

Dinner With Jesus Part 7

Come On Over

Acts 2:42-47

Memory Verses: Acts 2:42

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Over the past two months we've been looking at times in the Bible when Jesus took time to eat and fellowship with people. And one of the most interesting observations to me is who Jesus ate with. He ate with the despised, the outcast, and the sinners. He ate with Matthew and Zacchaeus... traitorous tax collecting money grubbing swindlers. He ate with Pharisees and prostitutes. He ate with disciples and sojourners. He rejects the invited and invites the rejected. He invites me and he invites you. Why? Because **the table is where strangers become family and family becomes stronger**. The table is where we show grace, hospitality, love, forgiveness, honor, and friendship. The table is where we share stories and our lives with one another. Get this church, **Jesus wants to share his life with you and he wants you to share your life with others**.

But let's be honest. Our culture doesn't do well with this. Meals around the table... inviting others over for a meal and fellowship... that's old school. Our lives are busy. We have soccer and dance. We have places at the lake and business trips. We don't have time for things like that anymore. Right? Wrong. I believe that the Bible tells us the exact opposite. I believe that God wants us to understand something that we've simply forgot. Life is too important not to share it with others around a table and a meal.

Look at **Acts 2:42-47**. Notice what it says the earliest Christians devoted themselves to. Fellowship. They devoted themselves to meeting together not just in church buildings... but in their homes, around tables and meals. And not just once in a while... but daily! They ate together, prayed together, studied scripture together, had spiritual conversations together on the regular. They were a family!

A few years ago a study came out about family meals. It came away with this conclusion. Families that eat together several times a week have stronger bonds, fewer conflicts, and healthier kids.

Doesn't it stand to reason that if it works for the natural family then it will work for the family of God. The point is simple... the modern American Christian church doesn't spend enough time together. A Sunday gathering is not a substitute for intentional and intimate fellowship! We can't just meet once a week, shake a hand, have some small talk and bond as a spiritual family! Family is forged in fire and

fellowship! Bonds that can't be broken start by breaking bread. Meals aren't just about food and physical nourishment. Rather, they are recommended to us for the sake of nourishing the spiritual health of the church body. Meals are a mission and it's about time we took that mission to heart. The table means something more. It's time we took our mandate to fellowship seriously, church. It's time we devoted ourselves to the breaking of bread in our homes. It's time that the old phrase, Come on over, became prominent in our culture once more. **The table is where strangers become family and family becomes stronger**.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see here is that... **Meals Build A Family Mentality**. Look at **Acts 2:42, 46** again. Notice they devoted themselves to this! This wasn't a half-hearted, if we can get around to it, kind of thing. This was intentional and on the books! This was... can't miss! This was... we must make this happen no matter what! It wasn't a – if we have time. No, they made the time! It was a priority. It was a meal mentality! Why? Because meals build family and family builds a mentality that says family matters!

Me and Lisa have the same conversation with our kids about once or twice a week. They will get into a fight or get frustrated with one another over something and say mean things that have the potential to divide our family. And so we tell them... family comes first! Your brother or sister... they are your blood. There is a code of honor in a family that means we stick together no matter what! We are a united front. We are an unbroken house. Family means something. Family is important. Family matters!

Romans 10:12 tells us to be devoted to one another in love. **Ephesians 4:2** reminds us to humbly and gently bear with one another in love. You can't pull away from the table if you are committed to the table! The mentality must be this... **the table matters more than my personal feelings**. The family matters more than the individual. The church matters more than the member. The table, the family, the church... are sacred and we don't push away from the table!

The more we eat together and fellowship together... the more we pray together and seek the Lord together... the more we do life together... the less we are apt to push away from the table. Meals are like spiritual campfires, the closer you sit, the warmer you get! Better yet, meals are like sleeping in a fox hole. You're cold, your brother is cold... so, with rifles in hand you huddle together to stay warm. Alone you will fall... together you will make it through the fight! Family means no one gets left behind. At Stone Creek... we need to forge that type of mentality... no one gets left behind. No one finds themselves without a seat at the table. And that mentality is forged in our homes around meals! **The table is where strangers become family and family becomes stronger**.

The second thing we need to see here is that... **Meals Model**
Grace. Look at **Acts 2:43-45** again. Awe came upon every soul. They were together and had all things in common. They sold their possessions to help each other in need. The people were radical in their love towards one another. They were models of grace towards one another.

One thing that always stands out to me in this text is this idea of them all having everything in common. They were united in their cause for Christ. They were united in their mission as a church. They were forged in the bonds of spiritual family. But you know what this doesn't mean... it doesn't mean that they never had a disagreement or that they struggled with personal preferences or were at times offended by different personalities. No matter how much the spirit of God rests on a people, there will always be personal issues. Why? Because people are all individuals. They all think differently and act differently and have different personalities and idiosyncracies. They all rub people differently. Some for good and some for bad.

What makes the church here in Acts differently is that they didn't let any of those personal things destroy their unity. And how did they do that? Grace! Look at **Colossians 3:13**. Because of their love for each other, their love for the church and their love for their God.... they beared with one another. It means that though they had some disagreements or rubbed each other the wrong way... they tossed that to the side in grace. They forgave each other as Christ forgave them. They held onto one another instead of pushing each other aside. Look at **Romans 15:7**. We accept one another as Christ accepts us.

The grace of the church should look like the grace shown to one another at a meal. When I sit down at the table with my family... guess what? They know my faults and failures. They remember that at times I can yell and curse and say mean things. They can remember that I am a flawed father and husband. But they don't get up from the table and leave me. They welcome me, they accept me, they love me. Why? Because the table is for family. Because everyone in our house is welcome at the table.

Listen, **Every chair at our table should preach the gospel of grace!** Our church isn't made of perfect people and it isn't made for perfect people. It's a group of imperfect people who strive to show the perfection of Christ through grace and forgiveness. We don't deserve a seat at His table and yet he lets us sit and eat and calls us his own! And everyone in our church should know that there is a seat at the table. The table here and the table in your home! **The table is where strangers become family and family becomes stronger.**

Lastly... we need to see that... **Meals Fuel Mission**. Look at **Acts**

2:47 again. They devoted themselves to fellowship and people kept getting saved. The thing I always notice here is that there is no mention of evangelism here. The passage makes no mention of them going out and inviting in the lost or preaching the Gospel on the street corners. We know that they did this but it's not mentioned here... why? Because the emphasis is on the magnetism of the church. The church became a lighthouse, a hospital, a sanctuary, and a place of enlightenment. In short... the people saw what was happening in this community... and they wanted to be a part of it.

Why? How? Because hospitality is disarming. It's welcoming. It lowers walls. Love and grace and forgiveness are contagious. Look at **Philippians 2:3-4**. This was the mentality of the early church. They are more important than I am. They need to see the love of Christ more than I need to have my personal preferences met. And the people ate it up!

The point is this... **the closer we become in here... the more people out there will want what we have!** What they don't want is more division, more grumbling, more gossip, more back biting. They want unconditional love. They want grace. They want forgiveness. They want meals around tables in homes with people who have accepted them for who they are! You want to make a difference for the kingdom... regularly invite people over to your house for a meal and christian fellowship! **The table is where strangers become family and family becomes stronger.**

Application

So what do we do with this? Open up your homes for meals and fellowship! Don't overthink it. Don't wait until the schedule is completely clear and the house is perfectly clean. Jesus, nor anyone else, cares if there is dust on your door frame. Just start small. One family. One neighbor. One new believer. One night a month. Invite them to come on over! Change your mentality... every meal is a mission. Every plate a plan to share the grace of Christ. **The early church didn't grow because they had slick programs. They grew because they had open tables.**

Conclusion

A missionary once said that the most powerful evangelism tool they ever had was not an open pulpit but an open table. He saw more lives changed over bowls of soup than in formal meetings. Why? Because at a table people feel loved and cared for. It's about relationship and fellowship and people can feel that. Tables promote discussion while Sunday services often promote one way directed lectures. So church... what if we lived like that? What if every home became a lighthouse? What if every table became an altar? What if every meal became a ministry moment? That's how revival spreads. That's how strangers become family. That's how the kingdom comes... one meal at a time! Come on over... **The table is where strangers become family and family becomes stronger.**