

“Something to Eat”



The Rev. Ryan Wiksell

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St. Michael's Episcopal Church

Independence, MO

May I speak with the Breath of God, from the Word of God, in the Name of God.

- “Party of One!”
 - How does that phrase make you feel?
 - How does it strike you when you see someone sitting alone at a restaurant?
 - Now, maybe it’s a fast food restaurant, and they’re grabbing a quick lunch between meetings. No big deal.
 - Or they’re in a sit-down restaurant, but they’re sitting at the bar and eating. Which is great, because you don’t really feel alone sitting at the bar. Even if there are no other patrons there, you kind of feel like you’re with the bartender.
 - But “Party of one” is just depressing. Sitting at a nice table by yourself.
 - There used to be a website called “Sad Desk Lunch”, and lunches pictured were very sad. But it’s the “desk” part that’s saddest of all. Using the same surface you work on to eat your dry tuna sandwich.
 - There’s even a popular self-help book called “Never Eat Alone”. Something that would never have occurred to previous generations to say. It was obvious. But now we have so many convenient meals, and individualized entertainment options, it can be tempting to eat alone.
 - But when we’re gathering on purpose, we always tend to eat.
 - After a wedding what do we do? We eat. And after a funeral. Even after church.
 - What is a date, without a meal? And can you imagine having people over at your house and not offering them something to eat?
- Even when we ignore it, it’s obviously our DNA to eat in groups.
 - But why? Why is eating such a communal thing for humans?
 - It’s not weird for animals. At least not most of them.

- Our cat will eat whenever she's hungry. Or as soon as her food is set down.
- She doesn't care who else is eating.
- Also, it's a strange activity if you think about it.
- We put parts of plants and dead animals between our lips
- Our spit breaks it down, and our mouth-bones crunch it up
- Our tongues move it around and then we send it down our esophagus
- Kind of gross
- Seems like the kind of thing we should do in the bathroom, where nobody can see us.
- But it's not. It's in our nature to look around for other people to eat with.
 - The last chapter of Luke shows us this in more ways than one.
 - We read the second half of the chapter this morning.
 - But right before that is the Road to Emmaus story, where Jesus walks with two of his disciples but they don't recognize him
 - When they arrive in Emmaus they convince him to join them for the night, and the first thing they do is share a meal.
 - They ask Jesus to say the prayer, and the moment he breaks the bread, they see him for who he is. When they tell the others what happened, they say that Jesus "had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread."
 - Something magical happened as they shared a meal.
- Then in the next scene, the one we read this morning
 - Jesus appeared to them again
 - Somehow they are still not convinced, and they think Jesus is a ghost.
 - So Jesus gets out a copy of "A Case for Christianity" and reads them all the reasons they should believe in the Resurrection.
 - NO, he doesn't do that. What does he do?
 - He says, "touch me and see"

- Just like he did for Thomas last week
- He doesn't want them to learn about him
 - He wants them to *experience* him.
 - It's one thing to know about Jesus. It's another thing to know Jesus.
 - Jesus is inviting them to know him. He's inviting you to know him.
- But the disciples are still struggling, so he piles on
 - "Do you have something to eat?"
 - Is Jesus hungry?
 - The gospels talk about Jesus being hungry elsewhere, like during his 40-day fast
 - But I really don't think he's hungry here. I don't think his resurrected body gets hungry.
 - Remember when Jesus raises Jairus' daughter from the dead, he tells her parents to give her something to eat.
 - He knows they need help believing – that they're worried the risen person is just a ghost
 - But ghosts can't eat. They don't have flesh and blood like Jairus' daughter, or like Jesus.
- So to see a person eat is to know that they're real, they're truly alive.
 - Jesus was made known to his disciples in the breaking of the bread
 - And he was made known to them again in eating the broiled fish
 - A little later the gospels show him cooking breakfast on the beach
 - Food was always important, but it becomes central during this time, when they're struggling to believe that Jesus is really alive.
- There is a practice within the church of having Private Eucharists
 - But those have been discouraged by the Episcopal Church
 - And for good reason, I think.

- The focus of our worship is the Ministry of the Table
- And it's a table designed for us to gather around
- Jesus is made known to us in the bread, and the wine
- And by extension, we are made known to each other in the bread and the wine
- Sometimes we need proof that the people around us are real, and truly living
 - We need to touch each other. We need to shake hands, or hug.
 - "Touch me, and see that I'm here for you."
 - We need to gather around the altar together
 - We need to gather around coffee and refreshments afterward
 - So that we can be assured of all that is written in the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms, as Jesus said.
 - So that we can be assured of the forgiveness we've been promised.
 - We can't witness this from a book. A collection of words won't do this for us.
 - When we eat together, and receive each others' touch, we are witnesses of these things.
 - We are witnesses that the promises of God are real.
 - That God's dream for us is coming true.
- Amen.

*** Collect of the Day** Easter Sunday

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Lesson Acts 3:12-19

Peter addressed the people, "You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

"And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out."

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 4

Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause; *

you set me free when I am hard-pressed; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

"You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory; *

how long will you worship mute idols and run after false gods?"

Know that the LORD does wonders for the faithful; *

when I call upon the LORD, he will hear me.

Tremble, then, and do not sin; *

speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.

Offer the appointed sacrifices *

and put your trust in the LORD.

Many are saying, "Oh, that we might see better times!" *

Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O LORD.

