

**Luke 22:20-24**

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. But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!" Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this. A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest.

**Psalm 8**

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour.

You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

**“When It's Time to Table Your Dreams”****Rev. Charles Schuster****October 4, 2009**

Joel's got his class right down there in the front row. It's a scary thing to be on the front row, I think. I would have been in the balcony, and I've been kicked out of better places than this.

Psalm 8 asks an important question. "O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" That's not the question, that's a statement of praise. And then it goes on to say, "And what are we, that you are mindful of us?" Why do you care about us? In other words, who are we, that we deserve this? Gene Brown once observed, "The Lord created the world in six days and then rested on the seventh, and on the eighth day, God started answering complaints from us." Who are we? In New York, in a church parking lot, they had a parking space reserved for the pastors. We aspire, some day, to have a parking space that says "Pastors." But they did. And no one parked there, except for the pastor, because there was a sign right in front of that parking space that said, "Clergy space - you park, you preach." Who are we? Why does God care for us? We've been saying you've got to have a dream, because if you don't have a dream, how are you going to have a dream come true? Our church is thinking about its future. Our church is dreaming. Next Sunday is Commitment Sunday. Next Sunday we pledge. Next Sunday we dedicate ourselves to our church's future, and this church is very generous. Not like Mary Ann Herman said about her church in El Paso, Texas, where, she said, "When it comes to giving, the people

in my church stop at nothing." Our church understands that pledges are promises, and promises are dreams' potentials. And if the dreams of this church become potential, and potential becomes real, it will make a difference in the world. Good will come of it, hope will be born because of it.

"O Lord, our Lord, what are we that you are mindful of us?" Who are we? Three things I'd like to say to this. First of all, there is in us some guilt. Just because we're not perfect, and we slump down sometimes when we sit, it's always been true of Christians. When Jesus met with his friends, when they had that final meal together that we celebrate, there was guilt. He told them one of them would betray him. There was guilt, because each of them began to slump down where they sat, and each one began to say, "Is it I? Have I betrayed him? Will I betray him?" There was guilt. Always, there is guilt. I mean, were they remembering the day they said they'd follow him, but they knew even at the time that they'd follow him only so far? Were they thinking about the time he told them the parable of the farmer with the bag of seed going up the hill, and there was a hole in the bag, and some it fell on the rock and some of it in the weeds and some of it on deep soil, and then, how he paused to see if they understood it? They didn't understand it. They never understood it. Were they remembering the day the children were brought to him, and he said, "Let the children come to me, and forbid them not, to such belongs the Kingdom of God," and they had already said "Get lost"? Children, they didn't like children. Because he knew how we teach all the children about life, but he knew how the children teach us what life is all about. That's the Kingdom of God. Were they remembering the day that they were in the boat, and the storm came up, and they were scared to death, and he said "You've got little faith, o ye of little faith"? There was guilt. Who am I? Betray him, let him down? Guilty.

Did you hear what Lou Holtz said at the halftime of the West Virginia - University of Colorado, which they lost? University of Colorado, West Virginia beat them, CSU-West Virginia, yeah. Lou was talking about a player he coached at Notre Dame who was real slow. The player didn't think he was so slow, and he said, "Well, Coach Holtz, what makes you think I'm slow?" and he said, "I'll put it this way to you, if we put you in a foot race with a pregnant woman, you are so slow, you'd come in third." How do you have dreams when you know who you are, and you're slow, and you're guilty? Is it I? The disciples, they thought they were lower than low, they thought they were slower than slow, badder than bad, the worst of the worst. They thought about who they were. They thought about what they had done, and what they had failed to do, and what they had said, and when they had been silent when they should have spoken up. They thought about it at the table, and they brought it to the table. The disciples were quick to call out, each of them, "Is it I?" Because each of them knew they had done some things to let him down. They each knew that they had hoped to be able to live up to the example that he set for them. When he wanted them, later on, to stay awake, you know what they did. They fell asleep. When he wanted them to learn to forgive and forget, you know they became violent and angry. One of them took out a sword and swung it, and all of them would deny they knew him. He just set too high of standards for them, he expected too much from them. They could not deliver, they could not be expected to do what he asked of them, and so he said that one of them would betray him, and they all thought they were

the one, because, why wouldn't they? Because each of them realized they were capable of it. Each of them, in one way or another, knew they had done it.

Have we betrayed him? Augustine once said, "Never fight evil as if it were something that arises totally outside yourself." Have we failed him in some way? Have we let him down? Have we let each other down? Have we made mistakes? Guilt will block out dreams. Is it I? Are we the one, the worst of the worst, the baddest of the bad? There isn't one of us, I think, in this sanctuary, who claims to be perfect. There isn't one of us who, from time to time, doesn't have something to confess to somebody. I mean, David Letterman isn't the only one who's got problems. There isn't one of us who doesn't have a regret or two. At a weight-watchers meeting after Easter, she confessed that she had failed once again. She had hoped, that year, her children, for the first time in their lives, would come to realize that chocolate Easter bunnies have ears, and she couldn't do it. Jessamyn West was right, she said "It's easy to forgive others for their mistakes, but it takes more grit to forgive them for witnessing ours." And we add to that, the hardest thing in life is to face the mistakes that we've made, when we know that we're the only one who knows. Times we've failed ourselves, times we've misused a trust, times we've violated a confidence, times we did something we've got to live with. Guilt, shame. Is it I, Lord? Am I the one who betrayed you? How do you have a dream, how do you have a dream come true when there's so much guilt? The disciples argued it with each other, over who would betray him, each of them knowing any one of them could have. They slumped in their places.

And then secondly a very interesting thing happened. I had not noticed that thing that happened, very interesting. There is another argument that arose among them, and they began to debate among them, right after that, they began to argue among themselves as to which of them was the greatest. "Is it I," each of them said. "Am I the one?" Same question? No, not the same question. Same words, different question. "Am I the one who is most favored? Do I get to sit at your right hand?" Grandiosity set in. And they began to strut. I can imagine one of them saying, "Remember the day you walked up to me and said 'Follow me,' and I gave up all my life for you? Remember that?" And another one would have said, "Remember the time that you told us to go get some food for the people as they sat down there when you were giving your sermon on the mount. What a long sermon that was, by the way, but do you remember that? And to you remember that there were baskets produced? And who do you think bought the baskets, Jesus?" And another one would have said, "I'm the one who told you I thought you were the son of the living God, and then you told me that I'm the rock, and upon the rock you're going to build the church. I've got to be Number One." Then another one said, "Well, you called me the Beloved Disciple, for crying out loud, I'm Number One." "Is it I who is the best? Am I Number One?" Grandiosity hit them hard, each of them wanting a place of honor.

They tell a story about Bear Bryant. His wife receives a call, she gazes out the window. They live on a lake. It's a magical spot, they bought it in his retirement. *Sports Illustrated* wants to interview the greatest football coach in college football history. He coached at Alabama. "Can he come to the phone?" She looks out the window. "Let me call him in. No, it's not a problem. He's having his morning strut across the lake. You see, he walks

on water." Grandiosity. We all got a touch of it. A senior pastor took some time off, and the associate preached the Sunday he was gone. When he came back, he asked a member of the church how the associate had done, and he was pleased with the answer. "She gave a dull sermon, and there wasn't much content in it." How good it is to be good, surrounded by those who aren't. When he saw the associate pastor, he asked her how she felt about her sermon, and she said, "I thought it went rather well, but to tell you the truth, I didn't have time to put one together, so I found an old sermon of yours, and I preached it."

We all have a sense we're number one. I have seen, obviously not this one, but I have seen choirs sit down after an anthem thinking that they were the Mormon Tabernacle. I have seen soloists polish off a version of "How Great Thou Art," and you wondered who thought they were great. I have seen people, we all have, strut their stuff, practice their dance in the end zone after a touchdown, spike the ball after a twenty-yard run. The President and Oprah thought they were Number One, and they came home knowing that the world would go to Rio. Did you ever go to an award ceremony, confident that you were the one to be honored, expecting family members to appear from behind the purple curtain, thumbing through your acceptance speech, carefully crafted so as to maintain the pretense of worthiness while at the same time holding a miniscule amount of humility. Hard to do, but you did it. And when the award was being presented, to move your chair back so as to be prepared to rise to your feet to make your way to the microphone, as you would glide across the room, and then to have them name someone else, whom you knew to be less worthy? Did you ever have that happen? Now, I have to tell you, the only reason I even raise that questions is because I've been there, I've done that, that's grandiosity. Is it I who is the best? No, it isn't. It's humbling.

There isn't a person in this room - well, there may be a few, actually - who have not strutted. Most of us, when the honor roll is called up yonder, will be there. We'll sit at the place of honor, we'll take our bows, because we're Number One. It's hard to have a dream when we're living the dream. It's hard to get better when we think we're the best. It's hard to keep moving when we know we've arrived. Grandiosity, guilt. Who are we? It's a combination. Slumping down in guilt, and strutting out in grandiosity. Halfway between guilt and grandiosity is the Gospel. And here's the third point. We aren't as bad as we thought we were, but we aren't as good as we think we are. We must not slump, and we should not strut. Our dreams will come true if we table them. I mean by that, if we bring them to the table. If we understand what Denny Drake meant when he said, "Anything I can do, we can do better." Table our dreams. Gospel our dreams. Good news our dreams, or, as Rebecca said, Eucharist our dreams. Last Supper our dreams. Table our dreams.

I'm reminded of the story of the child looking through a magazine with her mother, and they came across a picture of the Solomon's head of Jesus, it's the one picture we've got out there in the back of the sanctuary, and her mother said to her daughter, "Do you know who that is?" and the little girl responded, "Yes, I know who he is. He goes to our church." He does, and we meet him at the table, and his presence empowers our dreams, because the body of Christ is the community of faith, and on World Communion Sunday the body of Christ is all over the world. Dreams come true at the table. Emily Kimbrough

said it: "We all stumble, every one of us, that's why it's a comfort to go hand-in-hand." And George Bernard Shaw said, "I'm of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for I whatever I can." At the table, we remember Jesus goes to our church, and we table our dreams. That is, we bring them to the table. Even if our dreams seem impossible, we are reminded the crucifixion didn't end the story. The resurrection didn't end the story. We are Easter people, we are people of hope. We are part of the story as it continues. We are people who know what it means to join hands and open our minds. I said it last week - Some things that seem impossible become possible, and some things that seem improbable become probable, and when a dream becomes possible and probable, with a community of faith, and dreams are linked with God, they become inevitable. There will be sight for the spiritually blind, and there will be life for the spiritually dead, because we know, even every now and then, a Chihuahua can kill a bear. Every now and then a miracle happens and a soul is reborn, and it happens at the table, where guilt and grandiosity meet Gospel and dreams come true and God says to the body of Christ, "Don't slump, don't strut. Stand up straight, and remember who you are."

Let us pray.

Today, Eucharist. Today, the knowledge that Jesus goes to our church, and he will meet us at the table, and together, our dreams, O God, merged with your will, your will, will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Amen.