

## “Christ Doesn’t Become Fragmented in Us”

1 Corinthians 10: 14-22

At the beginning of this week, I thought this would be an easy sermon to write. It’s World Communion Sunday. We have a text that deals with eating and table manners. This sermon should write itself. Just to let you know-whenver I say things like this, it always turns out the other way around. I think it is the universe telling me to pay attention to the moving of God’s Spirit and not jump to conclusions too quickly. Because in reality, when it comes to communion, when it comes us gathering at the Lord’s Table, partaking the bread, partaking the cup, when it comes to remembering and celebrating that moment when Jesus gathered in the upper room with his disciples, it never does us any good to jump to conclusions or ignore the Spirit of God.

Because, the fact of the matter is, and what we as people of faith seem to ignore or forget most of the time is just that. We forget, we ignore that when we gather at the Table as the people of God, it is in this moment, we make our loudest proclamation of God’s love and God’s grace for all the world to hear. It is in this moment we proclaim the life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, a Savior who came so that all may know that they are claimed and named as God’s own. It is in this moment, when we gather around the Table, all drinking from the

cup of blessing, all eating from the bread of life, it is in this moment when our faith becomes tangible. It becomes life-changing. It is the moment when we proclaim our unity in Christ, showing the world there is another way. We become part of something that is larger than ourselves. It is in this moment when all are invited to experience the beauty, the wonder, the grace, the love of God, becoming part of the real, breathing, living Body of Christ here on Earth.

This moment of all drinking from the cup of blessing, this moment when all are eating the bread of life does not stand all by itself. It is part of the larger picture, the larger picture of how God is constantly at work in our world, working to bring healing and wholeness to God's creation. This moment is fundamental to our words and our actions as disciples of Christ. It is the moment which reminds us who we are and whose we are.

For us to grasp just how revolutionary this moment of all eating the bread together, of all drinking the cup of blessing together, for us to grasp just how revolutionary this moment really is, we need to understand a little bit of the context which surrounds it.

We can't look at Chapter 10 without taking a look at Chapter 8. I know, I know it seems crazy but that's the way it is. Paul begins his argument for this section in Chapter 8, gets distracted by a tangent in Chapter 9, and then picks his

argument back up again in Chapter 10. It seems that some of the members of the Corinth faith community have decided that they could participate in the cultic temples and practices for other various gods.. Their explanation for this was it really didn't matter if they ate the meals offered at these other various temples because they knew the other gods weren't real. As long as they knew what they were doing wasn't real, as long as they didn't buy into those other people's practices, then everything would be fine.

To which Paul replied, You are what you eat, cutting through their misconstrued logic once and for all. Paul tells them that if we follow their crazy train of logic then the same could be said of the Lord's Supper. Unbelievers could easily partake of the cup of blessing and eat from the bread of life without actually believing in God. We cannot compartmentalize God, worshipping and following God when it convenient for us. God is our God at all times and in every situation.

Paul reminds the community at Corinth and us as modern day disciples that the Lord's Supper isn't just any meal. It isn't just a gathering of believers. It is the moment in which we as disciples become the Body of Christ here on Earth, loudly proclaiming the love and grace of our God, agreeing to work together to make God's Kingdom a reality here on earth, and not just for those in our midst, but for all of God's children. The Lord's Supper is the moment we celebrate, when we remember Jesus' death and sacrifice. This moment which unites us shows us as

people of faith, shows us over and over again just how far God's love really does extend. When we gather around the Table, all partaking of the cup of blessing, all partaking of the bread of life, this is the moment in which we embrace our call to become the people God created and calls us to be, people of Welcome, people of Love, people who become partners in the very Kingdom work of our God.

So it is no surprise that Paul is furious when he is writing this part of the letter. He reams the community members up one side and down the other. He tells them that the Lord's Supper is not them. It is about God. It is about who God is. It is about sharing the very nature of our God with others, inviting them to become part of the Body of Christ, the very real, living breathing Body of Christ here on earth. Through the bread and the cup, we remember, we proclaim, we experience the very character of our God, something that cannot be faked or ignored. Through the grace which is extended to each and every one of us as we gather around the Table, Christ becomes very present in our midst, reminding us that, in all times, in all circumstances, our God is steadfast, slow to anger, loving, merciful, and faithful from generation to generation. The Lord Supper has never been about us. It has always been about enacting, becoming and celebrating who God is for the people of God.

Or let me say it this way... I know I have shared this story with you before but I am going to share it with you again because it constantly stands as a reminder

to me of the importance of the Lord's Supper to our faith. I was serving my first church as a student in seminary. I can still remember my first worship planning meeting with the Senior Minister. I was trying to adjust to the fact that this church didn't have communion every week when the Senior Minister shared with me the fact that I was not allowed to stand at the communion table or say the Words of Institution. This took me by surprise. I have always done these things. So I tried explaining to him, "Well, if this was because he thought I was just a student, than don't worry. I had the credentials. I was licensed through the region of KY. I was able to marry. I was able to bury according to the Christian Church (DOC) in KY. So he didn't need to worry about that. According to KY, I was minister with credentials. Then the Senior Minister looked at me kind of strangely and said "Well, that's nice but really doesn't have anything to do with what I am talking about... You are not an elder in our church. You are not a member of our church. You are not allowed to stand at the communion table or say the Words of Institution, well, because you are not a part of this church." My face took on this blank stare. I was confused. For as long as I could remember, I had been allowed to come to the table. I could remember summer camps where my fellow campers said the Words of Institution. I could remember youth retreats where I stood behind the table and broke the bread and blessed the cup. I could remember working on camp staff at Christmount, planning worship services and wondering how exactly we

were going to do communion. Would we use goldfish crackers and juice or could we just use cookies and milk? For as long as I could remember, I had been allowed at the communion table. For as long as I could remember, I had been a part of the Lord's Supper....And now...he was telling me that I was not allowed, that I could not stand behind the table, that I was not allowed to say the most meaningful, the most forming words for me as a disciple of Christ, simply because I was not a member of that particular church. I didn't understand. All I could hear was this minister telling me that although it was the Lord's table, an act that proclaimed unity and grace, I was not invited.

That's why Paul's words are so powerful, are so meaningful in our text today. He is writing to the Corinthians, writing to us as modern day disciples to remind all of us that it is the Lord's Table is not just any gathering of believers. It is not just any meal. The very act of all drinking from the cup of blessing, the very act of all eating from the bread of life binds us together as the Body of Christ..

This life-forming moment when Christ broke the bread and gave it to his disciples is for all people of God. This most meaningful moment when Christ blessed the cup and gave it to his disciples is for all of God's children. This is not just any meal. This is not just any gathering of community of believers. It is a proclamation of who God is for the people of God. And all are invited to partake, no ifs ands or buts. All are welcome because it is through this sacred act, we

become the very real, living breathing Body of Christ here on Earth, engaging in the very real ministry of healing and wholeness that is the Kingdom of God.

When we as Midway Christian Church, say “Welcome: Open Table, we are proclaiming loudly that everyone is invited. When we as Midway Christian Church celebrate our “Open Table, we are saying that we embrace the knowledge that this is not our table. Rather it is the Lord’s Table and through God’s grace and love all are invited to come to it.

We celebrate the Lord’s Supper each and every Sunday, and we don’t take it for granted because we know, we know that this is not just any meal, that this is not just any gathering. This is the moment when we, along with all of God’s children, become part of the Body of Christ here on Earth. And we proclaim our unity through the loudest proclamation that we ever make about God’s grace and God’s love by partaking of the bread of life, by drinking from the cup of blessing.... Because after all, we are what we eat!

Amen.