



Week 2: Mindful Eating

Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; So your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine. (Proverbs 3:9-10)

1 Thinking Theologically about Food

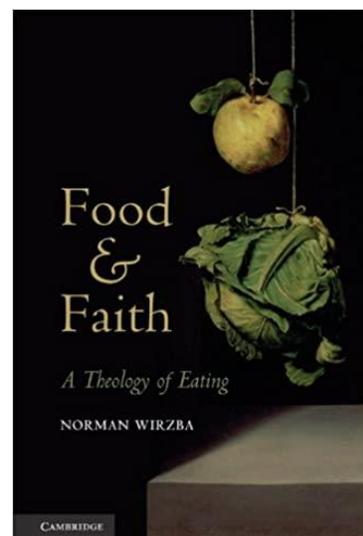
To live, we must daily break the body and shed the blood of Creation. When we do this knowingly, lovingly, skillfully, reverently, it is a sacrament. When we do it ignorantly, greedily, clumsily, destructively, it is a desecration. In such desecration we condemn ourselves to spiritual and moral loneliness, and others to want.¹

To eat is still something more than to maintain bodily functions. People may not understand what that “something more” is, but they nonetheless desire to celebrate it. They are still hungry and thirsty for sacramental life.²

Why did God create a world in which every living creature must eat?

Food is about the relationships that join us to the earth, fellow creatures, loved ones and guests, and ultimately God. How we eat testifies to whether we value the creatures we live with and depend upon. To eat is to savor *and* struggle with the mystery of creatureliness. When our eating is mindful, we celebrate the goodness of fields, gardens, forests and

watersheds, and the skill of those who can nurture seed and animal life into delicious food. We acknowledge and honor God as the giver of every good and perfect gift. But we also learn to correct our own arrogance, boredom, and ingratitude. Eating invites people to develop a deeper appreciation for where they are and who they are with so that their eating can be a sacramental rather than a sacrilegious act. A thoughtful, theological relation to food makes possible the discovery that eating is among the most intimate and pleasing ways possible for us to enter into the memberships of creation and find there the God who daily blesses and feeds life.



Bible Readings

Genesis 2:15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

Leviticus 19:9-10 “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.

John 6:5-14 When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. Philip answered him, “It would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!” Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?” Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). 11 Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. And when they had eaten their fill, Jesus told his disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.” So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves and few fish left by those who had eaten. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!”

Acts 2:43-47 A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Questions to Ponder

1. Norman Wirzba noted, “How we eat testifies to whether we value the creatures we live with and depend on.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?
2. Imagine you were present for the miraculous feeding in the John verses. Further, imagine you got to take home a basket of leftovers. How would you describe this story to others who weren’t present? Would you share the leftovers, be afraid to eat them, eat them alone, give them away?
3. Think about a time someone shared their food with you. What was that like for you?
4. Besides ‘big’ meals like Christmas, Thanksgiving or Easter, what gatherings around food with family and friends mean the most to you? Doesn’t the food just taste better and mean more when we are enjoying it with others? (Or maybe that’s just me.) How do these meals impact your faith?

Recipes of the Week

Casseroles – the best dishes to feed ‘a crowd’ and usually just as good leftover.

Notes: