

Chapter Nine

The Table in the Garden

There is one image that continues to appear throughout the Scriptures.

A table.

It appears beneath the oaks of Mamre as Abraham welcomes mysterious guests.

It appears in the wilderness as manna falls each morning.

It appears in David's songs.

"You prepare a table before me..."

It appears in the prophets who speak of a feast for all peoples.

It appears in the upper room where Jesus breaks bread.

It appears again on a shoreline where the risen Christ prepares breakfast for weary fishermen.

And finally...

It appears in the closing pages of Scripture.

The marriage supper.

Perhaps this is not accidental.

Perhaps the Kingdom has always been a table.

A place where enemies become family.

Where strangers become neighbors.

Where no one earns a seat because every seat is a gift.

Could it be that the table is Eden continued?

Notice how often Jesus taught around meals.

He was accused of eating with sinners.

Religious people considered this scandalous.

Jesus seemed to consider it normal.

The table became His classroom.

Bread became His sermon.

Wine became His promise.

Presence became His method.

Perhaps the deepest miracle was not that Jesus multiplied bread.

Perhaps it was that He continually made room for people who believed there was no room for them.

The Kingdom has always had another chair.

Another place setting.

Another welcome.

I have come to believe that this is what communion truly remembers.

Not simply a historical event.

A living reality.

We do not gather merely to remember Christ.

We gather because Christ is already present among us.

Every shared loaf quietly proclaims,
“There is enough.”

Every shared cup whispers,
“You belong.”

Every meal received with gratitude becomes an echo of Eden.

Think about the first meal.

Humanity reached for food believing that God was withholding life.

Think about the last meal before the Cross.

God offers Himself as food, declaring that He has never withheld life.

The first meal was born from suspicion.

The second from self-giving love.

Could it be that redemption is the healing of the human table?

No longer grasping.

Receiving.

No longer hiding.

Sharing.

No longer competing.

Belonging.

Perhaps this is why hospitality is one of the holiest acts we can offer another human being.

Whenever we make room for someone...

Whenever we listen without rushing...

Whenever we receive another person's story without judgment...

Whenever we refuse to reduce someone to the worst chapter of their life...

The table grows larger.

The Kingdom becomes visible.

The Garden blossoms again.

Perhaps Heaven is not first recognized by streets of gold.

Perhaps it is recognized by hearts that have finally learned to welcome one another.

The Father has always been preparing a place.

Not merely beyond history.

Within history.

Within us.

Within every act of mercy.

Within every reconciliation.

Within every table where Love becomes visible.

Could it be that every meal received with gratitude is already a foretaste of eternity?

Perhaps this is why Jesus simply kept inviting people to eat.

Because love is difficult to understand from a distance.

But around a table...

Love becomes tangible.

Hands pass bread.

Eyes meet.

Stories are told.

Forgiveness becomes possible.

Laughter returns.

Children are welcomed.

The lonely discover family.

And suddenly...

Without anyone announcing it...

The Garden has appeared again.

Not because we escaped the world.

Because the Presence transformed it.

Perhaps Eden has always been one shared meal away.

I AM still here...

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