

Message Title: **A Table like No Other**

Scripture Source: **Luke 22:14-20**

Date: Sunday, October 11, 2020

Teacher: John Garner

Table Time

Some of the most precious and tender moments have happened at a table...a grief shared and shouldered, an achievement marked and celebrated, a dream pondered, a relationship deepened. And some of life's most painful moments have marred table time...a broken vow confessed, a trust betrayed, a harsh word carelessly uttered, a person ignored, sitting in the silence, fading in the shadows of indifference. Table time can break a heart or heal a wounded soul...it so depends on what is spoken and what is done...or not done.

Each of us has deeply memorable table times that have left their unique mark on us, in us. How we need to treasure our table times, especially in times like these with restrictions hindering shared moments around a table.

A Table Like No Other: Luke 22:14-20

Imagine what is happening. Be there in your thoughtful pondering, with your heart tender and receptive to who is at the table and what is said and done.

Read Luke 22:14-16: Feel the yearning clearly defined and articulated by Jesus. He longs to share spiritual reflections with those closest to him. Connecting relationally at a soul level mattered to Jesus. "with you" Jesus related and shared spiritual and life truth often around a table. All sorts of tables, with all sorts of people...religious and irreligious.

And That Brings Us to This Table This Morning: Luke 22:19-20

We call this the Lord's Table, a place and time to reflect and respond to the truths Jesus originally declared. Truths meant to be remembered thoughtfully on an ongoing basis. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

The Lord's Table is a vivid, simple, and thought provoking explanation of the Gospel message, using such earthy 'elements' to engage people like you and me in thoughtful reflection. So...

Come to the Table...To Be Taught About the Gospel: 1 Corinthians 15: 1-5

Christ died for our sins in accordance with Scriptural declarations. His blood was shed in full payment for the penalty of sin...yours and mine. Consider Isaiah 53:5-6, 12. Yet, his sacrificial death was not the end of the story. God the Father raised him from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus validated the effectiveness of his sacrifice on our behalf and declared his power and victory over sin, Satan and death. 1 Corinthians 15:12-28 teaches extensively and persuasively about the critical truth of the resurrection...there is no 'gospel', no truly 'good news' without the fact of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, insuring the hope of resurrection and eternal life in its fullness with God one day.

Come to the table, to reflect upon the essentials of the Christian faith.

Come to the Table...To Repent of sin and Be Reassured of Forgiveness: Matthew 26:27-28

At this table we have the opportunity to keep 'short accounts' with God, ourselves and others. To confess sin, of whatever kind and manifestation it is. Who of us has outgrown our need to repent of sin...that being, the failure to love God, others and ourselves?

1 John 1:8-10 To repent of sin means that we own the reality of our choices, actions and inactions that dishonour God and hurt others. We blame no one, we excuse nothing. We ask God for strength to think and behave more like Jesus going forward. And, we believe and accept the reassurance of God that we are forgiven. We are not defined by our sins and consequences; we are liberated to mature by the grace, truth and power of God's Spirit at work within us.

What might repentance sound and look like in your life currently? In my life?

Come to the Table...and Ask God for Opportunities to Share the Gospel with others: Colossians 4:2-6

Time at this table ought to move us to spend time at other tables, cultivating relationships with others who are in need of the grace of Christ in their lives. The gospel of Christ alone can meet the deepest laments and longings of the soul...of yours, mine and others.

Jesus spent time at different tables, including with irreligious people. Luke 15:1-2
Why? To help them enter into a relationship with God. He was criticised harshly by the religious people for some of the tables he sat at. And...as followers of Jesus, we must spend time at tables, sometimes creating table times with people unsure of what they believe...unsure of how to live. We must spend time with all sorts of people, strong believers and dyed in the wool skeptics.

Who is God asking you to spend 'table time' with? And yes, we need to be creative about how that can happen during COVID-19! Yet, there are ways to pull up a chair and share gospel truth and hope with someone. Just like Jesus did...and by his Spirit does through his followers today.

Come to the table: to be taught about the Gospel, to be changed increasingly by the Gospel through repentance, and to share the gospel with others, empowered by His Spirit and enlightened by the Scriptures and the inspiring example of Jesus. Which of these three actions do you most need to pay attention to?

Questions for Personal Reflection and Table Talk Conversation

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CONNECT:

Can you recount a table time/talk that was memorable? Especially on the home front or with friends. And, why has that memory stayed with you?

ENGAGE:

The Lord's Table is a vivid, simple, and thought-provoking explanation of the Gospel of Jesus. What stands out to you about the original 'Lord's Table' as recorded in Luke 22:14-20?

What mattered to Jesus? What is at the heart of the Gospel message?

- **Come to the Table: Be taught about the essentials of the Gospel. 1 Corinthians 15:1-5**
 - What are the essential beliefs of the Christian faith?
 - Why is the resurrection so important? Consider Paul's reasoning in this chapter, vss.12-28
- **Come to the Table: Repent of sin and be reassured of forgiveness of sins; be changed by the Gospel, from the inside out...but certainly affecting outward behaviour!**
 - What does it mean to repent of sin? The word 'repent' means a changing of thinking leading to a change of behaviour.
 - Sin and failure need not define us; we can be liberated and changed by the grace and power of Jesus. Consider 1 John 1:9 and Proverbs 28:13
 - Sometimes repentance requires making amends with others...let's not overlook that.
- **Come to the Table: Ask God for the compassion, courage and opportunity to share the message of Jesus with others...at all sorts of tables!**
 - Reflect upon Paul's words in Colossians 4:2-6. What is Paul asking God for? Why? Is there someone in your world who needs to know the hope and purpose that comes through a relationship with Jesus?
 - Ponder thoughtfully the example of Jesus in Luke 15:1-2...is there a comfort zone Jesus is asking you to vacate, to be at tables that would really stretch you? Where might those tables be?

Come to the Lord's Table...to learn about the Gospel, to be changed by the Gospel and to be compelled to share with others the hope of the gospel. Of the three Come to the Table 'points', which one do you need to pay special or close attention to? Why?