

Waffles, Spaghetti, and the Spiritual Life  
Exodus 34:29 – 35; Luke 9:28 – 36; 2 Corinthians 3:12 – 4:2  
Sunday, March 3, 2019

Do you know anyone who cannot let their food touch? I am not ashamed to admit that as a 40-year-old adult, I do not want my *salad* on the same plate as the rest of my food. I want it in a separate bowl. And if it *has* to be on the same plate, it is going to be off by itself, not touching the rest of the food, or I will just wait until I *finish* the rest of my food and *then* go back and get the salad. It's a weird thing. I can't explain it. It just bothers me.

Some of you might be very happy with the way we're having communion today, because instead of taking a piece of bread and dipping it in the juice, you get your piece of bread first, and then you get your cup of juice, and the two stay separate. I have talked to people before who *do not like* the texture or consistency of soggy bread in communion.

This is something that I think most parents have dealt with at some point. You're having dinner, and you put the main course and the vegetables and whatever else on the plate, but the potatoes *cannot touch the ham* or else it's all contaminated. If that green bean touches that chicken nugget, dinner will not be eaten tonight.

I remember the *joy* that Jen and I experienced when we found *sectioned plates* for our kids, where the plates have little compartments to hold each serving. There was one plate that was shaped like Mickey Mouse's head. The face was where the meat or main course would go, and the two little ears were where you could put ketchup or fruit and vegetables. But they *did not touch each other*, which made our kids very happy.

There came a time, though, when we had to encourage our kids to let their food mix. They won't eat this chicken that we have cooked for dinner. So we would have to say, "If you take a bite of chicken *with* a bite of potatoes, it tastes really good together." "If you have a bite of stuffing *with* a bite of this turkey that you don't like, it makes it better." Eventually they shifted to where it was okay for their food to touch, and it made life so much easier.

It reminds me of this book that talks about how some people's brains are like waffles, while other people's brains are like spaghetti. Waffles have all those little squares in them. As a child, when I ate a waffle, there had to be butter in every single one of those squares, and each square had to have syrup in it. Waffles have compartments. With spaghetti, it all just mixes in together – the sauce and the noodles and all of it is just intertwined. So the thinking is that some people's brains are like waffles that have compartments. I can focus on *this*, and then I can focus on *this*, and then I can focus on *this*. But it's all separate. I can deal with one thing at a time, and I am able to separate my thoughts and my feelings on these different things. I can compartmentalize. But other people's brains are like spaghetti, where it is all intertwined and mixed together. I'm thinking about a lot of things at once, and it's all connected.

Some of us like to keep things *separate*, while some of us don't mind it all mixing together.

Now, if you're wondering what any of this has to do with Jesus' transfiguration and our scripture readings for today, it's this. People talk in terms of their *work life*, their *social life*, their *love life*, their *family life*, their *private life*, their *public life*, their *spiritual life*. We cordon off our lives into these different compartments and sections, so that these different aspects of our lives don't touch each other. Because when they *do* touch each other, it can get messy. If your love life

intersects with your work life, there can be problems. So we compartmentalize our lives and try to keep these different aspects separate.

But the reality is that they're all connected. They're all intertwined. They all affect each other. And as followers of Christ, one of our challenges is to let the spiritual be woven into every other aspect of our lives. Not to keep it *separate*, but to let it *infuse* everything else – our work, our families, the private and the public. To let our faith and the Spirit of God guide the decisions we make at work and in our families and relationships and social interactions. The challenge, as author Rob Bell says, is not to *have* a spiritual life but to *be* a spiritual life. To let the Spirit of God infuse all that you do and all that you are. And we actually see this at work in our scripture readings today.

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In this story from Exodus, Moses has been up on Mount Sinai speaking with God, receiving God's law. He has been in the presence of God for 40 days, and it has had an impact on him. As he comes back down the mountain to the people of Israel, his face is shining, radiating the glory of God. When the people see that, they are afraid. No one had ever seen God face to face, and even the glory of God being reflected off of Moses' face is too much for them. So Moses has to start wearing a veil. When he goes up on the mountain to talk with God, he takes the veil off. But when he comes down the mountain, after he tells the people what God had said, he puts the veil back on.

So it's like Moses has these two different lives – one up on top of the mountain and one down with everyone else. When he is engaged in everyday life, just walking around among the people, he wears the veil. But when he is carrying out his priestly duties, talking with God and relaying God's words to the people, he *doesn't* wear the veil. There is a clear, visible delineation between

his *priestly* life and his *personal* life; between his *spiritual* life and the *rest* of his life. It's almost like that person you know who is one way when they go to church, but then you see them out somewhere else and they are a completely different person. Moses has compartmentalized these different aspects of his life. There is a visible symbol that keeps them separate.

The story of Jesus' transfiguration is in many ways a reflection of the story of Moses. Jesus takes three of his disciples (Peter, James, and John) up on a *mountain* to pray. While they are on top of this mountain, Jesus' face begins radiating the glory of God, just like Moses' face did. Then, all of a sudden, Moses and the prophet Elijah are there next to him, talking with Jesus about his impending death. Peter, James, and John *see* this and are *amazed* by it all. These are things that they have only read about, heard stories about in Sunday School, and now they are *seeing it*, face to face. And they want to *hold on* to it. Peter says, "Lord, it is good for us to be here! Let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Elijah, and one for Moses. Let's just *stay here.*"

They have this amazing spiritual experience, and they want to *separate* it from the rest of their lives. Don't go back down the mountain to your everyday life; just stay here. Peter wants to compartmentalize, but God won't let them do that. A cloud comes over them, and the voice of God speaks to them from the cloud and says, "This is my Son, my chosen; listen to him!" Go where *he* tells you to go. Do what *he* tells you to do. In every aspect of your life, *listen to him*. And so they go back down the mountain, where the crowds of people are waiting for Jesus to bring them healing. Only this time, no one wears a veil. They have beheld the glory of God, but they do not have to cover their faces. They go down and bear the glory of God to the world. There's not one life up on the mountain and another down with everyone else. It's all intertwined.

There is a *shift* here. And Paul talks about that shift in his letter to the Corinthians. He says that in Christ we have beheld the very glory of God, and because of the hope that we have in him, we can act with great boldness. We don't have to wear a veil, like Moses. We can reflect the glory of God to the world in all that we do. Paul says we are being transformed into the image of Christ, into the glory of God, and all of this comes from the Spirit. The Spirit of God is *in you*, and so how can we help but have everything we do be spiritual?

If all that you *do* and all that you *are* is coming from the spirit of God, then *everything you do* and *everything you are* is *spiritual*. You don't come to church and have your spiritual life and then go back out into the rest of your life that is *not* spiritual. Your *work* can be *spiritual*. Your *family life* can be spiritual. Your *love life* can be spiritual. Your *social life* can be spiritual. *Exercise* can be spiritual. *Eating* can be spiritual. *Writing* and *painting* and *gardening* and *working with your hands* can be spiritual. Having lunch with a friend can be spiritual. Everything you do, every aspect of your life can be spiritual because *you* are spiritual. The Spirit of God has been breathed into your body and it infuses every single part of your being. We can't separate it and compartmentalize it, because that would be denying who we are.

We are called to listen to Jesus Christ in everything that we do – in our work and our play, in private and in public – to follow God's call in every aspect of our lives. Not to *have* a spiritual life, but to *be* a spiritual life. And in all that we do, to reflect the glory of God to the world. Not to hide it away, only to bring it out at certain times. Yes, it can be messy and difficult when those different aspects of our lives mix together; when we have to start thinking about our work and our relationships as a part of our faith. It can make us really uncomfortable and force us to

make some very difficult decisions. But it can also make every aspect of our life taste *that much better*; they can *enhance* each other.

The Spirit of God does not stay here when you leave. It goes with you. Because you are a spiritual being. And *every part of your life* can be spiritual.