



*Jesus Meets Us at the Table*

*John 21:1-19*

*Sunday, May 5th, 2019*

*First Federated Church of Peoria, Illinois*

*The Rev. Dr. Forrest Krummel, Jr.*

Have you ever met someone who left you never the same for the better?

For the past twelve years Tinney Davidson, 88 years old, sat in a chair by her picture window and waved to the school children as they walked to high school in the morning. It started in 2007 with her husband. Over the years she developed a friendship with the students and some would come and visit her at home. She continued the morning ritual even after her husband died.

Last week the students stood in her front yard with signs and flowers and blew her a collective kiss as a school year drew to a close and Mrs. Davidson was preparing to move into assisted living. The signs read "We love you Mrs. Davidson" and "Thank you for being awesome."

In the words of one of the students, "I think that it is going to be a tough legacy for whoever will live here to carry on."

There are people who touch our lives and whose touch forever changes us for the better. In our gospel lesson, Easter is over. It was time to go back to the normal routine of life. Simon Peter and Thomas, as well as the sons of Zebedee who were first called by Jesus return to their nets. They returned to their old way of life. But then, with the breaking of new day this return to normalcy is broken as a stranger appears on the beach and asks if they caught any fish. "No", they replied. "Throw your nets on the other side of the boat," the Stranger called back. It is at this moment that the disciple identified simply as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" whispered to Peter, "It is the Lord!" It's Him!

Once Jesus has come into your life, once Jesus has touched your life, you can never be the same, ever again. You may go back to your profession but you will not go back to your old way of life, your old way of looking at things.

Tim Kreutter, one of the founders of Cornerstone Development in Kampala, Uganda once said to me that once you take a boy from the streets or the ghetto and show they the discipline of following Jesus, even if they do not complete the program for a variety of reasons, they will never fall back into their old way of life, their old habits. They are forever changed.

And that is what this Table is about. We meet Jesus at the Table--to be fed, to be restored, to be encouraged, to be reminded not of who we were, but of who we are.

After they finished their meal Jesus turned to Simon Peter, the one who denied him three times and asked Peter if he love him. There are three words, as you have probably been told, in the Greek for “love”; eros, phileo, and agape. Eros is passion. Phileo is familial or “brotherly”, and agape is a “God-like” sacrificial love.

The first two times Jesus asked Peter for agape love, and each time Peter replies with phileo, familial love. The third time Jesus asked for familial love. Peter is grieved but replied, “Yes, Lord.” Jesus meets us where we are in life. He calls us to a higher calling but enters our lives where we are in our spiritual journey and walks with us in this journey we call life. At this Table we are reminded that Jesus is there to pick us up when we falter, to forgive us when we miss the mark, and redeem us when we know that we are not who we are called to be.

And this, my friends, is the gospel truth.

To God be the glory. Amen.