

## **“A Meal to Remember”**

### **Maggie Keeler 8.3.25**

When I signed up to preach this summer and realized that I had picked the first Sunday of August, a communion Sunday, I started thinking about why we have communion.

Now I know at a basic level, communion is one of two sacraments instituted by Jesus. (The other being baptism.) But why did Jesus choose a meal?

When Jesus wanted to leave His followers with a lasting way to remember Him, He didn't choose a symbol like a dove descending from heaven—like at His baptism (Matthew 3:16).

He didn't point to a cross carved in stone, even though the cross would become the ultimate symbol of His love (Luke 23:33).

He didn't tell them to reenact a miracle like walking on water or healing the sick.

He chose... **a meal.**

Bread and wine.

Ordinary things.

Shared at a table.

Why?

Because meals are part of real life.

We all eat. Every day.

And Jesus chose to make something **ordinary** carry something **sacred**.

Growing up, my mom was an amazing cook.

I mean, *really* good. She could take the simplest ingredients and turn them into something extraordinary. She had a knack for transforming whatever's in the pantry into a dish that felt special.

She never needed to say, "I love you" (although she did all the time), because her cooking said it for her.

Every breakfast she got up early to make, every lunch she packed with a special treat, every dinner she served was like, "I see you. I care. I'm here for you."

Even now that she's no longer with us, there are certain foods she made—those "comfort foods"—that just bring me back. Her mac n' cheese, her meatloaf, her strawberry jam, her pound cake.

They carry memories. They carry meaning. They make me think of her. And more than anything, they make me feel her love.

Jesus understood that power.

He knew that food can carry more than flavor—it can carry **presence**.

In **Luke 22:19–20**, at the Last Supper, Jesus takes bread and says:

*"This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember Me."*

Then He takes the cup and says,

*"This cup is the new covenant in My blood, poured out for you."*

It wasn't just dinner.

It was Him saying, "Whenever you eat and drink—remember Me."

He didn't say, "Build a monument."

He didn't say, "Climb a mountain and look for a miracle."

He said, "Eat together. Break bread. And as you do... I'll be there."

That makes sense, because food brings people together.  
Meals are where we laugh, cry, tell stories, slow down, and connect.

The scripture is full of stories of Jesus eating with people. There are stories of wedding feasts, religious ceremonies, meals with friends and even a picnic for a multitude. If we look closely, Jesus spent a lot of time around a table. Many of his most frequently quoted teachings and significant stories happened while sharing a meal with others. In Luke alone there are at least ten stories of Jesus eating with others and numerous references to food. To the point that professor Robert Karris concludes: "In Luke's Gospel Jesus is either going to a meal, at a meal, or coming from a meal."

Why? Author and theologian Tim Chester argues that one of "Jesus' mission strateg[ies] was a long meal, stretching into the evening. He did evangelism and discipleship round a table with some grilled fish, a loaf of bread, and a pitcher of wine." In Jesus's ministry meals were more than food. They were friendship, welcome, and grace in action.

"He shared meals with outcasts. He spent time with the self-righteous religious elite. He cared for people who had broken every rule and were seen as unclean. He dined at the tables of the wealthy men whose riches were won with lies and corruption...He crossed racial boundaries to the shock of many around him. He invited everyone to the table." (<https://hegetsus.com>)

He did this because he understood what modern researchers like Carolyn Steel have confirmed "Few acts are more expressive of companionship than the shared meal. . . . Someone with whom we share food is likely to be our friend, or well on the way to becoming one." (Carolyn Steel, *Hungry City: How Food Shapes Our Lives* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008), 212.)

And it is clear that Jesus wants to be our friend. In John 15:15, Jesus tells His disciples: "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."

And in Revelations 3:20 we are told, “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.” Revelation 3:20

In other words: *“I want to be close. I want to sit at your table.”*

He could’ve asked us to remember Him through dramatic, mountaintop moments.

But he knew that’s not where most of life happens.

We don’t see a dove every day.

We don’t see miracles every day.

But we **eat** every day.

So Jesus met us right there.

In **1 Corinthians 11:26**, Paul writes,

*“Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.”*

Because Jesus didn’t just want us to think of Him in rare, holy moments—He wanted us to **experience Him in the ordinary**, in the everyday, in the company of others.

So the next time you sit down at a table, or take communion, remember: Jesus is not far away.

He’s the Friend who eats with us, who gave everything for us, and who invites us to come back to the table—again and again.

Just like my mom’s food was a tangible way of saying, “You’re loved, you’re home, you’re mine”—

Jesus gives us bread and wine to say,  
*“You’re seen. You’re invited. You’re loved.”*