

Lenten Study Week 1
Meeting Jesus at The Table, Chapter 1
February 21, 2024
Gathering as Community at Sargeant UMC 6 pm

Scriptural Reflection:
The Feeding of the Multitude

Mark 6:30-44 - 30 The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. 31 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." 32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. 33 But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So, he began teaching them many things. 35 By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. 36 Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." 37 But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages[a]! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" 38 "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish." 39 Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. 41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. 42 They all ate and were satisfied, 43 and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. 44 The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

Lenten Study Week 2
Meeting Jesus at The Table, Chapters 2 & 3
February 28, 2024
Gathering as Community at Racine UMC 6 pm

Scriptural Reflection
He Eats with Tax Collectors and Sinners!

Matthew 9:9-13 - *The Calling of Matthew*

9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

10 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

12 On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' [a] For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

God's mercy is everlasting. Jesus is the mercy of God in human form, never more so than when he eats with outcasts and welcomes all of us in our brokenness. In this story questions comes to the surface:

Who belongs and who doesn't? Who is welcomed and who is held at arm's length? How wide are the boundaries of our community? Our worshiping community? Our nation?

Open Forum Discussion Notes:

Do you have any questions about this story? If you would like the pastors to clarify any part, please email them your question before we meet at: marburgerjon@gmail.com bridget@countrywidecarriers.com

Is there a theme, lesson or certain point of this scripture that reaches out to you?

How does this scripture connect to our lives today?

What Groups of people today tend to be viewed as the “tax collectors and sinners” of Jesus day ?

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How does this scripture connect to our lives today?

When have you experience the blessing of abundance from God?

Lenten Study Week 3
Meeting Jesus at The Table, Chapters 4 & 5
Gathering as Community at Brownsdale UMC 6 pm

Scriptural Reflection
Making Room at the Table to empty Chairs at the table

Luke 14:7-14 - 7 When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: 8 “When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. 9 If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this person your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. 10 But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. 11 For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” 12 Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

The reality is that people then began to choose not to show up. Excuses surfaced as to why one could not possibly attend. As the parable extended on in **Luke 14:15-24: The Parable of the Great Banquet**

15 When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.” 16 Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. 17 At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ 18 “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ 19 “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ 20 “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

21 “The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind

Lenten Study Week 4
Meeting Jesus at The Table, Chapter 6
Gathering as Community at Wykoff UMC 6 pm

We gather on this 4th week of Lenten with our focus on Hospitality and Discipleship. Our scriptural reference gives us an example of both.

Scriptural Reflection
Hospitality and Discipleship

John 12:1-8 - Jesus Anointed at Bethany

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took about a pint[a] of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 5 “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.[b]” 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

7 “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you,[c] but you will not always have me.”

There is a tradition of handwashing in preparation of sharing time together in sacred space. Psalm 26 expresses this as the palmist writes: I wash my hands in innocence, and go around your altar, O Lord, singing aloud a song of thanksgiving and telling all your wonderous deeds. O Lord, I love the house in which you dwell, and the place where your glory abides. Do not sweep me away with singers, nor my life with the bloodthirsty, those in whose hands are evil doers, and whose right hands are full of bribes.

Handwashing Ritual

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How does this scripture connect to our lives today?

How is hospitality part of your discipleship?

and the lame.’ 22 “‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’ 23 “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. 24 I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’”

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How does this scripture connect to our lives today?

Christ invites us to make our world more like God’s world. What steps can we take to move in that direction?

Lenten Study Week 5

Meeting Jesus at The Table, Chapters 7 & 8

Gathering as Community at Grand Meadow United 6 pm

A meal of memories revived by breaking of bread!

Meals are one of the favorite settings for sharing stories and memories. Be it holiday celebrations, weeknight dinners or weekly Lenten gatherings like what we have experience in the last several weeks. Gatherings open the door to those “Remember the time when... and “tells us about your” Kinds of conversations that link us between past and future. By telling and retelling our stories, we forge a family identity even a faith family identity. Our scripture this week brings us to a moment in history that forges a ritual we still honor to this day. And it came to be at a supper table.

Scriptural Reflection

Matthew 26:17-30 - The Last Supper

17 On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?” 18 He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. 20 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. 21 And while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” 22 They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, “Surely you don’t mean me, Lord?” 23 Jesus replied, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.” 25 Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, “Surely you don’t mean me, Rabbi?” Jesus answered, “You have said so.”

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” 27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the[a] covenant, which is poured out for many for the

forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." 30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

****Sharing of Communion****

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Is there a theme, lesson or certain point of this scripture that reaches out to you?

What does resurrection mean to you? Does the Communion Table remind you of this meaning?
