

## ***Jesus, Joy and Jazz***

Text: Acts 2: 43-47

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**I crossed a significant birthday a few weeks back when one is assigned a zero or a five as the second digit.** A perfect time for indulgence and pampering!

So Pam said, "Hey, why don't we go to the Camera Bar downtown and get one of those lenses you've been wanting for your camera."

My eyes lit up, "Great idea! But you'll be bored by the geeky talk in the store. Besides, I'll want some time there. How about if I go, try on some lenses, and bring one home for you to wrap? I promise I'll be completely surprised when you give it to me!"

And that, my friends, is the back-story to my birthday extravaganza! I brought home an ultra-wide-angle-zoom lens. It takes the limited view of a fixed or prime lens and opens the horizon to a much larger perspective. And it's simply awesome!

**By way of imagination I want us pop in my new lens as we celebrate communion today.** I want us to widen the horizon and open up our view at what we gather to share most on the first Sunday of every month – the Sacrament of bread and cup.

Fact of the matter is the Bible offers us not just one but a few stories to help us enlarge the picture. Each one pushes out the edges and invites us to consider what lives beneath and above and around this sacred meal.

The classic view is in the upper room. All four Gospels report this in parallel. Each portrays the gravity of the Last Supper, but also sets the scene at a feasting table with the intimacy of close friends. I think sometimes we miss the feasting part in our remembering. The living presence of Jesus was at center. The expression of symbol and ritual connected them in unspeakable ways. And there was music and singing – maybe even some jazz!

A second view spreads the vision wider. It was three days later. Two of the disciples were on the Emmaus Road trying to make sense of what had come to pass with grief, sore feet, confusion, longing, and mystery all being there. A stranger happened by whose presence stirred in them. Their eyes opened, seeing again as if for the first time. Exuberance bubbled as they tried to speak, "Did not our hearts burn within us?" And then it came clear. The stranger was Jesus; and they knew it for sure when he broke the bread for now a second time. And then he vanished from their sight.

I hope our field of vision is opening larger from the upper room to a dusty road, from a feast at Passover to bread broken in Emmaus. And then, add some music and the deep-

felt-sense of a burning hearts. Sprinkle in sacred words among very close friends; and always, *always*, **ALWAYS** the presence of Jesus.

On the same day a cluster of fishermen lost sight of their nets as a voice called to them across the water. The befuddled scene filled quickly with joy as the sun rose to reveal that a different sort of Son had Risen too. Shrouded first, in disbelief, were splashes of naked surprise as Jesus showed up again. Yet in a little, while a charcoal fire cooked fish, he broke the bread again, now a third time in as many days.

And then fifty-some days later the early Jesus-people added these words: “they all partook with glad and generous hearts.” Awe filled them and the spaces between them, too. And every time they gathered they shared in grace and gratitude and goodness around the mystery of the bread and the cup.

**I hope you are still with me.** Because honestly, this is the wide-angle view, pushing the edges: gladness and generosity; music – maybe even some foot tapping; closeness and solidarity and purpose; hopefulness and promise; sacrifice and celebration; and love, did I mention love?

And this. In every time and beyond time, the presence of Jesus was experienced as the Table just kept getting larger, including more, healing more, redeeming more. And it gets larger still as the ultra-wide-heart of Jesus reaches for all people. For. All. People.

My family and friends, what an inexpressibly great gift to the world! Amen.

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