

Take and Eat

After he took his seat at the table with them, Jesus took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. (Luke 24:30-31, CEB)

How many of you have planned your vacations around when and where you will stop to eat? We certainly have! Eating plays a central role in my life. I'm sure it does in yours, too. After all, every single one of us need to eat on a regular basis for nourishment. We pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." We are sustained and fed by the food we eat.

And yet, I have to admit that eating has been both a blessing and a curse in my life. Last year, at this time, I was celebrating hitting a significant weight loss milestone after adhering faithfully to a program of healthy eating choices and exercise to go along with it. This year, I'm lamenting the fact that I have put every one of those pounds, plus a few more, back on my frame. I just don't seem to have the same motivation and mindfulness around making good food choices that I did last year. I love to eat, but what I eat doesn't always love me.

Eating hasn't always been kind to my family either. My wife has had a myriad of gastrointestinal issues which limit what she is able to eat - no dairy, no caffeine, no alcohol, as well as limited spices and fatty foods after having her gall bladder surgically removed earlier this year. Our oldest had to have a feeding tube surgically implanted for an extended period of time as a toddler because he had severe eating problems, causing him to 'fail to thrive.' You would never know now, but meal times with him years ago were more like battles than happy family times. Our youngest just threw a major fit about what I put out for breakfast this morning, and I discovered that it triggered a deep place of woundedness and frustration still there within me that's not so lovely to admit. Our middle child is kind of the exception to the rule, as he routinely likes to order the 'strangest' item off of the menu. But even he lost his gall bladder and will have to watch what he eats during his lifetime.

Given all of this angst around eating, I find it an incredible blessing to know that one of the most significant ways that we can open ourselves to Jesus is by, guess what? Eating together! The Lord Jesus invites to His table all who love him, all who seek to grow in relationship with him. Jesus rejoices when we 'take and eat' in remembrance of him. When we share in the sacrament of communion, when we receive the gift of bread and cup, we sit at the dinner table of Jesus, just as saints and sinners alike did. It is Jesus' special offering to us remind us of who we are and whose we are.

Jesus is, indeed the Bread of Life. It is he who ultimately nourishes us for what we truly need. Feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving! I look forward to sharing the sacrament of communion with you this Sunday as we consider what it means to live A Life of Opening to Jesus.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor David Rittgers