

Remember me!
Luke 22:14–20; John 6:51

When I was sitting at the ocean during my sabbatical I often found myself wondering about communion: What is it about this ritual? What was it about breaking bread that had the two men recognize Jesus? When they hadn't recognized him during their long walk on the road to Emmaus?

I confess, my pondering was often trying to figure it out: How does it work? What makes it work? If we said the right words, would we experience the same magic, the same recognition the two men experienced?

Well, we aren't at the ocean, but we're in an *awesome* oak cathedral.... So for the next few minutes let's ponder the invitation and mystery of this ancient communion ritual...and perhaps...together...we'll recognize something...or someone...that we didn't before....

One of the things I was reminded about in my sabbatical reading was that the Gospels are written *after* Jesus ascended into heaven. This isn't new information for us...but let's remember it together....

This explains why each of the four Gospels are different. But what's absolutely consistent in all of the testimony is that *something* happened. And what's also consistent is that all the testimonies are eye-witness accounts told through the resurrection of Jesus. They're stories told from the Resurrection Garden. And from these eye-witness testimonies we know that something happened. Something liberating. And healing. And releasing. Something so life-giving and life-altering that after decades of telling the stories, they needed to write them down.

The story of Jesus' last supper with the disciples is told post-resurrection.

¹ James Alison's *Raising Abel* and *Knowing Jesus* have hugely shaped my imagination here.

Again, we know this. At least intellectually. But given the time and place we live, I'm pretty sure that subconsciously most of us read this story as though it's told in real time. Much the way NPR might report the story. Chances are we hear this story of Jesus' last meal from the Garden of Gethsemane.

But what happens when we hear the story of the Last Supper from the Resurrection Garden?

In your mind's eye, go into the Resurrection Garden. What do you notice? What do you experience? *Pause.*

The view from the Resurrection Garden is very different than the view from the Garden of Gethsemane! From the Resurrection Garden we see the Crucified *and* Living Christ. Not one or the other, but simultaneously Crucified and Alive. Post-resurrection we see that Jesus, the Persecuted Victim is Jesus, the Lamb of God on the Throne in the Kingdom of God.

From here, in the presence of the Crucified/Resurrected Jesus, what do we hear and see when Jesus says "Remember me" at the Last Supper? *Pause.*

In the Resurrection Garden, what becomes visible is the fullness and fulfillment of God's love and forgiveness, of God's grace and mercy, of God's justice and peace. From here we see God coming to us, like waves endlessly coming toward the shore, God comes to us with an ocean of love and forgiveness.

"Remember me."

In his dying we watched Jesus bear the shame and guilt and accusations of his persecutors and killers. Of our betrayals and denials. Of the sins of humanity. Bearing the shame, we heard him pray, "Father forgive them, they don't know what they're doing."

"Remember me."

In the Resurrection Garden, the Crucified/Living Christ opens his wounded hands offering Peace to his very distraught and disoriented disciples. And in Christ's presence, the shame and guilt of their betrayals and denials and fear were released. Our shame and fear are released. In the Resurrection Garden, Jesus, the Risen Victim, gives us sturdy garments of love and forgiveness to replace the fig leaves we've gathered and used trying to hide and cover our shame.

“Remember me.”

The Aliveness of God that we see revealed through the Crucified/Resurrected Jesus is so strong, so powerful, so sturdy that death cannot touch it. From the Resurrection Garden we see that dead is not dead! God's aliveness—God's love and forgiveness and presence and grace—cannot and will not be diminished. Not by our shame or guilt. Not by our sins or failures. Not by our fear or despair. No cross. No tomb. No death has the power to diminish the Light and Life and Aliveness of God. God is a living God! Eternally, persistently, awesome-ly alive!

“Remember me.”

In the Resurrection Garden, we are re-membered. The open arms of the Crucified/Resurrected Jesus hold our belovedness and our brokenness. The arms of the Crucified/Resurrected One hold our shame and guilt along with our forgiveness and release. The post-resurrection Jesus meets us and the fragmented pieces of our brokenness and pain are held. And we hear the Living Christ say, Peace. And as the Breath of the Holy Spirit fills us, our fears and failures, our losses, our despair are exhaled as the Breath of Life re-members us. And raises us up.

“Remember me.”

In the Resurrection Garden we are re-membered. The Spirit stitches us together with the powerful and unbreakable threads of God's love. We are God's beloved. Eternally.

“Remember me.”

“Do this. And remember me.”

May it be so.