

Isaiah 55:1-5

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ²Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. ³Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. ⁴See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. ⁵See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²²On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,²³and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; ²⁴whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, ²⁵that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

One Bread, One Body

October 2, 2016 World Communion Sunday

Love In Any Language

Je t'aime

Te amo

Ya ti-bya lyu blyu

Ani o hev ot cha

I love you

The sounds are all as different

As the lands from which they came

And though the words are all unique

Our hearts are still the same

Love in any language

Straight from the heart

Pulls us all together

*Never apart
And once we learn to speak it
All the world will hear
Love in any language
Fluently spoken here*

*We teach the young our differences
Yet look how we're the same
We love to laugh, to dream our dreams
We know the sting of pain*

*From Leningrad to Lexington
The farmer loves his land
And daddies all get misty-eyed
To give their daughter's hand*

*Oh maybe when we realize
How much there is to share
We'll find too much in common
To pretend it isn't there*

*Love in any language
Straight from the heart
Pulls us all together
Never apart
And once we learn to speak it
All the world will hear
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*Love in any language
Fluently spoken here.*

That song was performed by Sandi Patti back in the late 80's but I find it to be an appropriate song not only in light of World Communion Sunday but also because it is the message of the Gospel and one that we need to hear over and over again.

Today we celebrate our oneness in Jesus. Our unity as the children of God and the followers of Jesus. And we do so by having a simple meal together. A meal that is a symbol or sacrament if you will, that helps us not only to remember Jesus but to experience his presence with us right here and now. It is simply bread and juice and yet it is so much more than that. And as I considered how we might be together today on this day of World Communion it certainly didn't escape my thinking and experience just how divided we hear that we are.

Our media, our news, our politics, our religions, all seem to focus on the things that divide us. It reminds me of that old saying, "If it weren't for bad news, we wouldn't have any news at all." But there is so much more good news in the world that we get to hear, and there is so much more that brings us and binds us together, and I want to talk about that today through scripture, stories and songs.

It is a basic Christian principle that Paul so clearly talks about when he says we are all one body. That the head can't live without the feet and knees can't live without the ears. And though my feet is tired and my heart is weary, I still need the whole body of believers so that I can live faithfully in the world. We are in this together as brothers and sisters and we need to look for the good things that hold us together in the world and not the things that divide us.

I saw this amazing video on Facebook the other day about a group of young people from all different parts of the world who were being asked about their ethnic and national identity. There were people from France, England, Turkey, Cuba, Kurdistan, Iceland, and many more. They all felt that they were culturally and racially unique to their respective nations. And some of them felt that they couldn't tolerate some people from other nationalities. When asked if they would like to take a little journey based on their own DNA to discover their true identities they agreed although with some reluctance. Two weeks later they gathered all the participants together, about 40 or so of them to give them the results. Each and every one of them discovered that their roots extend across several nationalities and racial markers. Some were overcome with emotion as they realized that the peoples they had historically held in contempt were in fact blood relations. There was no one who came from any type of pure race or nationality, they were all connected somehow. One young lady discovered that she and one of the other participants shared a distant relative and he was actually a cousin based on his DNA. There were tears and laughter. One of the participants said, "this should be compulsory. There would be no such things as extremism in the world. If people knew their heritage like that who would be stupid enough to think of such a thing as a pure race?" In a way we are all related to one another; all cousins in a broad sense.

How would you feel if you discovered that the people that you most dislike or whom you most assume are evil or uncivilized or unchristian turned out to be one of your distant relatives? That you shared a common history with someone who may have been born 2 or 3 hundred years ago? And isn't that what we find today? That here at this table you and I and millions of others both living and dead, share a common ancestor who is God with Us, Emmanuel, Jesus. And today we sit down at this table and remember that he is the One who binds us all together and he wants us to live in unity and love. That doesn't mean that we don't disagree with one another. That might be asking too much. But that even if we disagree we won't become unloving or cause harm to another. We agree to disagree, but we never agree to become less than what our Lord has called us to be.

*Love in any language
Fluently spoken here.*

(Get my guitar)

Galatians 3:26-29

For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

1 Corinthians 10: 15-17

I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?¹⁷Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

One Bread, One Body—by John B. Foley

*One bread, one body, one Lord of all, one cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many, throughout the earth, we are one body in this one Lord.
Gentile or Jew, servant or free, woman or man, no more. (Please join me on the chorus)*

*One bread, one body, one Lord of all, one cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many, throughout the earth, we are one body in this one Lord.
Many the gifts, many the works, one in the Lord of all.*

*One bread, one body, one Lord of all, one cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many, throughout the earth, we are one body in this one Lord.
Grain for the fields, scattered and grown, gathered to one for all. (repeat chorus)*

This hymn is from our new hymnal and speaks powerfully about our connection to Jesus and the many gifts that we bring to the table, a table that is set for the whole world to share. Which reminds me of another story that Jesus told.

Luke 14.15-24

One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, “Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!”¹⁶ Then Jesus said to him, “Someone gave a great dinner and invited many.¹⁷ At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’¹⁸ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.’¹⁹ Another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.’²⁰ Another said, ‘I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.’²¹ So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’²² And the slave said, ‘Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.’²³ Then the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled.’²⁴

God desires for his house to be filled to overflowing. That everyone is invited to the feast of his love and forgiveness and he sends us out to do the inviting. Not out of fear or shame but out of joy and love.

In an essay by Daniel Clendenin he shares this wonderful wedding story.

“When my friend's daughter, Lisa, got married, they wanted to invite their entire church, but budgetary constraints prohibited that.

Instead, after the service, they had the local police block off the main street in downtown Waco, Texas. Guests danced in the streets and enjoyed refreshments from a Baskin Robbins ice cream cart.

The gazebo in the park next to the theatre sheltered the wedding cake.

Lisa's husband, Chris, had made friends with a number of homeless men who lived under a bridge. As a pastor, Chris had employed them for odd jobs at his church.

"Coyote," the leader of his homeless friends, attended the wedding in his standard attire of jeans with holes in the knees, a scraggly beard, and unwashed hair.

He organized his friends to clean up the streets after the wedding, then sat on the curb with a big smile and smoked a cigar.

Another guest was Lisa's next door African-American neighbor. The little girl loved to spend time with Lisa, and really wanted to come to her wedding.

So the mother, the daughter, and the grandfather all came. The 70-year-old grandfather was soon the center of attraction as he went out on the street and danced to the music. Soon the college girls were vying to dance with him.

As passersby strolled by and inquired about what was happening, they too were invited to the wedding.

There were guests dressed in their nicest clothes alongside guests who wouldn't feel at home at a formal occasion. No matter how they were dressed, every person felt welcomed as an honored guest, just as God himself welcomes us to himself, and invites us to welcome each other."

Love in any language
Straight from the heart
Pulls us all together
Never apart
And once we learn to speak it
All the world will hear
Love in any language
Fluently spoken here

I want to leave you with this beautiful blessing for World Communion Sunday written by Jan Richardson who is a poet, preacher, artist, and author. It is called "**And the Table Will Be Wide**"

And the Table Will Be Wide
A Blessing for World Communion Sunday

And the table
will be wide.
And the welcome
will be wide.
And the arms
will open wide
to gather us in.
And our hearts
will open wide
to receive.

And we will come
as children who trust
there is enough.
And we will come
unhindered and free.
And our aching
will be met
with bread.
And our sorrow
will be met
with wine.

And we will open our hands
to the feast
without shame.
And we will turn
toward each other
without fear.
And we will give up
our appetite
for despair.
And we will taste
and know
of delight.

And we will become bread
for a hungry world.
And we will become drink
for those who thirst.
And the blessed
will become the blessing.
And everywhere
will be the feast. Thanks be to God. Amen.

– Jan Richardson

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