

**SERMON: "DEVOTED TO ... BREAKING BREAD"**  
**TEXT: OLD TESTAMENT GENESIS 18:1-8**  
**NEW TESTAMENT ACTS 2:37-47**

**October 29, 2023**  
**Reformation Sunday**

**Dr. Dave Kivett**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Johnny asked me a simple question a few weeks back that got me thinking  
He asked, 'Did you cook as much at other churches as you do here?'"  
My answer, "No. not really. We did a pig pickin at the church in Georgia.  
I did the cooking for that with a bunch of other guys. It was my idea."

I said this as if a church having a pig pickin is commonplace. It is called that because  
the meat is so tender after being cooked all night, you can pick it apart by hand).  
With my roots in North Carolina and Johnny's in South Carolina  
I knew he would know what I was talking about. Barbecue is a shared language.

At the church I served in North Carolina, we also (and obviously) had a pig pickin  
My friend Mike did the cooking. He had his own catering business, his own smoker  
Yes. This is a sermon about food. And yes, a sermon about breaking bread  
starts with me talking about barbecue. And yes, this church will, in short course,  
have a smoker ... and I hope a pig pickin. Talking about some whole hog B-B-Q.

I have been cooking more here. I advocated for (begged for) that grill/smoker.  
Thinking about why that is, I've settled on two honest answers  
One, it is me wanting to share with you a taste of the South, some spice

Two, I am learning more and more something I wished I learned earlier  
I've spent too much time hurrying from one thing to another.  
Probably trying to impress the world with my busy-ness.  
I've rushed through too many meals, too many drive thru dinners

A big part of what makes a meal special is the time put into it  
That is certainly true of the cooking. It is equally, if not even more so,  
the case with the time just sitting, taking your time, enjoying the food  
and, if is a shared meal, enjoying the company.

That simple truth was reinforced through the shutdown of the pandemic  
We had, I know I had, a hunger to be with (eat with) other people  
That desire for and need for table fellowship is always there, isn't it?  
It gets reinforced when it has been too long since we sat down together

That is something becoming all the more evident as I preach through this series  
These things to which the early Church was devoted are not just good things,  
they are good for us - the apostles teaching, fellowship, breaking bread and prayer  
These things are, at a basic level, the things we need.

## DINE IN

Of course we need food. Along with that, we need meals together to enjoy the food and the fellowship. So, let's look at these verses again and explore what else they say about being devoted to breaking bread.

**They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.**

Luke, who wrote Luke and Acts, really focuses on togetherness. He mentions it several times. He also talks about them being together in the temple AND breaking bread at home. He mentions both places. So then, what might be the ask here? Last week I suggested that the Church is asking for your time, for time together.

This week, I think the 'ask' might be for a dinner invitation. One is for a meal at the church ... maybe the monthly 'Meal for Everyone' like we are having this Wednesday. Sally Rayzor is cooking. Thank you, Sally! It may be Sunday Supper at First Church Waterloo. I'm cooking today. It may also, before too long, be a Pig-Pickin. Can I get an "Amen?"

Two is a dinner invitation from you, for a meal at your home. The passage specifically says they broke bread at home and they ate their food with glad and generous hearts. At home. Your kitchen. When was the last time you had friends over for dinner?

I just had a good friend, one I have known for thirty years, spend the weekend. I enjoyed showing him around Cedar Falls and Waterloo, the community I call home, a community I love deeply (always will now). Enjoyed a shrimp po boy at Rodney's in downtown Waterloo. Did brunch after church at George's Local. I enjoy our local eateries and want to support them, share them with friends.

But what I most enjoyed was firing up my grill, having a good friend at my table. When was the last time you had friends over, fired up the grill, set the table? When was the last time you had an old friend over? When was the last time you invited somebody new over (or out) for dinner?

Shared meals are a great way to meet and eat and make new friends. All that breaking bread together at home with glad and generous hearts described in Acts could only continue if that table is a welcoming table. A table where there is room for more, another chair, another leaf for the table.

## SUMMARY - COMMUNION

You see a devotion to breaking bread includes meals at home,  
a table with room for new friends. It also includes breaking bread like we do today  
Breaking the bread of the sacrament of holy communion

### **Show image – communion**

Celebrating communion with the risen Christ, our host  
communion with one another, with all the other guests at Jesus' table

Maybe we could have combined two of the sermons in the series  
Fellowship and the breaking of bread. We could do so under the heading  
'communion' as long we understand that communion is both the sacrament  
when we remember Christ's sacrifice and connect with him through  
bread and cup symbolizing his body and blood  
AND communion is fellowship with one another  
and all sorts of others and anothers

We've been using individual serving containers of bread and juice for communion  
since the shutdown because of COVID. They are shaped like a chalice, kind of cool  
We will continue to make them available for those who wish to be, and need to be,  
extra careful. We will also continue to provide gluten free options  
These are the things you do when you strive to be "A Place for Everyone.'

This morning, as we focus on being devoted to breaking bread, we begin doing that  
We are not only breaking bread, we are baking it. Thank you so very much  
to the people who are really preaching this sermon, getting the point across  
To the worship committee, led by Joan and Kate. To the bread bakers and  
breadmakers – Jeff, Judy, Cathy and Pam. Thank you! You get an "amen!"

I asked for their help because I wanted the church to smell like bread today  
I really want you to sense God's love for you and me, us and them,  
with all your senses. To hear it in our words and music.  
To see it as bread is broken  
To touch it and taste it ... and smell it.

I'm particularly psyched about you smelling it. Why? Because our sense of smell  
is so powerful, because it speaks to us in a language beyond and behind words,  
because smell is so connected to our memories AND most of all  
because smell colors outside the lines, it spills all over  
goes wherever it goes ... well beyond any boundaries we might draw.

The devotion to the apostles teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread  
and the prayers that we are seeking to emulate, the devotion we are asking for  
from you ... My prayer is that devotion smells to high heaven (literally)  
and spills all over the place, making God's love known to lots of noses.

In a world where, quite honestly, there are plenty of things that stink  
we really could use some communion that smells ... and spills all over