

Do as Jesus Did

Through Jesus, the Holy Spirit is given to us. God is within us. We are a new kind of human race. Jesus is called the first fruit. It is an agrarian analogy for Jesus' first-century world. It is a sign of what's about to erupt en masse. A totally different human race; a new-man race; pure, humble, truthful, righteous, merciful, loving. Jesus was the first example of what is the new race. When Jesus comes back, the world will enter the new millennium; an era that we cannot imagine right now will arrive on Earth.

Isaiah 11: "In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard will lie down with the baby goat...The baby will play safely near the hole of a cobra. Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes without harm." It is the time that the knowledge of God covers the whole earth like water covers the ocean.

We must share the love of God and our personal stories with others so that they may experience God's life, grow closer to God, and develop a deeper love for God. This is our divine mission. As apprentices of Jesus, we closely follow Jesus, learning everything from and imitating Jesus' actions. We become like Jesus in our words, actions, and thoughts. Isn't that an incredible concept?

As an apprentice of Jesus, do we enjoy that job? Mostly not at all. It is an absolutely beautiful thing to send the love of God to the people who do not know it. To give hope to the place where there is no hope. We are in a different spiritual realm from the world. Our spiritual life is in the realm of God. Even though not fully lived, our inner life is connected to the heavenly realm. And people of the world are not. They are simply in the realm of the world under the logic of cause and effect, of natural law.

As an apprentice of Jesus, John said clearly, "This is how we know we are in him: whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did." We might answer by rejecting that statement: he was God, I am not. I cannot heal, do miracles like Jesus. Listen! Jesus said this: "Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing. Even greater things!" "Wow!!! Will that be still true? Really?" That was my question. When I received that message, I was just surprised asking myself, "Who am I? What does God think about me?"

Hey, do you believe in this? You're a child of God, and we're all disciples of Jesus. We're no longer powerless; we're supernaturally empowered by the Holy Spirit. I truly believe in this word. I've experienced this power myself, though not always. I know how happy God is that we use this power to bring people to the Lord. The same power that was on Jesus and his apostles, like Peter, Paul, and John, is now on you and me. Or at least, it's available to you and me if we surrender to the Father.

Yes! To a surrendered heart, God pours out his power. Let's look at how Jesus worked to fulfill his mission on Earth. He said, 'It's to seek and save the lost.' That's the same mission we have.

While I was studying Dinner Church, one of our church's future projects, I discovered something that was hidden from me. Probably from most of us because we see the gospel story through the lens of the 21st century. We might have thought vaguely, 'The first church was a bit different with agape dinner from our worship service.' And we didn't think much further, imagining it might be because of cultural differences.

Let's dive into the real Jesus story. It was enlightening to understand how Jesus created a space for everyone; the tax collectors and prostitutes, and more.

Prepare a dinner space

To make a space for the gospel, Jesus created a space around the dinner table. In our time, most secular people have zero interest in hearing the gospel, preferring to look for salvation in other sources. Christians are not evaluated well. People say, "Christians are judgmental, hypocrites," etc. It sounds hostile. In Jesus' time? Even more. They killed Jesus. How do we make a space in such a negative atmosphere? Follow Jesus! He ate and drank with those who needed the gospel.

Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus's house. Zacchaeus, as a chief of tax collectors, was hated by his own people because he lived by defrauding fellow Jews on behalf of the Roman Empire. People muttered, "Jesus has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

One theologian wrote, "Jesus got himself crucified by the way he ate. He ate with all the wrong people: tax collectors, prostitutes, Gentiles, the unclean. Danger! **He was accused of being a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners. The dinner table is the place where friends are together. Eating together means becoming friends.**"

Jesus was not a boundary marker, but a boundary breaker. Jesus was a sign of God's great welcome into the kingdom by inviting people to the dinner table. In the Gospel of Luke alone, there are over fifty references to food. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus is either going to a meal, at a meal, or coming from a meal.

Jesus said about himself, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." It was his mission. We should follow him and continue his mission too. In Jesus' mission, the dinner table is central. We, his apprentices, want to follow his mission. At the table, Jesus healed the sick, delivered the demonized, talked about the Kingdom of God. At the table, Jesus rescued people.

One meal at a time! We can't force a person to become a disciple of Jesus, nor would we want to. But we can offer them a space where such change can occur, even if slowly over time. We can actively seek out the lonely, the newcomer, the uncool, the poor, the odd, the immigrant or refugee, those with no family or no home—and welcome them into a community of love.

Henry Nouwen said, “In our world full of strangers, estranged from their own past, culture, and country, from their neighbors, friends, and family, from their deepest self and their God, we witness a painful search for a hospitable place where life can be lived without fear and where community can be found... It is obligatory for Christians to offer an open and hospitable space where strangers can cast off their strangeness and become our fellow human beings.”

When we offer hospitality, we get to embody the heart posture of the Trinity’s inner life—welcome, warm affection, generosity, safety, community, comfort, the meeting of needs, and delight. When we act like God, we get to feel like God to share His Joy!

Rosaria Butterfield called this act radically ordinary hospitality! She said, “Those who live out radically ordinary hospitality see their homes not as theirs at all but as God’s gift to use for the furtherance of His kingdom. They open doors, they seek out the underprivileged. They know that the gospel comes with a house key.”

It was Jesus ’way. It is still the best way. Jesus ’dinner was a heavenly portal between heaven and earth for the early church. Jesus ’mission was to find the broken and the lost.

There is no better place to get to know someone than over a meal, no better place to dialogue and even disagree in love. Because of that, there is no better place to share the love of God than around the table. It is something you are already doing. Anyone can do this. You can open your table. It doesn’t have to be yours.

Our Dinner Church is about Jesus ’dinner table. Divine intervention happens in the space. The first church in the time of the apostles was called Agape Dinner. The Agape Dinner Church disappeared when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. The church was highly institutionalized with high liturgy and entered the Middle Dark Age with corruption. By Luther, the Reformation started. Our modern church belongs to this category that church focused more on the interpretation of the scripture.

You might think, ‘Wow, Jesus used the dinner table! But I’m not sure how to talk to strangers! I’ll save that for next week. In the meantime, let’s focus on preparing ourselves to share my God story, pray, and meet people with confidence and love.

When we were enemies of God, God showed us incredible love and even died for us. If we hold the love in our hearts, it overflows naturally to others. we can do what Jesus did 2000 years ago. We’ll start to see how God’s presence will guide and gently nudge us. We’ll be ready to create moments of God’s presence in every day.