

Over the past couple weeks, I've had a lot of discussions with people about how much do we bring to church into the outside world. You know, what does it mean? Do we just take, do we only spend Sunday focusing inside the church talking about what we should be doing. Or do we talk about it in the outside world? How? Where do we draw that line? Where do we say we're saying too much? We're evolving the church too much in activities. I love that half of you are shaking your heads. We don't know, right? We don't know where that limit is.

I had an argument with somebody. I had an argument with somebody because they told me I'm too political. I need to be a pastor. I need to not talk about what's going on in the world. I need to ignore everything outside of my four walls. In the same discussion, I also got told that I don't do enough outside of our four walls. I need to be talking about the war that just started. I need to be talking about the kids that are dying. I need to be talking about different things like that. I'm like, but you just told me that I'm already doing too much. And now you're telling me that I'm not doing enough. It's the way the world is right? No matter what we do, we're wrong. Whether we're going and talking about something positively, talking about something negatively, it's going to make somebody upset. We're going to continue to make somebody upset. Doesn't matter. Does it really matter who we make upset? Yes. Does it really matter who we make happy? Yes. Does it really matter at all? No.

We had a wonderful conversation today in confirmation, I set them up to fail. I'm not gonna lie. I started off confirmation with the whole expectation they knew, absolutely nothing about what I was going to talk about, and I wanted them to get every question I asked wrong. And they did. But they tried. They tried, and they kept trying, and they kept trying. And the best part about Henry, when he fails, he will not accept it. He will not accept that he failed. He will not accept that he got the wrong answer. He will tell you literally everything he can think of to prove that I'm wrong, not him. And I love it. That kid has such a great heart.

We were talking today about communion. We were talking about the last supper. We've been talking about it a lot the last week. Obviously we are going to talk about it here, because it is Sunday. But we got to talking about it in Bible study. We got to talk about what it means to each one of us. Why it's important. Why it's not important. What makes it different? Why it's different for each faith? We had a great response on Friday.

One of our members in Bible study who's a former Catholic has two separate beliefs. Everybody's looking! I'm sorry. When she's at a Catholic Church, she believes a communion is the Eucharist, as many Catholics do. The second that the priest goes over, stands in front of everything, it all changes. For us, this is bread. When we take it, we remember that this is the body of Christ. To them, it literally becomes the body of Christ. We remember this is the cup. Jesus drank from this on the last night, He took it and he poured the wine into it. And he said, do this in remembrance of me. And we do. We use this to remind ourselves of the sacrifice he gave. But to them, it becomes literally his blood.

The difference between the two: Are they right, or are we right? The UCC has a wonderful idea that we are all independent. They believe that each church decides for themselves. Each person decides for themselves who and what we are, what we believe in, and what we do. There are some UCC churches that have communion every Sunday. There are others, they have it only on Easter because we get to decide. We get to decide what it is.

That was a great discussion with the confirmands because I said, What do you think it is? And Henry asked me what I thought it was. He was being sneaky today. I asked him about the bread. What's so important about the bread? Is it celebrated the way it is? When the Jews were lost in the wilderness, they ran out of food. And God made bread fall from the heavens. And that's what they survived on. Manna is what it is called. They celebrated this. Shared it. It's a continuation of Jesus. Breaking the bread is a continuation of that life promise from God. The blood, the wine, I asked him about that. Where did that come from? The first Miracle, the wedding at Cana where Jesus took the water and made it in the wine, showing us and reminding us continually about the miracles and the sacrifices that he made for us. They're great things.

It's a great thing that we celebrate. It's a great part of who we are, who our faith is in our tradition. Now, how do we share that outside of here? If we go to the school and demand they get grape juice every day so that our Christian students can remember the miracle. We can go and demand they get bread every day to remember the life that God gave us. Is that in our right, should we do that? Where is that line?

There's a great discussion this week on Facebook about whether or not a Christian Patriot should be allowed into the school to talk about human trafficking. Do you know the difference between a Christian Patriot and a Christian Nationalist? They believe that the difference is the Patriot puts God before the flag and Nationalists put the flag before God. Either way, The flag and God are together. That made me think if we allow somebody to come in and talk about something that has absolutely nothing to do with their beliefs, their religious beliefs, why are we wrong? Isn't it more important that this person be allowed to talk about something as significant as human trafficking? But we can not set aside the church. We instantly assume that they're going to talk about church. We instantly assumed that they're going to talk about faith.

I get into arguments all the time with pastor Don because he refuses to do things because people see him everywhere as the pastor at St John's. And I tell him that's why he should be doing things. No matter where I go I am always Saint Paul's. I'm at the school handing out bags for Feeding the Kids. I'm at a t-ball game. I'm at the bowling alley having a beer, I'm still Saint Paul's. And it doesn't matter. People are going to be upset one way or another. People are going to forget the good things we do and that it doesn't matter where we think our position is because we are all supposed to serve. That's what today's reading is about.

Today's reading is about putting all of that aside and remembering that we are to serve. It's easy to remember that Jesus is Jesus, right. It is easy to remember that he is the son of God. He died for everybody, so he shouldn't be washing their feet. He's better than that, right? He's bigger than that. He shouldn't have to be the one to do it. You didn't have to be the one to do it. He chose to do it. He chose to set aside that difference. He chose to remind them that no matter who you are, you should be serving others. It doesn't matter what you think somebody sees you as, it doesn't matter who you think they believe you to be. We should always be serving. We should always be helping each other out.

He took a moment from their biggest feast that they have. Their time where they came together to remember the Exodus, to remember the 10 plagues, to remember everything that God had done for them, to remember the bread, the manna. He took a second and served them. He took a second to remind them that we are all equal. That we are all God's children, that we are part of this wonderful thing that they created, and it doesn't matter who you make mad because they think you should be doing something else. What matters is inside of you. What matters is that we get to share that love together. We get to take the cup. This cup that was filled with wine on that last night. And we get to take the bread. The ordinary bread that was baked for guests until Jesus took it. And he told them to eat. To do this, had to remember him, to remember God, to remember the sacrifice for both of these? He wanted them to remember that even though our lives are ordinary, without the bread, without the wine, we truly are missing out. We are missing out on the greatness that was given for us and to us so that we could have eternal life. Let's continue with our communion hymn..