

October 11, 2020 New Beginnings Pt. 4 Mark 14:12-26

It may seem ironic that in a series of messages entitled “New Beginnings” we would turn to something that is very, very old. It is commonly accepted that Mark’s Gospel was the first of the 4 Gospels in the Bible to be written. It therefore gives us an early glimpse of common practice among the disciples of Jesus, at a time when the church was just beginning to emerge on the world wide scene. What I read to you is the oldest text we have about the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, communion, the eucharist.

During the week Barbara shared with me this comment from her morning devotions. It was the moment in which this meditation was in fact born as part of this series on the subject of New Beginnings. “When the disciples of Jesus asked Him what was really happening, Jesus did not propose to them a theory, He served them a meal.” That is a profound insight and one that is very important to us if we are to understand what faith in Jesus is about, in real time, any time, and especially in a time of plague, like this time with Covid-19. What are we to do? What is happening to us? What ought we to do to follow Jesus? Jesus served them a meal to answer all of those questions.

Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it. He said, “This is my body, broken for you. Take it. Eat it (the bread) and remember.” Participation in this meal, eating the offered bread, remembering the words of Jesus, is a fundamental

Christian act. Roman Catholics do it. Anglicans do it. Yes, Presbyterians do it. Baptists do it. Bible Chapels do it. People who believe in Jesus, do it all over the world, under various denominational banners. The Salvation Army (think about it for a moment), The Salvation Army does it. We do it this morning, in spite of the times, and in the midst of the current circumstances. It is a basic, fundamental, act on the part of disciples of Jesus. He said, Mark wrote it down, Matthew, Luke and John echo his memory... "this is My body, broken for you." With a piece of bread Jesus tells us how HE will die, why HE will die, that HE came to die, for us.

Then Jesus took the cup of wine. HE gave thanks. HE passed it to the disciples who were wrestling with trying to understand what is happening in the holiest Jewish season of the year, the season of Passover, when God saved HIS chosen from slavery in Egypt and set them free. In answer to their desire to know what is really happening, Jesus says, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" (including you, including me). Mark tells us they had all taken a mouthful from the cup and swallowed. It is a basic, a fundamental act on the part of disciples of Jesus, which is why it is so important we do this and do it together in the time when the church has been reopened for public worship and faith driven work. With HIS own cup from the Passover meal, Jesus takes us to the foot of the cross and reminds us that is where we are to live our lives.

We eat, we drink, we get to work in light of the fact that we believe in Jesus whose body was broken, whose blood was spilled, in order that no one less than the ONE true God Almighty, might save us from our sinfulness. He saves us from what we have done. He saves us from what we have omitted to do, or avoided doing. He saves us from wayward thoughts, from our stumbling into and out of faith and back again. That which was broken...you and I...the King puts together again, as HE suffers and dies, at the hands of people who hate HIM, who betray Him, people who run from HIM, and deny HIS will. The secret of Jesus love for you is captured in the symbols of the bread and the wine. He gave HIMSELF, to save you. HE loved you so much, HE saved you. Regardless of what you think of yourself, the broken bread and the cup of juice proclaims this for all time. You are HIS, and you are saved...heaven's children.

When the disciples were wondering what was really happening, Jesus did not give them a creed, or a theory, or a theology, HE gave them broken bread and wine, a meal. New beginnings, bring us to the Table at which Jesus offers HIS body, HIS blood, to save you.

Let us pray;

Thank you Lord for saving my soul. Thank you Lord for making me whole. Thank you Lord for giving to me, Your great salvation so rich, and free. Amen