

# “Showing You are Known and Loved through Food”

*Luke 24:13-35 & 1 Corinthians 13:1-13*

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**Prayer for Understanding** Ever present Lord, we thank you for your word, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Holy Spirit open our eyes to the signs of your presence, open our ears to your voice and open our minds to your wisdom. Amen.

Yorks show that they know someone and loved them through food. Growing up, each member of our family always had their favorite meal on their birthday. My grandma was an exceptional cook and perceptively observant. The majority of the Yorks live in southern Wisconsin. In order to find enough land to dairy farm, my family moved 5 hours north, too far of a trip to make between milkings. I only saw my grandparents about once a year. Every time I visited, grandma made a feast of a variety of foods and an array of cookies. Grandma watched what I ate. About once a month, I got a tin in the mail from grandma with my favorite cookies. It was how she showed me that I was known and loved. Grandpa carried treats in his shirt pocket. He learned that of the chocolates, hard candies, and caramels that caramel was my preference. Whenever I did something with grandpa, we began by eating a kraft caramel square together. Over the years, I have come to know many people who show their love through food. I am blessed to have several people who know my favorite treat and often put them in various spots in my study. It is a wonderful joy to be known and loved.

Timothy Keller wrote: “To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us.”

In her book *“On Being Known”* Julie Ackerman wrote: “One of the most difficult inner conflicts we have is our desire to be known versus our fear of being known. As beings created in the image of God we are made to be known — known by God and also by others. Yet due to our fallen nature, all of us have sins and weaknesses that we don’t want others to know about. We use the phrase “dark side” to refer to aspects of our lives that we keep hidden. And we use slogans like “put your best foot forward” to encourage others to show their best side. One reason we are unwilling to risk being known is that we fear rejection and ridicule. But when we discover that God knows us, loves us, and is willing to forgive even the worst thing we have done, our fear of being known by God begins to fade away. And when we find a community of believers who understands the dynamic relationship between forgiveness and confession, we feel safe confessing our sins to one another. The life of faith is not about showing only our good side. It’s about exposing our dark side to the light of Christ through confession to God and also to others. In this way we can receive healing and live in the freedom of forgiveness.”

Luke tells us how after discussing scripture, as Jesus broke bread, “their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus.” That word “recognized” can be translated “well-known.” Literally, it means that once their eyes are opened, they know Jesus well. The risen Jesus knows those weary wanderers before they know him. God knows you completely. God knows everyone through and through.

**Luke 24:13-35 NLT** Easter afternoon “two of Jesus’ followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. But they were not able to recognize who Jesus was. Jesus asked them, “What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?” They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn’t heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days.” “What things?” Jesus asked. “The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth,” they said. “Jesus was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. We had hoped Jesus was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago. “Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said.” Then Jesus said to them, “You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets

wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?" Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, but they begged him, "Stay the night with us, since it is getting late." So Jesus went home with them. As they sat down to eat, Jesus took the bread and blessed it. Then Jesus broke it and gave it to them. Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus. And at that moment he disappeared! They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as Jesus talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, who said, "The Lord has really risen! Jesus appeared to Peter."

Each of us is fully known by God and fully loved by God. We can start to know God through food and scripture. According to Luke, the two disciples recognized Jesus by walking together discussing scripture which sparked recognition. They described it as their hearts beginning to burn. This recognition was fueled by Jesus sharing a meal with them. Jesus probably served this meal precisely how each of them preferred their meal. One aspect of God's extravagantly love is that God loves each of us how we want to be loved. God honors the uniqueness God created in us by delighting in our uniqueness and communicating in our preferred style. God is creative. God made vast variety. God created and sustains a cosmos that is continuously expanding in diversity, expanding in love and joy. God knows your favorite food and delights in sharing it with you.

The worship of protestant churches is inspired by recognizing God through scripture and food, which is Word and sacrament. As we begin to know God, we become able to love God. Also, we discover our true selves through Word and sacrament which enables us to know and love ourselves. And we learn about others through Word and sacrament which enables us to know and love all people.

The Protestant Reformers declared there are two essential "marks of the church" Word and sacrament. John Calvin stated: "Wherever you have the Word truly proclaimed and the sacraments rightly administered, there you have the true church of Jesus Christ."

The Presbyterian Church insists on word and sacrament at every worship service. Scripture is always to be proclaimed in some form. The sacraments are always to be celebrated. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper are physical signs of God's redeeming grace freely offered to all people. The water and food are physical signs that illustrate the love of the Holy Spirit healing and uniting all people with love. When we do not physically share the physical elements of baptism and the Lord's Supper, it is called a dry celebration. The table commonly used for the celebration of Holy Communion is to remain visible in the church, as is the baptismal font, to inspire recognition, knowing, of God and each other. When the deacons and I provide communion to those unable to attend worship here, we are required to provide both Word and sacrament. Scripture is always read, or talked about, when communion is offered.

Reformed theology believes whenever, wherever, we explore scripture together and share a meal together either literally or virtually, our knowing of God, knowing others, and knowing self is enhanced and our love of God, love of others, and love of self is expanded.

There is another place in scripture where the word we translate, "recognize" and "well know" occurs. In First Corinthians, **1 Corinthians 13:12** "**then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.**" A more literally translation is "then I will know well, even as I have been well-known." It is not about fame. It is about recognition, that moment of looking into the eyes of another and seeing more than a reflection of yourself, seeing their uniqueness, seeing their eternal essence, love, and joy.

The Apostle Paul is known for his circular logic and run-on sentences. Listen to the context as he tries to explain knowing and loving. **1 Corinthians 13:1-13** "**If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but do not love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of insight, and if I understood all of God's mysteries and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but did not love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I did not love others, I would have gained nothing. Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or arrogant or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and love keeps no record of being wronged. Love does not rejoice about wrongdoing but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, love never loses faith, love is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become**

**useless. But love will last forever! Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! But when the complete comes, these partial things will become useless. When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.”**

There is a story about the funeral of Charlemagne, holy Roman emperor and ruler of the Frankish people, in the early Middle Ages. Not since the fall of Rome had one king unified so much of western Europe under his rule. Charlemagne governed most of present-day France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Italy. When this renowned emperor died, his soldiers bore his casket, in a mighty procession, from his castle to the great cathedral. There, the procession was met by the local bishop. He physically barred the cathedral door with his body. “Who comes?” the bishop demanded, according to ancient custom. “Charlemagne, Lord and King of the Holy Roman Empire,” proclaimed the emperor’s herald. “Him I know not,” the bishop replied. “Who comes?” The herald, a bit shaken, replied, “Charles the Great, a good and honest man of the earth.” “Him I know not,” the bishop said again. “Who comes?” Trying a third time, the herald responded, “Charles, a lowly sinner, who begs the gift of Christ.” To which the bishop — Christ’s representative on earth — responded, “Enter! Receive Christ’s gift of life!” Charlemagne, during his life, was certainly well-known. But in death, the only knowing that truly mattered was the fact that he was known by God.

Another aspect of our scripture to ponder is that as Jesus and the two disciples complete their walk, Jesus makes as if to travel on. But they urged Jesus strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So Jesus went in to stay with them.” God is always with us, so what is happening here. “Stay with us,” reveals our human tendency to resist the ever-expanding love of God. Many want God to stay in the box they have constructed. Many want God to act in familiar ways. Many want to control God. God continuously invites us to expand our knowing of God, knowing of self, knowing of others, and expand our love. And yet, God met those disciples and meets us where we are at, God stays with us. However, we are stuck in unloving ways, limiting our love of certain people, in certain situations, with certain lifestyles. God stays with us, leading, sculpting, pushing, prodding until we are able to more fully know and more fully love. God is always with us and God is always on the move, ever expanding the knowledge, love, and joy of the cosmos.

How much of someone’s desire to experience church only in a familiar building, with familiar music, with a familiar liturgy at a familiar time echoes those disciples’ plea, “Stay with us?” How much of someone’s desire to have people live, act, think and believe like themselves echoes those disciples’ plea, “Stay with us?” God offers us fresh experiences to expand our knowing and loving. I am able to enjoy a wider variety of food today, because I was courageous enough to try new foods. Struggling to love someone, love yourself or love God? Strive to know them more. Struggling to love. Strive to love with a new facet.

The risen Jesus is always with us. The risen Jesus is always traveling with us. The risen Jesus fully knows you and will nourish you with all you need. The risen Jesus loves you completely. Love will expand for eternity. Amen