

Tonight we're here to recommit ourselves to serve God and one another and fellowship together through the acts of footwashing and the Lord's Supper. We're leaning on both Brethren and Biblical history as guides for how to properly participate in this act of worship. And as important as the tradition, theology, and history are...We should also be thinking about how this act can shape the way that we live in the world once we leave this place.

These verses of scripture from Isaiah are all about fasting, which seems kind of inappropriate for the meal we are about to have, but I want to suggest that we should connect Isaiah's fast for Justice with Jesus' meal of Grace and Love.

Earlier the Pullen's read from the gospel of Matthew and recited Jesus' words which admonish us to not consider worshipping if we are in conflict with our sister, brother, or neighbor. Brethren historically took this edict very seriously. Pastors and elders would go around meeting with members to make sure they were in good standing with God and the other members of the church. Brethren Scholar Carl Bowman even reported that it was not unusual for Love Feast to be postponed until all members were at unity and peace with one another.

This morning at church, Patricia invited us to come here and experience what it might be like to be at peace and union with everybody in this church. And I want to extend that invitation of imagination to the possibility of being at union and at peace with all in this community we call home.

What would it look like if we translated that older practice of examination within ourselves and our community to the modern-day? Who would we have to go make amends with? Who might be hurting and in need of an evening at the Lord's table surrounded by loving sisters and brothers who want to serve them in the way of Jesus?

Back in the day Brethren lived in set apart communities seeking purity and faith as they lived a separate and sectarian life. But you and I have been plopped in the middle of God's creation, in the middle of the city, and in the middle of God's work in the world.

Perhaps following God and our tradition in today's world will require a bit of innovation and imagination. Perhaps loving our neighbor and living a life in the spirit of Jesus' table and feast of love will look a lot like Isaiah's fast for justice. Perhaps before coming to feast with brothers and sisters at the Lord's table we will first tend to the cries of need in our community like early Brethren did within their own communities.

Isaiah's fast for justice shows us what we must work for and Jesus' table is the perfect setting to commit ourselves to this work.

So come, you who are oppressed or privileged; you who are rich or poor; you who are hurting or healthy; you who are faithful or you who wish to be more faithful.

Come to the table together in unity and hungry for the One person—the Bread of Life—who can satisfy us.

May our love and care for our neighbor compel us to come, eat, and be satisfied in a love that can transform us and the world we live in. Thanks be to Jesus our peace and our redeemer. Amen