

October 11, 2020
Making Room For Life (5)
"Table Talk"
Luke 24:28-35
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We are going to talk about food and being a family at the table. The Scriptures teach that food is much more than just some means of survival. As we gather around, we can experience the presence of Jesus at the communion table, but also in our homes at the dinner table. With planning and prayer, we can anticipate dinner to be a sacred time that makes space at the end of our day to check in with each other, to enjoy wholesome food, and to experience God's presence around the table. As Jesus said, "I am the bread of life," He is the one who fills our hungers.

In the text today, there are two people that were not having a very good day. They were, in fact, probably the most disappointed they had ever been in their lives. There was also a meal setting where that disappointment disappeared in the presence of the risen Christ. Actually, two days earlier, all their hopes and dreams were nailed to a cross. Now they found themselves on a road back to the town that they probably lived in, thinking that the promise that they had heard about was now gone. So they were just going back to their old life, hoping that maybe there was another answer to life.

As they walked along this road, they joined in a conversation with a stranger. Their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. As they spoke, they were amazed that the stranger didn't understand what was going on. They said, "Didn't you hear about the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth? Don't you know what has gone on?" They related something about an empty tomb, but the meaning of it escaped them. They weren't sure what it all meant. With that, the stranger rebuked them and reviewed many scriptures that prophesied the suffering of the Messiah. As they approached the

village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if He were going further. But they urged Him strongly, *"Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over So He went in to stay with them."* (29) When He was at the table with them, He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. Suddenly, Jesus disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, *"Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"* (32) They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and those with them and said, *"It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon."* (34) Then they told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when He broke the bread.

Do you think it is coincidental that Jesus chose a mealtime to reveal Himself? Do you think it's coincidental that Jesus chose the Last Supper, a table meal, as a place where we're told to remember Him? That word "remember" doesn't mean to just intellectually recall the facts. It means to reflect, self-assess, self-rededicate, and remember and to reconnect to Him as the source of life. Jesus said in the kingdom of Heaven there is going to be a huge banquet table. He said, *"I won't eat of this meal or drink of the fruit of the vine until I eat it anew with you in the kingdom of Heaven."* (Matthew 26:29)

The table is the center of life and the universe. The Latin word for feast is "convivium." "Con" means with or together. "Viv" means root for live or revive. The meaning of the English word 'convivial' is friendly, lively, and enjoyable, especially around food. So a convivium for Christians encourages good food shared in God's presence together. That's what makes our hearts glad. What is the focus at most of your mealtimes? What are you thinking about when you sit down at your mealtimes? Most of you are thinking about what is right there in front of you. Hopefully, you think about more than that – who you are sharing it with. The question here today, is what do we think about when we come around this

table? We aren't thinking about the content of the food. I mean, we do, but we are really thinking about what it represents, the Lord's presence with us. So the more we focus on what we do here in the sanctuary and what we do at the dinner table at home, the more we get moved together and the more we will experience God's presence every single day as a family.

We want to know that we're invited to be present there with people. It's the same with Jesus. He won't press His presence on anyone. He wants to be invited. Notice what happened when He was invited. It says, *"He went in to stay with them."* (29) When Christ is in the home, He knows everything that is going on. He understands every need, every pain, and every struggle. He's there to stay with you, to remain with you. They are the same words that are used in Revelation 3:20 when Jesus says, *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into them and stay with them, sup with them and they with Me."*

Families that make the convivium happen do not need to control outcomes. They don't need to worry about whether it will go okay. When the focus is on Jesus, He becomes the host. I think it's fascinating that one of the terms for the Lord's Supper that the Catholic Church uses is "The Host." All of a sudden, you think He is going to be the guest, and He turns out to be the host. He's at the table. He takes bread. He gives thanks. He breaks it. He distributes it.

"Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him." (31) That's when the veil was lifted, when they saw Christ around the table and were reminded of His presence at the Lord's Supper.

Notice what happened in today's text. Right there, it says *"When they recognized Him, He disappeared from their sight."* (31) You see, when Christ is really a part of our life, He doesn't need to be there visibly present. We know that He is spiritually sensed and

understood. You may be going through a time when God may seem absent and when He doesn't seem very present to you at all. I'm not sure all the reasons why that is, and I know that happens to me sometimes, but sometimes God is waiting and withholding because we're the ones trying to control everything. He waits for a letting go and allowing Him the willingness to be the host, the one in control. Not to be in control of our business, but to let Him have control of our business, to create space for Him to lead and take care of the outcome.

Families that make the convivium happen discover that the effects of this ritual will ripple far beyond the moment. Look at what happened after Jesus disappeared from their sight. *"They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us?'"* (32) Today's text starts with a heartache and moves to a heart hunger and then it goes to heartburn. But it's a good kind of heartburn, an indicator that something marvelous is about to happen. We don't even have to have that experience. Something marvelous is going to happen.

They recognized Him in the breaking of the bread. Not only did they feel His internal presence, they were moved to go and report what happened. How much reporting is going on for you these days? How much do you share with others of God who is intersecting your life? That's what they did. They jumped up, ran from the table, and went back to Jerusalem to tell their friends what they experienced. If we are not sharing what God is doing, if there is no desire, and if there's no urge to tell other people, we need to be revived. We need the Word of God again to be broken for us so that we might be renewed and brought back to first things. The convivium creates an opportunity to combine a meal and fellowship and sharing around the Word that revives our faith. At the table, whether it's at church or at home, we would be prompted to share with others who are in need. Your dining table and this communion table are not just for us. They are for us to move outward into the world and share the Good News so that others might come and join us here.