

## Do This In Remembrance Of Me

March 1, 2020

Today is the first Sunday of the month, and this is the Sunday which we will observe the Lord's Supper. We will do that at the end of this message today, so I thought it appropriate to talk about Communion so that all would understand what it is, what it means, and so that we can be on the same page in our understanding.

First of all, we need to know how the Lord's Supper came about. We must remember that the entire nation of Israel was being held as slaves in Egypt for over 400 years. It was a severe time for them and they were feared and hated.

The Pharaoh hated them and kept them impoverished. And finally, after 400 years of this treatment, the entire nation called out to God and when that happened, He began going about the work that would lead them to their freedom. But it took the whole nation to do this.

Isn't this like the promise God made in 2 CHRONICLES 7:14, when He said;

***"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."***

No matter what a nation might be going through, when the real believers of that nation turn towards God with all belief and reliance, God promises us to help us, personally as well as our land.

America is going through a bad time today. We have been told that we cannot pray in school because some would be offended and we have said "fine". We have been told to stop reading our bibles and we have said "fine". And now, we are told to not mention the name of Jesus or to pray where people can hear us because it is "offensive" to some. And so far, we have said "fine".

Is it any wonder why America is having such problems as our youth being totally uncontrollable, or how we have been divided in this nation almost beyond repair? Maybe it is because, instead of praying for God's help as He told us to, we try to kick Him out of our culture.

And we are suffering. We should do just as the ancient Israelites did: Turn to God. Not everyone ... just those who are called by His name, or the small remnant of true believers who truly do seek to be like Christ.

And God told the Israelites that, as their very last supper as slaves, they were to eat a meal that He described in detail, and do so with their sandals on so they would be ready to go at a moment's notice. He also instructed them to eat that meal yearly in celebration of what He did for them.

And now, Jesus is in Jerusalem to eat the Passover Meal with His disciples. And later, He gave the Apostle Paul very important information as to what happened at that meal.

***1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-30 (Paraphrased)***

***23 For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread 24 and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and, as He passed it to the disciples He said, "This represents my body, which is being given for you. When you eat of this bread, do so in remembrance me."***

***25 In the same way, he took the cup of wine after the supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people - an agreement confirmed by my shed blood. Each time you drink of this cup, do it in remembrance of me. 26 For every time you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death for your sake, and that you are eagerly awaiting my return for you."***

***27 So if anyone eats this bread or drinks from this cup of the Lord in a manner that is not worthy of the Lord, is found guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Rather than do this, you should examine your heart before eating the bread and drinking the cup, to make sure it is properly focused on the Lord.***

***29 For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself.***

***30 That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died."***

And so, exactly what is the Passover Meal? It is called the Seder, and is a religious ceremony with a carefully prescribed ritual that makes this dinner different from any other dinners a family might enjoy. The dinner is a ritual and is laid out in a book called the Haggadah.

The head of the family begins the ceremony by the passing of the bread, and then sanctifying the holiday with a benediction over a cup of wine. In all, four cups of wine will be consumed, each at certain intervals. In turn, after the cleansing of the hands, different foods are served, after which a second cup of wine is poured.

This Passover Meal celebrates how God passed over the Jewish homes and spared them from the death of the first born and it also celebrates God's leading them out of slavery.

It was at this meal that Jesus changed the meaning of the Last Supper as it pertains to believers in Him. For the Jews of today, they still follow God's command to eat that meal every year in celebration of His leading their ancestors out of slavery, but Jesus is now telling all the Christians to eat this meal in remembrance of Him and what He has done for us.

And ever since then, Christians have observed this meal. The early Christians met secretly in homes to remember the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and since then, the church has been celebrating the Communion Service.

Jesus did not tell us to remember His birth, even though we do celebrate it. He didn't tell us to remember the day He arose from the tomb, but we celebrate that, too. The only two ordinances that Jesus commanded us to remember are baptism and the Lord's Supper, or what we refer to as Communion.

We certainly remember baptism in that whenever a person first comes to Christ, we baptize them into the body of Christ. And we observe Communion.

I think the message behind the Communion; the message of being set free from the bondage of sin, should humble our hearts to the Lord as no other celebration.

I think that Communion is too often looked upon as being just being something we do in church. In reality, it is an opportunity for Christians to worship Jesus by remembering the sacrifice He was willing to make for our sakes.

But like all other memories, we cannot remember unless we have a personal experience involving the situation. For instance, you cannot remember the first time I ever rode a horse because you were not involved. All you can do is hear about my riding a horse. In the same way, unless we are personally invested in the thing we are trying to remember, all we can do is hear about other people's memories of it.

As I continue, I want to explain what these verses I just read really mean to us today. The first thing is that the writer, Paul, was given this information by Jesus Christ himself. And he was given this information so that Christians throughout time could have a solid understanding of what Communion really is, what it really means, and how we are to properly celebrate it.

At the Last Supper, all the disciples were seated around the table with Jesus. At the first of the meal, Jesus took a loaf of bread and offered a prayer of thanksgiving to God the Father for that bread. And then He took a piece and passed the rest to the disciples.

In verses 24 and 25, Jesus told us that the bread and cup represent His body. Just as His body was broken and drained for our sakes, the bread is broken and the cup is drained at the meal. And we are called to remember that each time we partake of these elements.

If we have not given ourselves over to Jesus and taken Him as our Savior, we have no relationship with Him – therefore, we have no memories of what He has done. So, we cannot remember what we have never experienced. Just as

you cannot remember the first time I ever rode a horse because you were not there to experience it, all you are able to do is hear about it. And if you have never experienced a personal relationship with Christ, you will not be able to remember anything He went through for your sake.

But the idea of remembering is more than just recalling an event that once took place. It is the stirring of the mind to relive with Jesus Christ as much of His life, death and resurrection as is humanly possible. Each time we observe this supper, we must remember how holy it is and what it means to our very salvation, the reason we assemble in church in the first place. It is a time of honoring Him and worshipping Him for His sacrifice for us.

And in verse 26, it tells us that, as we do these things, we are proclaiming to ourselves and to others the fact that Jesus died for us and that He promised to come back for us.

So what do we remember? We remember what God's Word says about Jesus.

.... He left heaven to be born in a human body – Philippians 2:5-6

.... He became poor that we might be rich - 2 Corinthians 8:9

.... He bore our sins in His Own body on the tree - 1 Peter 2:24

.... He took our place on Calvary - Isa. 53:4-6

.... He shed His blood for our redemption - Rev. 1:5; Rev. 5:9

.... He conquered death for us forever - Matt. 28:1-6; Rev. 1:18

.... He ascended back to Heaven - Heb. 7:25

COMMUNION IS ALSO A TIME OF SELF-REFLECTION –

Verses 27 & 28 both give us a clear warning about how we partake of this meal. We must insure that our hearts have nothing in them that would distract our focus away from the Lord Jesus as we eat this meal. We are told

that if we eat this in a manner that is not worthy of Jesus, then we are purposely sinning against Him.

That is why Christians should never take the elements if they have something on their hearts such as unforgiveness. If you have something on your heart today, such as negative feelings towards another for any reason, please do not take this meal this morning. It is nothing to be ashamed of, and everything Godly to do so until your heart is clear of any such sin.

In verse 30, it tells us that sickness and even death can sometimes be attributed to how we partake of the Communion. Most people do not understand this meal well enough to know that if we partake of it with a heart and mind that is not fully focused on Him, that is a sin, and we are bringing that sin into the presence of Christ.

And since that is a sin, and all sin calls for punishment, then we suffer the punishment for our actions, whether those actions were intentional or not.

It is possible for a lost person to partake of the Lord's Supper and never be saved. This event holds no saving power! However, for those who are saved, it is a time for us to declare publicly that we believe His death and resurrection were for us!

Let us take our stand with the redeemed and loudly proclaim our faith in Him and our dependence upon His sacrifice. The Lord's Supper is a prime time to identify yourself with the Lord Jesus!

This is to be a time of education as well as a time of worship. We must always take the time to explain what we are doing when we take the bread and juice. This service is a prime time for declaring the Gospel message to those who do not know it.

In a day when many churches are becoming "seeker friendly" and others are abandoning the doctrines of salvation by grace through faith alone, let us determine that as long as there is breath in our bodies, we will strive to protect the Gospel message in this church!

We could compromise and draw a crowd, but we would rather preach the truth to a few than to drag a crowd behind us into a Christ-less eternity!

As a child, many of us can remember our mothers telling us to "wash up for supper." Well, that is what the Lord is telling you and me this morning! Is your heart in the right condition to come into the very presence of Jesus and receive the Lord's Supper today?

In VERSE 24, Jesus said, "This bread represents my body, which is being given for you. When you eat of this bread, do so in remembrance of me."

Let us remember Jesus Christ.

In VERSE 25, Jesus continued by saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people - an agreement confirmed by my shed blood. Each time you drink of this cup, do it in remembrance of me."

Let us close in prayer.