

Sermon.

It's called the nourishment hub. A sprawling feast of snacks, spanning the spectrum of fruit and appetizers, yogurts, muffins, m&m's, croissants, toast, nuts, warm appetizers, cookies, a latte/cappuccino maker, and a range of drinks that begin with your waters—bottled spring to fancy Perrier to caffeine-infused sparkling fruit-flavored water—and end with the diet sodas and refrigerated bottled Starbucks iced coffees.

All this time you thought you've been doing it right, but friends, you've been doing this eating thing all wrong. It's like a feast that never runs out, a feeding miracle that never ends, well, until Thursday afternoon.

For the past six years, during the final week of April or the first week of May, I attend a leadership training conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, where one of the highlights for every single one of us, is the mischievously named, "nourishment hub."

It's one of dozens of memories that comes back to me as I walk the halls of the hotel or the city. Some of those memories are big and joyful; nourishment hub-like. Maybe it was riding scooters around the city, or going to an Indiana Pacers playoff game. Walking the city with friends who thought it would be encouraging to chant my name as we walked down the street as if I made the game-winning shot, or one of my favorite memories of Indianapolis: my first official date with Kelsey at a Jazz club last year. Or our date with friends at a Blues club this year.

Others are more poignant, the sermon I preached for our daily worship services, just a month after my dad had died, sharing with colleagues that which was too raw and unprocessed to share here at the time. Experiencing the love that met me in that vulnerability. Saying goodbye to Kelsey that first year we did Indy together.

Still other memories are just plain ordinary. A Qdoba salad bowl as I tried to stave off some motion sickness—the nourishment hub wasn't up and running yet. A walk around the city square. A late night beer at the restaurant downstairs. Truffle popcorn, curious wall art, a movie, a monument, late nights and early mornings and many, many powerful insights into the intersection of our theology and church leadership.

Place has a peculiar way of reminiscing with us.

I don't suppose it was any different for Peter and John and Thomas and Nathanael and the other disciples. They'd returned to the Sea of Galilee, a familiar spot for them. Scholars speculate on why they returned there after Jesus' resurrection in Jerusalem. Maybe they were giving up on Jesus, maybe they were returning to what they knew as fishermen. Or as my friend Rev. David Telfort preached in his sermon this week in Indianapolis, maybe they returned to the place they first encountered Christ, because they were hoping that might just happen again. After all, Jesus

had been raised from the dead, but then kept disappearing. He wasn't sticking around very long before he was gone again. So, why not return to the place where they roamed the countryside together, where Jesus first told Simon Peter, the fisherman, that he would one day fish for people.

How many memories were running through their head? Surely, seeing Peter jumping in the water quickly reminded them of the time Jesus walked on the water and called Peter out to join him. He did, but then was spooked, and started to sink. Did Peter think he could do it any better this time?

On the shores of the Sea of Tiberias, also known as the Sea of Galilee, as Jesus is making them breakfast of fish and bread; the same hillside where Jesus turned a few fish and bread into a meal for thousands of women and children and men.

The wedding of Cana, just near the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus turned a situation of scarcity into abundance when he turned water to wine, something that mustn't have been far from their minds as their nets were brimming with overflowing fish from the water.

Maybe their memories weren't just big and joyful, but also poignant. Like when Peter promised he'd never abandon Jesus, but ultimately denied him three times, in front of a charcoal fire, the likes of which Jesus was using to make breakfast now.

Or maybe that last meal when Jesus took and broke bread with them just before he was

betrayed and executed, only now, it's no longer supper but breakfast, his hospitality is not in washing their feet this time but maybe in drying them, an important meal then transfigured now into the most important meal of the day.

Or maybe it was just ordinary memories of zillions of other meals together, the stories and inside jokes, the pranks and the lessons. Like when Jesus said he was the bread of life, that he was the vine and they were the branches, that he was the Good shepherd whose sheep know his voice and follow him. Out of a boat and onto a beach, even.

You can almost sense the disciples are overwhelmed. They don't know what to do or say. They don't know what to ask. They just sit with him and eat. Like Mary and Martha and the risen Lazarus.

And maybe that's what we need to be reminded of this morning. That for all the flash and showiness of Jesus' big miracles and grand resurrection, his appearances and transfiguration, the thousands fed and the hundreds healed and the wine glasses and fishing nets overflowing; that for all the signs and wonders of the extraordinary, there were exponentially more moments that were just plain ordinary.

At that has to be the good news for us this morning—that Jesus needed breakfast. And as much as he can be found in catching 153 fish in nets on a beach, he is also present in a boring old breakfast.

In the moments that often get overlooked, that didn't get recorded or recalled by the storytellers or even the disciples themselves. But how many other meals did they share together? And just like those times, here he was with them once again.

The gospel in this post-resurrection appearance of Jesus, is that he is right there having breakfast with them. He's not off healing anyone. He's not off confronting the powers. He's not off seeking revenge. He's with his loved ones. Daring them to do the same as he has done, to love one another. And that begins by being present with one another.

Each of us has these big, grand memories of conversations in the bar of a hotel in Indianapolis, when we were sure that God was speaking through the professed atheist who kept asking us philosophical questions until we were both confident this is what we were called to do. Big, grand memories of God showing up when we least expected it but needed it most—a job offer, a remission, a new romance.

But when we stop and think about it. When we're really honest with ourselves, as much as we are enticed by the extraordinary, we are sustained by the enduring ordinary. More times than not we have poignant moments or just plain ordinary moments, ones that are either too painful to relive or too inconsequential to recall.

But I'm telling you this morning, that's where God is. Not just in the miraculous but also, and especially, in the mundane. Not just in feeding thousands, but in that campfire breakfast.

If you really want a miracle though, it's that the risen Christ is present in every moment, that God is still speaking, that like lifelong partners, God remains with us through every high and every low. Enlivening us through the few extraordinary moments, but sustaining us through the the many, many, many ordinary ones.

Spanning the spectrum from breakfast muffins to smiles to jokes to laughs to losses and grief to coffees and group dates and play dates and date-dates. It's why something as ordinary as bread and grape juice, can remind us that the bread of life is in our midst, that Christ is in our midst, time and time again, enriching and nourishing our spirits.

So, let us bear witness to the risen Christ, by leaning into our everyday moments, by acknowledging God in the midst of our mundane, by trusting in the bread of life who sustains us through the ordinary.

Come to think of it, it's a whole other kind of nourishment hub.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.