

The Weekly Message from Darren Brandon
May 7, 2025
“Pinto Beans and Fried Potatoes”



In the warm, afternoon sun, we stood under the Stegner Pavilion in Cherokee Park to celebrate the life of my good friend Leo Wright. We took turns sharing stories, which connected like puzzle pieces to reveal a fuller picture of Leo.

It was a simple and holy moment - Leo would have loved it. Though he was a world traveler and the sharpest dresser I've ever known, Leo also appreciated life's simple pleasures. Once, after returning from a long trip, he asked Joyce to cook some of her delicious pinto beans.

I understand the comfort of pinto beans. My grandmother used to serve them with fried potatoes. Our old stove cooked unevenly, so she always fried her potatoes to a crisp - burning most of them. When my wife Lori cooks them for us, I ask her to cook mine to a crisp and burn a few. Those crispy, overcooked, fried potatoes bring me back to my early days around my grandmother's table.

Our brains are wired to remember food events and the people connected with those meals. Emotions and food are deeply linked. After fishing all night and catching nothing, Jesus appeared to Peter and the disciples—and empty nets became full to overflowing with fish. When the disciples returned to shore, Jesus was there, waiting with a breakfast of bread and fish cooked over a fire.

The last time Peter stood near a fire, he had denied Jesus. But now, in the warmth of this simple meal, he received grace. In that moment, Peter is not only fed—he is restored.

Sometimes a meal feeds both body and soul.

Grace and Peace,

Darren