

## What's Cooking Here?

Scripture: Proverbs 16:3, Romans 12:1 – 2, & John 21:15 - 19

On my TV I have the Food Network, do you? Recently I have been watching the show - 'Iron Chef'. It is a competition show pitting a renowned chef against some challenger. During the competition, they must prepare a four course meal and they are judged on A) Preparation B) Presentation, and C) Taste.

What's cooking here? Are we doing our preparation? How is our presentation? What do we provide to feed our souls? How does this food taste?

First, let us examine my role here. In some ways my role as pastor is like a chef in this competition. I have a limited time to complete my task to serve up a message that is well prepared, well presented, and does justice to God's word.

It is hard for you to judge my preparation since that is done outside of your view but I hope you can sense I have done my preparation.

The presentation will be the easiest one for you to judge. I will always strive to make the message enlightening, entertaining, and enriching. I will always try to hit the big three E's - enlightening, entertaining, and enriching. You need to hold me accountable for the presentation.

Finally the taste, this will be hard to judge because I believe God will be the judge and it depends on God's will. I pray that each and every week our service together will feed your souls, give you something to think about, and give you something to chew on. I will pray that we're cooking each Sunday. Please pray for this also!

I have chosen three scripture passages for today message. The first one is from Proverbs 16:3 and it speaks about preparation.

Here is good preparation - 'Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed'. All things are in God's hands and we should trust in the Lord to sustain us. Preparation - Commit to the Lord and you will succeed. Trust in the Lord and you will succeed.

Our second passage is from Romans 12:1 - 2 and it speaks about presentation.

What should you present to our Lord? You must present your body as a living sacrifice. How should you present your body? You present your body holy and pure. What should you not do? You should not conform to this world but transform yourself with a renewed mind. And why present yourself this way? You need to do this because God's will is good, pleasing, and perfect.

Our last scripture reading is from the Gospel of John 21:15 - 19 which definitely talks about taste.

In this passage, Peter is asked repeatedly if he loves Jesus by Jesus. Peter gets upset! Peter responds over and over again - You know I love you! Three times Jesus ask Peter if he loves him, and each time Peter responds 'Yes, I love you Jesus!'

I can really understand Peter's frustration with Jesus. Three times Jesus questions Peter love for him. It may seem at first Jesus did not hear Peter's answer. But the second time, it now feels like Jesus does not believe Peter's answer. But a third time, surely anyone of us would have gotten upset.

If you truly love Jesus, you will feed all his sheep. Your love will create a taste so inviting that you will be the feed for all of God's sheep. Your love of Jesus will invite people into fellowship with us. People will talk about how wonderful you are when Jesus is part of your life.

But we often must answer Jesus' call more than once. We must often answer Jesus question of each of us - Do you love me? Repeatedly! The world will test your answer over and over again. People who you do not know will test your patience and faith. People who you do know will very definitely test you also. They will treat you unjustly and you will consider responding in kind. Then you will hear Jesus' questioning you again - Do you love me?

If you can answer that question YES, over and over again, you will be able to feed his sheep.

As a church, our preparation needs to be our unwavering commitment to serve our God. We must prepare each day to answer God's call to be righteous and just. We must prepare each day to live a life that model's Jesus' life. We must each day ask ourselves 'Who is our master?' We must each day talk to God through prayer. We must share with each our joys, concerns, and our faith.

If we do all this, our preparation will be complete because God will bless us.

As a church, our presentation needs to be that we are a Christian community. We must show our compassion and caring for each other. We must demonstrate our compassion and caring for those outside of our fold at every opportunity. We must present ourselves as the image of Jesus in this community. We need to take seriously all that we do and question our presentation to see if it serves our Lord. We must ask the tough question - Why are we doing this?

If we do all this, our presentation will allow the Holy Spirit and this congregation to get closer together and will truly become a Christian Church filled with Disciples of Christ.

As a church our taste or our quality of what is being served will be good if we do our preparation and presentation well, and we make what we offer the most inviting and palatable feast around here. The taste is up to God but we must do the work.

Today is World Communion Sunday and we are going to take communion as always because it is in our DNA as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We are going to welcome everyone to this communion table, The Lord's Table!

## World Communion Sunday History

### **Reader #1 - \_\_\_\_\_**

Established in 1936, when the world was deeply fragmented by the conflict that would be later known as World War II, World Communion Sunday (originally called World Wide Communion Sunday) has been an observance to help Christians all over the world affirm their unity in Jesus Christ as it expressed so beautifully at the Lord's Table.

Originating in the Presbyterian Church in 1936, the idea of World Communion Sunday was embraced and promoted by the Federal Council of Churches (now called the National Council of Churches) in 1940. Other denominations, including the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), began to join in this annual witness to Christian unity, which takes place on the first Sunday in October.

### **Reader #2 - \_\_\_\_\_**

Those Christians who started World Communion Sunday saw the Table of the Lord as a place where the wounds in Christendom, many the result of a brutal war, could begin to find healing. At the Lord's Table, Christians in all nations, of many ethnicities and languages, could remember their kinship in Christ and be encouraged to live more fully as brothers and sisters in God's family. What a remarkable vision!

### **Reader #3 - \_\_\_\_\_**

As Disciples of Christ, our motivation is similar to those who originated World Communion Sunday. We believe, as disciples, that the wholeness of our fragmented world is best achieved at the Lord's Table, where we remember who God is, and what God has done for us. We are all one family in Christ, unconditionally loved and bounded together in our Lord Jesus Christ. As the Disciples of Christ movement invites and welcomes others to Christ Table, we will be agents of healing for the brokenness that continues to exist in the world.

**Reader #4 - \_\_\_\_\_**

As Disciples, we proclaim the message of unity at Christ's Table every Sunday of the year, not just on World Communion Sunday. We gather with other Christians every Sunday and declare our oneness in Christ as we take our place at the Table of our Lord. There are many different approaches to the serving and partaking of communion. Different elements are used. Different liturgies exist for communion in different churches. Communion is placed in a variety of positions in different orders of worship. But the message of God's love for us, made known in Christ, is proclaimed boldly through our worship at the Table.

**Reader #5 - \_\_\_\_\_**

It is this love that we proclaim at the Table that has the power to heal wounds, whether they are the wounds within our own spirits, within our families, within our communities, and between nations. God's love makes us one. We are not being truly faithful in our worship unless we are proclaiming that message.

**Pastor Rich**

May we find joy in proclaiming that message with passion on World Communion Sunday and on all of the other Sundays of the year. Come to think of it, why be restricted to Sundays? Let us proclaim this good news every day that God gives us breath.

We are the Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness .....