



April 1, 2007

A Living Eucharist

Colossians 2:6-7

- The Eucharist is body broken open and blood poured out. What does it mean to be a living Eucharist?
- How do you see yourself broken open in order that you might be Christ for another?
- Even after something is broken open that it may pour out for another it must be nourished and replenished or it will run dry. In what ways are you nourished on your journey? What priority do you place on that nourishment?
- Often we may think of roots as something that cement us to a place. If we are rooted we are confined. How then can being rooted in Christ actually free us? More specifically, to what kind of freedom is Paul referring in Colossians?

Look at Romans 12:1, 2, Look at Colossians 3:16, and Acts 1:8, Galatians 5:22

- In all of the verses listed above, Paul is outlining the ways in which we can live for Christ. Receiving Him is just the beginning. Once we have received him, we must continue to follow where He leads. In essence, we must live for Christ.
- As Paul addresses the Romans, what are the ways in which he calls people to live for Christ?
- How does living first for Christ, lead us to live for others?
- What would have to look different in your life if you were to begin living for Christ first and foremost? What about for those others around you?

April 8, 2007

Life and Death

I Corinthians 9:19-23, II Corinthians 4:7-14

- In these verses in Corinthians, we see Paul is living the example Christ set for us in his death. What specifically is Paul saying about how those around him become part of how he lives?
- How do you see yourself living that out? In what ways are you living for others to no benefit of your own, but purely for the benefit of them experiencing Christ through you?
- What is most difficult about living out a life like the one depicted by Paul in his example?
- What must die in us in order for the kind of life Paul described to grow?
- From your observations, what might Paul have had in common with those he describes in the passage from I Corinthians? Why is this so significant?
- Aside from breaking God's law, to what lengths would you surmise Paul would go to reach the people he reached?
- To what lengths could you imagine yourself going to reach others? How comfortable does that feel?
- To what extent would you be willing to risk your own comfort and feeling of safety to save all that you could?
- In what ways have you experienced feelings of resistance to where you think God may be asking you to go in order to reach someone?
- Looking at the passage from II Corinthians, it is pretty clear that feelings of resistance from Paul would be understandable given the descriptions of what he and his companions endured. How does he find his way through all those circumstances?
- How does Christ being the Eucharist give Paul the strength to continue in the face of such adversity?
- What encouragement can you draw from the Eucharist Christ that is for all of us? How does this affect how you live in community with others or your willingness to embark on a life engaged in community?

April 15, 2007

Blessing

Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:23-25 & Genesis 12

- What is most striking to you as you read Genesis 1:27? Having finished creating a place, he created the final addition to its inhabitants. What is most striking about this creation in particular?
- All these many years later, are you able to see yourself reflected in verse 27 in the same way the verse speaks specifically about Adam? What effect does this have on you?
- Look now at Genesis 2:23-25. Take a moment to reflect on the order depicted here. What is most striking to you about the “fit” of the people God brought together in this marriage union he created for us from the very beginning?
- So far, we see in these verses the way in which God has equipped us to “be” in this place He created. How do you see your own life reflecting this original picture of order and peaceful blessing He brought to the earth He created?
- Through the next several chapters in Genesis, you can read the accounts of sin from the very first account with Adam and Eve through the destruction of humanity save Noah and his family. Genesis continues through the repopulating of the earth up to the point at which we arrive in chapter 12 with God calling Abraham to live a life of faithfulness in order that he might be a blessing to all the earth. How do you see God acting to try to restore the original order He created in Genesis? What has God seen from humanity in terms of their faithfulness and obedience?
- Even Abraham, chosen by God because of his faithfulness falters. What does God's response tell you about how he feels about those who desire to be faithful to Him?
- If you follow the generations forward beginning from Abraham himself you discover that Jesus Himself was born from Abraham's family tree. What is your reaction to verses 1-3 knowing what Abraham never could have? Take a moment to consider where we might have been had Abraham not been obedient to what God called him to do. God promised a blessing to all the families on earth through Abraham. Translate that forward through your own life. What effect if any does this have on your desire to be faithful and your willingness to be obedient?
- To bring Shalom to the earth is to bring the peace of God to the earth. This is where we started in Genesis 1 with the creation of Adam and Eve. The earth was a place of “Shalom”. What does that mean? In a world broken by war and violence, what would it look like to bring the peace of God to those around us?
- The idea of bringing the peace of God to the earth may seem like an overwhelming job, achievable by nothing short of a miracle. Yet Abraham was able to play a pivotal role. What did he have to do to participate? How is the body of Threads being called to participate? How are you being called to participate as a part of the body of Threads? What about as an individual?

April 22, 2007

New Humanity

Ephesians 2:11-16 II Corinthians

- Reading Ephesians, Paul writes about the ways in which Christ bridged the gap between the Jews and the Gentiles. Can you think of an example of how your relationship with Christ, whatever that has been up to this point, has been a bridge for a gap in your life?
- How does living as a Eucharist, allowing ourselves to be broken open for the benefit of others build a bridge for those not yet here at Threads?
- Can you think of an example from your own experience where you have seen God do something in your life or the life of someone else that was beyond your wildest imagination? What was it? How did it affect your relationship with Him? What about with those around you?
- Many of us spend much of our life trying to “fit in” in some way or another. Ephesians paints a picture of a kind of unity we can experience in Christ. How do you live out that unity Christ has provided as a part of the body of Threads?
- As you think about the kind of unity among the two very diverse groups Paul uses as an example in his letter to the Ephesians, it is pretty clear that even the most obvious obstacles are nothing if Christ is willing to use Himself as a bridge for us to close gaps among one another. Are there any places for you where you experience walls that prevent the kind of bridges Christ offers in Himself? What is your biggest struggle in giving those walls over to Christ that He might break them down and bring the kind of unity He wants for us to have in Him?
- Who in your wildest imagination wouldn't you see yourself sitting down to dinner with? What is your reaction to those you can see across what appear to be great chasms? In the new humanity Christ creates what specifically will span the gap if we allow ourselves to submit to the kind of unity Christ wants for us?
- What is most scary to you about that kind of unity?
- Looking at the picture of Christ, pouring himself out so that we can be filled, where could you find the strength to care about those others you see across the gap?

Take Time to Pray

Take time this week to pray over your willingness to let yourself be Eucharist for others. Pray for God to grow a love for Him and others in you of which you would never yourself be capable of imagining, even in your wildest dreams.

April 29, 2007

The Church as Eucharist

Acts 8:9-20 Luke 5:16

- What would you say is the greatest sacrifice you have made up to this point in your life? What gave you the strength you needed to do what you did?
- Looking at the passage from Acts, what did Simon do after he was baptized?
- In what way was Simon trying to fill himself up? Specifically upon whose actions was Simon relying for fullness? Can you relate this to anything in culture today? How about looking at yourself, can you relate this to anything you have done?
- What is the result of pursuing that “fullness” in the way Simon did?
- Let’s compare Simon’s actions depicted in the book of Acts with those of Christ Himself in the book of Luke. Clearly the key to being able to pour oneself out as a Eucharist for others lies in how we are filled up. How did Christ fill Himself up?
- What was Christ experiencing in those times He retreated to the wilderness to pray? What is He building in those times? How do you think giving Himself the space to have desert experiences allowed Him to do the work He came to do?
- How does that connect to how we live out our experience as the body of Threads? From where do we get our fullness? Why is the source of that so important?
- What kind of space do you allow yourself to fill up? From where are you trying to draw that fullness?
- From our own strength, being a living Eucharist requires more than what we could possibly give, more than what we could procure by any means available to us, yet it is the most important part of living out the example of Christ. How do you resolve that as an individual, a partner in a relationship, as a community, as a body of Christ?

Drenched

Galatians 3:27

Take Time to Pray

As we contemplate our roles as individuals in being a living Eucharist for those around us and those being drawn to the body of Threads, we must certainly recognize our need for God's saving grace. Through Baptism we celebrate with those who have chosen to welcome the heart of Christ for their own.

- Pray for things that need to die in each of us as individuals in order that we might experience the growth of new life.
- Pray for those individuals who have come forward to take the step dying to themselves that they may be filled up with the new life of Christ through the public celebration of baptism.
- Pray for those individuals not yet ready to experience that death. Pray that they might feel secure in the grace and goodness of the heart of God.
- Pray that the heart of God be in each of us.
- Pray that those who desire to live as a blessing to others see the imperative of accepting God's grace.
- Pray that we would see the need to die to living for ourselves in order to be the blessing to those around us that God intended.
- Pray also that those seeking to participate in this life of being a living Eucharist see the step of celebrating baptism with community as an integral part.