

## READING 1

Luke 22: 7-8

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.'

Luke 22: 14-16

When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'

## READING 2

Luke 22: 24-27

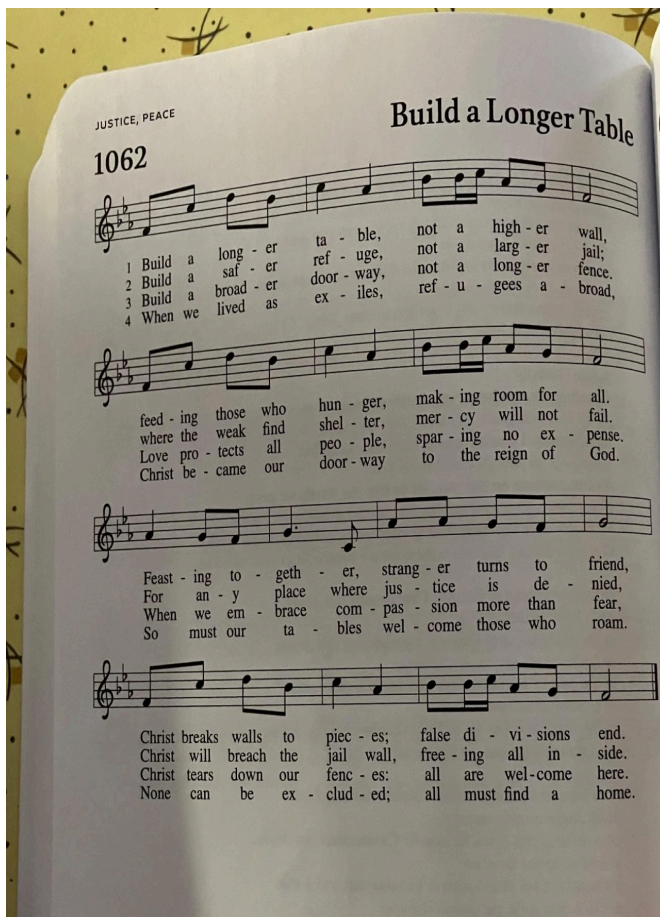
A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But he said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.'

## READING 3

Luke 22: 31-34

'Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.' And he said to him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!' Jesus said, 'I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me.'

Sermon idea: Ira Byrock 4 things that matter most (I forgive you, please forgive me, thank you, I love you). See [The Four Things that Matter Most - Transitions LifeCare](#)



Build a longer table, not a higher wall, feeding those who hunger, making room for all. Feasting together, stranger turns to friend, Christ breaks walls to pieces, false divisions end. Build a safer refuge, not a larger jail; where the weak find shelter, mercy will not fail. For any place where justice is denied, Christ will breach the jail wall, freeing all inside. Build a broader doorway, not a longer fence. Love protects all people, sparing no expense. When we embrace compassion more than fear, Christ tears down our fences; all are welcome here. When we lived as exiles, refugees abroad, Christ became our doorway to the reign of God. So must our tables welcome those who roam. None can be excluded; all must find a home.

<https://www.bu.edu/sth/protest-of-praise-written-by-david-bjorlin-sth-17/>

“David Bjorlin (wrote lyrics to this song) is a pastor and seminary professor with a unique ability to put practical theology into poetic forms. He states that ***‘The act of true praise is always a protest against all that curses or denigrates the Creator’s world and the people made in the Creator’s image; and an act of true protest is always in praise of a world that the protestor has begun to envision and works to make real.’***”

Many of these 50 texts in “Protest of Praise” were written in response to particular injustices of church and state. Written 2018 (this song).

## SERMON:

Palliative Care physician Ira Byock's book: 4 things that matter most - 4 short phrases that help promote healing and wholeness in relationship. (SLIDE) He used them with patients and families at the end of life as a way to heal rifts, strengthen bonds and create paths forward that allowed for flourishing, even in the midst of loss and death. But they can be used any time - they help us forgive, let go of grudges and celebrate life more fully.

11 words.

Words that admit our wrongs and ask forgiveness - what we know we've done, and recognizing that we don't know all the ways we've injured others.

Words that name what are sometimes not said because they're so obvious.

11 words:

please forgive me, I forgive you, thank you, I love you.

These words are relational - said to one another.

(BACK TO DESERT SLIDE)

Our scripture today:

Let's start with the last passage we heard - where Jesus speaks directly to Simon Peter, getting him ready for what's to come. (SEE HANDOUT)

Simon, Peter, he says - the Deceiver is at work, among all of you - and I pray, yes pray for you, that your faith won't fail. When you've turned back - strengthen your closest companions.

IN CONTEXT of 11 words: Jesus says, in advance, I forgive you.

Jesus' names the need to forgive, to ask for forgiveness and to move on; continuing the work, together.

Peter, oblivious to what's coming, says with courage: "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." Peter is naming his love for Jesus. He's imagining his best self.

J responds: 'I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me.'

Where Peter names his love, a love which falls short,

J knows what's coming, he prays for Simon Peter's faith - and says, 'go on, carry on this work, you are forgiven.'

Jesus models forgiveness for his disciples so they, too, can then practice it.

11 words - please forgive me, I forgive you, thank you, I love you.

When the disciples are arguing -  
they've just sat around the table. Just been handed bread and cup where Jesus tells them to remember him - and they start bickering amongst themselves.  
Who's the greatest.

They're not focused on building relationships. They're not looking for ways to support one another and this work that Jesus has been teaching.

They're afraid. They're still living with the mindset of kings who Lord wealth and power over one another.

Greatest? The greatest in the eyes of the world is the one who sits at the table.  
But once again Jesus turns that upside down. "I am among you as one who serves."

I FORGIVE YOU. I LOVE YOU.

Jesus doesn't seem to know, for certain, what decisions these followers will make. He told Simon that he's prayed for him, personally, that his faith won't fail.

Jesus reminds his disciples that they're the ones who have stood by him.  
Thank you - I love you - in time, you will be rewarded.

Jesus is preparing them for his death AND for what follows it.

Those 11 words of Dr. Byock, coming from Jesus, might instead be:

I forgive you, **forgive each other**, thank you, I love you.

Words have the power to change us.  
Actions are the fruits of our words.

Conversation October 2024 with CK:

I learned I need to let go of the gunny sack, said Carl. The gunny sack where I stuff my hurts that I later pull out and use against the people I love. I've learned I need to let go of that and instead focus on what we can create together now and in the future.

That's one way to sum up these 11 words.

Finding ways to say these words can be powerful, life giving and life changing. Try it.  
MY STORY: Living into them too: Telling my DIL about these words. Awkwardly saying them to her.

It changed something. I has asked her to step into an painful situation. To be with some fear. With trepidation we moved into it together.

The next day she said how important it was for her to face the fears of rejection - and to find they weren't there.

How might I continue to practice this honest, vulnerable way of relating to others?

The song "Build a longer table"

Lyrics:

Build a longer table, not a higher wall, feeding those who hunger, making room for all. Feasting together, stranger turns to friend, **Christ breaks walls to pieces, false divisions end.**

Build a safer refuge, not a larger jail; where the weak find shelter, mercy will not fail. For any place where justice is denied, Christ will breach the jail wall, freeing all inside.

**Build a broader doorway, not a longer fence.** Love protects all people, sparing no expense. When we embrace compassion more than fear, Christ tears down our fences; all are welcome here.

When we lived as exiles, refugees abroad, Christ became our doorway to the reign of God. So must our tables welcome those who roam. None can be excluded; all must find a home.

What does it mean for us to really live into this?

How do we use our spaces? How do we spend our money and time?

How do our actions unintentionally build walls and not tables?

For what do we need to say to our neighbors "please forgive me"? and thank you.

Say them again together - how might you live into this practice?