

## 2 – The Last Supper

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CCC

Tables. It is hard to say just how much happens around tables. Families get caught up on their day. Boy meets girl. World leaders sit down to solve problems and become friends. Many of the most remarkable episodes in world history happen around tables.

You were all challenged last week to spend your summers at tables with people who are on their way to faith in Jesus, but not there. And we asked for easy, medium or hard challenges. **And it looked like this.** We are going to watch Jesus at tables this next few weeks and see what we can learn from him. Our hope is that as a church, this becomes the summer **of 1000 Tables.** That it is just normal for us to be with neighbors and coworkers on a regular basis for meals

Maybe, the most famous and influential table is the one that we will talk about today. Open your Bibles to John 13 and 14. **Map of last supper.** Ohh! Here it is Jerusalem, Last supper, garden of Gethsemane, Caiaphas' house. And as we read parts of this evening, note that this is happening around a meal. Backdrop – **Davinci's last supper**

Not just any meal. It is the last supper. Jesus is eating with his disciples for the last time. It is his last impression before his crucifixion. And it was so remarkable, that John dedicates two full chapters to that special evening.

Before we jump into the text, I want to point out something provocative in the form of a question. Were the disciples saved at the time of the last supper?

Christians disagree on this... some say they were saved the moment that they left everything to follow Jesus. Some say it was with Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi "You are the Christ, the son of the living God." Some say it is coming with Jesus breathing on them and saying "receive the Holy Spirit." Some contend that it was not until the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost.

And I don't know. But I do know that at this point, the disciples were still forming. Jesus is gathered around the table with the 12 dudes who have been the most helpful in his ministry for three years. His closest buds. His ride or die.

**John 13:2** The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. <sup>3</sup> Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;

Think about who was there. Peter was about deny him. Jesus knew it. Judas was about to turn him in to the Pharisees to be killed. And here is Jesus having dinner with these guys. Spiritually confused, deeply loving, Not fully in. A betrayer. A denier.

One thing is for sure. These guys were still in process. They didn't understand the crucifixion. They didn't get the resurrection. They still thought Jesus was going to set up his new kingdom in a geopolitical Israel. And it reminds us of something important. It is not just the disciples who are in process. **Everybody is in process.**

Everybody is in process. Everybody who you sit down with at a table is in process. And every time that Jesus sits down at a table, he takes account of who is there and helps them take one step to the right.

**1-100 scale** – What do I mean by this? Some of you remember I taught this a few years back, but the idea is that everybody is somewhere on a scale of 1-100 with 50 being the point of actually crossing the line of faith. Down here is atheists, other religions, people who have been wounded by religion. And over here is the paragon of virtue, the spiritually formed, the Mother Theresa meets Billy Graham. **1-100 add arrow**

Now, where were the disciples? Scholars debate this for sure. But to be truthful, it doesn't matter. Because **Jesus is not nearly as concerned about location as trajectory.** He wants them all to take one step to the right. Or, maybe it is not really a linear scale because everybody starts in a different place. Maybe it is more like this: **(Other diagram).** Some are in, but are running from God. Some are stagnant, some are coming to Jesus. And Jesus uses dinner conversation to get people to take their next step.

Lets start with Peter.

<sup>4</sup>so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. <sup>5</sup>After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

<sup>6</sup>He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

<sup>7</sup>Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

<sup>8</sup>"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

<sup>9</sup>"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” <sup>11</sup> For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

It is interesting that we are already post dinner. Jesus is not meeting them at the door. They have already gone some time without having feet washed. And feet today are not like ancient feet. They were calloused, crusty, and from the road they were just dirty. They were likely to smell really bad. It was the job of the lowest servant to wash off the stinky feet. But apparently no servant was there to do it. I can't help but wonder if Jesus wasn't reclining next to someone with some pretty foul feet and thought “Who's gonna do it? Who's gonna serve?” But nobody did. So Jesus set the pace. Nobody is below that simplest jobs. So he puts on the towel. Leaders are the first to serve. That is a sermon in itself, but this is about the followers progress. So Peter is the classic. The disciple who does not get it, but talks first. The disciple with the foot shaped mouth.

And Peter is at first all offended. “You can't wash my feet. BUZZ. Wrong answer. OK, umm, well, then wash all of me... BUZZ... wrong answer.

Jesus says “Listen, once you have been Baptized, you don't need it over and over. You are clean. But, you still need to be forgiven for the dirt on your feet... the stuff you accumulate as time goes by.” So you confess your dirt and Jesus washes you.

You see, Jesus wanted peter to take one step to the right. Trust me, let me serve you. Baptism is once – as soon as you follow Jesus. And all the disciples were already baptized. But washing... well, we all screw up and need Jesus' ongoing forgiveness – not just the promise of once and for all. So Peter takes one step toward Jesus.

### **Jesus Predicts His Betrayal**

<sup>21</sup> After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, “Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me.”

<sup>22</sup> His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. <sup>23</sup> One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. <sup>24</sup> Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, “Ask him which one he means.”

<sup>25</sup> Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?”

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. <sup>27</sup> As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

So Jesus told him, “What you are about to do, do quickly.”

Then we have Peter again. Look at v. 37

<sup>37</sup> Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!”

At this point, I just want to point out who is at the table. Jesus does not exclude people because of particularities. He does not exclude Judas, even though he knows Judas will betray him. Peter will deny knowing him three times that night. Jesus knows it, but still loves them. He does not exclude people based on political views. On one hand, he has Matthew who used to work for Rome, on the other hand you have Simon the Zealot who trained to kill Romans for a living before following Jesus.

Let me ask who is at your table? Are you writing anybody off because of political views? Do you see people as hopeless because of their addictions? Do you include people who have different racial backgrounds at your table? Different economics? And most important for this conversation – different religious convictions? We win people when we are in relational proximity to them.

And here is another piece of the puzzle. Even Jesus had one betray him. And the rest were like riding a roller coaster. HE was faithful in ups and downs. And if Jesus had a follower leave him... shouldn’t we expect the same? And shouldn’t we keep going?

John 14:1-10 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God<sup>[a]</sup>; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup>My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup>You know the way to the place where I am going.”

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you really know me, you will know<sup>[b]</sup> my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup> Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup> Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?”

### **Thomas’s confusion**

Now, it should be noted that Jesus is three years into the relationship with these guys. They have had hundreds of hours of conversations and this one is pivotal, even historic. So we have to remember that as we are having conversations with our friends. Jesus is provocative here... confrontational... paradigm shifting. And that may be helpful for a friend right away, or it may take a long time to get there.

Thomas is a good example. His question “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” is kinda funny in retrospect. But Jesus uses that to move him from confusion to clarity. “I AM the way. And the truth and the life.” Thomas, don’t look for a path, look for a person. I am the road and the vehicle and the destination all wrapped into one.

Now it makes me take back one of my main points in the message. Jesus actually IS exclusive. Based on who believes in him. He is not exclusive based on politics or race or gender, but when it comes to believing, ‘nobody comes to the Father, but through me.’ Jesus is a one-way guy. And Thomas needs to know it.

### **Phillips hangup**

Then Jesus adds – from now on, you HAVE seen the Father. And Phillip is like “Uhhhh.... Just show us the Father and that will be enough.”

Jesus shoots them through another paradigm shift. If you have seen me, you have seen the Father. Add it up now. The way, the truth, the life and the Father? Jesus is saying “I am so much bigger and better and more important than you could ever imagine. In another spot he says “I and the Father are one.” For a good Jewish monotheist, this trinity stuff is paradigm shifting. But that is one thing Jesus is really good at.

### **Jesus helps each person with their misconceptions**

And when we are exposed to Jesus, he changes our ideas about God. And salvation. And the meaning of life. And what it means to be human. And morality. And origins. Humans have a proclivity to believe all kinds of nonsense. Jesus just brings us back to truth.

Three Years

Jesus did this for three years with the same group of guys. For three years. Because everybody is in process. And they all needed to take 100 steps, go through 20 paradigm shifts and fail a few times.

Our most impactful friendships will be the long term ones, where we get to tables, have conversations, love deeply, and expose someone to Jesus.

I have an idea for you. It is called a seeker small group. It is based in this thought that everybody is in process and Jesus helps each person with their misconceptions. I have done a dozen of these and trained and led hundreds of leaders, so I know it works. The idea is to just invite a friend, or two or five... to read about the life of Jesus and discuss it each week.

It is the table idea over time. It is a regular time to build relationships, build love, share stories and look at Jesus. I am surprised how many people say 'yes' if I ask them. And then when they show up, spiritual conversations are easy – because they expect to talk about Jesus.

You just open up a chapter about Jesus – like John 13 or 14 and ask what they see, what surprises them, what questions come up. People are really good at saying what they think and Jesus is really good at addressing misconceptions. You see, it takes all of the pressure off of us because if someone has a problem it is not with OUR ideas, it is with JESUS! And trust me, Jesus is really good at addressing issues.

If you have two or five or more people in the group, the group members will learn from each other, correct each other and grow together. There is just no more fun way to do ministry. Now, not everybody has these kind of relationships. But I'll bet 100 people in this room or online do.

And just like I used to train people, Allison is training people now. And a training is starting in about a week! [Seeker Group Training Wednesday June 5 6:30 CCCOmaha.info](https://www.cccomaha.info)

So, here is your 'to do' for this week. Share a table with someone. That is for everyone... or plan to do it or make an invitation. For those of you who have friends that are in your life that have some spiritual interest, come to the Seeker Group Training and learn how to help them move forward.

Friends, lets be like Jesus – the friend of sinners – in loving, inviting and being with people. Grace to all.

Let's stand and pray...

