



WEEK 2 DEVOTIONAL

MARCH 5, 2023

Today, is the second week of Lent.

Welcome to the table.

*Take a moment to pause and breath in and out slowly. Intentionally.
Rest in and welcome God's grace-filled table.*

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A grateful, and frugal friend of ours ripped out a page of a magazine and framed it as a gift to us. This framed upcycled magazine page now hanging in our dining room reads, "One can not think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well."

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When you reflect on those times you have dined well, what is at the forefront of those memories? Is it the place? The food? The even? Or maybe is it those who you were with around the table?

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Think back to high school. What table did you sit at? The jocks?
The geeks? The druggies? The popular? The not-so-popular?

Maybe better put what table welcomed you and why?

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We join Jesus today, at the table of Matthew.

Remember, Matthew was a tax collector, so he was viewed by his fellow Jews as a traitor—as he was working for the enemy collecting taxes for Rome.

So when we hear Jesus invited Matthew the TAX COLLECTOR to follow Him as one of His disciples—know for many this would have been scandalous and an insult to so called “proper Jews”.

That being said—what we’ll realize from our key Scripture this week is that dining well for Jesus has nothing to do with what is on the table but everything to do with who is welcomed to the table.

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As Jesus was walking along, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector’s booth. “Follow Me and be My disciple,” Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed Him.

Later, Matthew invited Jesus and His disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with such scum?”

When Jesus heard this, He said, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do.” Then He added, “Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: ‘I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.’ For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.”

Matthew 9:9–13, NLT



Jesus tells us to learn the meaning of this Scripture... 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices...'

So what do you think Jesus is trying to have us understand? What does this mean to you?



There's a clear division in this Scripture, is there not?

There are those who are too good to have certain kinds of people invited to the table. And then there's Jesus—who sees the good that can come through Him to those at His table.

As you hear this short excerpt from *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, listen for the parallels to today's Scripture passage.

Listen for parallels to your life...Bonhoeffer writes:

...the final breakthrough to community does not occur precisely because [we] enjoy community with one another as pious believers, but not with one another as those lacking piety, as sinners. For the pious community permits no one to be a sinner. Hence all have to conceal their sins from themselves and from the community. We are not allowed to be sinners. Many Christians would be unimaginably horrified if a real sinner were suddenly to turn up among the pious. So we remain alone with our sin, trapped in lies and hypocrisy, for we are in fact sinners.

However, the grace of the Gospel, which is so hard for the pious to comprehend, confronts us with the truth. It says to us, you are a sinner, a great, unholy sinner. Now come, as the sinner that you are, to your God who loves you. For God wants you as you are, not desiring anything from you—a sacrifice, a good deed—but rather desiring you alone. "My child, give me your heart."



As you hear today's Scripture again, reflect on where you find this table in the ordinary moments of your life?



In these final moments today, picture Jesus at a table. He notices you from the corner of His eye looking at Him and invites you with a smile to come and sit.

Now talk with Jesus about what has stirred in you from today's table story?



Come!

Come to the table!

Jesus is expecting you!