

Some of the most humorous and enlightening moments in our lives center around eating and drinking. I can remember at supper time, we had a neighbor, Charles Anderson who would always show up when we were eating and want to know what was the news for the day. He was a bachelor and we were his connection to the world. Quite some great conversations happened in those days.

Lets here this little story, between a pastor and young boy in a certain congregation. It seems this particular congregation loved good fellowship and always served coffee after the sermon. One Sunday the pastor asks a little boy if he knew why they served the coffee. "I think," said the boy, "it's to get the people awake before they drive home."

Or the one about Joe who had been away from his family for two weeks and was lonely. As he sat down in a little cafe to eat, the waitress asked, "What would you like?" Joe responded, "I want some lasagna and a few kinds words."

The waitress soon returned with his order, set it in front of him and turned to leave when Joe said, "Say, what about my kind words?" She leaned down to his ear and whispered, "Don't eat the lasagna."

Eating is not just an important event for health reasons but also for social reasons, and especially this morning, for spiritual reasons.

We heard the story earlier about the Last Supper.

In the book of Acts where again here about the events around a table. "Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church - about three thousand in all. They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, sharing in the Lord's Supper and in prayer."

In luke we get a feeling of anxiety, stress, anger, and uncertainty. In Acts we find joy, life, laughter, and celebration.

Today, we remember and we celebrate the reality of second chances in our lives. Jesus' death, resurrection, and return to heaven made possible the second supper, the second meal.

When Pentecost occurred, God's plan of salvation began to spread out. People heard, in their own language, about God's forgiveness, about who Jesus was, and why He did what He did. . . . And they believed and accepted the message and were changed! They had new life! They were at the start of something new and wonderful! Life would never be the same again and they were able to share their experience with one another by celebrating communion together.

Communion is both an individual and group experience. We consume the elements individually but do so together. Communion is a corporate celebration that is done in the company of one another.

Communion is an outward expression of commitment to God. It is designed to help us remember why we are here - to jointly share in the experience of remembering Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection and what it means for us - a new way to live.

I would like for us to visualize a larger table across the front of our sanctuary. It is a long, but simple table. There is food on the table and there are seats on either side of the table. It goes as far as we see. Some of the seats are filled and some are empty. There are people who are coming toward the table and those who are standing around it.

The table represents the Kingdom of God, which includes the church. The filled seats represent those who have made the decision to join His kingdom by following God. The unfilled seats represent those who have yet to do that.

We are about helping people find their place at the table. We can bring them to the table and invite them to sit down. But we cannot make them sit down and join the fellowship at the table. That is the work of the Holy Spirit and the choice of the individual.

But, those who are sitting at the table and those who are standing around or coming to the table also have something else in common - needs. Financial, educational, relational, material, emotional, as well as spiritual - and God is expecting the church to meet them.

God is expecting us to meet them. I don't mean all of them. We cannot do that and once we learn to accept that, we can be free to meet the ones we can meet. The ones that God wants us to meet.

Justice is about meeting those needs in Jesus' name. One of the things that made Jesus so angry with the religious people of His day is that they were long on talk, short on action. Justice is about putting our faith, our talk, out on the streets and making a difference in practical ways.

We have sat at the Lord's Table this morning. It was bread and juice not Lasagna but we also received a few kind words. Will it make a difference in our lives this afternoon?