has to do with Jesus being the Bread of Life. And in sharing food, Jesus shows up. Jesus becomes real. Jesus is shared.

So, share a meal in the next week or two. Fire up your grill. Invite your neighbors. Share food. Talk. It’s spring, and everyone is coming out of their winter seclusion. Invite a coworker to lunch. Or eat a meal with one of those folks you see along the side of the road. Don’t just drop off a bag of food, invite them to eat with you! Or go eat at a meal site. Oh, and one more challenge. When you have a backyard BBQ, or eat with a neighbor, or anyone, no matter how awkward, stop and say a prayer of thanksgiving out loud. You offer to pray it. That is part of your witness.

Well, did you notice? The moment they recognize it is Jesus, He immediately disappears. His purpose with them is achieved. They have experienced Him personally. And He vanishes. And notice, because He does, they go back on the road again! Sounds intentional!

PP#14: Luke 24:32-33a

32 They said to each other, “When He talked with us along the road and explained the Scriptures to us, didn’t it warm our hearts?” 33 They got up right then and returned to Jerusalem. ...

They sit there blinking at each other. “That was Jesus!” “Wow!” “He’s alive!”

I wonder if they ever admitted, “The women were right!” Probably not.

Then they said, “We should have known it was Jesus! After all, when He was explaining from the Scriptures why the Messiah had to die for sin, our hearts were ‘strangely warmed.’” They had a Jesus experience. They met Jesus for themselves, risen and alive. He was there, with them, for them. They met Him, and their hearts were “strangely warmed.”

John Wesley pointed to the disciples on the road to Emmaus to describe His own experience of Jesus in his life. See? This story is the story of all Christians, for us too. We are people who experience Jesus along the way, when we share with strangers, our homes, our meals. We are people who have our hearts strangely warmed.

PP#15: Sharing the Meal

1. Invite strangers into your home
2. Invite others to eat with you
3. Open your heart to Jesus

“They said to each other, ‘When He talked with us along the road and explained the Scriptures to us, didn’t it warm our hearts?’” -Luke 24:32

Some versions translate this as, “Did not our hearts burn within us?” They had holy heart burn! Christians have heart burn!

Do you know what this is? Have you felt that strange feeling deep inside when you know Jesus is close? Susanna’s question is still for you!

Sometime today, or sometime soon, when you are eating a meal, preferably with others, stop and quietly to yourself, ask Jesus into your heart. Remember on Easter we celebrated Holy Communion? Well, when you are eating, pray in your head, “Jesus, I eat this in remembrance of you. Come into my heart. Make it strangely warm. I want you!”

Now, don’t wait for a heartburn feeling, for unless you are eating spicy foods, it usually doesn’t come on demand! But at that time, make a point to open your heart to Jesus. Then, in the days ahead, pay attention to when you feel your heart strangely warmed. It will happen. You will feel Jesus close to you.

PP#16: *Image of Rolaid*s, subtitled

“They got up right then and returned to Jerusalem.” Luke 24:33a

Now, I just can’t help it...I have to go there: Rolaid is what you take when you have heart burn, right? Well, we have holy heart burn as Christians, but we don’t want it to stop. We aren’t trying to get rid of it. But we want to take Rolaid to *aid us to get rolling!* We experience Jesus, and we are on the road again. Notice the disciples right then get up, go back on the road, and go tell others that they have experienced the risen Jesus.

More on that in a couple of weeks.

But until then, take your spiritual Rolaid: aids to keep you rolling, “on the road again.” Invite strangers into your life. Share food with them. And invite Jesus into your own heart to give you holy heart burn.

When you have a heart that aches for more of Jesus, how do you spell relief? R-O-L-A-I-D-S! (Sorry, that really dated me!) Even so, may God give you relief by filling your heart with a strange warmth, and then keep you on the road.

Amen!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR MAY 10, 2015

Spring Series: “Emmaus: Walking with Jesus”

Sermon #3: “Sharing the Meal”

Scriptures: Luke 24:27-33a

Opening prayer

Introductions:

Introduce yourself and share a time when you felt God close when you shared a meal.

Context: Read Luke 24:13-26 to understand the context of the story.

Highlight the main movements and address any questions or clarifications.

Read Luke 24:27-33a in two different versions.

1. Why do you think Jesus acted like He was going to keep going on the road?
2. Look back on Luke 24:16. The disciples weren't allowed to recognize Jesus. Then He acted like He was going to continue on. When they invited Him in, they recognized Him. Discuss your reaction to the possibility that they had been prohibited from recognizing Jesus earlier in order to test if they would treat Him well a stranger, and invite Him in?
3. Why did they invite Him to stay with them? First, answer from the reasons they gave in verse 29. Then speculate what may have been their motivation behind their reasons.
4. Look up Matthew 26:26-30 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Notice the similarities. Do you think it was this pattern that helped the disciples to identify the stranger as Jesus?
5. Check out also Matthew 14:13-21, Matthew 15:29-39 and John 21:9-14. Explain how you see this same pattern?
6. Why do you think Jesus disappeared immediately after they recognized Him?
7. Why do you think they discussed together how their hearts had been warmed?
8. Where did they go? Why?
9. Application: What will you take away from this passage? How will you live it out?