

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday April 4, 2021. The twofer. Yes we finished one, and started another series.

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it. We're deep into 2021 and thankfully, we're still gathering in person. A small but growing group who follow all the safety guidelines joins us at the church. We have opened our children's and youth area also and are seeing a good response. We're so encouraged with your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We still are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions you have, please pass them our way. We feel just as isolated as you, and we want to maintain that connection with each of you.

II Sunday.

Okay, now you can tell that the intro is a generic one that is on every week's devotional. Sunday was Easter, Resurrection Sunday, we had lots more people show up, and we hope all of those who did felt safe, taken care of, and welcomed back warmly. We loved seeing all of you. There won't be a whole lot contained within this devotional since we did two short messages. Easter is a time to celebrate and basically we told the story of Easter, and introduced our next series.

So, a little about Easter first.

What does Easter, Resurrection Sunday mean to you?

How have you celebrated it in your past?

Is there any struggle or questioning about the validity of a literal physical resurrection?

There are so many scriptures around the resurrection, that we really don't need to go into all of them. The primary one we used was **1 Corinthians 15:3-8**. Read this and then we'll talk a little about it.

What would this have meant to the early followers of Jesus in facing persecution and really difficult times?

What hope, assurance, (not certainty remember), can we find from this passage for our walk with Jesus now?

The resurrection is what powers Christianity and being a follower of Jesus. Sure we have so much else in scripture that points to God, and even scripture itself. However, this early movement of the followers of Jesus called 'The Way' found their motivations solely rooted in their belief in the resurrection. It would be another 300 years before all of the letters and writings were collected to form the bible as we know it today. So, it was this belief in Jesus coming back from the dead that empowered and motivated those early believers.

A really challenging question. **IF...and that's a big if, you did not have scripture, what would be the source of your desire to follow Jesus?**

The second message was in the introduction of our new series that will run through April. And this will take some detailed explanation to open this conversation. The concept of *'tabling'* was introduced. Some of you from more traditional church or even government backgrounds, most likely understand *'tabling'* as formally setting a specific recommendation or issue aside to be discussed at a later time. So, why don't just *'table'* that understanding for now. You know that had to be expected. Kal introduced a newer concept of *'tabling'* by telling the story of post resurrection Jesus meeting some of the disciples after fishing, and sharing breakfast with them. Read this account in **John 21:7-14** and answer the following questions.

What jumped out to you about this passage?

Why do you think Jesus used an occasion like this, (around a meal), to reconnect with his followers?

And...what is your favorite breakfast food?

This passage was used to introduce a different understanding of *'tabling'*. And that is creating informal times of gathering, sometimes best over food or drink, in which relationships are intentionally grown deeper and more life giving through doing this regularly. *'Tabling'* isn't just hanging with friends for fun, (though that can be an important part of it). But for the purpose of growing relationships deeper to cultivate and nurture a circle of very close trusted friends who can help us be the best we can be. And we do the same for them.

So, *'tabling'* is the idea of planning regular gatherings with people we feel safe around, won't judge us, but we can have open, honest, conversations. AND it's okay, in fact encouraged, to have differing views and opinions about issues so there can be strength found in a diversity of opinion. Safety is found in a commitment to each other, and to the relationships generally, rather than the protection of a certain position or agreement on issues. This is VERY difficult to do, valuing the relationship over being right. That's what makes these kinds of relationships so important. And the reason we are to work with everything we have to grow these kinds of relationships in our lives. We give the practice and process of cultivating these relationships the name *'tabling'*. Which is what Jesus did when he reconnected with his followers, and had some rather difficult conversations with them.

So, let's talk about these kinds of relationships.

Do you have relationships like this in your life? Do you have people you can say anything around, but you don't have to always agree with them?

What have you done in the past that made these relationships stronger?

What giftedness or specialness do you possess that you could give to other people?

III Challenge.

We hope you had a great Easter, and we equally hope you join us for our series called *'tabling'*. We know it's a slight twist on an old concept, but we believe doing *'tabling'* well is at the heart of becoming the person we hope to be. Do a deep search in your present day friends, and begin the process with one or two of them to take your relationship to the next level. You won't regret it.