

Faith after Dinner

Dinner with Christ: Part 2 “Faith after Dinner”

Rev. Cameron D St.Michael – June 19, 2022

2nd Sunday After Pentecost / Father’s Day

Readings: Matthew 9:9-26

Reflection: Psalm 103:1-18

Greeting: The Lord prepares a great feast for all the peoples. He destroys the dark shroud veiling all the people. The Lord our God swallows up death forever! God wipes away tears from every face! Praise the Lord! (*Isaiah 25:6-8*)

Prayer: O God, our Guide and Guardian, you have led us away from the stress and the strain of the world to be in your peaceful presence. Grant us grace to worship you in Spirit and in truth. May we find comfort in your love and may you build us up by your faith. Enable us to do the work that you have called us to, without fear of failure or hesitation to do good. May we worship you, not just with our lips this hour, but in word and deed all the days of our lives; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Reflection: Psalm 103

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits— who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s. The Lord works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him. For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust. As for mortals, their days are like grass; they flourish like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments. (Psalm 103:1-18 NRSVue)*

We read the words of Psalm 103 and hear of God's grace. That God has compassion for his people like a father to a child. That God's steadfast love is there for all of his people. How do you give thanks for the mercy of the Lord? How does that mercy change how you treat others? What are you thankful for today? Have you shown that you are thankful? Have you shared your love of the Lord with others? How can we show the love of Christ in our daily lives?

Prayer: O God, you are our hope and our praise. You welcome us all to your table and invite us into your peaceful presence. May we be strengthened by your steadfast love and faithfulness as we come before you in prayer this day. Help us Lord, that you lift us up in both our joys and our sorrows. Be with us in both our laughter and our tears. May your light guide us and lead us to life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Sermon:

Our scripture reading for today comes from the New Revised Standard Version Bible. Our reading for today comes from the gospel according to Matthew chapter 9 verses 9 through 26.

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax-collection station, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with Jesus and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous but sinners."

Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "The wedding attendants cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are ruined, but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."

While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take

heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And the woman was made well from that moment. When Jesus came to the leader’s house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, “Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread through all of that district. (Matthew 9:9-26 NRSVue)*

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

This week's message takes a look at faith. We begin with Jesus calling Matthew the tax collector to follow him. The trouble starts when Jesus sits down to dinner when Jesus sits down with many tax collectors and sinners. Now, last week we had the reaction of one sinner approaching Jesus at dinner. Now there's many that Jesus is sharing company with. This raises questions for the Pharisees, so they ask the disciples why their teacher is willingly eating with sinners and tax collectors. Jesus hears it and notes that the doctor doesn't go to those who are well but those who are sick. Jesus is here for the sinners, the people who need their hearts and lives changed. Now, as Jesus continues on at the dinner table, the disciples of John the Baptist come with their own questions. They want to know why Jesus' disciples don't fast the way that the Pharisees and John's own disciples do. But Jesus has an answer for this as well. That while he is with them, they have cause to celebrate and not to mourn. They will fast when he's gone, but not while he's there. While he is teaching the people gathered at dinner in parables, a leader of the community comes in and kneels before Christ. It is here that we get the first of our two big displays of faith in this reading. He comes in and tells Jesus that his daughter has died, but that he believes that if Jesus comes and lays hands on her, she will live. Our second big act of faith comes when Jesus decides to go help that leader. They leave the dinner table, and he heads off to this man's house. But on the way, a woman who has spent twelve years suffering comes up to touch Jesus' cloak. Why does she touch his cloak? She believes that all she has to do is touch his cloak and she will be healed. Jesus sees her and speaks to her. He tells her that she should take heart and that her faith has healed her. Jesus goes on and clears away everybody gathering at the leader's house, telling them the girl is only sleeping. At first the crowds laugh. They do not believe at all. But Jesus takes the girl by the hand, and she gets up, just as her father believed. Because he believed Jesus would lay a hand on her and she would be well.

Those two acts of faith after the discussions at dinner help to show everything that Jesus was talking about. They also demonstrate something that we touched on last week. These two people show just how important faith can be and how powerful faith can be. Jesus has been saying that he's here to help sinners, to help those who are suffering, that he has a new teaching, a new way to live. That you need a new life to accept this new teaching. What we see directly after all of this dinner discussion is faith in action. Now, one of the reasons that I was drawn to this particular scripture for this particular day is because it is Father's Day, and we see a father faithfully seeking out help for his child. We see a father's faith on display. When I think about my first big impression of faith, it is from my own father. I learned about faith from

him and his example. It is something that I try my best to demonstrate for my kids, not just in showing the faith that I have, but also showing that I have faith in them. Because I want them to understand the depth of my faith. One of the ways is through showing them that I have faith in them and love them reflecting the faith and the love that I have in Christ. I was thinking about this father and the great faith he had. That he went to Christ with the faith that Jesus touching his daughter would be enough to heal her. He believed so strongly that he came to kneel before Jesus to ask him to heal his child.

It's interesting that in the midst of this that our second act of faith shows up. This woman comes believing that all she has to do is touch Jesus' cloak and she'll be healed. And she is. But it's Jesus words once again this week that really landed with me. "Your faith has made you well." Because she believed that she could be healed by Christ, she was healed by Christ. It's the same thing with the father. He believed Jesus could save his daughter and Jesus did. Jesus shows that your belief strengthens you to do what needs to be done to turn your faith into action. And it's such a huge lesson that I want to be able to pass on as a father. That the faith that we see here isn't an idle faith. It isn't a faith simply based on what we say. Because we see that it isn't all the conversation that gets people talking. That it isn't the debating, the questioning about theology, or discussion over law and ritual. It isn't figuring out the right people to shun or the right people to keep away from. No, what spreads throughout all the district is faith on display. That a leader in the community had faith in Christ, and because of that faith his daughter was healed. Or that a woman, after years of suffering, is healed after touching Jesus' robe because she believed. I pray that I can have and keep that kind of faith. I pray that I can show that kind of faith to others. I pray that I can instill that kind of faith in others through Christ. Because neither of these people just stated their faith and sat on their hands. They both take their faith and act on it, doing what needed to be done. And the response from Christ is that acting on their faith was the right thing to do.

So where is your faith leading you? What is your faith saying to you today? Where is Christ calling you to be? Where will your faith in the Lord take you? Our faith in action is our strength. Our faith in Christ gives us freedom. It gives us hope. Because it is our faith that reminds us that through Christ all things are possible. We find hope that Christ recognizes our faith. Christ encourages our faith. Christ praises our faith when we put it into action. When we believe strongly enough to go out and to do, when we are willing to act on what we believe, we recognize that we are called to act because of our faith in Christ. We are called to love the way that we have been loved by Christ. We are called to forgive the way we are forgiven in Christ. We are called to have mercy the way that Christ has shown us mercy. That we are not called to be wielders of the law and armchair theologians, but we are called to be a people of faith in action, a people whose love moves them, a people whose mercy and grace is visible. So may your faith grow. May the Lord strengthen you that you may believe, and you may go, and you may do. That you may be strengthened in love, encouraged in all. That we may all know that our faith in Christ makes all the difference. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Pardon: God, you are with us even when we turn away from you. Guide us back into your loving arms. Judge us not by the perfection of our actions but show us mercy and love. We have strayed like lost sheep from your ways, failing both in what we have done and what we have failed to do. Bring us back into your fold that you may guide us and lead us in all things. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us and forgive us. May we walk in your love and trust your ways. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy upon you. May the Lord forgive all your sins and lift you up in love through Jesus Christ our Lord, and by the Holy Spirit keep you in life eternal. Amen.

Offering: If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed below. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

Lord's Prayer

Dismissal with Blessing: May we go forth reflecting God's love in our lives as we go forth in the peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Current Series – *Dinner with Christ*

Our current series will be looking different times that Christ sat down to have dinner with people. Each interaction teaches us an important lesson about our Savior and ourselves.

June 12th – *Unexpected Guest* – Luke 7:36-50

June 19th – *Faith after Dinner* – Matthew 9:9-26

June 26th – *Unpleasant Table Talk* – Luke 11:37-52

Prayer List

Rev Charliam Renner	Bishop Frank Beard	Our Conference	Our Healthcare Workers
Patti Corder and the Greenup Ambulance Crew		Eric Veach	Ed & Verna Titus
Henry Catey	Jake Kiser	Cindy Cisney	Nancy Hoke
Family of Don Wells	Tricia Adkins	Don Stewart	Ronnie Winstead
Dwight Parsons	Lauren Stewart	Phyllis Gabel	Sage Martin
Dalton McFarland	Ruth Ann Finley	Jodie Bunch	Tom Finley
Laura Carlen	Judy McCellan	Rosie Chancellor	Susie Callahan
Kenny Holmes	Darrell Quick	Chuck Hogan	Brittany Gilbert
Jackie Potter	Don Holsapple	Family of Loise Roberts	Family of Horrace Ebbert
Jeremy Klinger	Richard Durham	Kathy Hanks	Wayne Carrell
Gary & Mary Winterrowd	Leo Smith	Sue & Bob Smyser	Larry Thompson
Family of Tony Eggers	Nick & Leana Ochoa	Greg Williams	Martha Roberts
Charlie & Charlotte Baxter	Paul Schulte		

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