



Maundy Thursday, April 9, 2020

### **This Is for You**

The Reverend Dr. John A. Dalles  
*Psalm 116:1-2; 12-14; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

I came across an article about house hunting that was titled: "9 Ways to Know You've Found the Right House." Anyone who has ever looked for a place to live — a home, a condo or an apartment, a cabin in the woods, or a cottage by the sea — knows that the search can sometimes be exhausting. And so, tips to know you have found the right place sound good to me — so that, when the house speaks to you, you can almost hear it saying, "*This is for you.*"

Here are the nine ways to know:

1. You want to go inside the house.
2. The house embraces you the moment you enter.
3. You don't feel uncomfortable in any spot.
4. You feel some ownership about the house long before you make an offer.
5. You begin to envision the furniture arrangement, and how you will live in that house.
6. It checks the most important boxes.
7. You want to stop looking at other homes.
8. You can't wait to tell your friends about it.
9. You're already planning to go back.

Not a bad list. We may not have felt all nine of those; even so, they all have the ring of truth about them. And here's the thing: we could extrapolate that list, and use it when making decisions about things other than the home in which we live — and it would translate pretty well.

- Nine ways to know you found the right job.
- Nine ways to know you found the right college.
- Nine ways to know that you've found the right **faith**.

Faith?

Yes, it is a good list, if you are asking questions about what you believe and how you will live your life, in the largest sense.

Nine ways to know that you've found the right faith:

1. **You want to go inside.** There is something about it that draws you in — something warm and welcoming; something that peeks your interest; something that makes you want to know more, and more, and more. There is something about this faith that offers a kind of shelter or haven — and something about this faith that offers you a chance to further explore who you are, and how you fit into the larger neighborhood that is your world. **You want to go inside.**

2. **This faith embraces you the moment you enter.** It reaches out to you and meets you more than halfway. It is like the warm welcome of a dear friend — a beaming smile, and a word spoken in such a way that you know *this is for you*. There is a sense of belonging, as well as believing. **This faith embraces you from the moment you enter.**
3. **You don't feel uncomfortable in any spot.** You may feel curious, but there is nothing about this faith that is painful or prickly. Instead, it makes you feel right. **You don't feel uncomfortable in any spot.**
4. **You feel some ownership about this faith, long before you make a commitment.** There is something about its words that warm your heart. There is something about its compassion for others that inspires you. There is something about its focus on forgiveness that helps you understand that here is a place to begin, or to start over, drawing closer to God. **You feel some ownership about this faith, long before you make a commitment.**
5. **You begin to envision how you will live into this faith.** You begin seeing that you have things to bring to it, as well as receive from it. You begin sensing that, here, you can make what you believe tangible — that your gifts and abilities somehow fit with what is needed. **You begin to envision how you will live into this faith.**
6. **It checks the most important boxes.** You know what they are. They may have to do with feeling you are at home at last. They may have to do with finding a place where you can address the world's needs. They may have to do with singing more, or learning more, or giving more. **It checks the most important boxes.**
7. **You want to stop looking at other faiths.** They may be fine for someone else, but you are convinced in your heart of hearts that this is what you have been looking for. This comes closest to the ideal. This makes the most sense. This makes your spirits soar. **You want to stop looking for other faiths.**
8. **You can't wait to tell your friends about it.** You are so excited that you cannot help but share it. This excitement spills from you to them. It shows in your whole personality. **You can't wait to tell your friends about it.**
9. **You're already planning to go back:** to see more; to do more; to be well acquainted with it, in a way that your initial impressions can be confirmed, and your faith deepened. **You're already planning to go back.**

In short, you can say of this faith: *This is for you.*

Friends, when we look at the Bible, we see God at work on every page, for us. From the marvels of creation, which we are invited to appreciate and celebrate, to the acts of kindness, justice, and mercy that helped form His faithful people. It does not stop with Scripture. It continues, right until today. We can look at these moments and say: *This is for us.*

When we gather on Maundy Thursday, we participate in the Communion meal that Jesus instituted in the Upper Room. We remember it, but, more than remembering, we share the meal with our Risen Lord. And in Him, we share it, one with another — and with all Christians in every time and place. Because God did it all, for us.

It was Thursday. It was evening. Bread was there.

*This is for you.*

The bread, then, was common to the culture of Christ's community, and Jesus set it apart, from an ordinary to an extraordinary use. Bread like that, bread that we eat every day, is provided now.

*This is for you.*

Jesus broke the bread, just as we will do. Jesus took what was whole, and, presiding there, shared it with all. The one complete loaf expressed the unity of the Body of Christ. Then, each of them shared the bread; torn, and shared, it conveyed to them the brokenness of Jesus' body on the cross and His willingness to die for humankind, out of love.

That was the meaning of the bread, that night. That is the meaning of the bread, this night.

*This is for you.*

When we share the bread, we are there. When we share the bread, Christ is here.

Then came the cup — poured out, signifying the shed blood of Jesus. His life, poured out for the world.

Jesus' message was for more than the individual — taking up one's cross, losing one's life — these are *not* the acts of a person who is disconnected from others. Taking up one's cross, losing one's life — these are the *intentional* acts of someone who is intimately connected to a purpose that is larger, greater, better, higher than themselves.

There in that Upper Room, Jesus was creating a community of faith; a company of the faithful; a congregation of the committed; a Church with Jesus as its leader; a body with Christ as its head; a center from which the gospel could be shared.

*This is for you.*

The great sacrament of Communion — begun on Maundy Thursday — is a social sacrament. The Lord's Supper binds people to Jesus. It also binds people to each other, in Jesus. So we can look across the aisle and down the pew, and all around the room and say: *This is for you.*

*“Who is so low, that we are not their sister or brother?  
Who is so high, that we have no path to them?  
Who is so poor, that we may not feel their hunger?  
Who is so rich, that we may not pity them?  
Who in God's heaven has passed beyond our vision?  
Who, in the depths, where we may never fare?  
Who is so hurt, that we may not know their heartache?  
Who sings for joy, that our hearts may never share?”*

Dear friends, when we gather on Maundy Thursday, we share this meal with our Risen Lord. And in Him, we share it one, with another — and with all Christians in every time and place.

*This is for you.*

This night, think upon Jesus our Lord; draw close to Him; draw close to one another; and hear once more the New Commandment Christ gave to us: *“Love one another.”*

*This is for you. **This is for you.** Amen.*