

Morning meal – Sunday 19th April, 2015

“Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast” (John 21:12a).

Beloved in The Lord,

Festival days are very important, because for a short time they help us to escape the daily grind, and they give us an opportunity to have some fellowship with our friends, outside the normal routine. When God gave Israel His Commandments and Laws, He specified certain days of the year that were to be obligatory festival days. These days corresponded to certain very important events in the life of God’s people and commemorated special events.

Today we have a festival day in our congregation’s life. We have designated this day as our Garden Fete. Garden Fete is a time to focus upon God and His Creation, and to thank Him for His abundant blessings. In our Garden Fete service today, I would like to spend the next few minutes unpacking the morning Jesus had breakfast with His disciples on the beach. Of all the occasions described in The New Testament, this morning breakfast is one of my favourites. I love this event, because it tells us so much about God and His dealings with us. It is a very simple yet profound occasion. Jesus simply invites His disciples to have breakfast with Him. He simply says: **“Come and have breakfast.”**

We need to understand that this event occurred sometime between Easter and Ascension Day. Jesus has risen from the dead, but He has not yet left the Earth. He spent 40 days after His resurrection, making various appearances to the disciples and other believers. This morning breakfast was one such occasion where His disciples saw Him.

After Easter, the disciples were in a bit of a quandary as to what to do. Peter decided to go fishing and some of the other disciples joined him. They spent all night in the boat, but they had caught nothing. As dawn breaks, they notice a man standing on the beach, but they do not realise that this is no ordinary man, it is Jesus Himself. The man calls out: “Children, do you have anything to eat?” They reply that they have nothing. The response comes: “Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find *a catch*.” They cast out the net and suddenly it is full of fish. John immediately understands that this is the work of Jesus and so he says “It is The Lord.” Peter, being Peter, jumps out of the boat and swims for the shore, eager to meet Jesus.

Oh, how we need more people with the spirit of Peter. People who rush to meet Jesus, and who are not always shying away from Him and making excuses for not spending time with Him. What a blessing it would be, if people eagerly and expectantly came to Church on Sundays, if people figuratively speaking sped to Church. When we come to meet with God, with excitement and expectation and eagerness, then we will receive much from Him, for He loves to bless us.

When the rest of the crew come ashore, they discover that Jesus has fixed breakfast for them. There are already fish cooking on the hot coals, and Jesus invites them to place some of their fish on as well. Then comes the beautiful invitation: ***“Come and have breakfast.”***

Jesus, here demonstrates His desire to live together with us, to eat with us, to have sweet fellowship with us. This is why we have Easter, this is why we have Christmas. Jesus came into this world to make it possible for us to live in fellowship with Him and the Father and The Holy Spirit. We find this truth over and over again throughout the Bible.

Jesus said: “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:1-3).

Jesus desires for us to be where He is – in the Father’s House. He invites us to a morning meal that will never end. He invites us to respond to Him in faith and trust. With His precious blood shed on the Cross, Jesus opened the way to God for us. The way was blocked by sin. We could not come near God by reason of the fact that we are sinful. Nothing sinful could come near Holy God. The Bible teaches us that God is love, and because He loves us, He desires to give us a seat at His table. The only way He could do that and satisfy His justice, was by shedding the blood of His Son Jesus.

When we put our trust in Jesus believing on Him, then we are cleansed by His blood from all sin and we are righteous in God’s eyes. We are able to take our place at His table. Jesus once told the following parable about a King who put on a wedding breakfast for his son. Read it carefully: ***“Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying, ² “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. ³ And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come. ⁴ Again he sent out other slaves saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited, “Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.”’ ⁵ But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business, ⁶ and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them. ⁷ But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire. ⁸ Then he *said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹ Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.’ ¹⁰ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.***

¹¹ “But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, ¹² and he *said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?’ And the man was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the

***servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen"(Mt.22:1-14).**

It is interesting to note that one man had entered the dining hall without a wedding garment, and he got thrown out. We need to understand the custom of those days. The person who was hosting the banquet provided appropriate garments for the guests to wear. This man apparently decided that his own clothes would be good enough, and that he did not need to wear the provided garment. It did not fare well for him. What this is teaching us is that in order to take our place at the final marriage feast of The Lamb of God, we need to receive our garments from Jesus Himself. We cannot come on our terms, trusting in our own selves. We must come His prescribed way, along His path, in the appropriate dress that He provides. We receive the appropriate dress, when we repent of our sins putting off the old Adam, and when we put on the Resurrected Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible speaks of a "Garment of Salvation" and a "Robe of Righteousness" . We read in Isaiah 61:10: ***"I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."***

God freely gives this to us, if we are willing to receive it from Him. It cost Him an unimaginable price, but He freely gives it to us, because He loves us so much. Please understand that God loves you, so very much and He wants to seat you at His table. Jesus, out of His love for you shed His blood for you.

Do not try to come to God in your own clothes. Do not think God will let me in and receive me because I have been a good person, and have done many good things. I belonged to the church and served in this and that capacity. God has to receive me on the basis of what I have done. Also do not be like those invited guests in the parable who were too preoccupied with other things to come to God and to heed His invitation. They came up with stupid excuses and cut off their opportunity to dine with the King.

Rejecting Jesus in this life leads to being rejected by Him in the next forever. That is a horrifying thought to be rejected forever. That is why the author to the letter to the Hebrews writes:

"Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For

we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,¹⁵ while it is said,

***“Today if you hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me”(Hebrews 3:12-15).***

At the end of this chapter we read about those who hardened their hearts:

“And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?¹⁹ So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:18-19).

This is a terrible state to be in. To be locked out because of unbelief. That is why, today, I urge you: do not harden your hearts, but hear the good news that Jesus invites you, and come to Him today. The past is the past. Today is the day. The day is rapidly approaching when you will have to leave this life. It may even be today. If you have accepted Jesus invitation, then that departure will be sweet, as you cross over the sea of death, Jesus will be waiting on the shore. The fish will be cooking and the wine will be poured and Jesus will say: “Come by beloved child and have breakfast with Me.” Please do not reject Him, but accept His invitation today. He loves you.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.