

Rappahannock Christian Church – 1/30/11
Dr. Kenneth Wilbur

Communion Meditation

There is a passage in Scripture that I'm guessing most of us could quote verbatim. That's the 23rd Psalm. It starts "The Lord is my Shepherd..."

There is a line in this Psalm that has bothered me for a long time. I really haven't thought about it, perhaps, as much as I might have, but it's the verse where David says, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."

God prepares a table for David in the presence of his enemies? What is THAT about??? Well, maybe what he means is that God blesses him richly -- even as David's enemies look on -- and there is nothing his enemies can do about it! God is the shepherd! God is in control! If God wants to bless, who can gainsay Him?

Lately, I have been thinking about this in relation to this Communion Table. The Lord calls us to His Table, reminding us of His grace. Our great enemy, Satan, looks on -- and there is *nothing* Satan can do about it. He is vanquished by the cross of Calvary! "If God is for us, who can be against us?" "Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?" (Romans 8)

As we partake of this Table, let's think about this and rejoice that we serve a Risen Savior. Let me read from Matthew's Gospel:

Matthew 26:26-29 – While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

This being the 5th Sunday of January, as is our custom we participated in a creative worship experience. This week we reproduced together the experience of the RCC Prayer and Praise ministry at The Orchard, an assisted living home in Warsaw, VA. The ministry is held on Friday evening once a month, and about 18-25 residents attend. Members from RCC wheel many residents to and from the meeting room, assist with songsheets and just plain show their love. Pastor Wilbur and John Childress play their guitars, we all sing and Pastor Wilbur has a short devotion and prayer....

Worship Devotion

It seems like just about every month has its own holiday. When we go to the Orchard, I like to have a short message about whatever holiday is coming up. Right now we're getting close to Valentine's Day, right?

Valentine's Day is the day when we think about human love; the love between boys and girls, men and women.

There are several passages in Scripture where human love is central. One that immediately comes to mind is the story of Jacob. If you remember, Jacob gets in trouble at home. It's so bad that his brother swears to kill him. In order to save his life, Jacob's mother sends him away. He flees to his uncle Laban's home, which is very far.

Now Laban has two daughters, Leah and Rachael. Jacob quickly falls hopelessly in love with the younger sister, Rachel. He goes to Laban and says, "Let me marry Rachel."

"Okay," says Laban, "You can marry her, but you have to work for me for seven years first."

Jacob does it. The wedding day comes. Jacob is married, but it doesn't turn out the way he expected. Now, I don't know how this could have happened, but perhaps because of the veils that they wore and maybe because it was so dark in the tent, when Jacob wakes up the next morning he discovers that he's been deceived. He's been married to Leah, the older sister!

Jacob is angry! He goes to his uncle Laban. "What have you done?" he demands.

But Laban isn't fazed a bit. "Hey," he says, "don't you know it isn't customary for us to marry off the younger sister before the older one? Look, you can have Rachel too -- you can have both -- just promise to work for me for seven more years."

And Jacob is hopelessly in love, so he agrees.

Important though physical, romantic love is, as Christians we realize that there is a purer and greater love -- the love of God. God's love is higher than any human love could ever be.

I suppose this is what the Apostle John was trying to explain to us when he wrote:

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. – **1 John 3:16**

And...

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. – **1 John 4:7-10**

In the Old Testament story, Jacob gets what he wants. He wins the prize. He gets the beautiful girl. God's love is quite different. We, in our sins, are not lovely! But God still loves us. Even when we were his enemies Jesus died for us.

Of course, we will gladly celebrate romantic love in a couple of weeks on Valentine's Day. But let's also remember that the greatest love of all is God's love for us in Christ.

