

Sermon Title: “A Seat at the Table”

March 3, 2024

Luke 22:14-23

Rev. Dr. Raphael Warnock

Scripture:

14 When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. 15 He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, 16 for I tell you, I will not eat it[Ⓜ] until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” 17 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves, 18 for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” 19 Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” 20 And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.Ⓜ 21 But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. 22 For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!” 23 Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

Sermon Summary:

The United States is the only country that still executes inmates and asks them what they want to eat for their last meal. This is a strange and bizarre gesture; is it supposed to soften the brutality of their execution? Rev. Warnock shared his experience meeting with a man on death row two days before his execution. Rev. Warnock did his best to assure him that even he had a seat at the table and was a child of God. As representatives of Jesus, we ought to recognize that Jesus sits with those marginalized and those incarcerated without due process. If we are to walk with Jesus, we need to understand Jesus walks with those most disenfranchised and oppressed. Rev. Warnock states that to be with Jesus, is to be with a man on death row.

Jesus tells his disciples to take up their cross and follow him, those who lose their life for His sake, will save it. Jesus’ main objective during His last meal before suffering on the cross, is to be with his disciples. He was not concerned about the food, but about who was at the table, he was concerned about the fellowship. Our communion, the breaking of the bread and the wine, serves as a reminder of how God liberated His people from slavery and oppression and His unfailing commitment to us. We ought to be as eager to be with Jesus as He is to be with us.

However, there was one who would betray Jesus seated at the table. The disciples were perplexed by this and instead of asking who would betray Jesus, Pastor Warnock suggests they should have asked WHY that person would betray Jesus. While Judas did

betray Jesus to the Roman soldiers, Peter denied Jesus three times, James and John wanted special seats at the table, and all of us have fallen short of God's glory.

Pastor Warnock highlights a few reminders the table serves for us:

1. **There is a seat for everyone:** We want a seat at God's table and think we can authorize others' access to the table. The good news is that God welcomes all people from all backgrounds, no matter how imperfect someone might be.
2. **There is redemption at the table:** The table symbolizes the redemption of God's people, our liberation from bondage. Each of the disciples had betrayed the principles of God in their own way. In spite of this, Jesus still called them to the table to do great works. We all have a story, a testimony, of how we got a seat at the table, a place and purpose in the Kingdom of God.
3. **There is symbolism of sacrifice:** We ought to acknowledge the sacrifices of others who paved the way for us to be at the table (both in life and in relationship with God). Without the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, we would not have access to the table: to eternal life and forgiveness of sins.

Reflection Questions:

1. How can we see Judas' betrayal as a source of encouragement when considering our own place at the table? Are we that much different than Judas?
2. What can we learn from Judas betraying Jesus?
3. Who in your life has made sacrifices in order for you to be blessed?
4. Why do some people feel they can control others' access to God? What are examples of this?
5. Do you ever find yourself forgetting that Jesus just wants to be with you, to just sit with you? Why is this significant to our walk with God?
6. How can we encourage someone this week that they, too, can and do have a seat at the table?