



Union Hill United Methodist Church

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AROS District - 1383

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Dear Friends,

My wife is responsible for about 98 percent of the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches made in our home. I know it sounds like an easy task, and one that should have a more equitable distribution of labor, but apparently I am unqualified to make such a humble sandwich. Every time I try, my boys turn up their noses and say, "That's NOT how Mommy makes them!" So today I tried to wow them.

Today I made the PB&Js like my Dad used to for me on those rare occasions when he was forced to make lunch. I mixed the peanut butter and jelly first, and I toasted up the bread with some butter in a frying pan. The boys were so excited when I told them that they were getting a special treat that Pop Pop invented. I even gave them a special name – PB and Pop Pops.

It was a fool's errand. Jimmy was the first to notice that the peanut butter and jelly weren't separate and clearly defined (or that the jelly wasn't on top!), and he refused to even try it. His brother quickly followed suit. I reasoned with them. I pleaded that they just try. I explained that the peanut butter and jelly were still there, but in an altogether new and fantastic form. If only they would take a bite, then they would know the truth, but by then it was too late. Lunch had become a stalemate, and the boys were as entrenched in their position as any soldier in WWI.

You would think it would be hard to mess up a simple thing like the peanut butter and jelly sandwich. It takes no special talent, and you don't have to create anything from scratch. The same holds true for Christianity. The message is so simple that even the youngest child can grasp it. God loves us, and he sent his son to save us. We don't have to create the message, and we don't have to come up with anything new. If you really think about it, we don't even have to do any of the hard work. The Holy Spirit will take care of the difficult stuff. All we are called to do is present Jesus to the world. Once we do that, we can step out of the way and let God work in the hearts of men.

It is such a shame that we mess up this seemingly easy job all the time. So often the Church shows the world Jesus so sloppily and so confusingly that people won't even try to follow him. They watch us, and they listen to us, and unfortunately come to the conclusion sometimes that the Jesus we represent isn't the best thing ever. We need to be aware of how much damage we can do when we try to add to or spice up Christ's message of love and salvation. It doesn't take flare or complicated theology. Jesus doesn't need us to tell the world all the secrets of the universe or change his message to fit the times. Instead, we need to love as Jesus first loved us. We need to be humble. We need to sacrifice our desires in order to follow the will of God. Do these simple things, and do them well, and the people of this community will hunger for the Word of God. Anybody can do it because anybody can live in the grace of Jesus Christ. Even you!

If you want to grow this church or spread Christianity, don't overcomplicate it. Show the world Jesus. It is enough.

In His Name,
Pastor Brad

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