

# **He Took Bread**

Luke 24:13-35

April 30, 2017

First United Methodist Church, Lindstrom

(This is a manuscript prepared for sermon delivery and may not represent actual words spoken.)

*When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.*

The text says that they recognized Jesus when he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and began to give it to them. So I wonder. What was it about that meal that enabled them to recognize Jesus? Think on that.

In the meantime, let me ask: what warms your heart? What ingredients make for a heart-warming experience for you? I suspect we all have our own recipe for that. But for most of us...whatever most warms our hearts...well, that would include something in the realm of relationships...wouldn't it? I mean, what most warms my heart these days is a call from one of my grandkids...or a hug from one of them...or something.

Like...I was talking to Granddaughter Angie. She is in confirmation now. Time surely does fly...at warp speed. She has to turn in sermon outlines. But the outlines do not have to be from her pastor's sermons. They can be outlines of any pastor's sermons. So you know what she is doing? She is turning in outlines of her pastor's sermons. But she is also going on our website and listening to my sermons and turning in those outlines. Kinda warmed my heart there. (So hi Angie.)

So what warms your heart? A big family meals warms my heart.

We United Methodists are big on John Wesley. He truly was a great man of God. He struggled a long time to come to an assurance that he was saved...that he was a child of God. He worked hard at becoming saved. He worked for it...even going so far as to coming to America as a missionary. Yes...in those

days America was the big mission field. He would later write in his journal that he went to America to save souls. But then he asked who would save him.

Then came a day in the month of May, May twenty-fourth. He later made an entry into his journal. You've maybe heard it. "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death...I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart." His heart was warmed when he responded to an invitation to come to Jesus by faith. From then on Wesley preached salvation by grace through faith, not works.

Has your heart ever been warmed by Jesus...by the love of God? The two people in our text talked about their hearts burning.

It was the day of Jesus' resurrection..., "that same day" the text states. They were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They talked and discussed the events of the day. What they were literally doing was they were tossing thoughts and ideas back and forth. They were trying to make sense of the day's events. Jesus came up and walked with them. So it was like they were walking along and Jesus sort of caught up with them. The two were kept from recognizing Jesus. Why? How? I don't know. But this will be one of those wonderful stories of going from non-recognition to recognition.

Jesus asked them what they were talking about. They stopped. They stood still. Note that the text says their faces were downcast. So that could be a metaphor. They were gloomy and baffled...trying to make sense of the events of the day. It could also mean they were literally looking down...which just might possibly explain why they were kept from recognizing Jesus. They weren't looking up. At any rate, we have a couple of gloomy fellas here. Maybe gloominess and a woe-is-me attitude prevents me from seeing Jesus. I don't know...just a thought.

The two were a bit taken aback. Standing among them was possibly the only person in all the area who had no clue about what had happened the past few days. They asked him if he was the only one who did not know the things that had happened. Like he would know if he was the only one who did not know. Jesus asked them, "What things?" They then told this one whom they thought to be a stranger all the things that had happened to Jesus. They said they had hoped Jesus would be the one to redeem Israel. What was most confusing to them was that thing about the empty tomb.

Jesus responded by calling them foolish. He said they were slow to believe all that the prophets had said about him. He asked them, "Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things, and then enter into his glory?" Jesus then began with Moses and all the prophets. He taught them all that was said about him in all the Scriptures. So Jesus pretty much dominated the conversation the rest of the way.

This is pretty important here. What we learn is that Jesus' suffering and glory were talked about in the Old Testament. I have a very good friend, one who is in my covenant group, who is fond of saying that he concentrates more on the New Testament...the words that are all about Jesus. We give him a bad time. The Old Testament is all about Jesus, too. What we call the Old Testament today—the Hebrew Scriptures—was not the Old Testament as Jesus walked with those two. Luke does not say that Jesus

taught those two from the Old Testament. Jesus taught them from the Scriptures...all the Scripture they had to that point. And the Scripture is all about Jesus.

They reached the village of Emmaus. Jesus would have continued on. But the two urged him...they strongly urged him to stay with them. Hospitality was very important in that culture...something they would have learned from their Scriptures and their ancestors. So Jesus stayed.

At the table, supertime, Jesus took the bread and gave thanks and broke the bread and began to give them the bread. It was at that point when the eyes of those two were opened. They recognized Jesus. Jesus then disappeared from their sight...perhaps went from there to that place where the disciples were hiding behind locked doors.

Now we might want to say that this breaking of the bread was the Lord's Supper...like what took place a few days earlier in that upper room. And in the breaking of the bread those two were doing what Jesus said to do at the last supper. They were remembering him. But this was a common meal here...an ordinary supper...ordinary in every way...except for one way...one very important way. Jesus was invited by those two to stay with them...right? That made Jesus their guest...correct? But at the supper table it was Jesus who took the bread and gave it to them. At the supper table Jesus went from being a guest to being the host. When Jesus took on the role of host, then those two saw and recognized Jesus.

Many lessons in this text. Among them is the truth that Jesus is our host. Now there are a whole host of definitions for the word "host". But there is only one big definition that applies here. You see, the host is the one who gives the party. The host is the one who goes through all the preparations for the party. The host is the one who incurs all the cost for the party. The host is the one who extends the invitation to come to the party.

There is no mistaking what took place in that home in Emmaus. Jesus took over as host. Those two—and their families who were no doubt with them—became guests in their own home. I know people most often don't like feeling like guests in their own home. But when they became guests, that was when they recognized Jesus. If we want to do what I've heard some families do...and place that empty chair at the table for the one who is referred to as the unseen guest...Jesus...we best put that chair at the head of the table...where the host sits.

Jesus is the one throwing this party. Jesus is the one putting on the meal. Jesus is providing the meal. Jesus has taken on the responsibility for all expenses. Jesus paid the price...a pretty hefty bill. And Jesus extends to each one of us the invitation to attend. All we need to do—and it is not that difficult—is accept the invitation and go. We just may experience our hearts being strangely warmed.

You know, this story at the end of Luke's Gospel puts me in mind of a story earlier in the Gospel. There was that deal where Jesus was accused of welcoming sinners...and eating with them. So Jesus not only ate with sinners...he welcomed them...welcomed them as the host. Then Jesus told that story about the son who left home and wasted what his father had given...blown the blessings bestowed upon him by his father.

But, oh, that dad had one more blessing for his wayward son. It was the biggest blessing of all. It was the blessing of a welcome home...the blessing of a big meal, with the killing of the fatted calf...the blessing of unwasted grace...grace above and beyond. The blessing of a meal for the son hosted by the dad.

Picture that for yourselves. Accept the invitation. And if you have already sent off your RSVP, then see yourself seated around that table. Jesus at the head...the host. And be warmed.

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