

So You Will Never Forget

1 Corinthians 11: 23-26 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread,

24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "**This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.**"

25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "**This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.**"

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Introduction

At sunrise of Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, 350 Japanese war planes flew through a mountain pass over the island of Oahu and rained death and destruction on Pearl Harbor.

Eight battleships and 10 smaller warships were sunk or put out of commission.

hundred American planes were destroyed and 3,581 servicemen were killed or wounded.

The USS Arizona took a bomb down its stack.

The boilers, oil tanks, and munitions magazine exploded.

The battleship went down in eight minutes, entombing 1,177 sailors.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt called the day of the sneak attack, "a day of infamy."

The national battle cry with which the United States entered World War II was "Remember Pearl Harbor!"

Other battle cries have marked our nation's two-hundred-year history such as "Remember the Alamo!" and "Remember the Maine!"

The Lord's Supper is not a battle cry, but it, too, is a call to remembrance.

Some things we need not forget:

I. Our Savior's final words

The Lord's Supper is a meal that we receive.

Just as we take the elements and receive them into our bodies, we have taken Jesus Christ and received him into our lives.

But the Lord's Supper is more than a meal.

It is a memorial.

When we share in the bread and cup we have not only the responsibility of receiving but also remembering.

On the night before Jesus was executed he gathered with his disciples for a final meal together.

It would be their last time together before he was hauled away by Jewish and Roman authorities to be crucified.

Around the table he shared the Passover meal with his closest friends.

Then Jesus "took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'This is My body, which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19).

In the apostle Paul's record of the instituting of the Lord's Supper, twice he has Jesus say "***in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. 11:24,25).***

The word remembrance means much more than recalling something or someone from the past.

To remember is to make vivid, to make real, to recall and make contemporary the reality of the deed.

In this case, it is a remembering of Jesus' words, life, deeds, and death that brings life to us.

Because of Jesus, we were redeemed, we are redeemed, and we shall be redeemed fully when he returns. The Lord's Supper commemorates that fact.

II. A memento from a cherished friend

To aid our memory, Jesus chose two symbols, necessary for life itself as constant reminders for us: bread and wine.

The simplest of elements, when they are associated with the greatest friend and Savior we will ever know, they become powerful mementos.

They stir up emotional memories in our hearts, as an intimate photo album does or a well-read and worn letter from a friend or a special gift from a mentor.

I attended a unique funeral for a cherished friend just a few weeks ago.

At the memorial service, it dawned on me that this is how our Lord wants to be remembered.

When the mementos of the bread and cup are before us, he desires that we remember him.

He wants our time together as his spiritual family to be as comfortable and familiar as an evening meal around the family photo album - not dryly lamenting his death, but vibrantly recalling his life.

III. A deed that saved us

It is tragic when a believer loses the wonder of what it means to be redeemed.

It is even more horrific when a believer forgets the Redeemer.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones once defined a Christian as a person "who is amazed at the fact that he is forgiven.

He does not take it for granted."

One reason that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper is to remind us of the price he paid to save us.

He has taken the wounds of Calvary to heaven with him, perhaps to remind us forever that he died in our place.

He never wants us to forget that sacrifice.

During the nineteenth century, Ireland was stricken by a potato famine.

During this time, many Irish people immigrated to America.

A young Irish boy stowed away on an American-bound ship.

At sea, the ship struck an iceberg and began to sink.

As people scrambled frantically for the lifeboats, the captain supervised the activity and was the last to leave the sinking vessel.

When he looked back at the ship, he saw the young stowaway coming out of hiding.

The brave captain ordered his lifeboat back to the sinking ship.

He climbed aboard and rescued the boy, putting him in the seat the captain had vacated - the only available place in the lifeboat.

As the lifeboat slowly pulled away from the sinking ship a second time, leaving the captain to go down with his ship, he yelled out to the boy, "Son, never forget what has been done for you today!"

I suspect that the boy never did.

When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper it was his way of saying "never forget what has been done for you on the cross."

Never forget the pain, the suffering, the sacrifice.

Through the broken bread, he reminds us of his body that was broken to meet our hunger for salvation.

In his brokenness, Jesus received our sin.

Through the poured wine, he reminds of his blood that was spilled out to meet our thirst for life.

Through his blood, Jesus erased our sin.

Through Jesus' broken body and spilled blood, he became the perfect sacrifice.

He atoned for our sin.

He redeemed us for all eternity.

IV. A response to a grand invitation

When we recall what Jesus did for us, there can be only one response.

When we understand his love all we can do is give our lives to him.

Let me take you back to that upper room where Jesus shared his last meal with his disciples.

Sharing a meal with friends was as common a practice then as it is today.

As Jewish men, sharing the Passover meal was as familiar as families today sharing a Thanksgiving meal.

The Passover was a call to remembrance - remembering God's deliverance of the Jewish people from Egyptian bondage.

But on that night when Jesus said, ***"This cup is the new covenant [established by] My blood; it is shed for you" (Luke 22:20)***, something highly uncommon was done.

In the first century, when a young Jewish man reached marrying age and his family selected an appropriate wife for him, he and his father would meet the young woman and her father to negotiate the "bride price," the figurative cost of replacing a daughter.

The price was usually very high.

And as the father of a daughter I can appreciate the big-dollar amount.

When the negotiations were complete, the custom was for the young man's father to pour a cup of wine and hand it to his son.

His son would turn to the young woman, lift the cup and hold it out to her, saying, "This cup is a new covenant in my blood, which I offer to you."

In other words, it was his way of saying, "I love you, and I'll give you my life. Will you marry me?"

The young woman had a choice.

She could take the cup and return it and say no.

Or she could answer without saying a word - by drinking the cup.

This act was her way of saying, "I accept your offer, and I will marry you and give you my life."

On the night of the Last Supper, Jesus and his disciples sat down together celebrating Passover.

The disciples knew the liturgy very well.

They had celebrated Passover all their lives.

When it came time to drink the third cup of wine, the cup of redemption, Jesus lifted the cup as the disciples would expect and offered traditional Seder thanks.

The same words are used to this day: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, for giving us the fruit of the vine."

And then he offered it to them but said something they probably did not expect: "This cup is a new covenant in my blood, which I offer to you."

Many meanings to that statement are possible, but one of them, in common, ordinary language, was, "I love you, and the only picture I can think of that will describe the power of my love for you is the pure love of a husband for his wife."

It's hard to know what those disciples thought that night.

Maybe a few chuckled a bit at Jesus making a marriage proposal, which must have seemed totally out of place in a Passover Seder.

And yet, they may have understood Jesus' willingness to die, be buried, and eventually raised to say, "I love you, and as my Father promised your fathers, I'll pay the price for you.

And in response will you love me back by giving me your life?"

When we come to celebrate the Lord's Supper, we must be mindful of Jesus' offer.

He still says, "I love you."

He proved the extent of his love by dying on a cross for our sins.

He says to us, "I offer you my life. Will you be my bride?"

The taking of the cup is a solemn moment, a sentimental memento, for it is in that moment that one looks to the Heavenly Father and says, "Yes, I accept your offer, and I give you my life in response."

Have you taken the cup?

Have you accepted Jesus' offer?

Have you given your life in response?

Do you remember when you did that?

Is it as vivid in your mind today as the day you prayed to invite Jesus in your heart?

That moment needs to be etched on your mind.

Conclusion

When coming to the table we remember sentences that embody a life, symbols dripping with meaning, an overwhelming sacrifice, and our response of gratitude.

Some things we need not forget.

Early Saturday morning, November 12, 1986, Jamie Estep was traveling from her home in Stillwater, Oklahoma to work the morning shift at the restaurant by the interstate.

As she rounded the last curve before she would turn onto the frontage road, a car in her lane speeding at over 90 miles per hour came toward her.

Jamie swerved her car but could not avoid the oncoming vehicle.

She was struck on the driver's side.

The young, vivacious teenager, with bright blue eyes and even a brighter future, was killed instantly.

The driver of the speeding vehicle, Lukas Jones, was going home from an all-night party with his friends.

He was drunk.

While thrown from his car at the point of impact, he walked away from the accident with only scrapes, bruises, and a broken arm.

Lukas was not a bad 17-year-old.

In fact, he was an honor-roll student and a member of the band.

He, on this night, simply had too many beers and should not have been driving a car.

He made a tragic mistake.

At his trial, witnesses testified of Lukas's achievements in the classroom, his service to the community, his kind heart, his church involvement.

The prosecuting attorney reminded the court that while all of these facts about Lukas may be true, he, nevertheless, drove a

car that exceeded the speed limit while intoxicated and took the life of an innocent victim.

Punishment was needed.

The court waited in anticipation for the judge's verdict in the case.

When the judge spoke from his bench, he said to a remorseful Lukas Jones, "Lukas, as the witnesses have testified, you are a decent young man.

And from your own statement, I realize that you are truly sorry for the crime you have committed.

I want to believe that, as you say, you will never touch alcohol again.

"But," and there was a long pause, "a young, innocent girl is dead because of your irresponsibility.

And nothing you can do will bring her back.

Her friends and family mourn her loss.

I, therefore, sentence you to two years in the juvenile center.

Since you have already spent sixteen months, the balance of your time will be eight months."

A gasp came over the courtroom from Jamie's family thinking the sentence was not severe enough.

"And," the judge went on, "for the rest of your natural life, every year on November 12, you are to go to the scene where you plowed into Jamie's car and think about your actions.

Son, I don't want you to ever forget what you have done.

I want you to recall your poor judgment, the life that was taken, and your part in that."

I think there is nothing more tragic and horrible than an innocent victim killed by a drunken driver.

But, my dear friends, we are no different than Lukas Jones.

We took the life of Jesus Christ.

It was our sin that nailed him to the cross.

He was an innocent victim.

He did not deserve to die.

We did.

But he took our place.

And so that we will never forget, we gather at the table, to remember him.

We taste the bread and sip from the cup to recall the life that was taken, the sacrifice that was made, and our part in the tragedy.

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- III. A deed that saved us**
- IV. A response to a grand invitation**