

This transcript was developed using an AI-based speech-to-text generator. We apologize for any typos or other errors.

.....

“Break Bread With the Enemy” The Rev. Aaron M. G. Zimmerman (5/7/2023, Fifth Sunday of Easter)

.....

Let us pray. Almighty God made the words in my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be always acceptable in thy sight. Oh Lord, our strength and our Redeemer, amen we'll begin with a little round of jeopardy. This Born Again Christian and multi platinum selling rap artist, whose given name was Earl Simmons was buried out of a star studded funeral in New York City that featured customized automobiles Louis Farrakhan and Lil Kim. Who is come on white people DMX DMX that was DMX. That's okay, it's okay. I bring up DMX. Only to say he released a song in 2002. And he gave us the perfect image that gives us the context for John 14. This reading you heard today very famous passage. I'm the Way the Truth and the Life. And it's a beautiful passage just on its own. But we know the context, I think it takes on some deeper significance and some really powerful help for for, for people. And in the 2002 song X gone give it to you. He said, The MX said, I break bread with the enemy. That is what you need to understand. For John 14, I break bread with the enemy. Now I don't know if you have ever had a dinner party. But usually you don't invite enemies. Jesus did. The passage in John 14 is in and around the Last Supper, Jesus has invited all his friends to this dinner, this Passover meal, and it's the night before he is arrested and he is going to be killed. And he is invited his enemies the thing is they don't know it yet. They don't know they're his enemies yet. But they are about to be just that. So I want to talk about what he says talk a little bit about the context here. And and I hope give some help to to the human person. I don't know if you know this, but you have this thing called your ego, which is your your sort of sense of self as you move through the world. The things that have made you the the things that you think you are the things you identify with your Twitter bio, you're about on Facebook, or just the way you introduce yourself when you walk into a party, your egos sort of there with you. And the thing about your ego is that in the course of life, it it gets massively punctured. And I want to talk about what happens when that I'll say more about what that means. Maybe you think oh, yeah, I'm going through that right now. Maybe you some of you are saying what is this? I don't know what he's talking about. I will explain and we'll get to it. But let's begin with the Last Supper, breaking bread with the enemies. So Jesus is having this meal before he dies. And it's it holds the title of most awkward dinner ever. Jesus is talking about things you're not supposed to talk about a dinner party, namely your death, not a real crowd pleaser. And also, he says that one of you will betray me. And he says it just in front of everybody. He's not like a Peter, Judas over there as he's like, no one of you is going to betray me. And I'll let everybody know who it is when I did my bread in the olive oil with the guy who's also dipping the bread everybody will know. So it's just very just tense at the Last Supper. You thought you Thanksgiving was bad at your house. Nothing like The Last Supper. And as I said he's breaking bread with the enemy. When I said that none of them thought they were the enemy. They all thought they

were good church going folks live in the Christian life. They've been following Jesus for three years, they've given up everything to follow him. Major sacrifice, major devotion, all of it, seeing the miracles, all of it. And they basically think they're okay now you know, Judas, maybe he's a little bit aware that he's the enemy but everybody else. Everybody else at this dinner when Jesus says I'm going to die and you were all going to head for the hills, you all are going to deny me you're all going to betray me. You're all going to flee. They all say no, no, no, no, we would never depart. We would never leave we are completely committed to Team Jesus. So they are the enemy but they don't know it yet. They are a little bit like the mayor of the French village in Chocolat. This Mayor prayed by Alfred Molina is sort of your puritanical type, who wants to resist this Chocolatier who's bringing this delightful and delicious treat, but it's so it's so carnal. It's so fleshly if people get into pleasures of the flesh, who knows where it could lead, you gotta nip it in the bud. No chocolate in this town doesn't help the Captain Jack Sparrow is there messing things up Johnny Depp is in the movie if you haven't seen it. But this mayor who's sort of very anti chocolate goes into the little Chocolatery, and it has a window facing the street for her to display all of her chocolate creations. And he goes into night thinking he's gonna shut it down and tear it up. And he just decides to, you know, to combat sin, you have to know what you're dealing with. So he, he takes a little bite of the chocolate, which leads to an enormous binge. And he wakes up the next morning pass, he's passed out in the window, facing the street. He's covered with chocolate, you know, like your one year old at the first birthday party with the frosting, he's just covered with it. And he's just sort of curled up asleep. And he's and he's a woken by people knocking on the on the glass like Missoula mayor, like what's Are you okay, what's happened. And so that was his moment of disillusionment, in that he had the illusion that he was in control. He had the illusion that he could control his impulses. He was under the illusion that he had an ego that was strong and could master his libidinal urges and base desires. And he was forced to realize very publicly, that he was not who he thought he was, he did not have the ability to, to master himself. And this is what is about to happen to every single one of Jesus's disciples. Again, we will not betray you, we will not flee, we will not desert you, when the chips are down, geez, we're sticking with you. Through the end, we've got your back forever. And the second he's arrested, they all desert him and fled and pretend that they've never met the man in their life. And so they have this moment of disillusionment, where they realize that they are not who they thought they were. These are folks who are trusting in their own ego, they thought that their strength was sufficient, and they're all about it failed spectacularly. And the ironic thing is that Jesus at this dinner knows that they are about to do this. If you knew someone was about to fail, you betray you let you down spectacularly in a way that would lead to your demise. What might you say to them at a dinner party, before they've done this thing? I don't know what you would say. But what Jesus says, Is John 14, don't let your hearts be troubled. In my Father's house are many rooms, and I go to prepare a place for you. And I will come back so that I can bring you to that place, so that where I am, you can be there too. What a gracious thing. What an unbelievable mind blowing thing to say. It's a little bit like the story in Acts where you saw Saint Stephen getting beaten to death with rocks because of his faith. And he says, Father, don't hold this sin against them mind blowing, somebody cuts you off in traffic and you pray for their eternal damnation. Steven forgives those people who are killing him. And Jesus of Nazareth, at a dinner with people who are about to betray them, says not some lecture, if you betray me, I'm cutting you off forever. No, he says, there are a lot of rooms in my father's house. And I'm going to go get yours ready just for you. And I'm going to come back and bring you there because I want you to be with me forever. Very low standards. The Lord has apparently. This is what grace looks like. And it's good news. Because many of us again go through life thinking that we are the upright. We are the good ones. We are the ones who are

on the path to make it better. We're on this ego driven journey. Here we are at the center of our little movie that we're in that's called our life. I mean, as I look, I noticed I'm in the center of everything I see, have you noticed that about you, you're in the center of everything. And so we think that we have power. And we think we have control, and all these illusions about our strength and our ability. And yet, then we are T boned. Whether it's the loss of what we thought our life would be, and that could be a career that goes sideways, that could be infertility. That could be mental illness that turns the person you live with into not the person you married, it could be just a running out of steam in life, failure, misfortune, things that you bring about on your own or things that happen to you. There is in every life. David Wilcock said in every human life, a little rain must fall, but I think he underestimated. I think everybody goes to these experiences, were just the plans that you made the castles that you thought you would build, crumble into into sand. And Jesus knows this is going to happen to his disciples. And so what he is trying to do is to dethrone that ego. He says that He is the WAY the TRUTH and the LIFE. Thomas asked this kind of touching question. He says, Lord, how do we know the way to get to where you're going? Tell us the way we don't know the way? That's an ego type question. Tell me the directions to get to the goal. And I will get there, you just got to give me the roadmap, give me the steps, give me the formula to follow. And Jesus says, Dear Thomas, I am the way I am the truth. And I am the life. By knowing me, everything is taken care of, I'm going to get the place ready. I'm going to come back, and I'm gonna put you on my shoulders and get you there to cross that divide that you cannot cross on your own. You are not the star of the story. You're not the belle of the ball. Your ego is nothing in this. You don't need to get directions to get to the goal. Because you're not the hero of the journey. Jesus is the one who says he will come and get you and bring you to the place where you will be in the Father's house forever. At this point, this is the part where I'm supposed to apply the sermon. You know, you're like, okay, good, good. Good. So how do I dethrone my ego? Give me the steps. What's the formula? Maybe two, three steps to put this into practice? Haha. So that's the thing. That's that Thomas question. Show me the way tell me how to get there so I can get there. How can I with my ego dethrone my ego? Well, that's it's tautological. It doesn't quite work that way. But I have a hunch that on some level, this is already happening to you, and will continue to happen to you throughout your life. Richard Rohr says, God comes to you disguised as your life. If you could identify at all, with some of the things I've talked about in terms of the losses and reversals and difficulties, the brick walls that one runs into in life, then this is already happening to you, you are already being decentered. You are already being dethroned in a sense. And what I'm saying to you is that this is the loving work of God in your life. So that you can stop trying to be God who controls everything around you, but you might, by God's grace, be able to rest and know that someone else is in control. Someone who loves you, someone who goes to prepare a place for you, and will then not say over there, hey, I've got the room ready? You you get over here. No, he will go back to find you, and bring you bring you home. And I think that's really good news. Because there are many, many things in life that I cannot solve. There are things that I cannot fix. If my salvation is up to me, it's not going to happen. If my sanctification and getting better is up to me. It's not going to happen. If me simply getting through life is up to me. It's not going to happen. Now this flies in the face of everything you've been taught. If you work hard, and get a good education, and follow the rules, you can be anything you want. It flies in the face of some of you who have your favorite poem Invictus, which is a deeply I'm Christian poem, I am the master of my fate captain of my ship. No, you ain't This does sound wrong in some way, I am in control, I am supposed to follow the steps. Well, that may get you part of the way. But at some point the wheels do fall off. At

some point, there's some situation you can't fix either in your life around your relationships, the stuff that makes up your so called life as well as what's inside you. If you are a person for whom anxiety is an ever present reality in your life, go to therapy, take your meds, but the black dog will return from time to time. If you are someone who is just prone to well, whatever it is in your life, that is something that will probably always more or less be there. You cannot fix you. Despite what Coldplay says. God is the one who says you don't need to know the way so you can walk the path, I am the way I am the truth. I am the life. Just know me. And I'll take care of the rest. To me. That is at first bad news because it means I'm not nearly as important as I thought I was. But ultimately, that is very good news. Because it means that someone who loves me and can actually do the work says that he'll do it for me. So this is a non application sermon. There is nothing for you to do, except maybe to just think about the possibility of entertaining the idea that God loves you that you are not in control and the situations in your life which most frustrate you and exhaust you. And where are you out? The places where you find out that you don't have enough fuel in the tank you don't have the strength you felt you had that those are the cracks where the light of God can get in and get you to a place where you are no longer like Thomas, show us the way we will never desert you. But instead, you're someone that says, Have mercy on me a sinner and then God embraces you and brings you home. Let us pray. Almighty God help us to see things rightly and to trust in you holy. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.