

DIAMOND IN THE BAG

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February 20/22

Mrs. Rodgers, Joy, my wife, is not a woman given to “water power” (that’s what my father called it when Mom was upset and tearful about something). The current Mrs. Rodgers (not my mother but my wife of 62 years) does not go into tears over the minor upsets of life. She is not one to use tears as a weapon to get what she wants. Still she gets upset over things that happen sometimes that I don’t always understand. When she does, she means it. When she does, I pay attention. So you can imagine that I was extremely concerned when I came home one day to find her hovering over every bit and piece in our recycling bag looking frightful. She was clearly upset over something in that bag, and it wasn’t the odd bottle cap that didn’t belong there. It took some time for me to find out what happened. She was upset because she had lost the diamond out of her wedding ring. It’s interesting to see the difference in our reactions. My first thought was, “You’ve got to be kidding?” A family heirloom - that ring was given to my maternal Grandmother on her wedding day. you’d understand my first reaction was “ough-oh!”. To me, it was a loss of a ring that had been in the family for three generations: but nothing to beat yourself up over. Bad things happen to good people all the time.

To her, however, it represented her/our marriage. She had lost the symbol of something which (she tells me) makes her happy. I began to think about it in a different light. Isn’t it interesting that the deepest form of communication in our species is symbolic? It is the least precise form of communication, to be sure, because its meaning depends both on the one talking and the one listening. For example, when I see a Canadian flag and a Canadian athlete holding an Olympic medal and if the medal is gold we hear our national anthem and we are proud-- all symbols -- it carries deep meaning to me. For many of you it does also, but the meaning is somewhat different. Yet we refer to these meanings by the same symbol. The communication is not complete in what I feel when I see the flag; it needs my experience to be complete communication. To my wife, that ring was symbolic communication from me to her, and it was very precious. That’s symbolic communication. It needs a symbol, like the wedding ring. It needs a sender, but it is not complete without the experience of the receiver. The deeper the experience on both sides, the more meaningful the communication.

Such a communication is found in the Lord’s Supper. The bread and the cup are symbols. Simple things; like a ring, or a flag, yet these are packed with meaning. They represent the body and blood of our Lord. As such, we see that Jesus committed his whole life into those symbols. He has made this communication as deep as it can possibly be. But the communication is not complete without our response. If we’ve never seen the flag before, it means nothing. If we choose to ignore the wedding ring, the communication is rejected. But if we commit our whole lives to Christ, the symbols take on the deepest of meaning for us. They become, symbolically, the very body and blood of Christ. They become our salvation; they become the promise of resurrection. And they are very precious indeed.

By the way Joy found the diamond tucked in the corner of that recycling bag. When she did we celebrated together – and all was well again! Today we gratefully celebrate here at this Table of The Lord with the awesome symbols of bread and wine (symbolically the body and blood of our Lord) and

more so we sense the sacrifice and love of God – we break the bread and eat – we lift the cup and drink – we taste and swallow and it is real. And all is well again! Amen