



WEEK 4: "THE PRACTICE OF EUCHARIST TO SHAPE A JUSTICE- ORIENTED PEOPLE" BY KYUBOEM LEE

[WATCH OR LISTEN TO THE SESSION: BIT.LY/2JMOTLY](https://bit.ly/2JMOTLY)

SYNOPSIS: Monuments are not just mere objects, they are signs that signify larger realities. In the case of the recent events surrounding Charlottesville, a Confederate statue was a monument signifying a certain kind of power and principality. These types of monuments speak into how we should structure world, society, what rules our hearts and minds, and what defines what is real and true and important. In addition, Lee argues, monuments demand loyalty and allegiance.

The Eucharist acts as its own kind of monument, a witness to the Kingdom of God through Christ. As such, it serves as a counter-monument to all the other kingdoms of the world (i.e., white supremacy, in the case of Charlottesville) that stand in opposition to God's kingdom.

In the Kingdom of God, there is equality at the foot of the cross. Unfortunately, many kingdoms of the world often lift up some at the expense of others. Many who receive the Eucharist also readily declare allegiances to other kingdoms. As the Western Church, we must guard ourselves against our tendency to co-opt the good things of God, given to us for the sake of shalom and peace, and use them for our own purposes and power. It's all too easy for us to misappropriate the Eucharist to exclude or keep people out, contributing to racial, economic, and social division. Instead, we are called to grow as a kingdom of hospitality—so that we welcome the "other" as God's image bearer.

But this is hard work, for a number of reasons. First, it is easier, in many ways, to keep the Eucharist in the realm of the individual, as a personal, pietistic encounter with God. It is easy to forget that it is a social and communal act of the church, with a justice and shalom-oriented character. And we must flesh out these social, communal, and justice-oriented aspects of the Eucharist, helping our communities cultivate imaginations with this kind of Eucharistic character in mind.

Lee gives two Scripture passages that describe our task: First, he cites 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, where the Eucharist was being served in different ways to different groups (rich vs. poor). Paul saw the Lord's Supper as a witness to the classism that was dividing the church in Corinth. One cannot proclaim one body and one cup and practice classism in this way; it is a betrayal of the heart of the Eucharist. Second, Lee shares Luke 14:15-24, the Parable of the Great Banquet, as a vision for what the Kingdom of God might look like at the Eucharistic table. The big question of the parable is: Who is going to make it in, and who are the VIPs at the table in this kingdom? Luke is clear: It is the poor, the blind, the lame.

At the heart of the Eucharist is hospitality—God's invitation to sinners to taste of his goodness. When the church heeds the call to practice hospitality and welcome in the poor, the blind, the cripple, it's a sign that the kingdom of God is here now.

This brings us back around to the second reason why a justice-oriented, hospitality-driven Eucharistic imagination is hard—because it often requires us to change. It requires us to step outside our normal comfort zones to embrace those not like us, to embrace and welcome in the poor, the marginalized and the downtrodden. It requires repentance, turning away from the kingdoms and powers of this world and turning toward the kingdom of God.

In summary, we need a vision of the “kingdom society” to be fed into our souls as we eat at the Table together each week. And this weekly Table practice needs to feed our imagination of what it means to be the Body of Christ in the world. This requires a people who are deeply, spiritually, imaginatively formed toward the justice and shalom of the Kingdom. The question before us is: How do we cast vision for and practice the Eucharist in such a way that it forms us into these kinds of people?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Kyuboem Lee offered a few “monuments” that many in the world are loyal to (white supremacy, racism, classism, etc.). Can you think of other monuments that the Eucharist might “counter?”
2. What are the “kingdoms of this world” that you are tempted to align with? Which of these has had an impact/influence in your formation?
3. Read through the two passages Lee referenced: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 and Luke 14:15-24. What do the passages communicate about the social/communal significance of the Eucharist? What eschatological realities are the Eucharist/Banquet Table signifying, according to Paul and Jesus?
4. Jesus said those who are on the outside—marginalized, forgotten—are the honored guests in his kingdom. How should this inform how we engage culture?
5. In your church or community, are the rich and poor sitting at the same table, giving a glimpse into God’s future society? If not, why? Are there other forms of exclusion happening?
6. Kyuboem Lee warns against Christianity’s history of paternalism, or restricting people’s freedom for “their own good.” Why do we do this, and what might be a better way to relate to culture?
7. Why is hospitality deeply challenging for you, personally? Thinking about your church as a whole, what are some of the challenges you face in practicing hospitality? Consider and identify a few simple, practical steps you and your church could take to practice hospitality more fully in the next weeks and months.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Books Kyuboem Lee referenced in his session

[When Helping Hurts](#) by Steve Corbett
[The Color of Law](#) by Richard Rothstein
[Family Properties](#) by Baryl Satter

[Race and Place](#) by David Leong
[American Apartheid](#) by Douglas Massey
[Exclusion and Embrace](#) by Miroslav Wolf

WEEKLY PRACTICE:

Practice hospitality by reaching out to and inviting someone different from you out for coffee, or if possible, over for a meal in your home or space—even if it requires you to be uncomfortable.