

“Let’s Surprise the World!: E is for Eat”

Luke 19:1-10

3/11/2018

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<sup>26</sup>While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take and eat. This is my body.”  
– Matthew 26:26

Remember the story?

In the Gospel of John,

Even before Jesus starts preaching

We hear the story of his first miracle

<sup>1</sup>On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee.

Jesus’ mother was there, and <sup>2</sup>Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. <sup>3</sup>When the wine ran out, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They don’t have any wine.”

– John 2:1-3

And remember what happens next?

We hear other stories of Jesus eating with

Simon the Pharisee

Zacchaeus the tax collector

Among many others

And after Jesus died and was resurrected...

On the night of that first Easter Sunday,

Cleopas, and the other disciple, and a stranger

were traveling out of Jerusalem

<sup>28</sup>When they came to Emmaus, he acted as if he was going on ahead. <sup>29</sup>But they urged him, saying, “Stay with us. It’s nearly evening, and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>After he took his seat at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup>Their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight.  
– Luke 24:28-31

And when the risen Jesus appeared to the disciples

when they were fishing on the Sea of Galilee,

and then they caught the second miraculous catch of fish

after they excitedly returned to shore, what did Jesus say?

<sup>12</sup>Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples could bring themselves to ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup>Jesus came, took the bread, and gave it to them. He did the same with the fish.

– John 21:12-13

And what did the early followers of Jesus do

after the Day of Pentecost?

<sup>41</sup>Those who accepted Peter’s message were baptized. God brought about three thousand people into the community on that day.

<sup>42</sup>The believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers.

<sup>46</sup>Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and simplicity. <sup>47</sup>They praised God and demonstrated God’s goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved.

– Acts 2:41-42, 46-47

And at the end of time,

When Jesus returns on Judgement Day,

What question does he use to separate

The sheep from the goats

The righteous from the unrighteous?

<sup>35</sup>I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

– Matthew 25:35

In the Bible,

With those who knew Jesus

And with those who followed Jesus

It sounds like there was a whole lot of eating going on

And think about every Christian church you’ve ever been in.

Methodist and Lutheran and Catholic and Baptist,

Any denomination...

The pulpit can be on the right or the left or in the middle,

But what one piece of furniture is always in the center?

The Communion Table

Eating with one another is a big part of being the church

I can’t think of any church I’ve been in in the United States

That doesn’t have a Fellowship Hall

The Methodist Church that I grew up in in Hopkins,

Built their Fellowship Hall before they built their sanctuary!

Eating with one another

and having fellowship with one another is important

Last week we agreed that

Jesus wasn’t kidding

when he commanded and commissioned us

to call people to change their hearts and lives

to make disciples of all nations

to be his witnesses to the end of earth

We also agreed that most of us are not

Billy Grahams or Billy Sundays

Preaching to millions and billions of people.

Yet, still, Jesus is calling us to do something.

We can live our lives

With our thoughts, our words, and our deeds

In such a way that we can begin,

Through our own lifestyle and practices

To point the way to Jesus for others

(Show Surprise the World Slide)

In his book, Michael Frost lists five really easy ways

To lead lives that causes those around us

To question why we live our lives in such a special way

To make it easy the first letter of each practice spells BELLS

(Show BELLS Slide)

Last week we talked about blessing three persons

This past week by offering

words of affirmation

(Show words of affirmation Slide)

an act of kindness

(Show act of kindness Slide)

an unexpected gift.

(Show unexpected gift Slide)

So, how did each of us do?

I found that even though I knew I did these things,

I couldn’t remember everything I did.

Hmm...

(Show BELLS form Slide)

Maybe we might need to write them down so we can remember

What we are accomplishing

So, guess what this week’s assignment is

(Show Surprise the World Slide)

Continue to work on the habit of blessing three people each week

And also, start the habit of eating with three people each week.

(Show Surprise the World - E is for Eat Slide)

Who here eats?

You already have a great start.

*(Show "E" is for Eat Slide)*

Here's the next step.

Bring three other persons to your table.

It can be three different meals in which you do this,

Or you can be tricky and add the three to one meal

Or dessert

Or a cup of coffee

Or, if we were Lutherans, a beer

They can be neighbors, or co-workers, or another kid at school  
with whom you've never eaten before

And are we following Jesus' lead on this –

This idea of eating and drinking with others?

And Jesus even took it one step further.

He ate with the outcast and the unpopular

That was one of the complaints against Jesus.

<sup>2</sup>The Pharisees and legal experts were grumbling, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

– Luke 15:1-2

So, that might be a stretch goal for you,

To eat with someone unexpected – from outside of our group

For by so doing, we can show the world what heaven will be like.

Jesus tells us,

<sup>12</sup>"When you host a lunch or dinner, don't invite your friends, your brothers and sisters, your relatives, or rich neighbors. If you do, they will invite you in return and that will be your reward. <sup>13</sup>Instead, when you give a banquet, invite the poor, crippled, lame, and blind.

– Luke 14:12-13

And he also told this story,

"A certain man hosted a large dinner and invited many people.

<sup>17</sup>When it was time for the dinner to begin, he sent his servant to tell the invited guests, 'Come! The dinner is now ready.' <sup>18</sup>One by one, they all began to make excuses. The first one told him, 'I bought a farm and must go and see it. Please excuse me.' <sup>19</sup>

Another said, 'I bought five teams of oxen, and I'm going to check on them. Please excuse me.' <sup>20</sup>Another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.' <sup>21</sup>When he returned, the servant reported these excuses to his master. The master of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go quickly to the city's streets, the busy ones and the side streets, and bring the poor, crippled, blind, and lame.' <sup>22</sup>The servant said, 'Master, your instructions have been followed and there is still room.' <sup>23</sup>The master said to the servant, 'Go to the highways and back alleys and urge people to come in so that my house will be filled.

– Luke 14:16-23

*(Show Heaven Invitation Slide)*

This is what heaven will be like

The image that is used for heaven

is the great wedding banquet of the Lamb

And sometimes, more will happen at these meals or cups of coffee

Than just the mere consumption of calories

*(Show "E" is for Eat Slide)*

You might get to know your companion a bit better.

You might have some unexpected and blessed conversations

You might even plant a seed that will change a life.

In Bible studies we get into the details why

Tax collectors in Jesus' day were so hated

But Jesus ate even with tax collectors

And their lives were changed

<sup>1</sup>Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through town. <sup>2</sup>A man there named Zacchaeus, a ruler among tax collectors, was rich. <sup>3</sup>He was trying to see who Jesus was, but, being a short man, he couldn't because of the crowd. <sup>4</sup>So he ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. <sup>5</sup>When Jesus came to that spot, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay in your home today." <sup>6</sup>So Zacchaeus came down at once, happy to welcome Jesus.

<sup>7</sup>Everyone who saw this grumbled, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

<sup>8</sup>Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone, I repay them four times as much."

<sup>9</sup>Jesus said to him, "Today, salvation has come to this household because he too is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup>The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."

– Luke 19:1-10

Did you see what happened?

Conversion flowered from communion.

This is another way we share the Good News of Jesus

And salvation with others

Michael Frost ends this chapter with a story

*I remember meeting a Southern Baptist minister in Portland who told me his neighbor both claimed to make the best margaritas in all of Oregon and regularly hosted margarita-and-poker nights in his garage. All the men from the neighborhood attended, but the Baptist pastor never accepted an invitation to join them, believing this to be a strong witness to his faith. When I heard this, I asked the pastor how many times his neighbor had asked him any questions about his faith in Christ.*

*"Never," he replied.*

*I asked how often he'd ever shared anything of his faith with his margarita-making neighbor; again, the answer was "Never." You see, it's not "questionable" when a Baptist refuses to attend a margarita-and-poker night. It's expected.*

*I challenged this pastor to accept the next invitation he received, and he took me up on it. His neighbor nearly fell over in shock. The Baptist minister joined the gathering in the garage, and true to his convictions he just drank soda. No one minded. He ended up having more conversations about faith than he'd had in ages.*

*All I'm asking, initially, is that you invite three people to share your table, at least one of whom isn't a churchgoer. But what you'll find happening is that people will reciprocate your hospitality. You'll start getting return invitations. And when that happens you've got serious missional traction.*

*Don't judge the lifestyles or eating (or drinking) habits of your host. See the opportunity as a gold mine for missional relationship building. Don't lose sight of the good goal of conversion, but follow Jesus' model of communion first and see what flowers from it.*

(Hymn "Be Present at Our Table, Lord" # 621)