

April 18, 2021 Easter 3B  
When are We Going to Eat?  
Luke 24:36-49

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The two most asked questions in my house are:

- 1) What's for supper?
- 2) When are we going to eat?

So I was pleased to see Jesus asking similar questions in our reading today. Let's look at it.

There is Jesus standing among His closest friends, the disciples. He says, "*Shalom!*" Loosely translated, this means something like, "Peace be with you." This isn't a perfect translation. There really isn't an adequate way to put *shalom* into English in one word.

*Shalom* means much more than "peace." Or "peace" means much more than what we think it means. *Shalom* means that all is well with the world, all is just, all is fair, all is the way God means it to be. It is wholeness and contentment. It even conveys something of a challenge—something like "What are you doing to make the world look more like God's world than Caesar's world?" With "Caesar" standing in for whatever the principalities and powers look like in a given era – empires, rulers, governments, multi-national corporations, markets, organized religion and the like.

Appropriately the disciples are startled – the dead one is on the loose. And terrified – because, holy moly, here He is! And He still has *shalom* on His mind. Always has, always will, always does.

Jesus then asks the disciples, "Why are you frightened?"

Well, gee, I don't know, Jesus. Could it be because the last time we saw you, you were dead, hanging on a Roman cross, soldiers all around, angry people all around, and, well, as far as we knew, dead is dead?

Well, He seems to say, that is true enough. Here, look at the wounds – see my hands, see my feet.

So, upon examining his hands and feet, hands and feet that have had nails – spikes, really – driven through them, the disciples, we, are filled with joy tinged with disbelief. They still think it may be a ghost. But nevertheless, joy.

Then the real Jesus steps forward. “Do you anything to eat?” Didn’t He always say you have to come to God’s Kingdom like a child? And how many times a day do children look at their parents and say, “What’s to eat?”

Apparently, as it is in real life, so it is in the resurrection of the dead: We need something to eat, something to sustain us, something to nourish us. So does Jesus. He wants us to feed Him.

So how are we to respond to His simple yet direct request? The disciples offer some broiled fish.

Jesus is hungry. He wants something to eat. They give him fish. He eats the fish. But perhaps we need to pay attention to what happens next. He “opened their minds to understand the scriptures” – that is what was referred to as The Law and the Prophets: Hebrew Scripture.

This suggests that perhaps His hunger is not for fish, not for bread, not for wine. Jesus is still hungry post-resurrection. He was hungry before the resurrection as well. What’s He hungry for. He had said something early in His ministry about “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.” Let’s consider the source of His hunger before we are so quick to offer Him something to satisfy His hunger. An in-depth understanding of Torah and the Prophets is to be the starting place.

Jesus was troubled with the religious experts of the day. He felt that the application of Torah, application of the Law and the Prophets, had gone off in direction not of God’s liking. Instead of bringing God’s people, all people, together, the administration, the understanding, of God’s 638 rules, beginning with the First Ten, was being used to separate people more than bring them together.

This made Jesus hungry – hungry for freedom, shalom and justice for all people – not some people, not most people, not lots of people. All people. The whole world as John 3:16 puts it—“For God so loved the world...”

Had he not made it clear that the hungry were to be fed? The naked clothed? The prisoner visited? The sick made well? The stranger, the resident alien as the Bible calls them, welcomed? The thirsty given something to assuage their thirst? Had he not self-identified with all these people, including lepers, women, orphans, children, servants, gentiles and Jews?

In a church that is increasingly consumed with power struggles within and without; a church looking for the next great Public Relations scheme to attract people; a church consumed with creating dividing lines between correct and incorrect "belief"; a church consumed with staying within the lines, or staying in their own lane, a church consumed with just about anything but Shalom. Is it too difficult to see that Jesus, who promises to be present in the bread and the wine, Jesus who promises that He is the stranger, He is the prisoner, He is the leper, He is the beggar on the street, He is the prostitute, the tax collector, the sinner, the woman who is bleeding to death, the mother or father begging for their child's life; a Jesus who challenges every sovereign temporal and religious power – is it too difficult to see that having been raised from being three days dead and gone and now returned and back with us for all eternity, that this Jesus whom we are to proclaim in all that we do and all that we say wants something more than a piece of broiled fish when he asks, "Have you anything to eat?"

"Repentance," says Jesus, "and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed...to all nations, all persons, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." Are we really witnesses to these things? These things Jesus is hungry for? Jesus, says Luke, is hungry. The Risen Lord is hungry! What in the world are we prepared to offer him? What in the world are we willing to give to him? How shall our witness satisfy His hunger?

We saw a devastating hunger at work in our community this week. A hunger for justice, a hunger for righteousness. What is righteousness? It is when things are right according to God's definition of right. We saw it clearly 2 weeks ago on Good Friday when sin, our sin, all sin, was punished once and for all time and God's people were made right with Him. That's righteousness. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Righteousness is when people created in the image of God are treated like they created in the image of God and have everything God wants them to have. That's righteousness. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

We are not there. We have people in our community starving for righteousness. Starving to have what God wants all people to have. Starving to be treated as people created in the image of God.

That's not going to happen by making a new law or government decree or government agency. The government lacks the power to change human hearts. Only God does that. He does it through His Church being His Church

Is it possible that his "Shalom" is not a greeting at all? Is it rather a request? An order? Is he asking for Shalom? Are we prepared to give him this Shalom He speaks of and died for? Or, are we still satisfied to just offer him a piece of broiled fish? Jesus is hungry. He wants us to be hungry too. How we respond will determine if His hunger is satisfied. We know what it will take. We have these Great Fifty days of Easter to begin!

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!